

## Useful guide to get started

### American Express Aeroplan Card



**Flytrippers Valuation of  $\approx$  \$945**

Rewards:  $\approx$  \$1065

Fees: \$120

**Rewards obtained with the welcome bonus**

71,000 Aeroplan points

(limited-time increased offer that ended September 20, 2022)

## Welcome

Here's the complete guide on **how to get started** with your new American Express Aeroplan Card.

Another guide on **how to maximize** your Aeroplan points (and plenty more pro tips) will follow, so stay subscribed to this free newsletter.

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## 3 things to know before getting started

Before getting into your card's details, here are a few things you need to know first.

### 1. Warning for the future

First of all, congratulations: You've taken advantage of one of the best welcome bonuses in Canada. You'll definitely grow fond of great welcome bonuses, but having gotten such a great one comes with a risk.

The risk is thinking that all other bonuses will be as high as this one!

It's easy to get a lot of travel rewards every year when you know how to do it, but typically, a welcome bonus worth  $\approx$  \$300 is very good. So **don't take this amazing deal for granted** too much and make sure to unlock the full bonus (and to use it well after if you want to maximize its value).

### 2. Important reminder regarding bonus details for all cards

Many people have been writing to us saying they can't find **the welcome bonus offer details anywhere**. Indeed, for any card (from any issuer), the welcome offer details are never included in the documents you get in the mail (or anywhere else).

That's the way it is. Always.

It's important to write down the details when you apply for a card. It's perfectly normal that you don't know this when you're first starting out, which is why we've created [a free checklist](#) to use every time you apply for a new card (and why we're creating a page with the checklist and all card links on our website).

This guide will of course include the welcome bonus details to make your life easier. But for all your next cards, following the 8 checklist items will help you remember important things like taking a screenshot of the specific offer you're getting. Because offers are constantly changing (that's why we do [a monthly ranking](#), so you can get the right card at the right time).

You can [download the checklist](#) for free right now. There are other equally important notes in it (like a reminder not to cancel your old cards — this has nothing to do with the card you just got: we're talking about the OLD cards you already had).

### 3. Last general piece of advice

**Being well organized** will definitely make your life easier throughout your travel rewards journey, so you can also [download our free card tracking template](#).

There are also some useful tools in there (in the 2<sup>nd</sup> tab in the file).

## Details of your welcome bonus offer

First, welcome bonuses usually have a much simpler structure. But because the bonus is so big this time, it actually has several components this time.

The components are **completely independent and separate from one another**. But it's by combining all of them that it gets very rewarding, if you want.

Of course, you always have to look at both sides of the equation, meaning the rewards and the fees.

Here's a summary of your Amex Aeroplan Card welcome bonus (and we'll cover some tips and rules after).

### 1. REWARDS

You can get **71,000 Aeroplan points** (Flytrippers Valuation of  $\approx$  \$1065)

#### 1.1 STANDARD WELCOME BONUS

Spend \$3,000 in 6 months = Get 45,000 points

#### 1.2 MONTHLY WELCOME BONUSES

Spend the \$3,000 equally (\$500/month) = Earn 15,000 points (6 separate bonuses of 2,500 points per month during which you spend \$500)

### 1.3 SPECIAL RATE AS PART OF THE WELCOME BONUS

Spend \$2,000 of those \$3,000 at grocery stores or at restaurants at a special bonus rate of 5 pts/\$ = Earn 10,000 points (valid for 3 months)

### 1.4 EARNINGS ON OTHER MINIMUM SPEND

Spend the remaining \$1,000 of those \$3,000 at the base rate of 1 pt/\$ = Earn 1000 points

## 2. FEES

You have to pay **\$120** in fees for this offer

### 2.1 CARD FEE

Fee of \$120

## 3. TOTAL WELCOME BONUS

Rewards: ≈ \$1065 (71,000 Aeroplan points)

Fees: \$120

Flytrippers Valuation of ≈ **\$945**

Net return rate of **32%** on \$3,000 (minimum spend required)

## 1. Rewards

Here are the details.

### 1.1 Standard welcome bonus

(Spend \$3,000 in 6 months = Get 45,000 points)

Just with your regular expenses (including groceries for the 3<sup>rd</sup> part of the welcome bonus), the \$3,000 in 6 months should still be pretty easy to achieve. It's the equivalent of only **\$115 per week**.

To be clear: for this part of the reward, you don't technically need to make purchases anywhere in particular.

It's just that in order to get the maximum points for the least amount of spending (that's what travel rewards are all about and why welcome bonuses are key), we recommend that you spend \$2,000 of the required \$3,000 at grocery stores (the 3<sup>rd</sup> part of the bonus).

If you can't reach the \$3,000 organically, here are our [5 tips to reach it more easily](#).

With those tips, most people will be able to not miss out on this welcome bonus.

## 1.2 Monthly welcome bonus

(Spend \$500/month for 6 months = Get 15,000 points)

To be clear: it's not an extra \$500 per month, **it's the same** \$3,000 as the 1st part of the welcome bonus that you can simply split equally each month (no extra spending).

Gift cards are very useful to simplify this and to make sure you reach the amount each month without complicating it too much (simply buy one at the end of each month, in a business where you know you will buy something soon like groceries or gas).

Actually, it's not really just one part of the bonus. Technically, it's 6 more items: each month is separate, so even if you miss the \$500 mark one month, you can have 12,500 points instead of 15,000 by simply reaching \$500 during the other 5 months.

Just add this task to your [card tracking file](#) so you don't forget it.

Comment [IL1]: Ajouter lien

## 1.3 Bonus on grocery and restaurant spending

(Spend \$2,000 of the \$3,000 at grocery stores or at restaurants at a special bonus rate of 5 pts/\$ = Earn 10,000 points)

This special bonus rate applies only for 3 months and on a maximum of \$2,000 in spending for 10,000 easy bonus points.

You can check out the full [list of grocery stores that accept Amex cards in Canada](#), but the main ones are Sobeys, Metro, Whole Foods, No Frills,



Super C, etc. Finally, Giant Tiger and Circle K/Mac's/Couche-Tard are coded as grocery stores too.

In terms of restaurants, almost all chains accept Amex cards (and many independent restaurants do too). You can see [the complete map](#) of the hundreds of thousands of businesses that accept Amex card.

Of course, **you can buy more than just groceries**: you just have to buy gift cards at one of the merchants that code as a grocery store and then use them somewhere else.

For example, Petro-Canada is not a grocery store... but you can simply buy a Petro-Canada gift card at your grocery store, you can get the 5X bonus. Walmart does not code as a grocery store... but by buying a gift card, you can get the 5X bonus on your Walmart spending (they don't usually have Walmart gift cards in grocery stores so you need to get that one in your convenience store that codes as grocery store). And so on.

There are dozens and dozens of retailers like this if you look at the gift card displays at your local merchant that codes as a grocery store. You can see [a very exhaustive list with pictures](#).

Gift cards are completely free by the way. No fees. However, if you like to take advantage of the purchase insurance and extended warranties that your card offers, use the gift cards only for items for which you do not want these protections.

There are also prepaid credit cards, which are not free: there is an activation fee. However, it may be worth it to pay the fee given the incredible 5X earn rate (to get 5X the points at Costco, for example).

Ideally, you should find a \$500 prepaid Mastercard that has a \$7.95 activation fee in some convenience stores that code as grocery stores.

Choosing the prepaid cards with the higher amounts on them will reduce the fee, because \$7.95 on \$500... that's just a 1.59% fee (you're racking up  $\approx 7.5\%$  with the 5X promo, so a net of  $\approx 5.91\%$  anywhere). If you buy a prepaid card with just \$100 on it... the \$7.95 fee is almost an 8% fee. That's not profitable anymore.

Doing the math is very important in the world of travel rewards!

We recommend keeping your prepaid cards after they have been used, in case you want to get a refund on something you paid for with them.

#### 1.4 Earnings on other minimum spending

(Spend \$1,000 at the 1X base rate = Earn 1,000 points)

Spending the remaining \$1,000 will give you **a minimum of** 1,000 points at the base rate of 1 point per dollar.

But you can earn even more for this portion if you spend it in a category with a 2X multiplier rate like Air Canada travel or a 1.5X multiplier rate like restaurants (once you've reached the \$2,000 from the 3<sup>rd</sup> part of the bonus), as explained in the section on earn rates below.

## 2. Fees

Here are the details.

### 2.1 Fee

The card fee is \$120. This obviously doesn't count towards the minimum spend, even if it shows up on your statement. So be careful.

Then, as mentioned in [the free checklist for when you get a new card](#), you should always re-evaluate each card after the 1<sup>st</sup> year to determine if the benefits of that card are worth it to you: every traveler is different.

### 3 basic reminders to unlock a welcome bonus

Here are **some very important reminders** about minimum spend requirements.

(These are all in [the free checklist](#) so you can easily remember them).

#### 1. When the countdown starts

Your countdown to reach the minimum begins the day your application is approved (NOT when you receive your card and NOT when you activate it).

#### 2. What counts as an expense

Be careful not to count your card fee in the amount in case it appears on your statement and therefore in your total balance due.

You need purchases: not ATM withdrawals, not cash advances, not balance transfers. Not anything else: only actual purchases.

Be careful not to make returns/refunds that might make your drop below the required minimum spend amount.

#### 3. Why it's important to be organized

There's no flexibility on the timing for the minimum spend. None!

Even if you miss the deadline by just one day and by just one dollar, there's absolutely no way to get the welcome bonus points back if you don't meet the requirements. Those are the rules.

So make sure you reach the required amount. We suggest you set up regular reminders to monitor your progress.

## Logistics of creating your accounts to get started

The detailed guides on points will have more details, but here are the basics.

You can obviously easily pay the balance of your Amex Aeroplan Card from any bank account by simply adding it as a bill payment.

But to manage your account and rewards, you need to create 2 separate free online accounts, since Aeroplan is a separate program.

You need to create **an Amex account AND an Aeroplan account**. The Amex account is for managing your card. The Aeroplan account is for your rewards; so you really need different accounts.

For Amex, if you don't already have other Amex cards, create an Amex account online on the Amex website (blue button at the top right). They also have a handy app. Then, for Aeroplan, create an online account on Air Canada's website.

Pro tip: the 2-player mode is obviously twice as fast to earn more points, so to make it easier to combine Aeroplan points when your travel companion is going to get their own welcome bonus, you can create an Aeroplan account right away and then set up "Aeroplan Family Sharing."

It allows you to combine all your Aeroplan points together and you can do that with any traveler, they don't really have to be in your family. You can do it with anyone you want. It's easier with this combined account, although of course you can always use your points to buy a ticket for anyone else regardless.

## Your card's rewards earn rate

Here are the earn rates for your Amex Aeroplan Card (excluding the promo rates of the first 3 months):

- **2 points per dollar** at Air Canada ( $\approx 3.0\%$ )
- **1.5 points per dollar** on restaurants ( $\approx 2.25\%$ )
- **1 point per dollar** on all other purchases ( $\approx 1.5\%$ )

Of course, it's not with your regular purchases that you'll earn points quickly, but rather with welcome bonuses (which you probably figured out given the size of this welcome bonus).

But it's good to know your card earn rates so you can use the right card at the right place depending on which ones you have.

This is useful for times in the year when your expenses won't be used to unlock extremely lucrative welcome bonuses, which you should get regularly.

With earn rates, there are always 2 important things to pay attention to:

- The base earn rates
- The multiplier rates on specific categories

The base rate on your Amex Aeroplan Card is pretty standard and there's a decent multiplier rate on 2 interesting categories.

But if you really want to maximize that, consider the "best" card in Canada for your next one: the American Express Cobalt Card which earns 5X Amex points (so 5 Aeroplan points) on restaurants AND groceries at all times, an outstanding rate to be honest.

(It has a nice welcome bonus that's sometimes increased, but it's pretty much the only card in Canada worth considering just for its excessively high earn rate, since 5X the points is very, very lucrative!)

Keep in mind that your Amex Aeroplan Card's earn rates obviously also may be worth even more, since Aeroplan points are variable-value rewards that have the potential to have an outsized value and an unlimited value. The base rate can easily be 2% instead of 1.5% if you use your points well.

## Your card benefits

In addition to travel rewards you get with your welcome bonus, you now enjoy other valuable benefits with your Amex Aeroplan Card.

Here's how each one works.

### Free checked bag on Air Canada

It's so much nicer to travel light and we recommend never bringing checked bags as most flight pros do, but we know that most people like to bring too much stuff all the time.

So, this benefit can be very interesting: you get a free checked bag for you and up to 8 other travelers on the same reservation as you.

Of course, the 1st flight on your itinerary must be operated by Air Canada. You don't even need to pay for your flight with your card: it's really just a benefit of being a cardholder.

### Preferred rates for reward flights on Air Canada

As we'll explain in the guide on how to use points, the pricing system for Aeroplan reward flights is unique.

It has 2 different components:

- Flights on 40 airline partners: fixed prices and limited seating
- Flights on Air Canada: unfixed prices and unlimited seating



In short, as an American Express Aeroplan Card holder, you'll get preferred rates on Air Canada. Flights will cost you slightly fewer points than if you weren't a cardholder.

It's not a huge discount, but it can save you a few thousand points in many cases.

### **Free additional card**

You can get a free additional card ("joint" card) so that someone you trust can help you earn more points (and have them all in the same Aeroplan account).

You can also get an additional card for \$50 if the person needs the free checked bag benefit (if they're traveling without you).

It doesn't count as a credit application for the additional cardholder and it doesn't prevent them from eventually getting their own card, which of course **your travel buddy should do** to get their own welcome bonus, because welcome bonuses are key.

You are entitled to 9 additional cards and the minimum age is 13 years old.

### **Shortcut to Aeroplan Elite status**

To be clear, it's very expensive to achieve airline elite status (unlike hotel elite status).

This benefit doesn't change that.

It's just that if you're already spending a lot on Air Canada, the Amex Aeroplan Card gives you a shortcut to earn bonus Status Qualifying Miles (SQMs) and Status Qualifying Segments (SQSs) based on how much you spend with your card.

If you don't know what SQMs and SQSs are, the benefit is of no use to you. We'll be doing an article on Aeroplan elite status soon.

If you know what SQMs and SQSs are, for every \$10,000 you spend on your card, you'll get 1,000 SQMs and 1 SQS. The shortcut doesn't help with Statut Qualifying Dollars (SQDs) unfortunately.

### **Access to the Amex Offers program**

As an Amex cardholder, you have access to the [Amex Offers program](#), which offers **interesting discounts and freebies** on select purchases throughout the year (at the bottom of your online account or on the Amex app).

### **Access to the American Express The Hotel Collection program**

You get access to The Hotel Collection program, which gives you privileges at high luxury hotels (such as a US\$100 hotel credit and a free room upgrade) **if you like to pay for expensive hotels.**

### **Access to American Express Experiences**

You have access to American Express Experiences, including exclusive Amex Front of the Line invitations, which give you early access to event tickets, for example (via email).

### **Recycled plastic card**

It's not really a big plus, but it's unique to this card: it's made of 70% recycled plastic.

### **Card with no preset spending limit**

This is a benefit for those who want to make expensive purchases, but in practice, it's not so useful for most travelers.

That's because it's technically a "payment card" and not a standard credit card. There's only Amex that has that.

It doesn't change anything if you always pay everything in full on time, as you should do if you want to maximize travel rewards and be financially responsible.

## Your card's insurance coverage

The free insurance coverage included is another great reason to take advantage of card deals on a regular basis (so you're always covered for free with welcome bonuses).

Here are the ones you get with your [Amex Aeroplan Card](#) while you wait for our ultimate guide to insurance.

### Flight delay insurance

When you pay for your flights with your [Amex Aeroplan Card](#) or with your Aeroplan points, you will get a free flight delay insurance that will give you \$500 for a hotel and meals (minimum delay of 4 hours).

Airlines don't owe you anything when the delay is due to the weather and that's normal: they don't control the weather!

So this insurance is really useful. It's always good to take responsibility and not depend on anyone else.

And even when the cause for delay is under the airline's control, why go stand in line to maybe get a hotel that's probably lousy (or maybe get told that they won't pay anything). Take responsibility and use that insurance.

I have used this insurance 10 times and it's great. I never have to wonder what's causing the delay or fight to get anything... and I never have to pay anything.

I book the most expensive hotel possible as soon as my flight is delayed overnight and I don't waste my time in line or complain that the airline isn't giving me anything. I go straight to a nice hotel!

And I even collect a lot of points on the stay paid in cash (reimbursed by the insurer) to get free hotel nights in the future too, in addition to the free night during the delayed flight.

### **Car rental insurance**

You'll be covered if you paid for your rental car with your Amex Aeroplan Card or Aeroplan points. You don't have to pay for the unnecessary insurance car rental companies offer, the one on your card is free.

Note that this applies to damage/loss/theft only; no card covers the liability insurance portion.

For that, your personal car insurance may cover you in some countries, and if not, liability insurance is often included by default with the basic price of car rentals in many countries. Be sure to check.

But at least, don't pay for the damage insurance part. Coverage does not apply to cars worth more than \$85,000 and pickup trucks (among others), which is standard.

Coverage does not apply to rentals longer than 48 days or to rentals from individuals.

### **Hotel burglary insurance**

You also have hotel burglary insurance (maximum \$500) if you paid for the hotel with your Amex Aeroplan Card or Aeroplan points.

### **Insurance for baggage and personal effects while traveling**

You also have insurance for lost or damaged baggage during your trip (up to \$500) if you paid your flight with your Amex Aeroplan Card or Aeroplan points.

### **Baggage delay insurance**

You also have insurance in case your baggage arrives late (maximum \$500 in combination with flight delay insurance) if you paid for your flight with your Amex Aeroplan Card or Aeroplan points.

### **Accident insurance**

You are covered for up to \$500,000 if you die or are maimed while traveling if you pay for your plane, train, boat, or bus tickets with your Amex Aeroplan Card or Aeroplan points.

## Purchase insurance

You have theft and damage protection for 90 days after most of your purchases (maximum \$1000 per instance), as with most cards.

## Extended warranty insurance

Finally, you also have an extended warranty (double the original warranty; up to 1 year) on most of your purchases (maximum \$10,000 per item; \$25,000 per year), as with most cards.

## Medical travel insurance

Note that this is one of the travel cards that doesn't have medical insurance.

But unlike other types of credit card insurance coverage, medical travel insurance is valid whether or not you pay for the trip with your card.

This is always the case for this type of coverage, contrary to the very popular belief. In the world of travel rewards, it's really best to assume that what everyone thinks is just wrong!

So, as long as you have another card with medical coverage, you're covered whether you pay for the trip with it or not! That means you could pay for your flights and hotels with your Amex Aeroplan Card and the medical coverage on your other cards would still cover you for the most important insurance.

And if you don't have a card that has medical travel insurance, just consider this when choosing your next card.



## Aeroplan points expiry

We'll talk more about this in our guide to use the points, but we want to reconfirm that **there's no time limit to use your Aeroplan points.**

Some people seem to think that means the points don't expire. It's not that they don't expire, it's that you have no time limit for using them. It's not quite the same thing.

Aeroplan points don't expire as long as you have an Aeroplan card that earns you points.

If you cancel your card, Aeroplan points expire if you have no activity for 18 consecutive months. But it's excessively easy to earn or use a single Aeroplan point in 18 months, even without a credit card, and thus push the expiration back literally forever.

If you travel once in 18 months, it's done. Otherwise, you just need to make an online purchase (at many of the retailers you already buy from) through the [Aeroplan online shopping portal](#) (and you'll get free bonus points as well).

So it's very, very simple to never have to worry about expiration with one easy task in 18 months.

## How to use your Aeroplan points

Stay subscribed to this free newsletter to receive the next part of this guide, which is how to use your Aeroplan points (with **lots of other pro tips too**).

## Conclusion and what's next

With this information, you'll be able to start your journey with Amex Aeroplan Card and your Aeroplan points.

Feel free to email us at points@flytrippers.com if you have any questions about your card.

We'll soon help you **maximize the value you get** with your points with the next part of this guide.

Thank you and talk soon,

*Andrew & Kevin*

Flytrippers co-founders

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Thank you!

