AIR CANADA’S BOOKING FARE CODES:  
A SUMMARY OF RECENT CHANGES

Between 2001 and 2004, Air Canada implemented a number of changes to its basic fare structure. Booking codes are now grouped together based on varying degrees of restrictions and fare levels to present a “simplified” fare structure to the general public and travel agency community. In May 2003, Air Canada announced this new fare structure for the domestic market with six fare classes: Tango, Fun, Econo, Latitude, Freedom and Executive. In the first quarter of 2004, Air Canada expanded its simplified fare structure to transborder destinations. In October 2004, Air Canada eliminated the Econo class and now offers only five fare categories. At the same time, Air Canada also removed all Saturday night stayover requirements for discounted domestic and transborder tickets and has made all these fares available for one-way purchase.

While the five fare categories presented to the customer provide a simplified user-interface, Air Canada’s more complex inventory management structure remains. Each of the simplified categories continues to be associated with a series of booking codes (e.g., Tango is associated with E, G, I, N, P, R and T booking codes). In fact, there are actually a greater number of active booking codes in 2004 than in 2001 (increase from 14 active codes to 20 active codes). Each booking code continues to be further differentiated into a series of fare bases and specific airfares (e.g., the G booking code in the Tango category is further differentiated into fare basis such as G7NRB, G7NRBW, etc.). The fare bases vary seasonally and are determined based on specific restrictions. While some of the individual booking codes appear to have seen some streamlining in the number of fare bases offered, others have actually seen an increase (e.g., the Y booking code for full economy fares has increased from typically one fare basis “Y1” to numerous fare basis such as YRB, YSTRB, etc.).

Despite these internal complexities, the recent changes in booking code structure have provided consumers with a better understanding of Air Canada’s fares and restrictions. These changes, together with improvements to the fare displays on Air Canada’s website, are likely to help the carrier with its goal of increasing online carrier direct sales.

Changes in Air Canada’s North American Booking Codes 2001 to Present

![Diagram of booking codes and fare structure changes]