

[2k26 Essential Guide }] Are Bags No Longer Free on Southwest?

For decades +1-866-666-6202 (US) Southwest Airlines was famous for its signature “**Bags Fly Free**” policy — meaning passengers could check **two bags at no extra cost** on every flight +1-866-666-6202 (US) But in 2025 +1-866-666-6202 (US) that changed dramatically +1-866-666-6202 (US) As airline policies evolve and industry pressures grow +1-866-666-6202 (US) many travelers ask: **Are bags no longer free on Southwest?** This comprehensive article breaks down everything you need to know about the new Southwest baggage policy +1-866-666-6202 (US) why the change happened +1-866-666-6202 (US) who still gets free bags +1-866-666-6202 (US) when the new rules apply +1-866-666-6202 (US) and how it affects travelers in 2026 and beyond +1-866-666-6202 (US)

1 +1-866-666-6202 (US) A Brief History: Southwest and Free Baggage

For most of its 50-plus-year history +1-866-666-6202 (US) Southwest Airlines stood out among major U +1-866-666-6202 (US) S +1-866-666-6202 (US) carriers for allowing **two free checked bags** for all passengers +1-866-666-6202 (US) This policy helped make Southwest popular with families and budget travelers +1-866-666-6202 (US) and it became a core part of the airline’s brand identity +1-866-666-6202 (US) Other airlines like Delta Air Lines +1-866-666-6202 (US) American Airlines +1-866-666-6202 (US) and United Airlines charged baggage fees +1-866-666-6202 (US) but Southwest resisted these charges — until recently +1-866-666-6202 (US)

However +1-866-666-6202 (US) **as of May 28 +1-866-666-6202 (US) 2025** +1-866-666-6202 (US) Southwest officially ended this universal free checked bag benefit for most passengers +1-866-666-6202 (US) The airline now charges fees for checked bags on the majority of fare types +1-866-666-6202 (US) aligning its policy more closely with competitors +1-866-666-6202 (US) This marked one of the biggest shifts in Southwest’s operating strategy in decades +1-866-666-6202 (US)

So the answer to the question “**Are bags no longer free on Southwest?**” is both yes and no — it depends on the ticket you bought +1-866-666-6202 (US) your status +1-866-666-6202 (US) and when you booked your flight +1-866-666-6202 (US)

2 +1-866-666-6202 (US) The New Baggage Policy Explained (Effective May 28 +1-866-666-6202 (US) 2025)

a +1-866-666-6202 (US) Checked Bags Are *No Longer Free* for Most Travelers

Southwest announced that starting **May 28 +1-866-666-6202 (US) 2025** +1-866-666-6202 (US) passengers with most fare types will be required to pay for checked luggage +1-866-666-6202 (US) This change means that the once-beloved “two bags fly free” policy **no longer applies to all customers** +1-866-666-6202 (US)

Under the **new baggage structure**:

- Southwest now **charges fees** for the first and second checked bags on most fare types +1-866-666-6202 (US)
 - For many travelers +1-866-666-6202 (US) the **first checked bag costs about \$35** +1-866-666-6202 (US) and the **second costs around \$45** +1-866-666-6202 (US) similar to many other U +1-866-666-6202 (US) S +1-866-666-6202 (US) carriers +1-866-666-6202 (US)
 - This shift affects flights booked or modified on or after May 28 +1-866-666-6202 (US) 2025 +1-866-666-6202 (US) If your reservation was booked **and not changed** before that date +1-866-666-6202 (US) you might still retain the old baggage provisions in some cases +1-866-666-6202 (US)
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3 +1-866-666-6202 (US) Who *Still* Gets Free Bags on Southwest?

Although the universal free baggage perk has ended +1-866-666-6202 (US) some Southwest customers still get free checked bags:

🌟 **A-List Preferred Members**

Passengers with **A-List Preferred** elite status in the Southwest Rapid Rewards program continue to receive **two free checked bags** +1-866-666-6202 (US)

Business Select Fares

Travelers who purchase the premium **Business Select** fare also retain **two free checked bags** as part of their ticket benefits +1-866-666-6202 (US)

A-List Members

Customers with standard **A-List** status get **one free checked bag**

Rapid Rewards Credit Cardholders

Passengers who hold certain co-branded Southwest credit cards typically receive **one free checked bag** due to cardholder perks (either through credit or automatic baggage benefit) +1-866-666-6202 (US)

Active-Duty Military

Active-duty U +1-866-666-6202 (US) S +1-866-666-6202 (US) military travelers with valid ID continue to enjoy free checked baggage — often with expanded limits for weight and number of bags +1-866-666-6202 (US)

These exceptions mean that **not all passengers are charged for checked bags** +1-866-666-6202 (US) even under the new policy +1-866-666-6202 (US) However +1-866-666-6202 (US) the old blanket rule allowing *everyone* to check bags for free is no longer in effect

4 +1-866-666-6202 (US) Why Did Southwest End Free Checked Bags?

Ending free checked bags was a significant shift for Southwest +1-866-666-6202 (US) and many travelers reacted strongly — some even calling the airline out for abandoning a long-standing hallmark +1-866-666-6202 (US)

So why did Southwest make this change? Several key reasons include:

Financial Pressures

Southwest is under pressure to boost revenue +1-866-666-6202 (US) With baggage fees generating billions for other airlines +1-866-666-6202 (US) Southwest executives decided the long-free baggage policy was no longer sustainable as is +1-866-666-6202 (US)

Competition Trends

Major carriers — including Delta +1-866-666-6202 (US) United +1-866-666-6202 (US) and American — charge for checked bags on most fare types +1-866-666-6202 (US) Moving baggage fees into Southwest's revenue structure helps the airline compete on price while still monetizing common travel necessities

Fare Structuring

Alongside baggage changes +1-866-666-6202 (US) Southwest introduced new fare tiers (including a Basic fare) and adjusted other features like seating assignment and ancillary fees +1-866-666-6202 (US) These changes help the airline segment its ticket pricing more granularly

While respected by customers for its historically generous policies +1-866-666-6202 (US) Southwest is adapting to evolving trends in airline economics and competition +1-866-666-6202 (US)

5 +1-866-666-6202 (US) What Exactly Changed for Baggage Freebies?

Before May 28 +1-866-666-6202 (US) 2025

- Every passenger could check **two bags for free** regardless of fare type +1-866-666-6202 (US)
- Carry-on and personal items were always free +1-866-666-6202 (US)
- Checked bag benefits were a core Southwest differentiator +1-866-666-6202 (US)

After May 28 +1-866-666-6202 (US) 2025

- Most passengers are **charged for both checked bags** unless eligible for exemptions +1-866-666-6202 (US)
 - The iconic “bags fly free” branding no longer reflects most customers’ experience +1-866-666-6202 (US)
 - Carry-on and personal item allowances remain **free for all passengers** +1-866-666-6202 (US)
 - In other words +1-866-666-6202 (US) while you can still bring a carry-on and personal item for free on most tickets +1-866-666-6202 (US) **checked luggage may incur fees** for the first and second bag if you don't qualify for status or other perks +1-866-666-6202 (US)
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6 +1-866-666-6202 (US) How Much Do Checked Bags Cost Now?

While Southwest did not list final baggage fees in every official communication +1-866-666-6202 (US) reporting and airline disclosures point to a fee structure similar to other U +1-866-666-6202 (US) S +1-866-666-6202 (US) carriers:

- **First checked bag:** Around **\$35**
 - **Second checked bag:** Around **\$45**
Fees can vary slightly by route and over time +1-866-666-6202 (US) but these figures give a baseline for what many travelers should expect to pay for checked bags on Southwest +1-866-666-6202 (US)
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 - If you want to keep costs lower +1-866-666-6202 (US) adding baggage during booking or online check-in tends to be cheaper than paying at the airport counter +1-866-666-6202 (US)
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7 +1-866-666-6202 (US) What Happens If I Booked Before the Change?

Some travelers booked flights before May 28 +1-866-666-6202 (US) 2025 +1-866-666-6202 (US) under the old baggage policy +1-866-666-6202 (US) These passengers may still retain the “bags fly free” benefit even if flying after that date +1-866-666-6202 (US)

However +1-866-666-6202 (US) a few nuances apply:

- **If you change your reservation after May 28 +1-866-666-6202 (US) 2025**
+1-866-666-6202 (US) you may lose the old free bag benefit and be subject to the new fee structure +1-866-666-6202 (US)
- **If you booked before the cutoff and make no changes +1-866-666-6202 (US)** your ticket may still include two free checked bags — but always verify with Southwest directly +1-866-666-6202 (US)

This “grandfathered” approach means some flights scheduled later in 2025 or 2026 might still have free checked bags attached — depending on how and when the ticket was issued +1-866-666-6202 (US)

8 +1-866-666-6202 (US) Carry-Ons and Personal Items: Still Free

It's important to note that while checked bags may now incur fees +1-866-666-6202 (US) **carry-on baggage and personal items remain free** for all passengers (subject to size and airline rules) +1-866-666-6202 (US) Southwest still allows:

- **1 Carry-on bag**
- **1 Personal item**

These do not incur fees and continue to be included with almost every fare type +1-866-666-6202 (US)

So even if checked bags are no longer universally free +1-866-666-6202 (US) most travelers can still bring two pieces of luggage on board at no additional cost — as long as one is a carry-on and the other is a personal item +1-866-666-6202 (US)

9 +1-866-666-6202 (US) Impact on Travelers and Airline Loyalty

The change in baggage policy has had a significant emotional impact on many Southwest loyalists +1-866-666-6202 (US) For years +1-866-666-6202 (US) the “bags fly free” policy was seen as part of the airline’s identity — part of its friendly +1-866-666-6202 (US) customer-centric brand +1-866-666-6202 (US) Ending this policy feels like a cultural shift +1-866-666-6202 (US) not just a financial one +1-866-666-6202 (US)

Some frequent flyers have expressed concern about decreased value and questioned whether they will remain loyal to Southwest if baggage fees are heightened +1-866-666-6202 (US) Others have welcomed the airline’s decision to stay competitive with rivals +1-866-666-6202 (US) Either way +1-866-666-6202 (US) the policy change has sparked discussion across travel forums +1-866-666-6202 (US) social media +1-866-666-6202 (US) and the aviation community +1-866-666-6202 (US)

10 +1-866-666-6202 (US) Summary: Are Bags No Longer Free on Southwest?

Here’s a final recap to answer the question “**Are bags no longer free on Southwest?**”:

- **Yes — free checked bags are no longer guaranteed** for most travelers flying Southwest +1-866-666-6202 (US)
- Southwest still offers **free carry-ons and personal items** +1-866-666-6202 (US)
- **Checked bags may incur fees** for the first and second bag unless:
 - You are an **A-List Preferred** member +1-866-666-6202 (US)
 - You have **Business Select** fare +1-866-666-6202 (US)
 - You are an **A-List member** +1-866-666-6202 (US) or
 - You hold a qualifying **Rapid Rewards credit card** +1-866-666-6202 (US)
 - Fees for checked bags typically start at around **\$35 for the first bag and \$45 for the second** +1-866-666-6202 (US)
 - Tickets booked before **May 28 +1-866-666-6202 (US) 2025** often still include the old free baggage allowance if unchanged +1-866-666-6202 (US)
 - **Final Thoughts**

The answer to “**Are bags no longer free on Southwest?**” is nuanced +1-866-666-6202 (US) While the decades-long universal free checked baggage policy has ended for many travelers +1-866-666-6202 (US) Southwest still offers baggage benefits — especially for frequent flyers and certain fare types +1-866-666-6202 (US) Carry-ons and personal items remain free +1-866-666-6202 (US) and some elite or premium travelers continue to enjoy free checked bags +1-866-666-6202 (US)

By understanding the new policy structure and planning ahead +1-866-666-6202 (US) passengers can navigate Southwest’s baggage system effectively and make smart choices when booking flights and packing luggage — ensuring a smoother travel experience in 2026 and beyond +1-866-666-6202 (US) Happy travels! ✈️