

What Is the Southwest Cancellation Policy?

Refunds, Credits, and Rules Explained

The infographic features a woman in a straw hat and backpack standing on an airport tarmac, looking at a Southwest airplane. The background is a bright, sunny sky. The text is arranged in a clean, modern layout with a mix of bold and script fonts. The Southwest logo is in the top right corner, and the 'IRFLY POLICY' logo is in the top left. The main title 'What Is the Southwest Cancellation Policy?' is in a large, bold font, with 'Refunds, Credits, and Rules Explained' in a smaller font below it. Four icons represent different policy areas: Refund Options, Travel Credits, Cancellation Rules, and Flexible Options. A call to action 'Call Now +1-888-212-0809' is prominently displayed. A handwritten note 'Your Journey Matters...' is also included. The bottom right corner features three icons: Affordable Travel, Trusted Policies, and Hassle-Free Support.

IRFLY POLICY

Southwest
Low Fares. Great Flights.

What Is the
Southwest Cancellation Policy?
Refunds, Credits, and Rules Explained

Refund Options
Know your eligibility.

Travel Credits
Use for your next trip.

Cancellation Rules
Avoid extra fees & surprises.

Flexible Options
Plan with confidence.

Your Journey Matters...

Call Now
+1-888-212-0809

Travel Smart with Southwest!

Affordable Travel | **Trusted Policies** | **Hassle-Free Support**

Canceling a flight can be stressful, especially when you are unsure whether you will receive a refund or travel credit. The [cancel policy southwest](#) follows different rules based on your fare type, cancellation timing, and reason for canceling. For help understanding your options, you can also call +1-888-212-0809.

Southwest has several fare options, and each can have different cancellation benefits. Knowing these rules before canceling can help you avoid losing the value of your ticket.

What Is the Southwest Cancellation Policy?

The Southwest Cancellation Policy allows eligible passengers to cancel their reservations before departure. The result can be a refund to the original payment method, a flight credit, or a Transferable Flight Credit™.

One important rule is the cancellation deadline. Southwest states that customers should cancel at least 10 minutes before the original scheduled departure time. Failing to cancel before that deadline can trigger the airline's no-show policy.

Your exact cancellation outcome depends on the fare you purchased.

Can You Get a Refund After Canceling a Southwest Flight?

Yes, but refund eligibility depends on the fare and circumstances.

Southwest's current fare structure includes Basic, Choice, Choice Preferred, and Choice Extra. Basic is non-refundable, while Choice Preferred and Choice Extra are refundable fares. Choice is generally non-refundable but may retain its value as a Transferable Flight Credit.

If you purchased a refundable fare and cancel according to the applicable rules, you can generally choose between receiving money back to your original payment method or receiving the applicable flight credit.

For eligible refunds, Southwest says refunds to the original payment method are generally processed within seven business days.

What Happens to a Basic Fare?

Basic is Southwest's most restrictive fare. It is non-refundable and normally cannot be changed unless you upgrade to an eligible higher fare.

If you cancel a Basic reservation at least 10 minutes before departure, you may receive a flight credit if value remains. Southwest currently states that Basic flight credits generally expire six months from the original booking date, subject to the payment method and other applicable conditions.

Because these rules can depend on how the reservation was purchased, check the specific terms attached to your ticket before canceling.

How Do Southwest Flight Credits Work?

A flight credit represents unused eligible ticket value that can be applied toward future Southwest airfare.

Southwest says credits created from reservations booked or changed on or after May 28, 2025 have expiration rules. The expiration period can vary by fare and payment method. For example, certain Choice credits may have a 12-month period, while Basic credits generally have a six-month period.

Customers should check their credit balance and expiration date before booking another trip. Rapid Rewards members can view eligible credits through their account, while non-members can use Southwest's travel-funds tools.

What If Southwest Cancels Your Flight?

The rules are different when Southwest cancels your flight.

If Southwest cancels your flight and you decide not to travel, you may be eligible for a refund. Southwest also provides options that can include rebooking or receiving a flight credit, depending on the circumstances and your preference.

A significant delay or schedule change can also create refund eligibility. Southwest generally defines a significant delay as three or more hours for domestic itineraries or six or more hours for international itineraries, subject to the airline's published conditions.

This distinction matters because a passenger may have different options when the airline causes the disruption than when the passenger voluntarily cancels.

What Happens If You Miss Your Southwest Flight?

Missing a flight without canceling beforehand can result in the loss of unused ticket value.

Southwest asks customers who do not plan to travel to cancel at least 10 minutes before the scheduled departure. If they do not, the no-show policy applies. Basic and Choice fares can be forfeited, while eligible Choice Preferred and Choice Extra reservations can receive their value as a Transferable Flight Credit™.

For reward reservations, the treatment of points and taxes can also vary according to the fare purchased.

How Can You Cancel a Southwest Reservation?

You can generally manage your reservation through Southwest's website or mobile app.

Before confirming cancellation, review:

- Your fare type
- The scheduled departure time
- Whether the ticket is refundable
- The expected refund or credit
- Any expiration date attached to the credit

If you are unsure about the consequences, review the fare conditions before completing the cancellation. This is particularly important for Basic fares and reservations involving credits or rewards.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I cancel a Southwest flight and get my money back?

It depends on the fare and reason for cancellation. Refundable fares can qualify for a refund to the original payment method, while non-refundable fares generally retain eligible value as a flight credit.

How late can I cancel a Southwest flight?

Southwest requires customers to cancel at least 10 minutes before the scheduled departure time to avoid the standard no-show consequences.

Do Southwest flight credits expire?

Yes, many newer flight credits have expiration dates. Credits created from reservations booked or changed on or after May 28, 2025 are subject to fare-specific expiration rules.

Conclusion

Understanding [Southwest's cancellation rules](#) before you cancel can help protect the value of your trip. The most important factors are your fare type, cancellation timing, and whether Southwest caused the disruption.

Always check your reservation details before confirming a cancellation. If you need additional assistance understanding your available options, visit Airfly Policy or call +1-888-212-0809 for travel guidance.

Author

Peggy Carter is a professional travel writer who creates practical, easy-to-understand guides covering airline policies, cancellations, and passenger travel options.

