

Module 8: Tracking and Managing Redemptions and Expiration Dates

Purpose of This Module

This module explains how to manage and track your redemptions once you have used your points or miles. It also covers how to monitor account balances, prevent point expiration, and keep all confirmations organized for the Africa 2028 journey.

Why Tracking Matters

Managing multiple airline and hotel programs can quickly become confusing. Keeping accurate records ensures that you know where your points are, when they expire, and what value you are getting from your redemptions.

Good organization prevents mistakes such as letting points expire, booking duplicate tickets, or missing promotional bonuses.

Using a Family Points Tracker

A central spreadsheet or tracker is essential when coordinating multiple travelers. The Family Points Tracker should include columns for:

- Name of traveler
- Program name (Amex, Chase, Marriott, etc.)
- Account number and login details (stored securely)
- Current balance
- Expiration date
- Date of last activity
- Points used and for what redemption
- Notes or confirmation numbers

This tracker can be updated monthly or after any major transfer or redemption.

Keeping Confirmation Records

Whenever you book a flight or hotel with points, save a copy of the confirmation immediately. Store all confirmations in a single digital folder titled 'Africa 2028 Travel.'

Recommendations:

- Save each confirmation as a PDF or screenshot.
- Label files clearly (e.g., 'Qatar_Cairo_BusinessClass.pdf').
- Keep a backup in cloud storage like Google Drive or Dropbox.
- Share folder access with family members who are traveling.

This method keeps everyone on the same page and avoids confusion later.

Preventing Point Expiration

Each loyalty program has its own rules for inactivity and expiration:

- **American Airlines AAdvantage:** Miles expire after 24 months of no activity.

- **British Airways Avios:** Points expire after 36 months of no activity.
- **Qatar Airways Privilege Club:** Points expire after 36 months regardless of activity.
- **Marriott Bonvoy:** Points expire after 24 months of inactivity.

To keep accounts active, earn or redeem at least one point every few months through:

- Dining or shopping portals.
- Credit card transfers.
- Small hotel stays or short flight bookings.
- Using an airline's shopping or survey partner.

Tracking Expiration Dates

Add a dedicated column in your tracker labeled 'Next Expiration Date.' Highlight any balances that will expire within 90 days.

You can also:

- Set calendar reminders 60 days before expiration.
- Use free apps like AwardWallet or MaxRewards to monitor expiration dates automatically.
- Link email accounts so that confirmation emails update your tracker in real time.

Monitoring Value and Performance

Tracking is not only about balances and dates — it also helps measure the value you are getting from your redemptions. For each flight or hotel booking, record:

- Points used.
- Cash price of the booking.
- Calculated cents per point (cash price ÷ points × 100).

This shows which programs give the best returns and where to focus future earning efforts.

Avoiding Common Tracking Mistakes

- Forgetting to log small redemptions or transfers.
- Losing track of family member balances.
- Ignoring emails that confirm expiration extensions.
- Not reconciling tracker totals with actual account statements.

Treat your tracker as a living document that grows and evolves as your travel plans progress.

Recommended Tools and Templates

Tools that can help with organization include:

- **Google Sheets or Excel:** Easy for manual updates and sharing.
- **AwardWallet:** Automatically tracks balances and expiration.
- **Notion or Airtable:** Good for visual organization with filters.

For security, store login credentials separately from your tracker in a password manager such as 1Password or Bitwarden.

Summary

Tracking your redemptions and expiration dates ensures that every mile and point contributes toward your Africa 2028 journey. Organization is the key to maximizing value and preventing costly mistakes.

The next module will focus on protecting your balances from devaluations and program changes while maintaining long-term value.