

The five best credit cards for free airport lounge access



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Get free Qantas lounge access with top-tier credit cards

While many high-end credit cards dish out two free airport lounge passes each year, a handful go above and beyond to offer anything from *four* free yearly visits through to unlimited worldwide lounge access with multiple airlines.

Don't be stuck out in the terminal – if your passport wallet doesn't pack a coveted Platinum frequent flyer card, your Platinum, Black or Infinite credit card could be just the ticket.

1. American Express Platinum Charge Card

Okay, so this one's a 'charge' card as opposed to a 'credit' card, but it's worthy of a mention.



It starts with free and unlimited Priority Pass Prestige membership – giving you access to over 700 airport lounges across the globe regardless of your seat number or even which airline you're travelling with, releasing you from the shackles of frequent flyer programs and airline alliances.

Add to that: free, unlimited use of any Virgin Australia domestic airport lounge before your Virgin Australia flight, along with any Delta Sky Club worldwide before a Delta flight.



As icing on the proverbial lounge cake, you'll enjoy unlimited access to the American Express Sydney International Airport lounge regardless of which airline you're flying with, along with Centurion Lounges in the USA and both Centurion Clubs and Platinum Lounges in South America and India.

2. Citi Prestige Infinite Visa

Remember that works-with-any-airline unlimited Priority Pass card? It's also yours with the Citi Prestige Visa from Citibank, which too waives the usual fees for one additional guest in the lounges.



While Priority Pass' coverage in Australia is poor with just one lounge in Cairns International, you're covered pretty much everywhere else – all of the likely suspects are on the 'lounge list' including Los Angeles, Dallas, New York, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, London and Paris, among many others.

Also not forgotten is Singapore, where members can visit a staggering 11 lounges before their flight, including the newly-renovated SATS T1 Premier Lounge:



Conveniently located in the same terminal used by Qantas, Emirates, British Airways and Jetstar, inside you'll find private shower suites to rival those of the Qantas Singapore Lounge plus plentiful seating, power points and more.

Read: *New SATS T1 Premier Lounge, Singapore: Changi Airport's best Priority Pass lounge?*

3. Diners Club

Whether you pick the standard Diners Club card or the one Qantas-branded, you'll enjoy unlimited access to over 500 lounges worldwide through Diners' own network



Aside from one lounge in Auckland International, the Diners Club partner lounges overseas are much further further away – but you'll still find the popular spots such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Los Angeles and New York among them.

Also on the list, the No. 1 Traveller lounge at London Heathrow which has a separate day spa where cardholders can pay for a massage.

You'll find a full list of participating lounges on the Diners Club website – just flash your Diners Club card and you're good to enter.

4. ANZ Frequent Flyer Black

ANZ has its own lounge hook-up, instead giving its Frequent Flyer Black cardholders free and unlimited access to over 60 Velocé network lounges [PDF, 52kb] around the globe.



While none of these are found in Australia, you're covered in a reasonable range of major overseas airports such as Tokyo Narita, Jakarta, Singapore, London, Frankfurt, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Johannesburg and of course, Auckland, where the Emperor Lounge awaits.

It's nothing overly-lavish, but still provides you the option of a shower after a long day's work, and somewhere quiet to catch up on email before switching off for the flight home.

You'll also pocket two single-use Qantas lounge passes – valid in Australian domestic Qantas Clubs and Qantas international business class lounges before any Qantas or Jetstar flight, along with two free visits each year to the AMEX Sydney lounge when flying with any airline.

A close second: the ANZ Rewards Black cards, providing the same Velocé and AMEX lounge access but without the additional Qantas lounge passes.

5. Westpac Altitude Black

As with ANZ's above-Platinum cards, Westpac's Altitude Black cardholders also start out with two free visits to the American Express lounge in Sydney – as always, regardless of the airline you're travelling with.



Then, it depends on how you earn points on your everyday spend.

Opt for 'Altitude Qantas' and you'll also net two free Qantas lounge passes, or for members using Altitude Rewards, it's a complimentary Priority Pass membership with two free visits included on your account.



While not as comprehensive as cards that provide unlimited global access, the bank is at least providing the most relevant lounge access for each cardholder: Qantas lounges for those earning Qantas Points and Priority Pass for chasing points with Virgin Australia, Singapore Airlines, Cathay Pacific and more.

Highly commended: AMEX Velocity Platinum

The American Express Velocity Platinum card trails Altitude only as there's no choice when it comes to lounge access, delivering two free visits to Virgin Australia's domestic lounges each year.



Redeemable when travelling onward with Virgin Australia, Velocity Gold or Platinum frequent flyers could also use these to bring an additional guest into the lounge over and above their regular entitlement – handy for families or groups of colleagues travelling together.

Following the trend, you'll also enjoy two free visits to the American Express international lounge every 12 months...