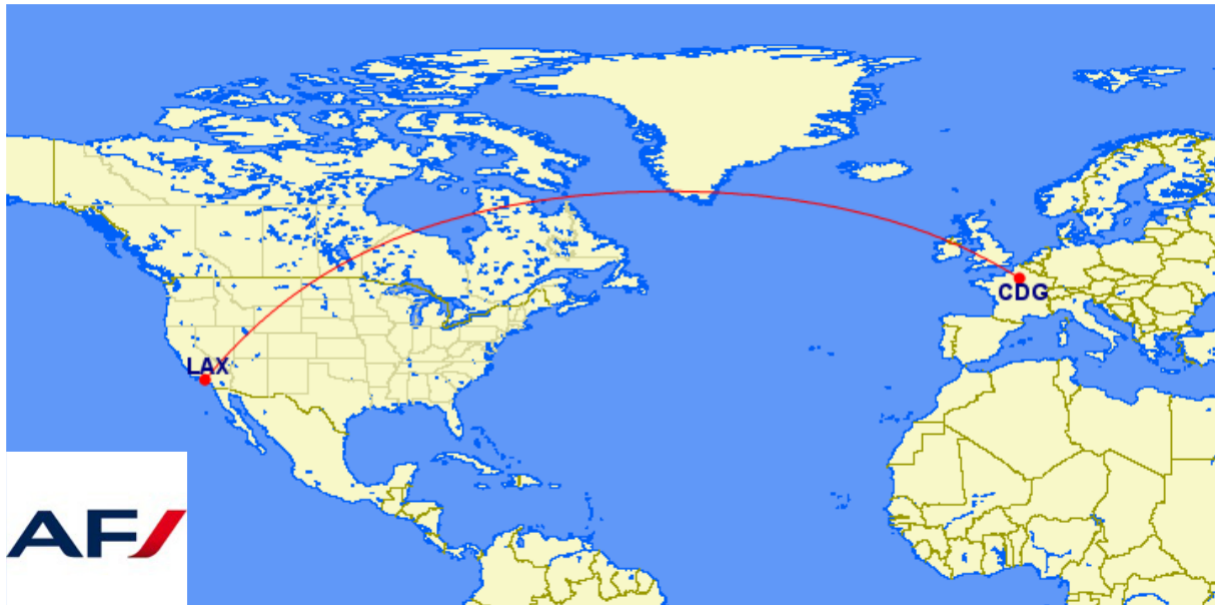
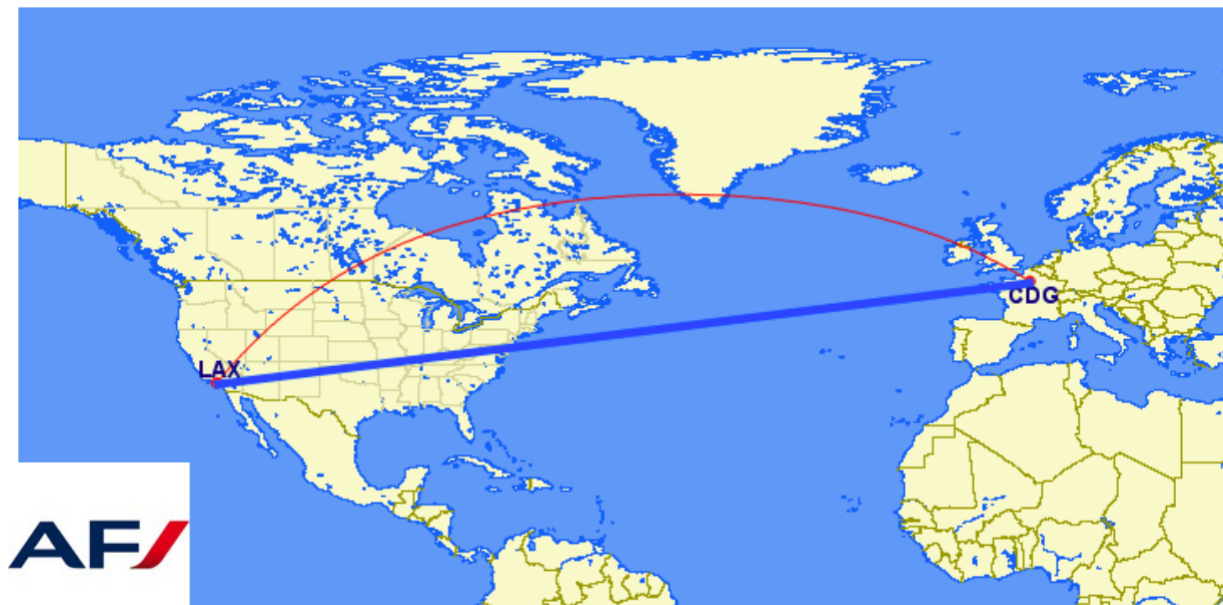


Consider the flight from Paris to Los Angeles, USA. The figure below shows the route taken by Air France planes to reach both cities:



The trajectory of the planes thus follows a non-obvious curve: one could rather expect the blue path below:



However, if we change perspective and look at the Earth's sphere "from above", as in the illustration below, we realize that the path followed by Air France (in red below) goes straight from Paris to Los Angeles. This path represents a fraction of a great circle. Great circles are therefore straight lines on a sphere, while other trajectories, such as the small blue arc of a circle, are not straight.

