



# **Spending Money on Vacation**

**By:Vejai Etwaroo**

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# 14 Ways to Save Money on Your Accommodation



Accommodation can be one of the most expensive parts of your [vacation](#) if you are not careful. Fortunately, there are a number of ways to keep the budget down.

## 1. Look for a package deal

Once you have created your [travel](#) budget, you should have a pretty good idea of how much you can afford per day. Go online to see what kind of package you can get at around that rate. For example, booking flight, hotel and car rental on Expedia can offer significant savings.

## 2. Be clear about what is important for you and your family

If you are single, chances are you won't care what your room is like because you will be outside of it most of the time soaking up the sights. But do check if you get stuck with a single supplement fee.

If you are [traveling](#) as a family, a suite with a refrigerator and microwave can help you keep the kids fed and costs down.

Remember, the less you spend on your room, the more you have to spend on other things.

### 3. Consider staying with family

If you have any family in the area, see if you can stay with them.

### 4. Try Airbnb

Some of the properties are really great and a fraction of what you would pay for a hotel. Just be sure to check the location in relation to all the places you want to visit. You may need a rental car if you are not driving to your destination, which can add to the cost. Check for public transportation, and typical taxi fares.

### 5. Consider [travel](#) hostels

Hostels have come a long way in the past few years, and are clean, modern, and full of amenities. Some of them can be a bit out of the way, but their cheapness can more than make up for location. Backpacker hostels in New Zealand are a way of life and are used by people from 8 to 80, so don't worry about being "too old" to go to a hostel. Just be prepared to share kitchen and sometimes the bathroom, or pay more for a private room if available.

### 6. Watch your [travel](#) dates

Peak times will be at the holidays and in the summer in many locations. Travel in the off-season can cost a fraction of what it does at peak season.

### 7. Bid on Hotwire or Priceline

You can get some great bargains this way. With Priceline, you can't pick the exact hotel, but you will have an idea of location and rating.

### 8. Beware of location

City center hotels can cost a small fortune compared to others a bit further out. So too can airport hotels if you are not careful. Consider the cost and availability and time factor in relation to public transportation and/or taxis to

where you need to go (and/or car rental), and see what makes the most sense.

## 9. Loyalty programs

If you are a frequent [traveler](#), join a loyalty program for the same chain of hotels. It can add up to a range of perks and might also get you a room upgrade at no extra cost.

## 10. House Swapping

House swapping is becoming more popular, as families who want to visit certain locations but still enjoy comforts of home exchange with others. Just be careful of location, and do be careful of their property and your own valuables when you have anyone in your house.

## 11. Camping

Camping can be a great adventure. Campsites can be very basic, or full of amenities.

## 12. Caravan parks

Caravans are one up from camping in a tent. They are warm, dry, have a stove and fridge, and can be a fun way to enjoy a holiday by the seaside or other scenic location.

## 13. Deals and discounts

Look for bargain deals, coupons and more.

## 14. Check the fine print

Before making any booking, be sure to read the fine print so you know exactly what things will cost.

# 17 Ways to Save Money on Transportation When You Are on Vacation



There are a number of ways to save on transport when you are on [vacation](#).

## Plane Travel

### 1. Save money on tickets

You can save a lot of money on airline tickets if you're flexible with your [travel](#) dates. A day or two earlier or later can make a huge difference in the cost. Tuesdays through Thursdays are usually the cheapest days to [travel](#) by air.

### 2. Consider alternate airports

Sometimes, flying into a different airport can save hundreds of dollars per ticket per flight. Larger cities typically have multiple airports.

### 3. Consider [travel](#) to and from the airport as well

Try to save money getting to and from the airport. If you take your car, you will need to pay for parking at the long-term car park. There might be cheap transportation to and from the airport, but it might be cheaper and less hassle to take your car if you have a lot of people and/or a lot of luggage.

### 4. Don't overpack

Airlines can charge a small fortune these days for checked baggage. Pack each carry on for each family member carefully for maximum usefulness in the minimum amount of space.

### 5. Watch out for fuel surcharges and airport taxes

These should usually be included in the price of the ticket, but if you are booking online, that "cheap fare" might actually end up giving you sticker shock.

### 6. Book packages if possible

A flight, hotel and car rental for one inclusive price can be a good deal.

### 7. Collect air miles

Air miles can all add up to a big savings on your next [vacation](#) as long as there are no high fees for booking. Charges will usually be highest for last-minute [travel](#), such as less than two weeks prior to departure.

### 8. Go in the off season

Avoid flying at the height of the holiday and summer. Try spring and fall getaways instead.

## Going by Car

### 9. Make sure you have the car serviced before you go

You don't want to end up with breakdowns and/or any costly repairs on the road.

#### 10. Check the tires, especially in warm and cold weather

The state of the tires can have a significant impact on fuel mileage.

#### 11. Look for good gas prices

If you have more than one option, shop around.

#### 12. Pay cash for your gas

This can save you around 10 cents a gallon because so many gas stations these days are passing along the credit card company charges to the customer.

### Coach Holidays

#### 13. Go all-inclusive

Consider an all-inclusive coach holiday, especially if you are not fond of driving. They can be very cost-effective and offer sightseeing to top locations.

#### 14. Bus passes

These are popular in Europe and other locations where people like to see the sights by bus. You could get a pass offering unlimited [travel](#) for 7 days, for example. Compare the price of the pass with the individual prices of the tickets between all the destinations you want to visit.

### Train Travel

#### 15. Train passes

As with bus passes, these can be a really cheap way to see Europe and the



rest of the world. Note that some train systems will have first, second and perhaps even third-class options. The latter should be the cheapest, and reasonably clean and comfortable in most cases.

## Cruises

### 16. Book a cheap cruise

A cruise is your transportation and hotel all rolled into one. All you have to do is unpack once and relax. Before booking, check out each destination carefully to make sure there will be enough to do. Some will stop at interesting destinations, while others will spend most of their time off the shore of their own company-owned island for people to do water sports and other activities.

Look for last-minute deals and packages if you don't live at a cruise ship port of call and have to fly to get to your ship.

## Planes, Buses and Trains

### 17. Consider group [travel](#)

Traveling with a group, usually 4 to 10 people, can really cut down on expenses. Larger groups can get the best rates if they plan ahead.

# Are All-Inclusive Holidays Worth It?



Many people wonder if all-inclusive holidays are really worth the money. The answer is that it depends. You will need to do some research and know what things cost in order to determine if you are better off all-inclusive, or "a la carte". You will also need to watch out for any hidden fees.

It is also important to note that all-inclusive holidays vary considerably depending on type of holiday, time of year, and destination you are [traveling](#) to.

## Air, Hotel and Car Rental Combinations

It can be really convenient to book all three of these with just a couple of clicks, but the price you see on the screen is not always the price you are going to pay. There can be all sorts of surcharges, airport fees, insurance on the car, gas surcharges, and more.

Price the holiday separately and together. Look at the different choices of accommodation available. You might do better with cheap airfare and an Airbnb property. Watch out for car rental versus public transportation. If the

area you are going to has a good public transportation system, you probably won't need the car. If it is more isolated, get the car.

Check the meals with the hotels. Some offer breakfast every morning, and some offer free happy hour and early bird dinners. If you like to eat early and/or have kids, the early meals can be ideal.

## Coach Holidays

Coach holidays provide transportation, accommodation, sightseeing and meals all in one package. Someone else does the driving for you, so all you have to do is hop on and off to enjoy the various destinations and the meals provided.

The hotels and rooms can be of varying quality, as can the meals. You might do the math and decide it is better to just drive yourself. Or, you can take a bus or the train, and stop off at certain locations to enjoy the sights. Greyhound offers cheap [travel](#) on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and special casino excursions.

In Europe, bus and train passes are available, as well as extensive public transportation, so a coach holiday is really only worth it if you are nervous about being abroad and don't speak the language - though these days, you can always find someone who speaks English. They are also good for those with disabilities, but do check for accessibility at the accommodations listed.

## Resorts

Resort holidays became popular with the advent of Club Med, but these days, all-inclusive does not mean the same as it once did. For example, the drinks might only be local rather than international brands, otherwise you have to pay a surcharge. Any extras like spa treatments can come with a hefty price tag. Therefore, it is important to read the fine print and make sure you know what extras you will need to pay for.

If the resort is very isolated, check for transport from and to the airport, and what excursions are available and included in the price. If not included, are the prices reasonable, or are there other options?

Check out the food. The buffet may sound great for the first day or two, but if

you are going to be there for a week, it might start to get dull. There might be other restaurants on the property, but you might have to pay a fee for the privacy of a more intimate setting than a huge dining hall.

Check out the equipment and activities and facilities for the children. Make sure there is lots to do and watch out for hidden fees like childminding fees, lesson fees, and equipment rental.

## Cruises

Cruises should be all-inclusive, but watch out for port fees and taxes, service fees at bars and restaurants, excursion fees and equipment rental fees.

# Avoid These Pitfalls When Buying Your Souvenirs



Most people love to get a souvenir of their trip and also usually bring back a gift or two for family and friends. However, this can really bite into your budget if you are not careful. The best thing to do is to avoid these traps when buying your souvenirs.

## 1. Don't buy at the airport

This is where many people trying to get last-minute gifts for people they have forgotten about will try to find something. You will be paying top dollar here for bargain-basement quality goods like t-shirts and keyrings.

## 2. Steer clear of touristy gift shops

Gift shops are crowded, overpriced and full of junk. Get away from the main strip and see what you can find at the local stores, or even supermarkets.

## 3. Don't buy anything unwrapped if it is edible

In many cases, it will be confiscated by airport authorities concerned with terrorism and/or agricultural hazards. Either eat that salami from Italy before you land, or buy it vacuum-packed.

#### 4. Beware of other food gifts

Watch out for jams, jellies, olives and so on, as the liquid may cause security personnel concern.

#### 5. Watch out for breakables

Anything you buy should be transported easily without concern over it breaking.

#### 6. Try thrift stores

If you see a local thrift store, head in to see what they might have with a local theme.

#### 7. Shop in dollar stores

They often have locally-themed trinkets to keep the kids happy.

#### 8. Avoid dust collectors

Don't buy things just to be buying. Unless you are really going to use those shot glasses, spoons and fridge magnets, pass.

#### 9. Buy ahead of time online

This may sound weird, but if your kids won't be able to live without a t-shirt of the place they are going to, like Disneyworld, buy the shirt online for a fraction of the price you will have to pay in the theme park.

#### 10. Beware of gift shops at each attraction

The more places you visit, the more temptations. Almost every museum, theme park, zoo and so on has their own gift shop, which you usually have to

walk through in order to leave. It can be tough to say no to your children when they are dazzled by all the items on display.

Remind them that you have to carry everything that you buy home with you. Also check the list price by doing a quick search online. If they really feel they can't live without it, buy it less expensively when you get home, as long as you don't have to pay shipping and handling.

## 12. Only buy things that are real value

A hand-knit Aran sweater will cost around \$25 USD in New Zealand or Ireland, but up to \$1,000 in the USA depending on how complicated the pattern is and where the store is. They will also last a lifetime if you protect them from moths. This will be a far better value than \$25 on t-shirts.

## 13. Only buy things you will actually use

Be practical. If you not only love what you see, but are sure that you (or the person you are giving it to) will actually use it, then it will be good value. If it is just going to get shoved to the back of the closet when you get home, it's not worth the money or hassle to carry it.

## 14. Buy local items you can't get anywhere else

If you go to Peru, you can get fantastic clothes made from Alpaca. If you go to the south-western United States, you can buy the most gorgeous turquoise and silver jewelry. Buy local items sourced from local, indigenous resources. Look for bargains at local markets.

# Five Vacation Spots That Are Worth the Money



There are a lot of choices of destination when you are going on [vacation](#). The main questions are how big is your budget, what sorts of things do you and your family love doing, and are you [traveling](#) domestically or internationally.

Ask any [traveler](#) and they will have numerous suggestions, but here are top-rated places to go that should suit every taste and budget. The overseas suggestions will be worth a visit no matter what the exchange rate.

## 1. Singapore

This is a fantastic island-country and city with the best food in the world at the most affordable prices. The accommodation ranges from tourist to five star, all at affordable prices. Book online for a package deal.

There's so much to do that you won't be spending time in your room. The public transportation is superb, so you can get anywhere you need to go. Buy a [travel](#) pass when you arrive at Changi airport and head out for adventure.

The tourist buses called "ducks" will take you around every attraction in the city center, plus onto the river. Nearly everyone speaks English and the British influence is still strong. Try the chocolate buffet at the Fullerton Hotel on



Saturdays and the original Singapore sling at the world-famous Raffles bar. Even the height of luxury is affordable in this paradise.

## 2. New Zealand

If you get a good deal from Air New Zealand during the "off season", which are the spring and fall in the Northern Hemisphere, you can head down under for a song. They also offer multi-airfare passes so you can get up to six internal flights for only a bit more than the cost of the international ticket. You will usually fly into Auckland on the North Island and branch out from there.

For those who love the tropics, head north to the beautiful Bay of Islands for a beach holiday. If you want a spa holiday, head to the middle of the island, Rotorua.

Are you a fan of Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit? Head to Wellington on the North Island for tours of many of the locations used. If you love skiing, head for Queenstown on the South Island to ski the Remarkables, filmed so lovingly in the movies just mentioned.

Best of all are the backpackers hostels - you can stay in a Microtel for around 6 USD per night. The food is fantastic, as is the local wine.

## 3. Ireland

Ireland is full of fun, food and fabulous attractions. A flight to Shannon Airport is only about five hours from the east coast of the US.

Ireland is full of castles, unspoilt nature, and seafood. Public transportation is easy and cheap, everyone speaks English, and they are all very friendly to North Americans. Great bed and breakfasts abound. Expect to pay around \$13 for a meal and \$35 for accommodation each night outside Dublin.

Dublin caters to tourists, so it does not have the real Irish feel of Cork or Galway, but it does have a fantastic amount of attractions, including Trinity College and the two cathedrals. The youth hostels near Christ Church Cathedral are clean and modern. Expect to pay \$20 to \$100 per night, depending on season and number of people in the room.

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