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Travel Booking Website: [Expedia.com](https://www.expedia.com)

Task: Reserve a hotel room for 2 people in Times Square in New York City, New York for 12/31/2022 through 1/1/2023. The hotel room must be accessible and accommodate for a wheelchair.

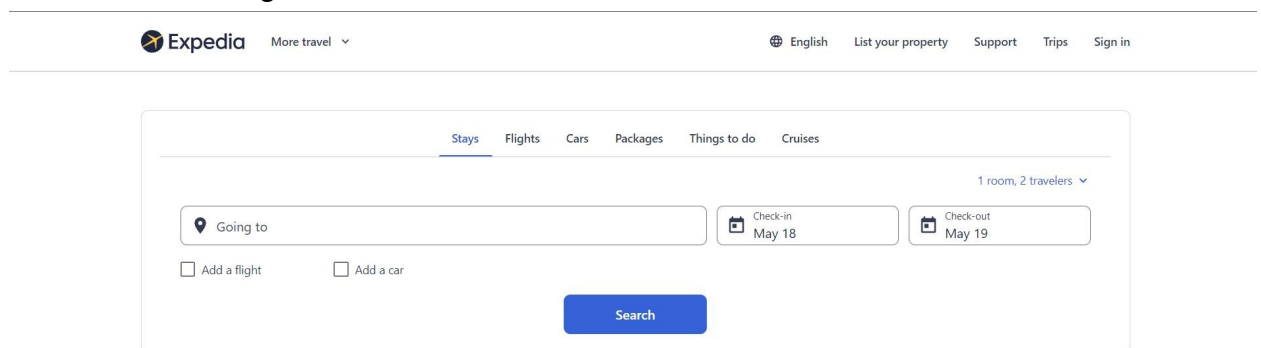
Target user: Our target users will be adults ages 18+ that have an active credit card and have access to and are comfortable navigating the internet and websites. They do not need to know how to book a hotel or have travel experience.

Assumptions:

- 1) The user is using a PC and is connected to Wifi.
- 2) The user knows how to get to Expedia.com.
- 3) The user is using Google Chrome.
- 4) The user has the webpage maximized (not fullscreen or minimized in any way), as the interface changes based on the size of the window.

Cognitive Walkthrough

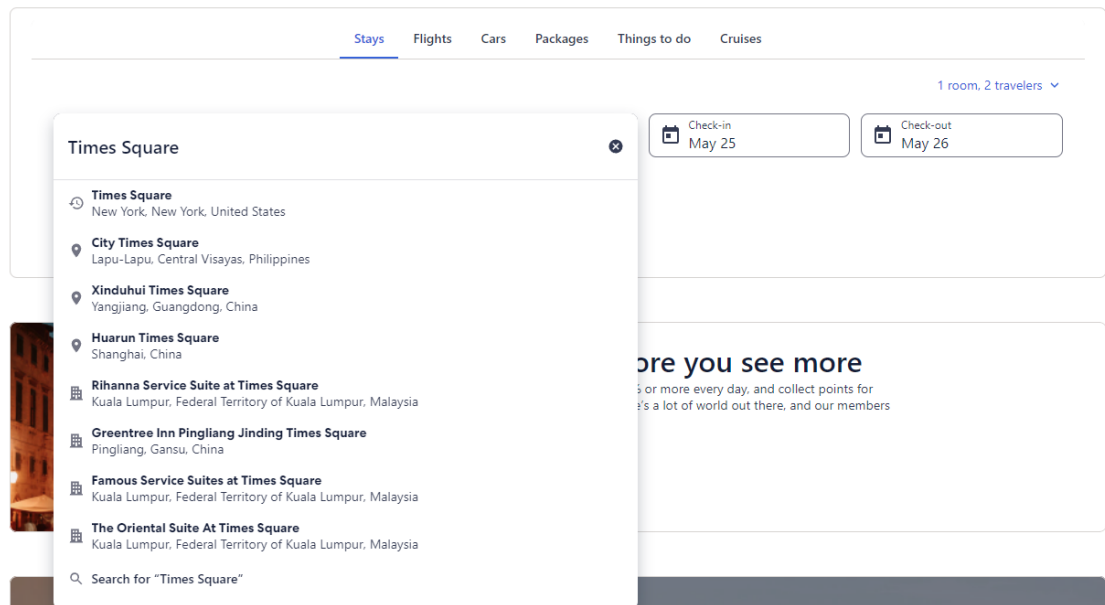
1. Click on the "Going to" button



The screenshot shows the Expedia website's search interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Expedia logo, a 'More travel' dropdown, and links for 'English', 'List your property', 'Support', 'Trips', and 'Sign in'. Below this is a search bar with tabs for 'Stays', 'Flights', 'Cars', 'Packages', 'Things to do', and 'Cruises'. The 'Stays' tab is selected. The search bar contains a 'Going to' field with a location pin icon, a 'Check-in' field with a calendar icon and the date 'May 18', and a 'Check-out' field with a calendar icon and the date 'May 19'. Below these fields are two checkboxes: 'Add a flight' and 'Add a car'. A blue 'Search' button is located at the bottom right of the search bar. The text '1 room, 2 travelers' with a dropdown arrow is visible in the top right corner of the search bar.

- a. The goal of the user is to choose the destination of their stay in order to find a hotel room near that destination.
- b. Yes, the “Going to” button on large and is in the center of the screen.
- c. Yes, the search bar has a label and a pinpoint icon to signify that the user needs to input their destination there.
- d. Yes, once the “Going to” button is clicked, a pop-up will appear with a text input that asks where the user is going, which is cognitively the next step and is good feedback for the user.

2. Type in “Times Square”



- a. The goal of the user here is to enter their desired destination in order to tell Expedia where the possible hotels should be located.
- b. The search bar is large and relatively centered. There is also a cursor indicating the user to type.
- c. Yes, the search bar is labeled with the phrase “Where do you want to go”. This could be even better labeled if it said “Type where you want to go”.
- d. If the user types in “Times Square”, the search text area will populate with relevant destinations, the user will see their destination at the top of the text area indicating that the search bar understood what their destination is.

3. Click the “Times Square” option from the list

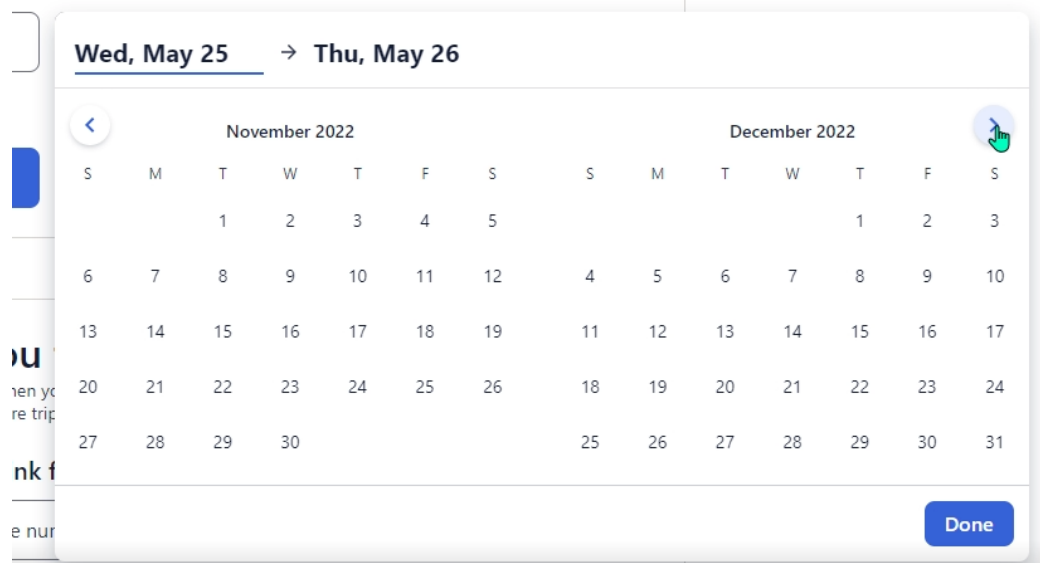
The image shows the top section of the Expedia website. At the top, there are navigation tabs: "Stays" (highlighted), "Flights", "Cars", "Packages", "Things to do", and "Cruises". Below these, on the right, is a text "1 room, 2 travelers" with a dropdown arrow. The main search area contains a large text input field with a location pin icon and the text "Going to Times Square". Below this field are two checkboxes: "Add a flight" and "Add a car". To the right of the input field are two date selection buttons: "Check-in May 25" and "Check-out May 26". At the bottom center of this section is a large blue "Search" button.

- The goal of the user here is to select their destination from the options Expedia provides.
 - "Times Square" will be at the top of the text area, the text is large, and when hovered over, the cursor will update which indicates that the user can click.
 - No, there are no labels for each selection that indicates that clicking one of them will result in this step being completed. Only, when the user hovers over one of the options will a label that says "Going to" appear.
 - The "Going To" button will update with the user's selected destination which is good feedback that they have completed this step.
4. Click on the "Check-in" or "Check-out" button

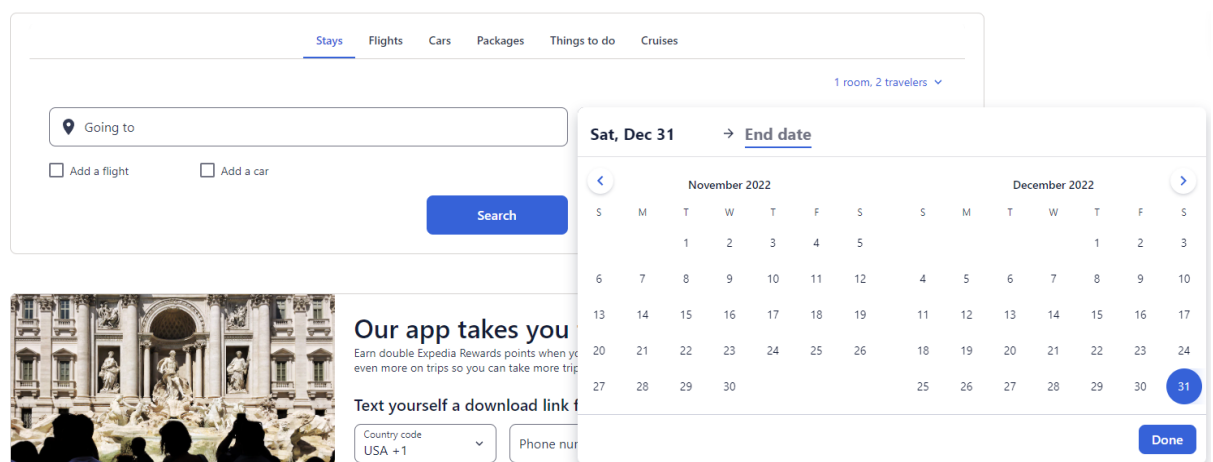
This image shows the same Expedia search interface as before, but with a calendar overlay open. The calendar is for May 2022 and June 2022. The "Check-in" date is set to "Wed, May 25" and the "Check-out" date is set to "Thu, May 26". The calendar shows days of the week (S, M, T, W, T, F, S) and dates. The dates 25 and 26 are highlighted in blue. Below the calendar, there is a promotional banner for the Expedia app with the text "Our app takes you..." and "Text yourself a download link". At the bottom of the banner, there are input fields for "Country code" (set to USA +1) and "Phone number", and a "Done" button.

- The user's goal here is to enter the dates they want to book a hotel room in order to tell Expedia how long the hotel reservation should be. The subgoal here is to enter the check-in date.
- Yes, the "Check-in" and "Check-out" button is large and is centered on the screen.
- No, the button is automatically filled in with dates, and there is no signifier that tells the user that clicking the button changes the dates.
- When the user clicks on the "Check-in" button, a calendar interface pops up indicating that the user selects their dates. This is good feedback that the user is going in the right direction.

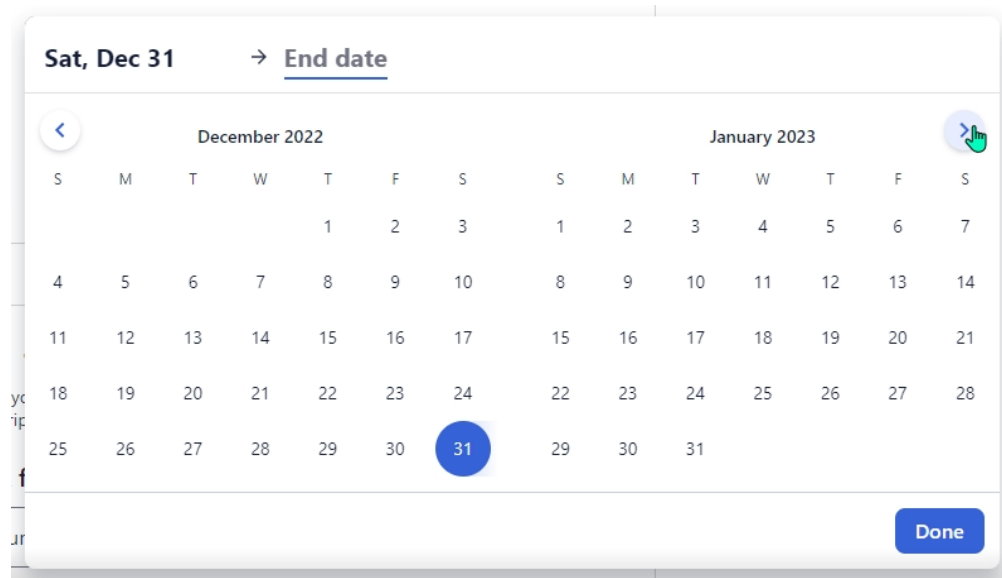
5. Click the arrow near the top-right of the calendar interface until you can see the month of December



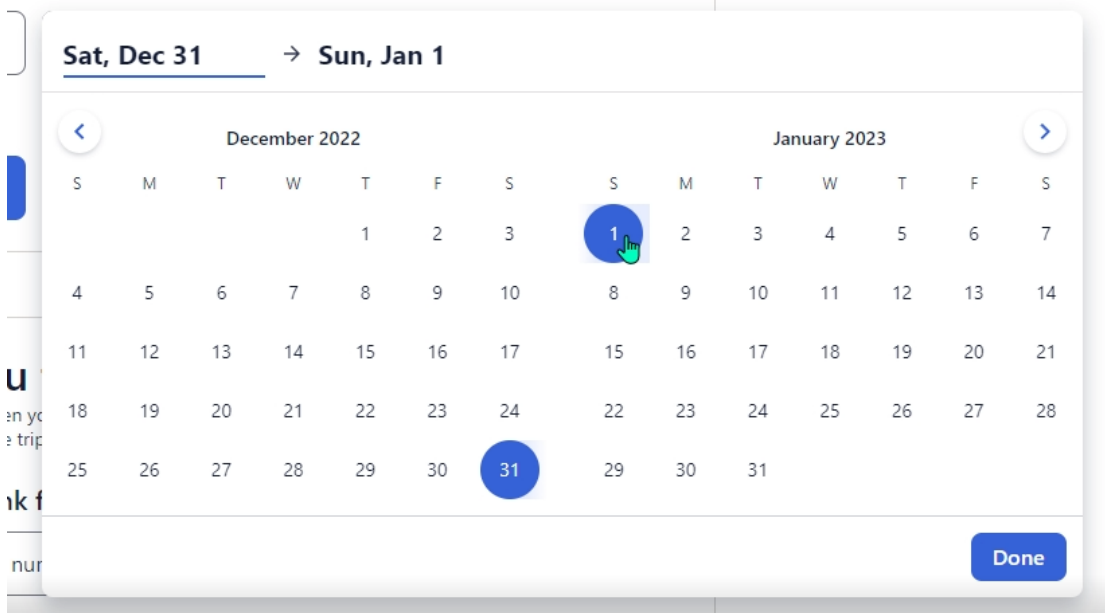
- a. The user's goal here is to change the calendar interface so that the user can select their desired check-in date to December 31st.
- b. Yes, the arrow icon is large and is located in an obvious place. However, it could be even more obvious with a label.
- c. The icon is of an arrow pointing to the right which matches the user's goal of changing the interface. However, the interface assumes the user understands that moving the calendar to the right is going forward in time.
- d. When the user clicks the arrow, the calendar interface updates by showing the next month. This is good feedback because the interface updates with each click and shows the months moving in the right direction.
6. Click on the 31st of December date for the check-in date



- a. The user's goal is to select their desired start date on the calendar interface.
 - b. No, while the interface shows the days of the month of December, it does not obviously show that the user can select any of the days.
 - c. No, once the user figures out that hovering over a day in the month is like hovering over a button (the cursor changes), there's no guarantee that the user understands clicking on a day selects it as there is no label.
 - d. Once the user clicks on a day of the month, the day is highlighted with a blue circle which is good feedback that the day is selected.
7. Click the arrow on the right of the pop-up calendar until you see the month of January



- a. The user understands that they have selected their check-in date at this point, so their current goal is to change the calendar interface so they can select their check-out date which is January 1st, 2023.
 - b. Yes, the arrow icon is large and is located in an obvious place. However, it could be even more obvious with a label.
 - c. The icon is of an arrow pointing to the right which matches the user's goal of changing the interface. However, the interface assumes the user understands that moving the calendar to the right is going forward in time.
 - d. When the user clicks the arrow, the calendar interface updates by showing the next month. This is good feedback because the interface updates with each click and shows the months moving in the right direction.
8. Click on the 1st January date for the check-out date

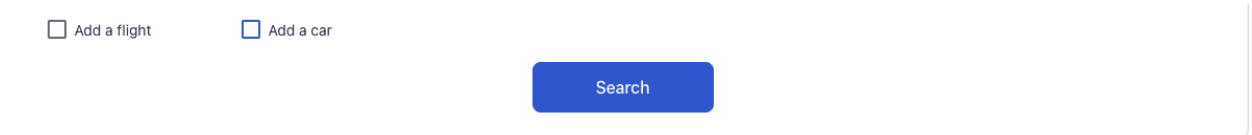


- The user's goal is to select their desired end date on the calendar interface.
 - No, while the interface shows the days of the month of December, it does not obviously show that the user can select any of the days.
 - No, once the user figures out that hovering over a day in the month is like hovering over a button (the cursor changes), there's no guarantee that the user understands clicking on a day selects it as there is no label.
 - Once the user clicks on a day of the month, the day is highlighted with a blue circle which is good feedback that the day is selected.
9. Click the blue "Done" button

- At this point, the user understands that they have entered in their desired check-in and check-out dates and they want to finalize their selection and continue with the search.
- Yes, the done button is large and has high contrast colors.
- Yes, the label fits the user's desired actions perfectly as the user wants to be "done" with the date selection and move on to the next step.

- d. When the user clicks the done button, the calendar interface disappears and the check-in and check-out buttons are updated to show the dates the user selected which is good feedback that they are done with that goal.

10. Click the blue “Search” button



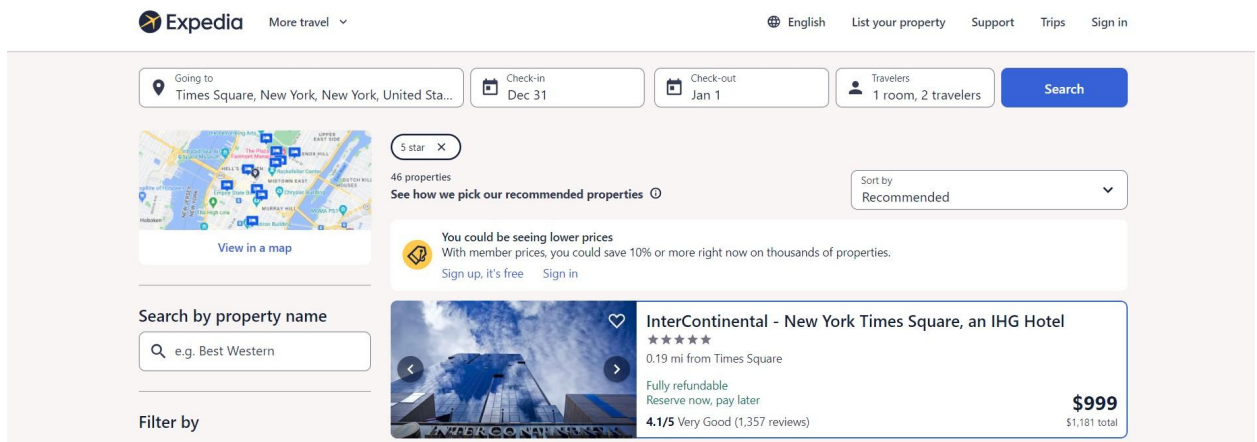
- a. The user is trying to submit the information to get the results expected by the travel details.
- b. Yes, the necessary actions in the interface show that the search button is clear and separated from the rest of the UI components in bold blue.
- c. The button is recognizable with the words “Search” for the users.
- d. The feedback is good because the web page refreshes to show the results expected for the information.

11. Scroll down until you see the “Sort and Filter” section of the page and click “WheelChair-Accessible parking, Accessible bathroom, Roll-in Shower, In-room accessibility, and stair-free path to entrance”

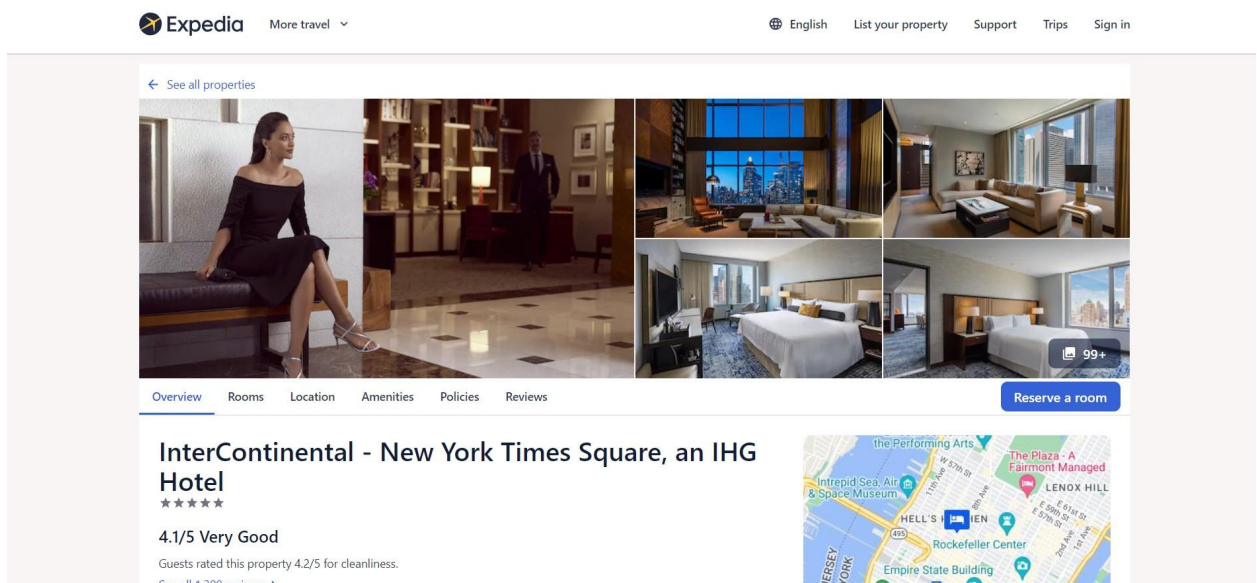


- a. The user is trying to filter the results for the Wheelchair accessible rooms.
- b. In the maximized window, the options are shown on the side, but minimized is hidden in a button.
- c. Yes, the users are able to recognize the button that says “Sort and Filter”.
- d. The buttons/options that are selected are highlighted to indicate that they have been chosen.

12. Click on “Intercontinental-New York Times Square”




- The user is trying to select a room that matches their description.
 - Yes, the results are shown with hotels that are clickable to see more information.
 - No, the boxes are clickable, but there is no information on how the listings are supposed to be interacted with.
 - Yes, the full information and possibility of the booking will be displayed.
13. Click on the blue “Reserve a room” button




- The user is attempting to make a reservation for the room.
- There is a bright blue button near the top of the page, as well with all of the options.
- The label is “Reserve a Room” which is clear.
- The feedback is that the user gets to see all the listed types of rooms available from the hotel.


14. Scroll down until you see the “Deluxe Studio, 1 King Bed” and click the blue Reserve button.


Overview Rooms Location Amenities Policies




Deluxe Studio, 1 King Bed (Deluxe)

 550 sq ft

 Sleeps 2

 1 King Bed

 Free WiFi

[More details >](#)

Cancellation and payment

[More details on all options ⓘ](#)

☒ Fully refundable before Dec 29 + \$0
Pay now to use coupons and points

☐ Fully refundable before Dec 29 + \$0
Reserve now, pay at property (in local currency)

Extras

☒ No extras + \$0

☐ Breakfast for 2 + \$20

\$1,119
\$1,319 total

[Price details >](#)


We have 3 left

[Reserve](#)

- The user is trying to book a deluxe studio from the hotel that they have chosen.
- There is a bright blue button to indicate that this will reserve a room
- The button is labeled “Reserve”, so it would match the user’s goal.
- There is good feedback because it would take them to the next screen of paying.

15. Click on the blue “Pay now” button

✕ Your payment options

 **Fully refundable before Thu, Dec 29**
You can change or cancel this stay if plans change. Because flexibility matters.

Pay now

- More ways to pay: use Debit/Credit card or PayPal
- You can use a valid Expedia coupon

\$1,119
\$1,319 total

[Pay now](#)

Pay when you stay

- You will not be charged until your stay
- Pay the property directly in their local currency

\$1,119
\$1,319 total

[Pay at property](#)

- a. The user is attempting to choose the option for when the payment would be submitted.
 - b. Yes, the actions are available.
 - c. The labels say “Pay now” and “Pay at property” to match the corresponding actions.
 - d. No, there is no clear feedback on which option was chosen.
16. Click in the text box underneath “first name” and type in your first name (do this for “last name” too) and mobile phone number.

Room 1: 2 Adults, 1 King Bed

✓ Free WiFi

First name * **Last name ***

(e.g. John) (e.g. Smith)

Mobile phone number *

USA +1 ▼ So the property can reach you


☒ Receive text alerts about this trip. Message and data rates may apply.

Smoking requests (optional) ▼

Special/Accessibility requests (optional) ♿ ▼

- a. Enter their personal information to have the booking under their name.
- b. Yes, the user can enter all of the information needed for the first and last name.
- c. Yes, the fields are labeled “First Name, Last Name, and mobile phone number”.
- d. Yes, their information is shown as the user is typing the information.

17. Scroll down and click on the circle next to the option: “Yes, I want Hotel Booking Protection for my trip”

 **Protect your hotel** Recommended

Important: Trip cancellation due to government travel advisories, fear of travel, or change of mind is not covered. Travel insurance may provide coverage for COVID-19 diagnosed illness. COVID-19 is a foreseen event and certain other coverages will not apply. [Learn more](#)

Note: If you are a resident of WASHINGTON state, please [click here](#) to view products that you are eligible to purchase.

Cover your stay against the unexpected:

1. Up to 100% hotel reimbursement if you're sick and have a [late cancellation](#)
2. Up to 100% reimbursement on unused hotel nights if you're sick and need to come home early
3. Up to \$150 for a hotel or meals if your trip is delayed for covered reasons
4. Up to \$500 for covered essentials if your bag is delayed

[View insurance details and disclosures](#)

Select Yes or No to continue booking *

☒ Yes, I want Hotel Booking Protection for my trip. **\$29.02**
per person

☐ No, I'm willing to risk my \$1289.55 trip.

* Things happened outside of my control which caused the trip to be canceled. The Travel Protection was valuable in reducing the losses to me when we had to cancel the trip. " - Mr. Rodman

- a. The user is trying to get booking protection for the hotel room reservation.
- b. Yes, the actions are obvious in each option.
- c. Yes, the buttons are clear to select the option of if the protection is added to the bill.
- d. No, because there is no information returned until the end, to see which option was selected.

18. Scroll down and click on the text box under “Name on card” and type in the name on your card



Name on Card *

- a. The user is entering the name that is under the payment information
- b. Yes, the interface is clear for the fields for First and Last name.
- c. Yes, the first and last name fields are labeled above the fields as Name on Card.
- d. The user will see the information as the user is typing.

19. Click on the text box under “Card number” and type in your card number

Debit/Credit card number *

- a. The user is entering the card number that is for the payment information
 - b. Yes, the interface is clear for the fields for the number.
 - c. Yes, the “credit card” fields are labeled above the fields.
 - d. The user will see the information as the user is typing the credit card number.
20. Click on the drop-down menu labeled “month” and click on your card’s expiry month (do this with the year too)

Expiration date *

Please choose a valid month and year.

Month ▼

Year ▼

- a. The user is entering the card expiration date that contains the month and the year when the card is available.
 - b. Yes, the interface is clear for the drop-down menu for month and date.
 - c. Yes, the “Expiration Date” is labeled above the dropdowns that are titled “Month” and “Year”
 - d. The user will see the option they have chosen returned to them where the month and year used to be.
21. Click on the text box under “Security code” and type in your card’s security code

Security code *

Please fill out this field.

1234 123

3 digit security code

Billing ZIP code *

- a. The goal of the user here to type their card’s security code and continue to enter in their credit card information to successfully reserve the hotel room.
- b. Yes, the security code entry element is legible, and when the user selects the entry box, a small graphic of a credit card is displayed showing where to find the card’s security code.

- c. Yes, the entry box element is labeled correctly. When the user hovers over the entry box element another label is displayed that tells the user what to do, which exactly matches their goal here.
- d. When the user enters in a valid security code, the graphic of the credit card disappears indicating that they are not on that step anymore. This is not the greatest feedback, but due to this page being a form that needs to be fully filled out before a button can be clicked, it's good enough feedback.

22. Click on the text box under “Billing ZIP code” and type in your zip code

The screenshot shows a portion of a credit card form. At the top, there is an empty text box. Below it, the label "Expiration date *" is followed by two dropdown menus for "Month" and "Year". Further down, the "Security code *" field contains the number "234". To the right of this is the "Billing ZIP code *" field, which is currently empty. A red error message "Please enter a ZIP code" is visible below the ZIP code field. A tooltip with the text "Please fill out this field." is displayed over the ZIP code field.

- a. The goal of the user here is to type their card's billing zip code and finish entering their credit card information to successfully reserve the hotel room.
- b. Yes, the Billing ZIP code entry element is legible and it is apparent that the user has to enter information there.
- c. Yes, the entry box element is labeled correctly. When the user hovers over the entry box element another label is displayed that tells the user what to do, which exactly matches their goal here.
- d. There isn't good feedback that the user has completed this step because nothing changes on the screen when the user enters a valid zip code.

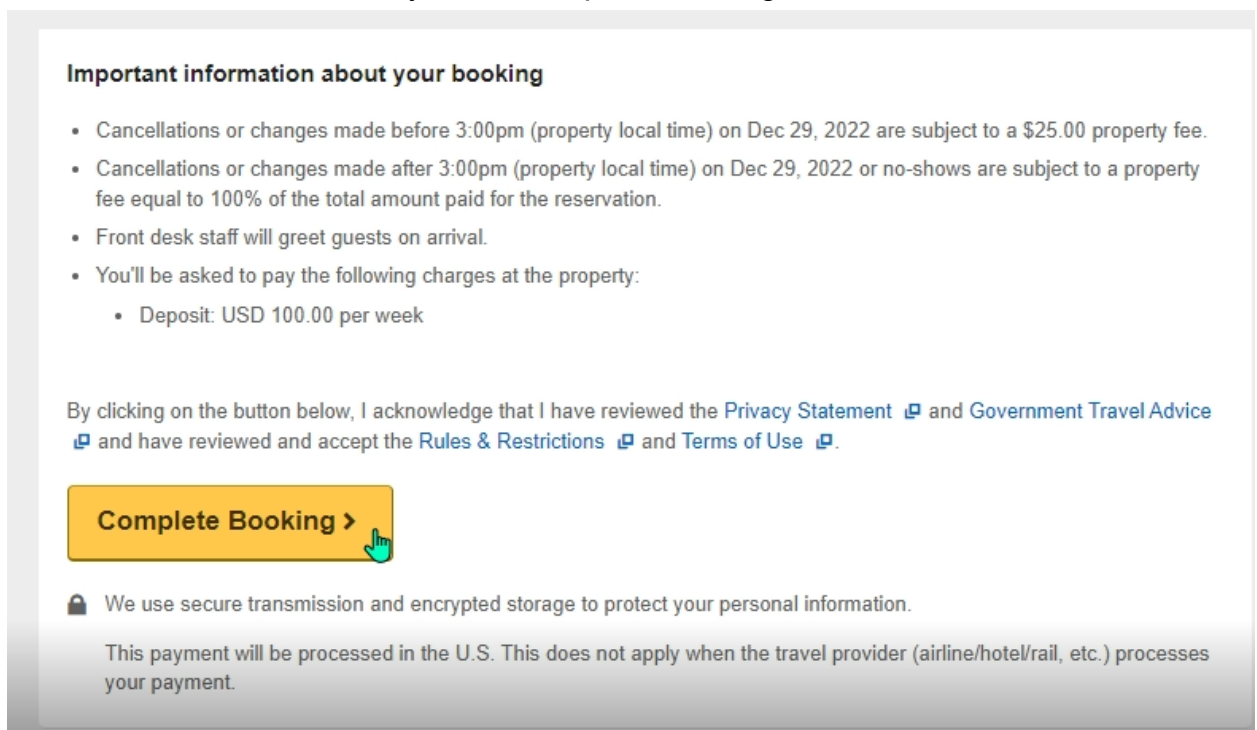
23. Scroll down and click on the text box under “Email address” and type in your email address

The screenshot shows a form titled "Manage your booking". Under the heading "Confirmation email", there is a sub-label "Email address *" and a hint text "Please enter the email address where you would like to receive your confirmation." Below this is a large, empty text input field. A red error message "Please enter a valid email address." is visible below the input field. A tooltip with the text "Please fill out this field." is displayed over the input field.

- a. The goal of the user here is to enter in their email address to complete the reservation process. This action has the benefit of giving the user a confirmation email of the reservation, but that is not a direct goal here.

- b. Yes, Email address entry element is legible and it is apparent that the user has to enter information there.
- c. Yes, the entry box element is labeled correctly. When the user hovers over the entry box element another label is displayed that tells the user what to do, which exactly matches their goal here.
- d. There isn't good feedback that the user has completed this step because nothing changes on the screen when the user enters a valid email address.

24. Scroll down and click on the yellow "Complete Booking" button



- a. The goal of the user is to finish the reservation process and complete the booking for the hotel room.
- b. Yes, it is apparent that the element is a button. The button is large and uses contrasting colors.
- c. Yes, Complete Booking button is labeled correctly. The button uses an arrow as a signifier that the user is finishing this step and moving to the next one (which in this case is the final step).
- d. When the user clicks the button, the page refreshes and shows a confirmation screen. The user also gets sent a confirmation email to the address they previously entered. Both of these are good forms of feedback that the user has completed their end goal.

Summary

Expedia.com advertises its website to users who are interested in a quick and easy hotel booking and reservation process. Their website is styled neatly and interface elements are mostly large and centered. This leaves the question: can a user with little to no experience in vacation planning, reserve a hotel room in their desired locations and with their desired specifications, in a quick and timely manner?

Our findings suggest that Expedia.com does a great job of allowing a user to accomplish this goal. Expedia streamlines the process of reserving into the following steps:

1. Enter your destination location and check-in/check-out time.
2. Find the hotel with the user's desired specifications.
3. Enter in credit card and personal information.

and by assuring that each of these steps are largely different from each other, with different interfaces, new webpages after the completion of each of the steps above, and methodical labels that fit the user's mental model, Expedia.com provides strong feedback to its user that they are heading towards their goal. However, where Expedia.com leaps over the gulf of evaluation, it sinks into the gulf of execution. In most of the steps in the process, Expedia.com puts a lot of trust in the user that they'll be able to perceive and interpret the various interfaces to find their desired actions. For example, when the user is entering their check-in/check-out dates, the user needs to interact with the calendar interface. While the interface uses a very familiar formatting, Expedia.com assumes that the user has used a similar interface and thus the calendar element does not have any labels indicating what the user should be doing. In particular, there are no directions or labels stating that clicking a day in the calendar interface is the only way to select the date. On top of this, Expedia.com doesn't allow manual text input of the user's desired check-in/check-out dates and forces the user to interact with an interface that could be unfamiliar to the user. One way to remedy this glaring issue is to fill the whitespace around and within the calendar element with text labels or a short list of directions stating exactly how to use the interface. More simply, Expedia.com could just allow for manual entry of the user's desired dates.

Another example of Expedia.com failing to provide an obvious display of available actions that relates specifically to the target user of this walkthrough, is when the user wants to input their desired specifications in order to accommodate for their disabilities. When Expedia.com brings users to the page listing the possible hotels, there is no obvious element that allows the user to filter the available hotels according to their specifications. In fact, the user has to scroll down a significant amount in order to find

the small element with accommodations checkboxes. Of course, if the user doesn't understand that scrolling down will reveal more of the page, the user will be stuck on this step and perhaps never proceed. One interesting thing to note is that this issue is only apparent when the user is in full-screen mode; when the webpage is minimized, there is a large "Sort and Filter" button that is at the top of the page. We suggest that having this button at the top of the page regardless of the size of the page would improve the user's experience for the step in the process.

Despite this issue, Expedia.com manages to provide a quality and streamlined user experience through the use of clean interfaces, large and centered elements, and strong feedback. However, accommodating the more specific use cases of the website, such as booking a hotel room with specific disability accommodations, by increasing the use of text labels and the visibility of more niche elements of the page, would drastically improve the usability of the website.