

20 TRAVEL HACKING STRATEGIES



EXTRA PEANUTS
PACK OF

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SAVE MONEY WHEN TRAVELING

“I’d love to travel, but it’s too expensive.”

This is the refrain I hear from almost everyone I know who wonders how I travel so much.

But the simple truth is: I spend less money traveling than most people spend staying at home!

Whether you’re traveling to Bangkok or Boston, these 20 tips will show you how you can travel more and spend less.



AIRFARE



1. EARN AND USE FREQUENT FLYER MILES TO FLY FOR (ALMOST) FREE

Flights are almost always the costliest part of traveling, and using frequent flyer miles is the best way to cut the expense.

You can earn miles in tons of different ways that don't include flying, and those miles can score you awesome tickets, like [\\$5 flights to Rio for the World Cup!](#)

I could write a book about this ([oh wait, I have!](#))

2. BOOK FLIGHTS 330 DAYS BEFORE TRAVELING

Airline tickets will open up 330 days before your travel date.

If you get in right away, you could snag some of the first tickets, which will be cheaper than tickets down the road.

This is especially true if you're traveling to a large world event, like the Olympics or World Cup.

Not only will prices be sky high for these tickets if you wait, but they might not be available at all.

3. IF YOU CAN'T DO THAT, BOOK FLIGHTS 6 WEEKS BEFORE TRAVELING

If you don't get in super early, the best thing to do is wait.

Ticket prices will begin to drop about 6 weeks prior to the departure date, when airlines are looking to fill empty seats.

4. FLY ON TUESDAY OR WEDNESDAY

If you have flexibility in your trip, try to fly out and back on Tuesdays, when the ticket prices are lowest due to lack of business travelers.

The second best day to fly out: Wednesday.

5. ALWAYS CHECK FOR BUDGET AIRLINES: AIR ASIA, TIGER AIRWAYS, JETSTAR, JET BLUE, FRONTIER, RYANAIR, EASYJET

While America attempts to catch up in the budget airline boom with JetBlue and Frontier, the rest of the world has the budget airline thing down pat.

If you're in Asia, get tickets on Air Asia and jump around Southeast Asia for well under \$100 a ticket.

I even flew from Japan to Malaysia once, an 8 hour international flight, for under \$100 ROUNDTrip.

If you can't find what you want on Air Asia (which would be surprising), check out Tiger Airways.

And for travel to or around Australia, look at JetStar. In Europe, RyanAir and Easy Jet have flights all over the continent, oftentimes for unfathomably low prices.

Expert tip: You'll pay for the extra amenities, so if possible, travel without a checked bag, bring your own food on the plane, and load up that iPad with movies or be prepared to pay for those luxuries.

ACCOMMODATIONS



6. RENT AN APARTMENT

If you're staying in an area for over 2 days, renting an apartment can not only save money but also give you a more authentic experience.

On top of that, you'll likely have amenities that you wouldn't find in a hotel, like a kitchen and washing machine.

An apartment can be especially cost effective for bigger groups who would normally need two or more hotel rooms, like families or several sets of couples.

The best sites for apartment rentals are [AirBnB](#), [VRBO](#), [Homeaway](#), and [GoWithOh](#).

7. HOSTELS AND LOCAL GUESTHOUSES

Staying at locally owned hostels and guesthouses is an awesome alternative to hotels.

Solo travelers almost always pay substantially less since rates are usually per person.

And not only will you pay much, much less, but you'll likely have a much easier time connecting with other travelers.

To top it off, your money supports locals instead of major corporations like Hilton, Hyatt, etc.

The best ways to find hostels and guesthouses is on [Hostelbookers](#) or [HI Hostels](#).

Both of these sites have reviews from people who have actually stayed there, so you can check out what you're getting beforehand.

8. HOUSESITTING

Want all the comforts of home when you're on the road, for free?

Enter housesitting.

Many people around the world need their homes and possibly pets looked after while they are away, and they're willing to let you stay and use their place for this privilege.

And sometimes, these houses can be AMAZING!

By far the best place to look for a housesit is [TrustedHousesitters](#), which has available housesits all over the world.

For more information on housesitting, like how to make a profile that'll help you score the housesits you want, [check out this interview with the founder of Trusted Housesitters, Andy Peck](#).

9. COUCHSURFING

Based on the idea of people opening their homes and couches to travelers for free, [Couchsurfing](#) allows you to connect with locals and local culture in a way that staying in hotels does not.

With over 6.5 million members worldwide, you'll almost always be able to find somewhere to stay, or at least a local to grab a cup of coffee with.

10. IF YOU ARE GOING TO STAY AT A HOTEL, MAKE SURE TO CHECK PRICELINE

You should never, ever, ever pay full price for a hotel room.

Learn a few [Priceline or Hotwire tricks](#), and then put them to use and easily save over 50% off the published rate (who pays that anyway?).

EATING



11. EAT YOUR BIG MEAL AT LUNCH, WHEN THERE ARE MORE SPECIALS

Dinner will always be more expensive than lunch, so pack it during lunch, when sit down places have prices that are much cheaper, then grab something small for dinner.

12. EAT AT LOCAL PLACES INSTEAD OF WESTERN FOOD PLACES IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

Not only will the food taste better by eating at local places (trust me, burritos in Chiang Mai just don't cut it), but it will be sooooo much cheaper.

13. MAKE HAPPY HOUR YOUR BEST FRIEND

Want to have a night on the town but on a budget?

Grab most of your drinks at happy hour, where prices can be as low as 1/2 off.

Happy hour is not just an American thing either; I've frequented happy hours in many different countries.

One notable difference: In many countries, happy hour actually starts later, which is nice if you want to make it a whole night out ([like aperitivo in Italy](#)).

TRANSPORTATION



14. IF YOU'RE WITH A GROUP OF FRIENDS, CONSIDER RENTING A CAR

In countries where train tickets can be expensive (I'm looking at you, Switzerland), renting a car might be more economical.

Plus, renting a car also means you have the freedom to stop where you want, when you want and you'll create more spontaneous memories.

Check out this [step by step guide to make sure you're always paying the lowest price for rental cars](#).

15. IF YOU DO RENT A CAR, SEE IF YOU CAN DENY THE INSURANCE

Many credit cards offer collision insurance if you rent your car with them.

Turning down the Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) could save you up to 50% off the rental.

To find out [which cards offer CDW insurance, plus 9 other tips for renting cars, click here](#).

16. CHECK TO SEE IF A COUNTRY OR AREA HAS A WEEKLY OR MONTHLY RAIL PASS FOR TOURIST

Many countries or regions will offer rail passes that will give you substantial discounts if you are traveling a lot during that time.

The [Eurail pass](#) is the one most people are familiar with, but Japan also has a very similar [Japan Rail Pass](#), which allows you unlimited rides on the bullet train for 7, 14, or 21 days.

17. USE CARSHARING

It's like hitchhiking, but much safer and bookable in advance!

Sites like [BlaBlaCar](#) and [Carpooling](#) allow travelers to post where they need a ride to or check where others are going.

You'll pay a set price to ride along (with limits imposed by the websites to keep the cost down) and you'll even be able to see what type of car you'll be riding in, the exact route being driven, and the timetable of the trip.

Both sites have built in features like reviews from other riders, profiles, and ways to communicate with the driver beforehand so you can vet each option before choosing to accept a ride.

18. LET ROME2RIO SHOW YOU THE CHEAPEST OPTIONS

Not sure of the cheapest way to get between two places?

Let [Rome2Rio](#) do the work for you!

Simply put in the two cities you want to travel between and Rome2Rio will return all transportation options.

Buses, trains, planes, carshares, and even the estimated cost in gas and tolls if you were to drive yourself.

A lot of times, the cheapest option may surprise you!

MISCELLANEOUS



19. ASK FOR STUDENT DISCOUNTS

Being a student and showing ID can get you cheaper rates on many things, from train tickets to hotel stays to museum passes.

Make sure to ask in any situation.

20. GO TO MONUMENTS AND MUSEUMS ON “FREE” OR “DISCOUNTED” DAYS

Some of the world's most impressive tourist sites have certain times when they are discounted or even free.

For example, The Prado in Madrid normally costs 14 euros, [but is free from 6pm-8pm Monday-Saturday and from 5pm-7pm on Sundays and holidays.](#)

And the Philadelphia Art Museum (home of the Rocky steps!) normally runs \$20 but is [“pay what you wish” the first Sunday of each month and every Wednesday after 5 pm.](#)

The best way to find out about these discounts is to ask at the reception desk of the place you're staying or to pick up a free event guide that most cities publish and print (like TimeOut London).

FINAL WORDS

Next time you think traveling is too expensive, catch yourself and think about implementing one, or all twenty, of these tips.

In no time, you'll be traveling more and spending less!

What's your favorite way for saving money when traveling?