

Title:

Making Hotel Reservations Online

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603

Summary:

When you begin planning a vacation, one of the most important steps is to book a hotel room for your stay. After you have made your arrangements to take off work and get to your destination, you will have to figure out an affordable place to stay. There are many ways to approach hotel booking, the most tried and true being purchasing a vacation package through a travel agent. However, travel agents are becoming more expensive and less practical as Internet travel booking beco...

Keywords:

hotel

Article Body:

When you begin planning a vacation, one of the most important steps is to book a hotel room for your stay. After you have made your arrangements to take off work and get to your destination, you will have to figure out an affordable place to stay. There are many ways to approach hotel booking, the most tried and true being purchasing a vacation package through a travel agent. However, travel agents are becoming more expensive and less practical as Internet travel booking becomes the norm.

Rather than paying a middleman to book your flights and hotels, online travel websites make it easy to compare rates, research locations and check on availability. Most hotels have their own websites where you can enter your needed dates and get a quote for your stay. You do not have to enter credit card information to research rates at most hotels, so it makes do-it-yourself comparison shopping convenient for anyone with an internet connection. Some hotels even post layouts of their buildings, so you can choose exactly which room you want, rather than taking a chance on being right next to a pool full of screaming children when you are trying to get some much-needed rest and relaxation.

There are also some websites that will do your comparison-shopping for you. Sites like Hotwire and Expedia search their databases for hotels available on your needed dates, and they list the best deals for you. You can choose to

search according to location, rate range, hotel chain or room size. When using sites like Hotwire, the more flexible your dates are, the greater your chances are of getting an inexpensive rate. However, even if your dates are set in stone, you may still be able to find a cheaper hotel rate using these sites than you would on your own.

One way to use the Internet to find low hotel prices is to join a travel club. Many airlines and car rental companies offer deals for repeat customers. Through these programs, frequent travelers can arrange car rentals and flights at discount prices, and they often throw in hotel stays for a minimal charge. Some car rental companies have partnerships with particular hotel chains, giving discounts to customers who use both companies on their trips. You can sometimes use your airline frequent flier miles to pay for hotel stays, as well. Be sure to check with your airline of choice to see if they offer special hotel rates with their frequent flier programs.

Because making reservations online is a do-it-yourself endeavor, hotels save money on staffing. This allows them to offer special online rates for those who book their stays via the Internet. Most hotel chain websites have links to special Internet deals that can save you a lot of money on your vacation lodging. If you are Internet savvy, you can sometimes even qualify for free nights when you book a week at the same hotel.

When you are ready to make your online hotel reservation, be sure to have your credit card handy. Because of high security practices, you often have to enter the three-digit code on the back of your credit card to confirm your reservation. Though some people are wary of entering credit card numbers over the Internet, most sites take great care in securing and encoding the information, making identity theft virtually impossible. However, if you are not comfortable completing your transaction online, many hotels allow you to reserve the nights and to call and complete the booking over the phone. Unfortunately, sometimes completing a transaction this way disqualifies you from receiving special Internet rates.