

Title:

How To Save Time & Money On Car Rental

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Summary:

Lowest Rates Vs. A Good Bargain

Many people approach Car Rental as a lowest-price-possible contest rather than to concentrate on the value of the deal they eventually would get, in terms of what type of car, what's included (air conditioning, automatic gear shift etc') as well as what type of service they are buying.

The thing is, Car Rental market is very competitive one and rates differences for comparable quality and service are relatively small, sometimes as small as...

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Article Body:

Lowest Rates Vs. A Good Bargain

Many people approach Car Rental as a lowest-price-possible contest rather than to concentrate on the value of the deal they eventually would get, in terms of what type of car, what's included (air conditioning, automatic gear shift etc') as well as what type of service they are buying.

The thing is, Car Rental market is very competitive one and rates differences for comparable quality and service are relatively small, sometimes as small as \$10 to \$20. These minute price differences are going to vanish in the wind when you consider the long lines and lost time at the cheapest renter counter, drop charges for remote destinations, late return fines, and gasoline inflated rates as well as other service charges you didn't think about when you shopped for the "best deal".

Don't get us wrong, we don't like to pay higher prices more than you do. We do recommend to shop around and check the various rates available, especially when it's so easy to do it via the Internet at comparison sites.

All we say here you need to consider other things beside the price and when you compare please make sure you compare apples to apples and not apples to pears.

Things to consider when ordering a rented a car

Who is using the car, are you by yourself on a business trip or you are traveling with the whole family? How much luggage are you going to have, does the car you are thinking about is big enough to have you all plus all your hand luggage and big suitcases? If not, consider to change to a mini van or a car with extra large trunk.

Do you need an Infant seat or a child booster? make sure it is mentioned clearly with your order, usually there is a shortage of these seats and they are provided for extra charge. Check the state laws for where you are traveling. A new law in Denver for instance, requires Booster Seats for all 4 and 5 year olds who are not 55 inches tall.

Do you actually need the car in the town or city at the first few days? If not, consider to take a taxi, a bus, a train or the hotel shuttle into the city and when it's time for you to go out of town and travel around, then, rent the car from the city location and by that save up to 15% on Air-Port charges as well as on city parking fees.

Are you going to a very warm and humid destination? If yes, it's recommended to order a car with air conditioning, usually the price difference is negligible, the problem is that it's not available in all destinations like in some European countries.

Most major rental car companies allow for unlimited mileage in the same state, but it's a good idea to check their policy before confirming. Many smaller local independent companies charge mileage after 100-200 free miles per day.

As mentioned before price is not the only factor to consider when choosing a car rental company. If you choose a very small, no-name company, don't expect them to provide you with service across all nation or continent, what would you do if the car is needed to be replaced or serviced for some reason?

Frequent or Preferred Renter Programs and affiliations

Frequent renter programs, Like airlines and hotels, major car rental companies track their customers' rental histories and offer preferential service to loyal customers. Most of the major companies offer frequent renter programs that are

similar to airline frequent-flyer programs and hotel frequent-guest programs.

Preferred renter clubs, Most major car rental companies also offer preferred renter programs or clubs (one example is the Hertz #1 Club). When you belong to one of these clubs, you get preferential treatment, including automatic upgrades when those cars are available. You can join these programs at any time, even if you are a first-time renter with that company.

While basic-level club memberships are often free, higher-level memberships (as in the Hertz #1 Gold Club, which allows you to bypass the rental counter) generally come with a price tag. What most people don't realize is that it's often possible to avoid the membership fee by simply writing or calling your car rental company and asking them to waive it. They will do it because the car rental industry is very competitive, and they want your business

If you're still faced with a steep rate, try getting discounts based on your affiliations with organizations like AARP, AAA or others. These discounts are usually not great, but they are better than nothing.

In addition, always check for corporate rates if applicable to your situation.

Car Rental Insurance

Some of the Insurance terms seem to be confusing, let's try to clear them out first.

CDW - Collision Damage Waiver.

LDW - Loss Damage Waiver.

PDW - Physical Damage Waiver.

PAI - Personal Accident Insurance.

PEC - Personal Effects Coverage.

ALI - Additional Liability Insurance.

Many of the Credit Cards have most of these coverage, therefore it's not mandatory to purchase excessive coverage. It's better to check this issue with your travel agent, insurance agent and your credit card company a head of time. Some Car rental companies require that you show proof of insurance.

Also be aware that your personal insurance probably doesn't apply to your rental

car when traveling overseas. All this is somewhat complicated and at times confusing because there are no industry standards for terminology and policies vary by locations.

Important things to check and do before leaving the Air-Port

After a long flight and the waiting in lines for your luggage and afterwards for your keys at the car rental counter, it is understandable you just want to take the rented car and drive away to your hotel, but wait! Here is a list of things you must check first.

Start by making a careful check around the car, look for any small dents or scratches, in case you find some, don't be lazy, go back to the office and ask a representative of the rental company to write down all of these dents, ask for a copy of that report. Other wise you might be responsible for damages you didn't perform.

Open the trunk, make sure you have a spare tire, a jack and set of tools, there is noting more irritating than to find out in the middle of nowhere that you don't have a jack when you need to replace a flat tire.

Many car companies will provide you with an extra key if you ask for one. This can come in handy for some of us who are absent minded.

It is recommended to spend some time to get acquainted with the cars' features and switches, make sure you know where the lights switches are, how to operate the windshield wipers, the air conditioner and even set your favorite radio stations as well as set your side mirrors. It might be quiet frustrating to fight with the new switches while driving, when all of a sudden it starts raining.

Make sure you have a map and it's better to spend few more minutes and plan your driving route.

Last but certainly not least, If you have a lot of luggage, don't park the car in the parking lot and go for lunch, in many countries, this is an easy target for the thieves, It's better to buy some sandwiches and beverages in the air-port, or stop somewhere along the way for refreshing but never leave the car unattended.

In case you are involved in a Car Accident

These are the most important pieces of information to collect from the involved

parties: full name, mailing address, telephone number, insurance details, and drivers' license number.

Also try to get the names and contact information of anyone who witnessed the accident. Make a note of the vehicle's make, color, brand and license plate number.

Try to pinpoint the exact time and location of the accident. If the police get involved, ensure that you receive a copy of their report. Don't forget to inform your insurance agent immediately and notify the car rental company. They will let you know about their accident procedure.

If you purchased insurance through the car rental company, they will have to make the claim. If there is damage to the rental car, there will be much paper work to complete

Make sure any involved parties are ok. Any injuries should be taken care of ASAP.

Call the police and/or ambulance (if necessary), and then call the car rental agency. Be as cooperative as possible. The car rental agency will have its own policies regarding accidents.

Exchange information with the affected parties. Try to record everything on the scene. Your notes should include details of the accident, identification of the autos and people involved, and the names and badge numbers of all emergency personnel.

Take pictures if possible. If you are on vacation, you will probably have a camera handy already.

File an accident report with the police, and report the claim to your own credit card company or insurance company.

When returning the Car

Make all necessary arrangements to return the car on time, that includes looking the location in the map especially if you return the car in a foreign city.

Late return charges are high and arbitrary, secondly, if you are late, you probably won't have the time to fill the car with gasoline yourself and the rental company will charge you exorbitant inflated gasoline rates.

In case you return the car in a city location on Sunday, it might be that the

station will be deserted, it will let you in via automated gate, make sure to take the card and leave it over the dashboard, this is your recorded time of arrival.

In addition, lock the car, take the keys plus your rental contract and insert them into the designated box.