



Get organized and save money: Part 3 - Travel

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When it's time to get away, a little planning can save you lots of cash.
your-cheap-travel-guide photo

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Is it time for a vacation? By taking an hour or two to organize your plans, you can minimize your spending and maximize your fun. Try these tips and links:

- **Qualify for group airfare.** If you have a large family, or if you like to travel with friends, a church group, or other group that totals 10 or more, you can qualify for group airfares on a variety of airlines including [American](#), [Southwest](#), and [United](#). Many tour operators, cruise lines, and train operators also offer group discounts.
- **Avoid airline booking fees.** Use the airline's online site to book and pay for fares. Otherwise, you risk an add-on fee for dealing with a customer service agent. Exception: if your travel is complex (for example, multiple stops with special arrangements), it may be worth the fee to have an agent do the booking for you.
- **Minimize air travel luggage fees.** If you can avoid paying luggage check-in fees, you can save \$15 or more per bag. Members of some airline loyalty programs are exempt from these fees, so check your airline's web site to learn what rules apply to you. Another option is to [ship your luggage](#) to your destination. If you choose this option, you'll need to plan what to pack and ship far enough ahead of time to assure your luggage meets you at your destination and keep costs low enough to justify shipping vs. checking and paying for your bags.
- **Consider a sleep-and-park package for air travel.** Many inexpensive itineraries include very early first flights. If traveling to the airport in the dark is tiresome for you and your family, consider investing your airfare savings in a sleep-and-park package that combines a night at an airport hotel, a shuttle to the terminal, and parking at the hotel for 7-14 days. These deals typically cost about the same as parking at the airport. Compare deals at [Park Sleep Fly](#), [Stay 123](#), and [Parking Access](#).
- **Try train travel.** If the hassle and expense of air travel has discouraged you in the past, consider taking the train for your next vacation. Tickets are generally much less expensive than airfare, and most people find train travel a much more leisurely, relaxing experience. Visit [Amtrak](#) to find a route to your destination, and check out the Weekly Specials page for money-saving deals.
- **Relocate a car.** Private and commercial vehicles need to be transported from one place to another for a variety of reasons, and sometimes a carrier vehicle isn't the cost-effective way to do the job. If you're flexible about your travel destination and timing, and if you like to drive, consider relocating a vehicle. Sign up with [Auto Driveaway](#), or call rental car companies about one-way rental deals that might interest you.
- **Join a B&B club.** By offering your spare room for \$10-\$20 a night to people on the road, you can have access to a room, including breakfast, in the home of a B&B club member. Investigate the possibilities at [Evergreen Club](#) (for travelers over 50 years old) and [Affordable Travel Club](#), and always take care to check the identities of the strangers you consider allowing to use your spare room.
- **Stay connected at your destination.** If you need to check email or maintain access to internet resources while you travel, save commercial connection fees by finding free Wi-Fi hot spots around the U.S. and around the world. Use [jiwire](#) to search for free spots at all of your waypoints and your destination.
- **Find free sightseeing.** In addition to all the great attractions available for a fee, there are many offered for free (tipping is expected, however). Use [Global Greeter Network](#), [Europe Tours](#), and the chamber of commerce at your U.S. destination to find information.

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