

Top 10 Booking Hacks For The Best Hotel Deals

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Trevor and I love to stay in hotel rooms. We are those people who feel the most at home when we check into a suite and place our luggage at the end of the bed. It's our 'zen', a weight off our shoulders and our guilty pleasure. But on the subject of frequent travelling, **there is one thing we really don't like about hotels- paying to much for them.** Over the years we have developed some great strategies for paying the lowest hotel prices possible, so we might as well share the love.

Here is our insiders guide:

Top 10 Booking Hacks For The Best Hotel Deals!

Listen, this blog is for people who seriously want to save money on hotels. The tips we give here are literally our secrets for being able to travel as much as we do, seeing as we are not millionaires, but our wanderlust seems to think we are 😊

#1- Time Is Money

The tortoise wins the race in this game. Without patience and time to put into booking your hotel suite, ALLLLLLL of the following tips we give you will mean diddly squat. When you invest your time into researching, comparing and booking, that is when you will score the best deal. In our experience the best deals don't usually just pop out of nowhere, you have to hunt them down and be ready to double check your work.



Think of what the value is for you if you did save a few hundred bucks on a hotel stay. Is it worth spending an hour or two with 10,000 browser tabs open? For us the answer is YES.

#2- Try Off Season or Shoulder Season

We do this ALL the time! If we really want to stay in a specific hotel or visit a certain city that is usually out of budget, we consider their peak season.... and then avoid it like the plague!

It gives me a headache thinking about paying double and being squashed amongst tons of other tourists in the middle of an area's 'busy season'. Just because it's the 'off' or 'shoulder' season does not mean it's bad. In some cases the weather might be more tolerable, the attractions easier to see, and just a more relaxed pace of life.

For example, we visited New Orleans in July, dead smack in the middle of their off season. Yes, it was hot, but we like that! We got a great deal on our suite at the [Windsor Court](#) because we didn't try and book it between February and May, which is their busiest time.



#3- Compare, Compare, Compare

Here is where you invest a little bit of time, and if you are anything like me, you will have multiple tabs open and a notebook to jot down price differences.

Hotel Comparison sites are where it's at This might be the tip that saves you the MOST out of all of them (if you are willing to do the work)

Here is what you do: Open up the hotels website directly and then these sites in a new tab (the ones we personally use)

- [Hotels Combined](#)
- [Trivago](#)
- [Hotels.com](#)
- [Booking](#)
- [Otel](#)
- [Priceline](#)

One of those top 6 (*and it's usually always different!*) comes out with the best price, so we check all of them before we book. Always.

We also have another site we check it all against that has surprised us a few times with being drastically lower: [Last Minute Travel Club](#). They ask that you create a membership profile to use their booking engine, but it's totally worth it!

Here is an example: **The Grand Fiesta in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.**

We stayed there a few times recently and guess where we booked it through? **Last Minute Travel Club** for SURE. (*I just picked May 2 to May 5 for this example*) On the **hotels direct website**, the rate is **\$258** and on **LMTC** the rate is **\$158** for exactly the same room, same amenities. ***That is \$100/night ya'!!!***

When we first came across [LMTC](#) we thought it was just another site claiming it had low prices, but in some cases it REALLY does in a huge way.

Out of the 7 comparison sites, we use [Hotels Combined](#), [Trivago](#) and [Otel](#) the most, as they usually come out cheaper 75% of the time. **However**, we still have found the occasional cheaper deal on Hotels.com, Booking, Priceline and LMTC, *so don't rule them out.*

Just to show you how different they can be, here is an example of all 7 hotel comparison sites with the Grand Fiesta Americana in Puerto Vallarta (May 2-5)

LMTC - \$158

Trivago - \$178

Hotels Combined - \$184

Otel - \$228

Priceline - \$312

Hotels.com - \$316

I'm not sure about you, but I would be **TICKED OFF** if I paid \$316/night when I could have paid \$158 a night. ***That would equal out to \$1000 extra for a week stay.*** Brutal!

One final tip for comparison sites: Be ready to pull the trigger. A good deal can literally be gone 1 hour later, so if you see something that is considerably lower, grab it quickly!

#4- Flexible Dates

If you have the ability to shift your time off a few days early or a few days later, it might work out in your favour. This once is a little hard to explain, but here I go:

Sometimes the time you are choosing to be at the hotel runs over a holiday, a busy time, or maybe even a conference. Let's say you want to book 5 nights somewhere and it just so happens night #4 the hotel is at full capacity. **The rate for that night will sky rocket your average rate for the entire stay!** *Avoiding it might save you a ton on the overall cost.*

Here is when we used this to our advantage: We wanted to stay at one of our favorite boutique hotels in the world, [Villa Premiere](#), for 1 month. (*I know right, tough life*) but there were **3 days in that 30 day period that JACKED the entire rate.** We adjusted the trip to avoid those 3 days and the rate came down about **30%** overall!

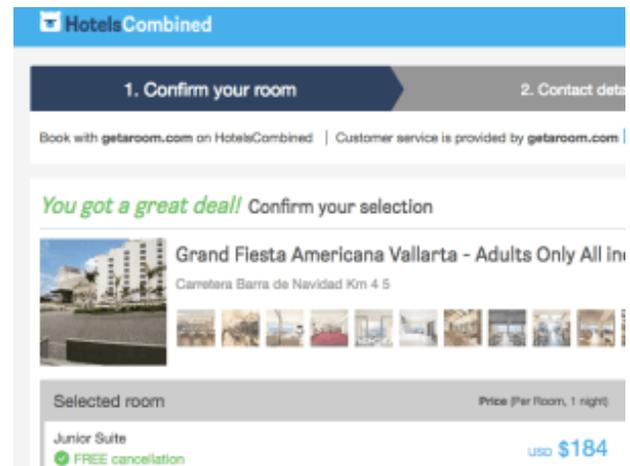
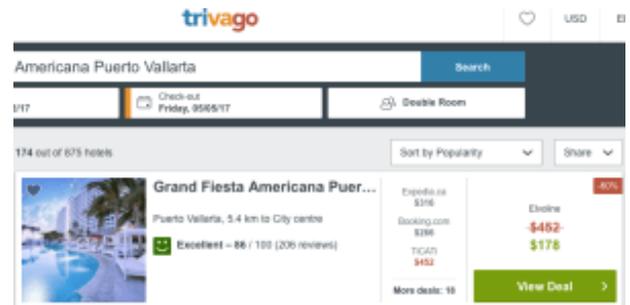
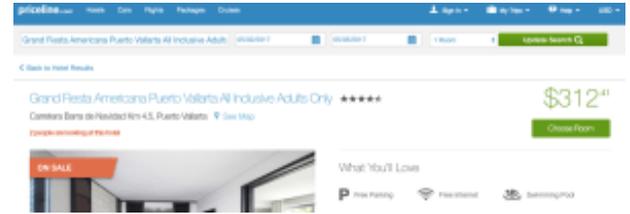
So here is how to apply this tip. If you search your hotel of choice from 'x' date to 'y' date and it's not looking good, try **shifting those dates** ahead or behind a few days, or perhaps even **try searching with 1 night less or 1 night more than originally planned.** Example: your goals dates are June 1 to June 10. Also try, May 31- June 9, June 2 - June 11, and maybe even June 1 - June 9.

#5 - Upgrade At Front Desk

Are you a risk taker? If you like the thrill of the chase, then asking for a cheap upgrade at the front desk might be your cup of tea. If the hotel has lots of premium rooms available they may let you have one for a LOT lower than you ever would have found it online.

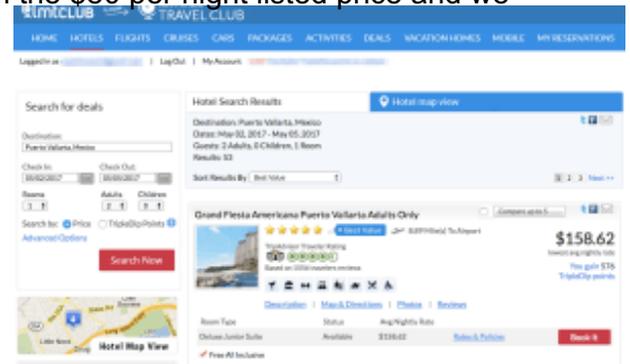
Here are our **tips for asking for an upgrade** at the front desk:

- Have a bit of a conversation going first! Ask if they have been busy, because if they say it's a slower time for them, you know right away there is an upgrade with your name on it!
- **Never say yes to the first price.** We checked into the Westin once and asked what the upgrade



cost would be to one of their Junior Suites. He replied with the \$80 per night listed price and we asked him if that was his best price for the room.

Right away he said "Actually, I can do it for \$30". Boom! We paid a base rate, plus \$30 more per night for a suite that retails for \$200 more than our booking.



- If they are FIRM on their upgrade price, see if an upgrade might be available for half of the time. If you are at a resort for 10 days and they can give you a smoking deal on a huge suite for only 5 of those days, wouldn't you still want it?
- **The \$20 Trick.** Okay, have you heard of this before? We first heard about it in Vegas and thank goodness it worked out wonderfully (the first time at least) We handed our ID to the front desk along with a \$20 bill and asked if there were any 'complimentary' upgrades. Low and behold, he put us in a better room without changing our rate. Yahoo! On the other hand, we tried this in Mexico and the front desk agent just took it, smiled at us, and literally put us in the worst room at the hotel. The \$20 Trick can do wonders or literally backfire in your face.



#6- Are You Loyal?

Loyalty means a lot in this world and it can certainly pay off with your favorite hotel chain.

One of the downsides with booking on third party sites (*like hotels.com and the others I mentioned above*) is the hotel chain usually will not give you any loyalty points for your stay. If you are always staying at the same chain, these points can add up fast to **free meals, complimentary upgrades and even free nights!** IF the price of booking the hotel room directly with the hotel chain is at par with the booking comparison sites, book direct to get points! If there is a major price difference, I would personally rather save money than accumulate points.

Here are our best loyalty tips for booking directly with hotels and why in some cases it's the best idea:

- **Sign IN!** When you sign into the hotel loyalty program directly, you may be able to see 'members only prices' which can be deeply discounted.
- If you love a brand/chain, stick with them! Points can add up fast if you are not collecting them from every different hotel chain under the sun.
- Most big chains have something called '**price matching**'. Let's use Marriott for example. **They claim they will beat any price by 25%**. (which is HUGE!) The only downside is they require you to submit the claim showing the site you found the cheaper deal on has exactly the same cancellation policy and they take 24 hours to get back to you. On many of the hotel comparison sites, 24 hours is enough time to see that cheap price disappear forever. You also must BOOK the hotel room with Marriott when you submit, so if they can't 'find' that sweet deal you saw, you now have a full price Marriott room with your name on it.
- Loyalty can also mean turning airline points into hotel chain points, which many frequent fliers do. Make sure you have the best credit card and points accounts for all the major airlines and hotel chains to swap points around as you need to.

#7- Know What Your Getting Into

Don't use Hotwire, Priceline Auctions, and other sites that don't tell you the name of the hotel until you have booked it with no way out.

I know this goes against everything else you read when you google how to get hotel deals. Most people say "Oh try that site where you grab a last minute deal and the hotel name is secret, but you can get 5 star hotels for half price."

No. *I am calling total BULL on this method.*

You know what, in some cases it may have worked out for people, but in our experience we pay less using our 7 key comparison sites or asking for an upgrade at the hotel.

We tried the '**secret hotel**' way and it's **not fun**. They tell you it's a 4 Star and it's really the 3 Star down the road from the 4 Star that you actually wanted to stay at. The devil you know is better than the one you don't. If you only have a few weeks of vacation a year, why gamble that you might spend it in a place you really don't enjoy that you also likely paid normal rates for.

Puerto Vallarta is a city we know like the back of our hand and we played the 'Hotwire' game there a few times and regretted it. Now we can actually look at the hotels on that site and know which one they are referencing and we can find the same deal on LMTC or Hotels Combined.

Sorry if Hotwire is your jam, but it's certainly not ours!

#8- Collaborations

Say *what*??? Okay this tip might only be applicable to a smaller group of people, but it's a dang powerful

one.

There is nothing wrong at all with talking to your dream hotel about a possible collaboration. What I mean by that is - ***how you may be able to work with the hotel on a great rate, upgrade, or other perk.***

Here are some examples:

- **If you have a large social media following** that includes the people from the hotels target market, they may welcome you to stay for a discounted rate for some social plugs. Like live 'stories' on Instagram, Facebook posts, Youtube video tours, blogs, and other viral promotional methods. Billboards, commercials and magazine ads are expensive! Hotels know a discounted rate or a free upgrade has way more value if you have an audience that will enjoy it.
- **Reviews.** A newer hotel or a smaller independent hotel might not have any reviews up yet. Reviews are the life blood of the industry so perhaps ask them what they would be willing to do if you provide a detailed review with pictures and video. Again, if it's a small hotel, maybe they even need photos of the rooms done and you happen to be a photographer. Works out perfectly!
- For these tips, of COURSE ***your opinion of the hotel cannot be swayed by their generosity.*** You have to be upfront with them that your opinion is your own and the benefits they might offer you will not change your point of view. **Honesty is the best policy.**



#9- Coupon Codes & Email Signups

Sometimes there is STILL money on the table even after you have found an incredibly low price!

Email Sign-Ups: Remember how in tip #3 I told you about our favorite hotel comparison sites? Well it just so happens that Otel has an extra perk when you sign up for their email list. We found a killer deal on a hotel in New Orleans on Otel and then filled out their **'subscribe for 6% off'** email sign up form at the bottom of the page. Within about 10 minutes we were emailed a coupon code that gave us an additional 6% off that booking that was already lower than any other site. **Winning!**

Coupon Codes: When in doubt, GOOGLE IT! Just type in 'so and so hotel coupon code'. Sometimes you can find one and other times it just leads you around in circles of junk.

Price Alert Sites: There are a few out there that email you if your hotel rate goes down, when major brands have promotions on, etc. I find these can get overwhelming if we are not travelling for a while, but super helpful when we are in 'booking mode'

#10- Diamond in the Rough

We all want super big suites for lower prices, am I right? Well sometimes the WORST place to look for a hotel deal is at the fancy 4 and 5 star chains. **Stay with me on this one....**

If you are looking for a suite that is big, unique, and fabulous, you can sometimes **find a diamond in the rough at the most unexpected property.**

For this example, I am going to show you a suite we recently found in **Kelowna, BC, Canada**. The hotel was not 'rough' by any means, but it certainly is not in the upper echelon of local upscale resorts. It's called the **Comfort Suites**, part of the Choice Hotels brand and is your typical highway hotel. BUT, it has an incredible, massive, luxurious, and insanely unique honeymoon suite that is only about \$30 more than the basic room (**and about \$400/n LESS per night than other suites in fancy dancy nearby resorts that were comparable in size**) We were blown away by how grand the suite was and how low of a price it came in at. That's what they call VALUE folks!

Moral of the story: try downgrading the star of property and upgrading the type of room for a deal that is sure to impress.

Have any of your own tips and tricks for scoring hotel deals?

While this '**Top 10 Booking Hacks For The Best Hotel Deals**' guide is our personal blueprint for how we book, we would love to hear if you have any tips to add! Comment below what you personally do to get great deals on hotels so we can swap ideas!

Because we like being transparent, some of the tips we have compiled for you have affiliate links that may reward us with a small amount if you decide to use the service. It does not sway our recommendations, nor does it effect the price you might pay in any way. It's just our way to be able to spend extra time making useful guides for our readers.

Quick Re-Cap of the Hotel Comparisons sites we use:

- [Hotels Combined](#)
- [Trivago](#)
- [Hotels.com](#)
- [Booking](#)
- [Otel](#)
- [Priceline](#)
- [Last Minute Travel Club](#)

