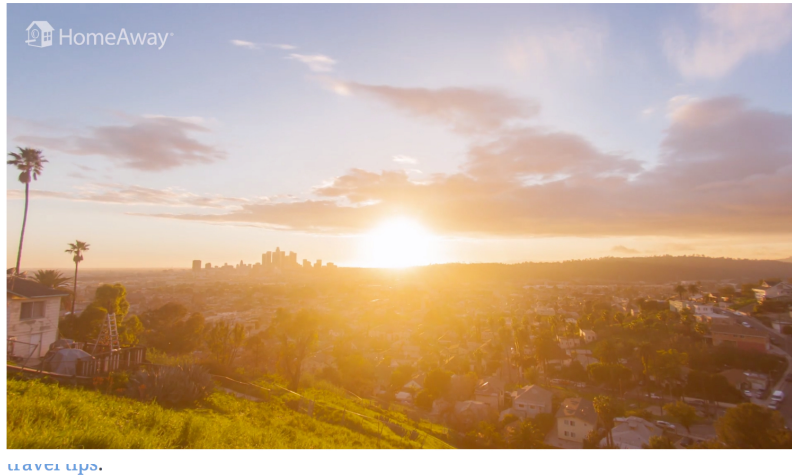


Turn Your Travel Dream Into a Reality With Budget Tips From These Globe-Trotting Pros

These world travelers have the advice you're looking for.

By **Erica Corbin** | November 9, 2018 | **Travel Credit Cards**



1. Be Flexible With Your Travel Dates

Lindsay Paige Stein of [NomNom.Com](#) advises travelers to be flexible when planning their vacation dates. “I’d say the biggest win when trying to save money on your next trip is finding the best flight deal. It’s actually not too difficult and pretty easy to grab an affordable international flight — as long as you are flexible with dates and destinations,” she said.

Not sure how to go about looking at a range of dates for the best travel price? “Travel apps like Hopper and Skyscanner are perfect for that because you can input a period of time instead of specific dates to check cheapest flights, or you can add certain cities to your wish list so that the apps can send you notifications when there is a dramatic price drop,” said Stein.

2. Use Reverse Budgeting to Fund Your Travel

Would you be willing to give up your morning latte or daily sugary soda if it meant seeing the Mona Lisa? That’s exactly what Kris of [Nomad by Trade](#) advises. “Every week, I transfer a small amount into my savings account to help fund my travels. I made it into a challenge for myself because I was trying to stop drinking soda and decided that for every meal I skipped ordering one, I’d transfer \$2 into savings,” she said. “It was great because it helped me fund my vacation with money that I otherwise would’ve spent on drinks and helped me reduce a bad habit. At the end of the week, I tally up what I need to transfer and move the money. You’d be surprised how quickly it adds up.”

Discover: [How I Turned Coffee Cravings Into Travel Savings](#)

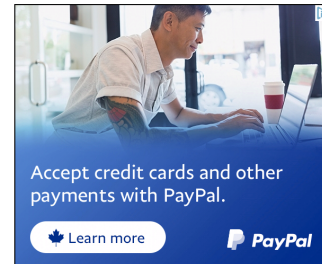
3. Take Advantage of Plastic — and Plastic — to Rack Up Those Points

If you’re saving for a vacation and you’ve been using cash or debit cards for your expenses, it’s time to rethink that strategy. Using credit cards comes with major perks, whether it’s cash back, points or some other form of reward. Travel miles, in particular, can be used to cover the cost of flights, hotels, rental cars and other trip-

particular, can be used to cover the cost of flights, hotels, rental cars and other trip-related expenses. For instance, if you put \$1,000 on your [credit card](#) and you earn two miles for every dollar you spend with that card, that means you've just gained 2,000 miles toward your next flight. Assuming you're using your card responsibly, making your payments on time and in full each month, you can [do some serious points-hacking](#).

Alex Tran, a travel blogger for [Love Eat Travel](#) said, "I am a points person. I earn points via business and personal expenses. I highly recommend the Chase Sapphire Reserve card in conjunction with Chase Ink Preferred and Chase Freedom. The trifecta of credit cards has allowed me to earn at least two international round trips per year just for spending as I usually would."

The points pro takes this tactic one step further, stating on [Love Eat Travel](#) that you should consider using a third-party service such as Plastiq, which allows users to pay things like rent, student loan bills and [mortgages](#) with a credit card — something you normally can't do. Though these types of services charge a fee for most transactions, it could be worth it if you're looking to quickly rack up those miles.



4. Don't Be Afraid to Barter

Lindsay and Dan McKenzie of [Follow Your Detour](#) live, work and play full-time in an RV, so they know a thing or two about travel on a budget. The couple relies on a barter system to live their dream life on the road. "Find tour companies, hotels, restaurants, etc. that will provide you with comped experiences, meals and stays in exchange for a specific service you can provide," advises Lindsay. "Whether it's photography and video, social media marketing or maybe even your helping hands, there's always something you can offer that the business or company will find valuable."

Lindsay knows what she's talking about, too. After quitting her job, she set a goal for herself to bring in \$3,000 or more per month — the same amount she was making as a teacher before their big adventure — which is no easy feat. After about six months of offering her services as a blogger, freelancer, and consultant she's nearly hit her goal.

5. Consider the Airport a Mini Vacation

There's nothing worse than a delayed flight at the airport, right? Wrong. Brian Cassmassi of [The Ambitious Trekker](#) has seen his fair share of airports, and he advises travelers not to underestimate their beauty. He's spent time at the gorgeous Cultural Gardens in the Daniel K. Inouye International Airport in Honolulu, Hawaii and has taken the opportunity to stretch his legs and enjoy some peaceful contemplation. "One time, when flying from Maui to California, I had to make a brief layover in Honolulu first, and I looked forward to showing the gardens to a friend," he notes on his site.

Check Out: [Coolest Airports That Are Worth the Layover](#)

If you're not jazzed about the airport itself, you might be happy to hear that if you have a layover of more than a couple hours, you could take a free, guided tour of the surrounding city, effectively [turning your layover into a second trip](#).

6. Take Advantage of Cheap Locations and 'Free' Days

Though far-off destinations are great, don't rule out exploring your own backyard. You could [enjoy a fairy tale staycation](#) in your home city for a fraction of the cost you would spend on long-distance travel. No one knows this better than the budget travel pro, mother and wife behind [This Messy Season](#), who has documented several fun trips in her own city and ones nearby. She recently took her kids to St. Helens, Oregon to have some spooky fun at the place the movie "Halloweentown" was filmed. The destination was only 30 minutes away, and the cost? After "splurging" on ice cream for her two kids and admission to an oddities museum, they spent less than \$10 total. It goes to show that fun doesn't have to be expensive.

The blogger advises travelers — especially those with children — to note days on the

calendar in which businesses give out freebies. “When you’re traveling ... seek out special days like ‘National Doughnut Day’ and get free doughnuts, or look for local spots [that] offer ‘Kids Eat Free’ day,” she said.

7. Get a Big Airbnb Discount

According to Russell Hannon of [Break the Travel Barrier](#), you can score an extended Airbnb stay for cheap just by doing a little legwork. “To get upwards of 67 percent off Airbnb rentals of two or more weeks, get all the details you can from the Airbnb listing, then do a google search to find the renter’s contact information and contact the owner directly to bypass Airbnb and ask for a monthly rate,” he said.

Hannon said that you won’t just be getting around those Airbnb fees either. “Monthly rates are tax-free in most states and provinces and average a third of what you would pay over the same duration at Airbnb’s nightly rates,” he said. “Even if you just stay for two weeks, monthly rates booked directly through the owner will still [be] cheaper than two weeks at Airbnb’s rates.”

Tips and Tricks if You Prefer a Hotel: [15 Strategies to Talk Your Way Into Free Hotel Upgrades](#)

8. Transportation Can Be Your Accommodation

Ben McLaughlan of [Horizon Unknown](#) says that public transportation isn’t just useful for getting you from point A to point B — it offers a welcome rest. “Overnight transport doubles as accommodation. Catching a train or bus in the night time not only gets you to a new destination, saving your daytime for exploring a new destination, it also saves money on a place to sleep during the night.”

So, if you’re not willing to pay for a hotel just to catch some z’s, consider hopping on a night train to the next stop on your journey.

9. Limit How Much You Eat Out

Blogger Gabby Beckford of [Packs Light](#) understands that people want to indulge on vacation and soak up the local culture — often in the form of food — but she believes that not every meal has to be eaten out. “When traveling, compromise on eating out by eating breakfast at home every day and carrying snacks with you,” she said.

“Anywhere I go, I buy six or seven apples to have in my accommodations ... I can eat one for breakfast each day (they don’t need any utensils and don’t need to be refrigerated) and usually carry some granola, an apple, nuts or peanut butter crackers to keep me from spending too much money on food when I’m out exploring.”

“Basically, every meal doesn’t have to be extravagant,” she said. “Keep 50 percent of your meals simple, cheap and functional, and the extravagant meals will mean that much more. And, your wallet will thank you.”

10. Search for Lodging Outside of the City Center

If you’re planning to visit a popular city, you’re likely looking at the city’s center for accommodation. This could be a big mistake, according to Jill Bowdery of [Reading the Book Travel](#), who says staying outside city limits is definitely worth it. “When I travel, I always look for a hotel which is a little outside the city center, but right next to a metro station. By taking a 20-minute metro ride at the start and end of my day, I can find clean and safe accommodation at a much more reasonable rate than in the city center, and by staying close to the metro station, I limit the risk involved in walking through the city after dark — especially since I normally travel solo.”

It’s not just the cost of the hotel that Bowdery is saving on by doing this, either. “... This saves on transport costs too. Because I am close to a metro station, I don’t need to take taxis to get around, even at the start and end of my trip when I have my suitcase to contend with,” she said. “And, the 20-minute journey time is often no more than I would spend walking from a more central hotel to the main sights.”

11. Consider a Hostel Instead of a Hotel

Travel blogger Kimmie Conner has been everywhere from Botswana to Iceland, attending festivals and generally living her life to the fullest. She's documented her globe-trotting on her blog [Adventures & Sunsets](#). Years of travel have given her a wealth of knowledge about accommodations, so it's worth noting that she advises travelers to use hostels on their trips. They're cost-effective and not as scary as they seem. "Many Americans have the wrong idea about hostels (thanks, Hollywood). In reality, they're amazing places for like-minded budget travelers to come together," said Conner. "I've stayed in hostels all over the world and had great experiences."

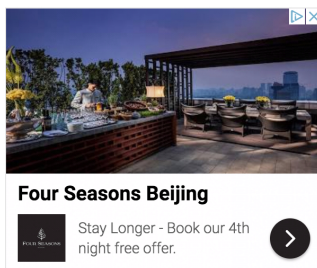
Don't know where to start? You can now find hostels through many popular travel sites, such as Hotels.com, but there are also sites that specialize in them. "I find all my hostels on Hostelworld, and even find tons with private ensuite rooms when I need my own space but would like to meet people at bustling hostel bars," said Conner.

Discover more [money-saving travel tips from people just like you](#).

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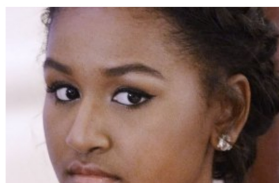
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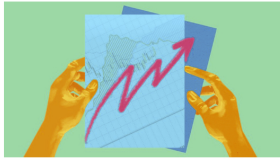
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