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Don't Get Ripped Off! Budget Travel Ideas for the Christmas Holidays

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By Jan Ross

You know the annual routine. You've practiced it well enough over the years: shop your heart out, decorate like crazy, slave away in the kitchen baking up a storm for the holidays. If you're like me you'll be

wondering how on earth you'll find the cash, let alone the time, to take that trip you've been thinking about. Visiting the family, taking that weekend getaway... it's a nice idea but is it, well, *worth it?*

Well I guess we could just stop shopping, decorating, cooking, save every spare penny and every spare minute, but it just doesn't sound very *festive* does it? Plus Christmas must be one of the most expensive times of year to travel, especially when traveling on a budget.

Well don't worry, thankfully there are a few ways you can travel over the holidays without breaking the bank.

Budget Travel over the Christmas Holidays

Last Minute Frenzy

The first thing to check is for late offers, such as these last minute [New Years Eve hotel deals](#). You might be surprised what you'll find, including many rates that are significantly below the usual market rate in all classes, 3, 4 and 5 star.

The DealAngel data is showing that rates are dropping



in numerous cities across the US and beyond, but prices and availability are volatile so be sure to snatch the best deal when you find it.

Within driving distance of Chicago? How about a stay at the **4* Raffaello for \$123/night? That's 50% below the expected rate!**

How about Boston, at the **Fairmont Copley Plaza 5* for \$210/night?**

Don't Fly, Take A Staycation

Although it's still easy to find great hotel rates for the holidays, finding a cheap flight is another matter entirely. This is one of the most expensive times of year to fly and prices will only continue to increase as the holidays get closer.

My advice is to avoid flying altogether. Even though the price of gas these days seems astronomical, filling your tank a few times is still way cheaper than buying a flight.

This gives you a new opportunity to really explore your own city or state. Think about all the places you could visit just a few hours drive from home and then check to find the **best hotel deals**.

For example, those within driving distance of Austin can still get a great deal at the **Barton Creek Resort 4* for \$142/night!**

Check Your Memberships

Dig out your membership cards, you might find that they come with a few discounts. Auto clubs, social groups, seniors associations, etc sometimes arrange for special discounts at hotels and restaurants. When you make your booking mention your membership with AARP or AAA and see if any discounts are offered. It never hurts to ask!

Stay Flexible

Be flexible. If you are not visiting family and don't have a specific destination in mind, let the travel deals guide where you want to go. Want to go to the beach? Any beach? Just see where the best deals are available and head there for a few days.

Be even more flexible. Can you travel a day or two around the dates you are considering? You may find the day after you are considering is substantially cheaper, so check all your



options.

Catch The Post-Holidays Deals

But no matter how hard you try, there's no denying that traveling on a budget over the Christmas holidays is a tricky prospect. But for real bargain hunters, the time immediately after the holidays, even starting on January 1, is considered a dead travel period. If you can rearrange your schedule a little you might find some great deals once the holidays are over.

Please note: all hotel rates are accurate at time of publication and are likely to change quickly – get in there quick!

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