



Want to travel for free? Let us show you how

## Description

# A guide to making your travel dreams a beautiful reality

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“We travel not to escape life, but for life not to escape us.”  
*Anonymous*

If you have been under the impression that travel for free is only for people who travel extensively or are frequent business travelers, this is for you. Anyone can learn the ins and outs of maximizing travel perks. For those of you who must travel on a budget or have limited funds, we will teach you ways you can also travel for free or at a low cost.

Too many people miss out on unique life experiences or never take that trip on their bucket list because they believe it will be out of their financial reach. Recently we came across a meme that said if you can buy lunch and go to Starbucks for a coffee five days a week while at work, you can afford a vacation if you save that money instead. We have had colleagues who often spend \$15 to \$20 daily between coffee runs and lunch. Take \$15 and multiply by nine months of work days, and you have about \$3000. Multiply that by two people; that is a very generous travel allowance.

You may say that isn't enough money for a vacation overseas. Grab some wine, and we will walk you through some of our trip finances and how we got there. Before you know it, you will be planning your

own bucket list adventure.



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## Common questions

One of the questions we often get is how can you afford several yearly trips to Europe? The assumption is that we must max out our credit cards or have some secret money. Neither is farther from the truth. As a matter of fact, we are pretty cost-conscious and penny-pinching. In both cases, we pay our credit cards in full each month. We each have held regular jobs our whole lives, with Joelle medically retiring in recent years. Cash flow is limited, and it is essential to find ways to keep costs under control to travel often.

Another assumption is that we get hotel stays and other freebies because we own a travel blog. Due to the blog, we have never received free hotel stays, meals, activities, upgrades, or flights. To date, we have made a point not to let anyone know we have a travel blog to experience it as our readers would and report without bias.

Several friends have asked if all the money you make on the blog pays for your travels. That is not the case. We are years away, if ever, from making any profit. It is not the reason we went into this. Our goal was to share our passion for travel and to encourage others to discover how life-changing exploring the world can be.



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## **Why keeping costs down is important**

We are equal business partners at Wanderers Compass, which means we split all our travel costs right down the middle. We set a budget and plan our travels from there. Ryan is early in his career and a single dad, so it becomes even more vital that we keep our costs down to make it affordable for him. To be able to travel for free, such as having zero hotel costs, is what makes traveling several times a year possible.

However, after years of travel, Joelle especially has higher expectations about where we stay and how we travel. It doesn't need to be fancy or upscale but well-reviewed, centrally located, safe, and clean.

Not that we don't enjoy business class seats and high-end hotels, but we only do so when it is free or at a low cost that makes sense.

## There are only two main approaches we use to keep costs controlled



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1. **Loyalty programs** Our loyalty goes to Hilton, Alaska Airlines, United Airlines, and Avis.
2. **Reward Points from our credit cards**, Specifically Chase Sapphire Reserve (Joelle) and American Express Platinum (Ryan). In the case of the Chase card, we have a Chase business credit card as well, and any points we collect there can be transferred to Chase Sapphire Reserve, so they are all in one place and get maximum travel value.

**But before we break that down, let's look at one of our trips to whet your appetite.**

### Real Numbers Example #1

#### Croatia



Dubrovnik Croatia

## Flights

United Airlines Economy Upgraded for free to Economy Plus

**Total cost \$1705 or \$827 per person**

## Hotels for 14 nights



Suite in Dubrovnik – Zero cost

All hotels averaged 4.5 stars at the time. The rooms were large and often suites. All included breakfast. Some had Executive lounge access, which provided appetizers, an open bar with complimentary cocktails, and even dinner at times. Our last hotel in Dubrovnik included parking.

**The total cost for all 14 nights is \$194.00 or \$97 a person**

### **Avis Rental Car for 15 days**

Reserved a manual 4-door, upgraded to a Mercedes Automatic for free

**The total cost is \$435.11 or \$217.56 a person**

### **Meals**

This is where each person can control their costs. In our case, we usually purchased only one meal a day. We had our plentiful complimentary breakfasts, then a light snack and beverage during the day. Dinner was at a local restaurant. Some hotels had evening appetizers or light dinners that were so generous we skipped eating out.

**Total Costs \$852 in meals or \$426 per person**

### **Other costs**

Gas, Tolls, Entries, Boat Ride, Tips, and Parking

Total cost \$522 or \$211 a person

### **Total Cost for a 14-night Trip in Croatia**

**\$3708 or \$1854 a person**

On our trip to Croatia, many would call it upscale with airport lounge access, preboarding, exit row seats, free luggage (checking more than two bags), a Mercedes rental car, excellent hotels with upgraded rooms and suites with views, complimentary breakfast daily, and executive hotel lounge access. Remember that first example of a person buying their lunches and coffee each day of work. One person's spending during the nine months would almost fully cover this trip for two.

## **How can you travel for free? Breaking it down**

### **Hotels**



Malta Hilton

There are two ways to keep hotel costs down or for free. Our **first choice** is using Chase Reward Points from Joelle's Chase Sapphire Reserve (CSR) Visa card or Ryan's American Express Platinum points. This is our pot of gold. The points add up quickly between the sign-up bonus at Chase (100,000 at the time) and putting everything we purchase in our daily lives on the card.

If you buy any certain travel or dining through the Chase portal, you can get up to ten times the points to the dollar. Another great way to gain points is to use the card for large purchases. Joelle bought a car using her CSR for the downpayment. Ryan had new flooring installed and put it on his credit card. Take that a step further; if anyone in your family plans a big trip or expenditure like furniture, ask if you can put it on your card. They then pay you back in cash. A cruise or vacation package they purchase on your card and bonus points can get you a few nights of hotel stays for free.

#### Why do we love Chase Sapphire Reserve so much?

Now with CSR, here is the crown jewel and why we love Chase so much. If you use your reward points toward travel through their travel portal, they are worth 50% more. So as an example, that 100,000 points sign-up bonus is valued at \$1000, but when booking travel through the Chase portal, it is now worth \$1500. That goes a long way toward hotel stays and what a way to maximize point usage.

#### TIP

A great way to reduce food costs on a trip is by booking through the Chase portal; always add the complimentary breakfast. Higher-end hotels tend to be excellent and generous with lots of local specialties. As a result, we will not eat lunch and enjoy a larger meal at dinner.

Our **second choice** is using points from our hotel loyalty program. Hilton is our program of choice, as stated before. We both have Hilton credit cards that combined gave us over 300,000 points via the sign-up bonus. Depending on which brand of Hilton you stay in or during special offers like staying four nights using points and getting the 5th night free, those points can go a long way!

#### Airlines



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## Flight over the Northwest Cascades

This may differ from most other travel bloggers' guidance. Joelle learned in years of business travel that loyalty pays. Those few dollars you save to use another airline are not worth the perks you receive from staying loyal. Joelle has used United Airlines almost exclusively for international travel for several years. She first got free Gold tier status using Elite Challenge (soon will do a blog post on that). As an MVP Gold on Alaska Airlines, she presented United with proof of her status and received a year free of United Gold Status.

### Loyalty perks

Loyalty doesn't often come with price breaks, but the perks that come for free add up. Extra leg room at exit row (we are both over 6 feet), meals and drinks in the airport lounge, guaranteed space for carry-ons, faster check-in, and free checked luggage with no worries about the weight of the bags make traveling more enjoyable. Joelle has kept her United status for several years by planning trips well and keeping on top of miles. Last year United offered her Platinum status for free for several months, and if she flew eight segments she could have it for an entire year. Since that was already her plan, it was a sweet bonus. People traveling with her on the same reservation get the same perks. That makes it unnecessary for both of us to have the status, though Ryan has gained United Silver status due to our travels.

A sweet perk of United Platinum status, Joelle receives a fixed amount of annual Plus Points for free business class upgrades. Those spaces are almost like mini living rooms where the seat turns into a bed, along with first-class service. We will be taking advantage of those Plus Points on one of our longer Europe trips. We have also used miles to upgrade to business class since we tend to buy our tickets. Though we should warn you once you fly international business class, you will never want to go back to the coach, but we do.

### Rental Car



## Rental car in Croatia

Joelle has used Avis for decades. She is at her highest status and, as a result, gets free upgrades 100% of the time. One incredible perk is that we never stand in line. Just go straight to the car and drive off. Once, we used CSR reward points for a rental car and stood in line for an hour to process the vehicle. We always reserve a standard four-door for our international travel and usually land up with a Mercedes, BMW, or Volvo each time without ever asking for it. Since, on our trips, we tend to drive many, many miles, a luxury car with excellent gas mileage is a huge bonus.

Avis also provides reward points with rentals that can be used later for free days or other services. You can see how this keeps bringing costs down more and more.

## Real Numbers Example #2

### Fall '22 Mexico City

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## Flights

**Ryan used United miles and, with taxes, cost it \$120.04**

Joelle purchased her ticket

## Hotel

Five nights at Gran Hotel Ciudad De Mexico. One of the only 5-star hotels in Mexico City

Large Suite with breakfast included reserved with Chase Reward Points

**Total Cost ZERO!**

We will not be renting a car

**Staying Loyal helps gain travel for free**



Over the years, we have also learned that trying to stay loyal to a hotel brand, car rental company, or airline has many perks. For hotels, the brand we choose is Hilton. Joelle has maintained Diamond status for years by sometimes staying farther out than ideal on US-based trips to keep points growing. Though the drive may be a bit longer, it is rarely an issue, and the nicer room and complimentary food credits are worth it. There are special discounts for Hilton Honors members and super point bonus promotions.

During his Army drill weekends, Ryan must stay in a hotel and always stays at Hiltons. It adds up, and

the food credit goes a long to keep his costs down. In the end, it rewarded us well during our international travels. Diamond status internationally comes with complimentary breakfast, executive lounge access, upgraded rooms, expedited check-in, and complimentary water bottles. At times snacks, a complimentary bottle of wine is in the room, spa, gym access, free internet, complimentary cocktails, or other perks like free parking, shoe shine, etc. There is also a dedicated Diamond phone line for any issues or to make reservations.

The rental car loyalty program results in avoiding lines, a car ready for you upon arrival, free upgrades, choices for vehicles you can upgrade to, attentive service, a dedicated phone line, special deals, coupons, and reward points.

#### **Elite frequent flyer status**

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## Ryan in the British Airways Lounge

Airline frequent flyer elite status perks are the most extensive and increase with your elite level. Extras include; dedicated phone lines, a separate check-in line, free first-class upgrades domestically, early boarding, tagging luggage with priority status, bonus miles, free seat assignments, free upgrades to premium coach seats, no cost for an exit row seat, free checked baggage, a complimentary cocktail and snack on the flight, several lounges passes a year, discount to lounge membership, special deals and offers, and free rebooking with no penalties. Alaska Airlines provides a few first-class upgrade guest passes each year. When issues occur, they often prioritize your rebooking.

**What are the annual fees for membership to the loyalty programs we reviewed above? ABSOLUTELY NOTHING, FREE!**

**Downside? You get a bit spoiled traveling in style and being treated like a valued guest.**

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**Real Numbers Example #3**

**Summer '22 Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna, and Prague**



Image from Adobe Photo Stock – Prague, Czech Republic

## Flights

United Airlines Premium Economy Class

Total cost \$2556 or \$1278 a person. We chose not to use any points

## Hotel

14 nights at, on average 4.5-star hotels in the best areas of the cities

Large rooms or suites with breakfast included are reserved with either Hilton Points, American Express Points, or Chase Reward Points

## **Total hotel Costs \$63**

We did not do the driving ourselves but used the [My Day Trip](#) car service. All private car transportation between cities with sightseeing included—budget under \$1000 total. Dramatically less than a rental car. We will report back on our experience as it is our first time.

## How can you travel for free?

Do you wonder how you can get status at a hotel or airline? Do you have to fly a lot to do that? Not anymore. Many credit cards offer some level of hotel or airline status for free. Choose the airline you prefer or is most convenient based on where you live and get their credit card. Ryan got the United one with a generous sign-up bonus. He now has almost 150,000 miles to use. Many airline cards provide frequent flier status, hotel status, or even free TSA Precheck or Global Entry. Delta and United offer substantial discounts for [Clear membership](#). Lots of airline cards will offer several free lounge passes a year.

Want sign-up bonuses? Pick cards that offer generous ones. Look closely at the rules, though, and don't close the cards until a whole year has passed. After spending a set amount, Ryan recently got an American Express Platinum Card, which gave him a huge sign-up bonus. In 9 months, he has earned almost 250,000 points, translating into many free hotel stays.

American Express is great but the the Chase Sapphire Reserve is our favorite travel credit card out there. We get most of our hotel stays for free using our Chase points which dramatically reduces our travel costs. We can not recommend it enough.

### Chase Sapphire Reserve – Our top pick



We both have the [Chase Sapphire Reserve](#), which is incredible and by far the best card out there for travelers. The card has many exceptional bonuses such as 50% more value in points when using their travel portal, \$300 travel credit per year, 50% more value with Pay Yourself Back, complimentary airport lounge access with Priority Pass all over the world, \$100 toward Global Entry or TSA precheck, free Door Dash subscription with delivery fees waived, Travel Insurance, Rental car collision coverage, booking portal, and so much more.

Both these cards have high annual fees, \$550, but if you travel often and with the many credits to use toward travel, it pays for itself quickly. If someone rarely travels, these are not likely cards worth the annual fees. Sign-up bonuses for these cards can vary greatly, so research before applying.

## American Express Platinum

With Ryan's [American Express Platinum](#), he gets an annual \$200 hotel credit and a \$200 Airline fee credit along with complimentary airport lounge access all over the world, travel insurance, UberEats \$200 cash credit per year, \$189 CLEAR Credit, \$240 digital entertainment credit, cell phone protection, booking portal, upgraded stays, early ticket access to major concerts, \$100 year at Saks 5th Ave, and so much more!

### Hotel credit cards

Have a favorite hotel chain? Get their credit card that offers a generous sign-up bonus. The cards tend to give you an elite status at some level immediately. The only hotel card we have is from Hilton. [C heck out some of the hotel cards we suggest.](#)

*Interested in seeing the best travel credit cards on the market? Check out our [Best Travel Credit Cards for 2024.](#)*

**\*Here is the important part; you must be disciplined and always pay off the entire balance of your credit card each month. If your goal is to travel for free, paying interest makes no sense. The interest you pay often wipes out your benefits and potentially impacts your credit score. Spend within your means. \***



Virgin Atlantic Airport Lounge Dulles Airport

## Real Numbers Example #4

**Malta, Sicily, Naples, Sorrento, and Positano**



Amalfi Coast Italy

## Hotel

15 nights at 4.0 stars or greater hotels in the best areas of the cities

Larger rooms or suites with breakfast included were reserved with either Hilton Points or Chase

Reward Points

**Total hotel Costs \$458**

## Keeping track of shared costs during travel

Since we split our costs down the middle, keeping close track of the numbers as we go becomes essential. Years back, we found this great iPhone app called Cost Split. Joelle has also used it when traveling with her siblings and friends. It takes seconds to put in a purchase and attribute it to who paid and how it will be divided. It keeps you on top of your costs and how much each person is due. All can share it in the group, and each person can make an entry. It converts currency as well. When paying off in the end, it keeps track of that too.

Once the trip is completed, it generates a detailed report of expenditures for your records. It keeps us all honest and on top of our costs. Over the years, I have had many friends share concerns that a trip, in the end, cost them more than their travel companions, as the math was suspicious at times. Sometimes, it was so bad that they refused to travel with them again. With Cost Split, it is done and well documented. You can check out the [Cost Split app here](#).

There are several good apps, but Cost Split has been our favorite.

## Our way is not the only way to travel for free



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There are many great ways to cut costs on travel. Many people use their reward points for free airfare only. If you aren't bothered by long layovers or backtracking when flying, a ton of money and points can be saved. If you have a flexible schedule, sites like [Scotts Cheap Flights](#) find mind-blowing deals on transcontinental flights.

Then there is the 5/24 game, keeping to no more than five open Chase credit cards in 24 months. That is because when you go over five, it penalizes you. We don't put that much effort into point gathering, but those who do make quite the killing. A great site to learn more about this is [10X Travel Insider on Facebook](#). Even if you don't go full bore with the points-gathering game, you can learn much on this page.

Then there are the timeshare promotions, where you must sit through the sales pitch to get a cheap package at a great resort. Hilton offers them often. A week in Hawaii for 150 dollars, but you need to sit through a two-hour timeshare pitch. If you use reward points to buy plane tickets, you have a nearly free trip there. Those timeshare sales pitches are pure misery to us and something neither of us would ever purchase. Therefore, we don't go that route to get points and low-cost hotel/resort stays.

#### **If a clean bed is all you need**

If you don't care if the hotels are highly rated and want a bed, you can extend your travel for free options. When using the Chase travel portal, there are often hotels throughout Europe for unbelievably low points per night. It would be easy to stretch your points over many trips if you wanted. We are talking in Europe, at some of the top destinations!

***Are you planning to travel? Check out [country travel guides](#) on our [Destinations](#) page.***

## **Balancing travel for free to the dollar value**



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The post title stated you could travel the world for free. As you see in our examples, we pay for its pieces, such as our flights or rental cars. Points can be used for free airfare, rental cars, hotels, complimentary breakfast, and even access to evening lounges with free food and drinks. Chase allows you to use points for booking tour packages, entry to sites, and other entertainment in the cities you visit. The choice is yours, but in our case, we look at the value of the dollars it costs to the points used.

Our best example of this was in Croatia. The rental car was just over \$400 for two weeks. It does not get cheaper than that. Though points would cost at the time around 50,000 points, we could not have used our status with Avis or gotten an upgrade. That is a poor value-to-point ratio when the dollar amount is so low. We have many miles on our various airline frequent flyer accounts. But since status is essential, we buy to keep our status. It is part of the balancing game of point redemption. The United and Alaska airline program also allows us to use miles for hotel stays, but the amount of miles needed always seems way too high for the value. It pays to study this closely to get the biggest bang for your points and miles.

As you can see, paying cash over using points often makes sense.

## Real Numbers Example #5

### Portugal and Spain



Malta

## Hotels

Nine nights at an average 4.5 stars hotel

Larger rooms or suites with breakfast included were reserved with either Hilton Points or Chase Reward Points.

**Total Hotel Costs ZERO**

**Air BNB 6 nights**

**Cost \$748**

**Rental Car Avis**

**Used Chase Rewards points Cost ZERO**

## When things go wrong, loyalty can help

Strasbourg France

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## Strasbourg France

We are all hearing more stories of flight cancellations, lost luggage, and overbooked hotels. That is why we tend to stick to a loyalty approach to travel. As well we are reserving well-reviewed hotels. When things go wrong, they are more likely to take much better care of you. If that flight is canceled, you have a dedicated priority phone number to call that gets you to the front of the line for rescheduling. If you don't like your Avis car, they will do all they can to make you happy. We have never been bumped from a flight (I hope we haven't jinxed ourselves). Hilton moves the earth for their most loyal customers in our experience.

That doesn't exempt us from issues, and they do happen. One day we will write a very long blog post about all the various calamities that have crossed our path during our travels. The key is to go with the flow, stay calm, and make the best of it. A level head that keeps cool will handle obstacles better. Ultimately, it's all part of the adventure and the stories you will tell.

## Is travel for free too good to be true?

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View from the private balcony in Dubrovnik Hilton.

A frequent online comment is that this can't be real; why would credit card companies do this? If you pay your balance at the end of the month, why would they keep giving you points for nothing?

Keeping the explanation simple here goes. First, credit cards charge the hotel, airline, rental car, and restaurant fees to use their services. Based on the card, it would be 3-5% of your total bill. So even if you pay your balance in full monthly, the bank still rakes in the dough!

Their real goal is for you to pay interest where they make money hand over fist. Stay disciplined, and you both come out ahead. It isn't too good to be true and is an incredible coup financially if you learn to play the game right.

## Preparing for the unexpected costs



Travel, as in life, is not without risk. You can get most of your trip for free but unexpected costs can turn that upside down. The key is to guard against costs that could skyrocket quickly. The best way to do that is to buy travel insurance. Travel insurance can protect you from financial ruin. Our strongest warning here is not to rely on the medical insurance part of what comes free with your credit card. It is awful! We love the Chase Sapphire Reserve, but the total coverage for medical issues is \$2500, which won't cover much.

Travel insurance can be very affordable if you do it right. It just takes a little education to make you an empowered consumer. Check out our blog post on the importance of travel insurance and where to buy great and affordable coverage [here](#).

Another cost aspect to consider is Emergency Medical Evacuation coverage. Travel insurance offers generous evacuation coverage but, in most cases, only covers your evacuation to the closest hospital that can handle the severity of your condition. That is very important, but in most cases, it won't

transport you back to the United States. You could spend weeks in a foreign hospital. Companies like Medjet will get you home to a hospital of your choice at no cost. If you are seriously ill, the last place you want to be is in a hospital where you can't speak the language and care is substandard. Learn more from our blog post on medical evacuation membership [here](#).

**You can travel for free or at a reasonable cost and live your travel dreams!**



Image from Adobe Photo Stock

With the five examples of our savings from the trips we noted above, you can see what many spend on daily lunch and coffee could take you on a fantastic lifetime trip. Even if you are that person putting aside some dollars each week along with rewards and miles, you can travel affordably. This is not out of most people's reach. With a plan, it may take a couple of years to build up enough points, but you learn the ropes before you know it.

You have even greater control if you are okay with lower-rated hotels, willing to fly economy, and don't pre-assign your seats. If you are not into eating out all the time, you can get into some local grocery stores and save a ton of money. If you are willing to take public transportation, you can save on rental cars, gas, parking, and tolls. Imagine how low some of our numbers could have been if we had done that!

## Final Thoughts



Eiffel Tower, Paris

Our goal in this post was to have you see how you can travel for free or affordably if you play your cards right. You don't have to be rich or save for decades. We are passionate about travel and its life-changing impact. It has brought us so much joy, and we were hoping you could discover that wonder too. But, like most of you, costs are a factor but should not keep you from traveling.

Start researching; before you know it, you will work towards free travel. Now all you have to do is decide where your first adventure will take you. If only that were an easy choice!

Bon Voyage.

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[Squaremouth.com](#)

## **Our favorite travel insurance site!**

If you book a trip, don't forget to get travel insurance within 14 days of your first booking. We could not be stronger advocates of being well-insured. Not just for the little stuff but the big things like medical emergencies. We never leave home without it. Over the years, we have used many sites but have now found our go-to place. [Squaremouth.com](https://www.squaremouth.com) does a fantastic job; it has a user-friendly interface, uses top-rated and reputable insurance carriers, and most policies cover COVID-19 medical issues and cancellations. They also mediate on your behalf if you have problems with your policy.

To empower you as a consumer, we suggest you read our [blog post](#) on the importance of travel insurance and how to get the best coverage from top-rated companies for an affordable price.

### [MedjetAssist](#)

## **Medical transport back home from anywhere in the world**

They are the premier global air medical transport. One caveat to travel insurance is that medical evacuation usually gets you to the closest facility to care for you. Medjet gets you back to the U.S. to the hospital of your choice once you are stable enough to fly. They cover COVID-related transport as well.

[Medjet](#) carries its own policies. These policies are only for transport and do not cover other aspects of travel insurance. They have individual trip policies starting at \$99 and annual policies for around \$300. Most of their policies limit the age to 74 and younger. Prices are not based on age below that.

To learn more about how Medical Evacuation membership with Medjet Assist works, check out our [blog post](#) for a more detailed review.

### [Expedia.com](#)

## **Hotels, home rentals, BNBs, flights, and other transportation & tours**

[Expedia](#) is a US-based company whose mission is to power global travel for everyone and everywhere. Whether planning a family vacation, booking for business, or organizing the trip of a lifetime, they are a fantastic resource. Wanderers Compass focuses on independent travel, and using sites like [Expedia](#) makes that possible. Every aspect of travel you need, from airfare, accommodations, rental car, and cruises to activities to do at your destination, can be booked on [Expedia](#).

### [Booking.com](#)

## **Hotels, Home rentals, BNBs, Flights, and other Transportation & Tours**

[Booking.com](#) connects millions of travelers to memorable experiences, various transportation options, and incredible places to stay – from homes to hotels and much more. It is one of the world's largest travel marketplaces for established brands and entrepreneurs of all sizes.

We always check Expedia and Booking.com to verify prices. At times, one is sold out of rooms while another at the same place has rooms. We also often find some European hotels, especially smaller ones, on Booking.com but not on Expedia. It could be they are a Europe-based company. Try both before booking accommodations.

### [Vacation Rental By Owner \(VRBO\)](#)

#### **Are you traveling with a family or having an extended stay at your destination?**

With over 2 million bookable vacation rentals, [VRBO](#) connects homeowners with families and vacationers looking for something more than a hotel for their trip. The [VRBO](#) community offers families or groups various rental property types such as condos, cabins, lake rentals, beach houses, etc.

[VRBO](#) is now under the Expedia group's ownership, which many were worried about, but it hasn't panned out to be a concern. It is a massive network with access to all lodging forms should issues arise. Joelle has used VRBO for many years with her family and has had no problems with it.

### [Viator](#)

As the leading marketplace for travel experiences, [Viator](#) believes that making memories is what travel is all about. And with 300,000+ experiences to explore—everything from simple tours to extreme adventures (and all the niche, interesting stuff in between)—making memories that will last a lifetime has never been easier.

With industry-leading flexibility and last-minute availability, it's never too late to make any day extraordinary. This one site has it all and has experiences throughout the world. We use them often during our travels, especially for food tours. We especially take the time to read the reviews provided.

### [Amazon.com](#)

#### **An excellent source for travel essentials and guides**

*We now have our own Amazon Storefront with all our favorite travel accessories and gear in one place. Check out our travel store at the link below.*

### [Wanderers Compass Amazon Storefront](#)

Amazon is one of the most comprehensive online shopping sources in the world. Teams worldwide provide lower prices, better selection, and rapid delivery on behalf of customers. They offer a vast inventory, and their 1.7 million small and medium businesses worldwide selling on Amazon.com offer extensive options to customers.

We buy most of our travel books, accessories, and luggage from Amazon. We have ordered up to two days before travel and get what we need.

## [HYDAWAY](#)

This is not your ordinary drinkware company. The **HYDAWAY** difference is what their products do when you're not using them. Practical and portable, HYDAWAY doesn't take up unnecessary space in your already-packed life or pile up in landfills. We all know that trying to pack light while being environmentally conscious can be difficult. Having the right items can make a world of difference. [HYDAWAY](#) provides that.

We have used their collapsible water bottle, carrying case for the water bottle, and collapsible insulated drink tumbler. They are all lightweight and durable. A conservation-focused product you can be proud to buy.

**Use our Promo Code. WANCOM15, at checkout for 15% off your Hydaway order**

## [Welcome Pick-ups](#) (Airport and sightseeing service)

A global leader in ground transportation for travelers. They help hundreds of companies worldwide enhance their services and boost their revenue with our 5-star ride experiences and hassle-free automation.

Founded in 2015 in Athens, Greece, [Welcome Pick-ups](#) goes above and beyond the standard transfer service as the first company to deliver a holistic, in-destination travel experience. From the moment a traveler arrives at a new destination until they return home, Welcome accommodates all their travel needs (transfers, travel products, things to do, information) as the easiest, friendliest, and most personalized solution.

## [PhotoAiD](#)

Do you feel like you are wasting time visiting an on-site photographer only to be embarrassed by the photo? Would you like control of the final product? Get the perfect VISA or passport photo online with PhotoAID.

When traveling, you often need to apply for official documents such as a passport, ID, and different kinds of licenses or cards. Those applications require a picture that must meet specific conditions to be accepted, depending on the country. Now, it is possible to take this picture at home without the help of a professional photographer. PhotoAiD allows you to take the perfect biometric photo you approve without leaving home.

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