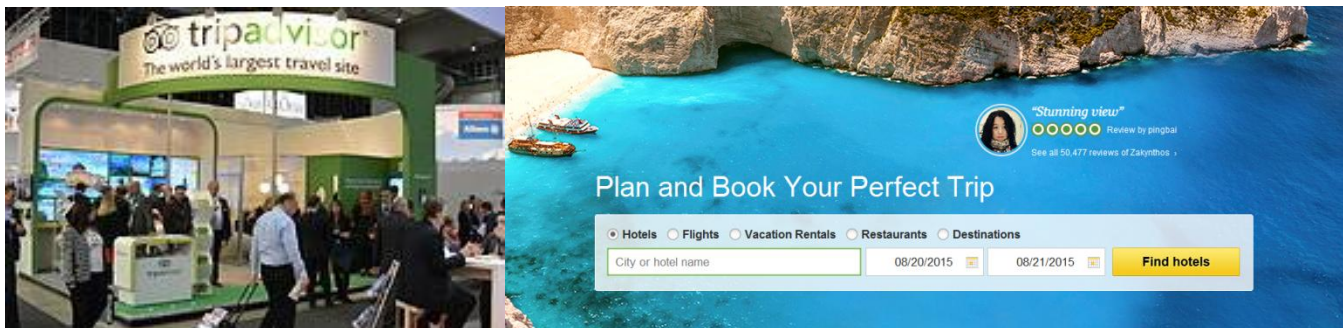


# Helpful Websites

## Hotels

**Hotwire** When you're in a large city, book through Hotwire, which often gives you the best deals. There are two types of rates—standard rates, which give you the name of the hotel, and secret “hot rate” rates—where Hotwire gives you a location where the hotel is in, but doesn't tell you the name of the hotel. If you use “hot rate” rates, you'll often get a huge discount on prices, but make sure the hotel's ratings look decent.

**TripAdvisor** TripAdvisor is a very helpful site when booking hotels. TripAdvisor lists all the hotels in a city and then lists travel sites' prices (such as Hotels.com, Expedia, and Travelocity). This way, you'll be able to see which site has the best prices, without having to look at tons of sites. Also, you can read traveler's reviews on the hotels you're staying at. See our other exhibit on TripAdvisor at the museum >



**Rocketmiles** If you travel a few times a year, commit to staying at a certain brand of hotels or a certain airline (such as Choice Hotels—Quality Inn, Comfort Inn, and Rodeway Inn or American Airlines). When you book through Rocketmiles, you're spending the same price for hotels on other sites, but you're also earning points or miles for a certain brand. It's a very helpful site that saves you money in the long run. Just be careful of what hotel or airline you're earning the points for (don't be earning points for a brand of cheap motels and then say, “I'm never staying here again!” even though you've earned free-night points).

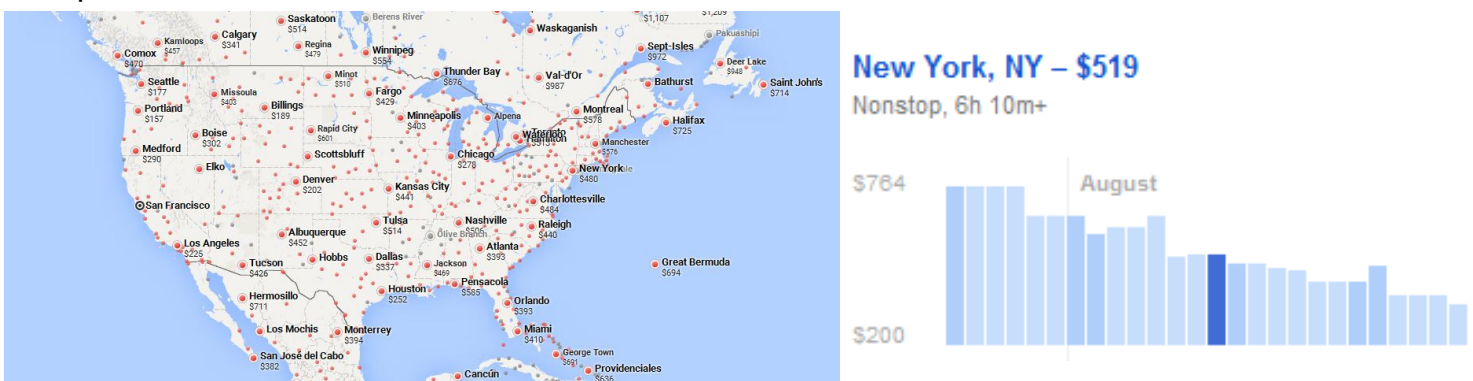
**Book Direct** When you book through the actual hotel's website, you'll often find other discounts, such as AAA or AARP, which Hotwire and TripAdvisor doesn't have. Plus, if you commit to staying at a certain brand or chain of hotels, you'll earn points when you book directly and present your member number.

**Hotels.com** Hotels.com offers a helpful and cost-saving product—stay 10 nights and get the eleventh one free. While this might seem like a lot of paying nights, going on a weekend getaway, spring break trip, and short summer vacation can add up to 10 nights. Also, Hotels.com’s “Secret Prices” are lowered, discounted prices for Rewards members and Hotels.com app users. Make sure to sign up for their rewards program and save big!

**Groupon** Lastly, Groupon has quite a few deals for each city on their website. Sign up for Groupon and choose a city you’re going to go on a vacation in, and deals will come flying in to your email! Plus, Groupon has lots of hotel deals, too.

## Flights

**Google Flights** Google Flights is a very helpful way to book flights. When you are searching flights, you can look at a map of the whole world. Each airport has a location on the map, and it shows the price of the flight. This way, when you’re researching costs, you don’t have to keep entering in data, you can just see the costs all at once. Also, Google’s low fare calendar shows the cost of flights in one month. It shows each day’s price from the destination to the arrival city. If you’re flexible about your days when you’re traveling, look at Google Flights’ low fare calendar and see which day is cheapest.



**Hotwire** Check Hotwire for flights. Sometimes, Hotwire can be cheaper than booking direct and booking through Google. Also, Hotwire shows how recommended the flight is (such as *Satisfactory Flight – 5.5 out of 10*). This is very useful because it can let you know which flight to take, if there’s more than one at the same price.

**Book Direct** When you book direct through an airline, you may find cheaper fares, sales, and you will earn miles. Websites like Hotwire and Flights.com don’t allow you to earn miles for your airline, so you will be spending money that can’t ever be used

again. Also, when you sign up for email promotions from your airline, they will let you know when there are sales, or give you a coupon code. (If you're like us, and don't like a lot of junk mail, create a separate email for companies to send you promotions with.)

## Other Websites

**SmarterTravel** SmarterTravel is an excellent website when you're planning trips, because it gives you insights on travel, tips on travel, and discounted airfare. If you sign up for their newsletters, you will learn lots of tips (some you may want to bookmark for your next trip) and learn things to do or places to stay when you're traveling. Visit [SmarterTravel.com](http://SmarterTravel.com) to sign up.

**AirfareWatchDog** AirfareWatchDog, like SmarterTravel, is a TripAdvisor affiliate. By signing up for promotions, AirfareWatchDog will save you money and time. Sign up for a route or routes that you want airfare updates on, and AirfareWatchDog will send emails to you. Often times, they will show you that this price is the lowest fare in 30 days. Also, they will send you what sales are going on at airlines (such as \$49+O/W to Los Angeles from San Jose.) Visit [AirfareWatchDog.com](http://AirfareWatchDog.com) to sign up.

**TripAdvisor** TripAdvisor is an excellent site to visit before planning your trip. By looking at hotels, attractions, and restaurants in the city or cities that you're vacationing to, you will be able to feel good about what you're booking. You can read through the most recent reviews of the establishment, look at the rating summary (Location—1/5, Value—5/5, Sleep Quality—4/5) or look at the terrible reviews. Sometimes, there can be many terrible reviews, but they may be from a long time ago, or they include problems that aren't really a big deal, such as an insect in the pool, which means the hotel is "absolutely disgusting!" Also, TripAdvisor shows you many booking sites' prices on hotels, so you will be able to see tons of prices without going to each site.

**VIA Magazine** Lastly, VIA Magazine's website, [ViaMagazine.com](http://ViaMagazine.com), is very helpful when you're planning trips. Even if you're not a AAA member, you can still learn tips from the website. Click on 'Travel Tips' at the top, or read the recent articles, some of which are from the print magazine. Also, when you know where you're going on a vacation, search that city in the search box, and see what articles come up. You can also download the VIA magazine app.