



TRAVEL TIPS

Saving Money On Hotel Rooms

(NAPSA)—Whether you're jetting off on a getaway, planning a family vacation or traveling for business, where you stay can be among the most important factors for happiness on your trip. Fortunately, there's an easy and cost-efficient way to find just the right accommodations to suit your needs: book online.

With 30 percent of hotel rooms unsold nightly, more hotels are offering discount rates online. In today's tough economy, it's a great time to take advantage of these bargains and save big. Travel journalist Mary-Jo Lipman offers these tips for finding and booking a hotel:

- Stay in a business hotel on a weekend. Many hotels are geared toward mid-week business travelers, leaving them with plenty of unfilled rooms on the weekend, which they offer at special low rates.

- Visit a destination during off-peak periods. With the tourists gone for the season, hotels tend to significantly lower their room rates. You'll save a bundle while enjoying more personalized attention and a less crowded hotel, too.

- Compare rates on all hotels. Surprisingly, it's common to find a better rate at a three star hotel than at a two star hotel. Don't just look at rates at economy hotels, check for special Web rates on luxury hotels too. The unique Matrix Display on www.Orbitz.com, a popular travel site, lets you compare all available hotels in a city on one screen, based on price,



An online travel site can point you in the right direction to get the best for less.

location and quality (one to five star ratings).

- Choose your own amenities. Search the 'Net for "pet friendly," "exercise room," "meeting facility available," "handicap accessible" or whatever meets your needs.

- Be flexible about neighborhoods. A hotel room in the center of a city, close to major tourist attractions, will probably cost more.

- Pay in advance. If your travel plans are set, consider paying your hotel reservation up front to save up to 75 percent. The rate is found on Orbitz.com as an "OrbitzSaver" (look for the blue arrow). The discount rate, available online, is offered by more than 4,000 hotels worldwide.

"There are so many great hotel deals out there, there's no need to overspend on a night's stay," said Lipman. "The Internet makes it easy to search and compare tens of thousands of properties in one click."