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HOTEL
HACKS

TO GET THE BEST DEALS



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20 Hotel Hacks to Get the Best Deals

It goes without saying that hotel staycation can be expensive. As with any average staycationer on a limited budget, you would want to know how you could make the most of your hotel stay at the best possible price. After all, you have saved up your hard-earned money for that much-awaited break from your job or business, and want to enjoy your staycation without undue stress or hassle, most especially from expenses.

Unfortunately, many staycationers often realize that they did not really get the best deals for their hotel stays. And in some cases, they ended up overpaying just because they were unaware of the existence of some less-known hotel hacks and strategies that could have pared their hotel accommodation costs by at least a few bucks.

It is not enough that you know how to book your hotel room through online sites or that you're familiar with standard hotel policies. Here are a few extremely useful and helpful hacks to get your money's worth as well as to make your stay more enjoyable.

Booking the Room

1. Use reputable booking sites

Booking sites give you the most reasonable rates plus other useful information, such as room availabilities on specific dates and details about amenities. Many also contain reviews from past hotel guests. Travel sites like [Agoda](#) sometimes feature promotional rates for some hotel rooms, as much as 50-75% off! Compare at least three of them to take note of price differences and room features. Sometimes the differences can be pretty glaring! Some aggregator sites like Kayak can show you rates of several online booking sites all at once, so you can find out the best deal in a flash. But the downside is that you would have to prepay for your reservation in full.

2. Call the hotel or property owner directly

Despite numerous hotel booking and bidding sites, you may still not be able to get the "best" deal. Some hotels offer only a handful of their best rooms and save the rest for walk-ins or corporate guests who could pay more for the rooms. In [Airbnb](#), you can contact property owner prior to booking, so go ahead and email or call him directly to negotiate a better rate, as well as to clarify terms and conditions.

I also had an actual experience of calling the hotel about a room I wanted, one which could accommodate a group of 6 people. The hotel booking site offered only one such room, so I thought I would take the chance by contacting the hotel manager directly. Lo and behold, there was one more, and it was available at a great price. The

manager even said that they didn't advertise the room on online sites because it was supposed to be a promotion for locals. I was just lucky it was available at the right time and that he was willing to accommodate me. Plus, I didn't even have to pay in full to reserve the room, just the first night. Talk about a real steal!

3. Avail from group buying sites

Check out hotel and travel deals at [Deal Grocer](#), [MetroDeal](#), [CashCashPinoy](#) or other online group buying sites. You'll be surprised at the amazing rates they offer. One catch is that these have to be bought and used within specific deadlines, and usually only during weekdays or non-holidays so carefully read the fine print. Cancellation and rescheduling policies should be strictly followed or you forfeit the whole deal, and your money. The other catch is that the room may not be up to your expectations. But you can always call the hotel to verify the amenities and features of the room prior to booking.

4. Pay attention to reviews

Read up on reviews and blogs written by previous guests to get a well-rounded perspective of the hotel. But do exercise discernment over which ones are honest and which ones are deliberately meant to ruin the hotel's reputation. There will always be at least one unhappy guest, but then again, he may just be too hard to please in the first place. Another good place to look for reviews is the hotel's Facebook page (if any). You get not only feedback but also announcements of any existing or forthcoming promotions offered by the hotel. The hotel's Facebook page is also handy for making inquiries and getting almost-instant replies.

5. Book refundable rooms and check back on other deals

If you were given ample time by the booking site to cancel any reservation, why not scout around some more? Who knows you may be able to spot another much better deal? Then you can just cancel your prior reservation and book the new one at better terms. But book the new room first before cancelling the previous one, just in case the new room is suddenly not available.

6. Avail of credit card signup bonuses or promotions

Many credit cards (hopefully also your own) send offers on fantastic hotel deals to new credit card users or to existing users of excellent standing. Just use your credit card to reserve the room.

7. Use your loyalty points

Hotel booking sites offer loyalty programs to frequent users. Like miles for flights, these loyalty points will come in handy for your next hotel booking. Also check your credit card points which may entitle you to discounted or even free stays at some hotels.

8. Book your flight and hotel together

Some sites like [Expedia](#) offer great discounts if you book both your flight and hotel accommodations with them at the same time. But you must also be aware that you are obligated to pay the bookings in advance, so you must already have a firm decision about your travel plans.

9. Negotiate lower room rates for longer stays

Almost all hotels are open to giving you lower rates for stays longer than several days. You can also try negotiating a lower rate if you had to extend your stay due to unexpected flight delays.

10. Book during off-seasons

Hotels will always be eager to offer you discounts and other specials just to increase their occupancy rates during slow seasons. You also get extra-special service quality and full attention because the staff won't be as busy or stressed during this time. Remember though that slow seasons also mean fewer places that are open to visit and less than ideal weather.

While at the Hotel

11. Make friends with the bellhop, concierge, and hotel staff.

Flash your nicest smile and most pleasant manners to the hotel staff. Even take selfies with them to win their hearts. Slip in a small tip at the front desk. Most hotels know that this practice is a guest's gesture intending to ask for free upgrades or extras, like an unspoken rule. If they are in no position to give you an upgrade, they will also secretly slip your tip back to you so there's no harm trying. More often than not, they will at least offer you something in lieu of upgrades. And if you have any complaint about the room, do express your dissatisfaction with utmost politeness, and see how quickly your problem will get resolved. Furthermore, you could get a great discount deal for future bookings with the hotel as compensation for your complaint. Being sweet and friendly has its rewards!

12. Inform the hotel about any special occasion you're celebrating during your stay.

Do you or any of your travel companions have a birthday or anniversary soon? Do tell the front desk about it when you check in. By informing the hotel about the special occasion (you'll need proof in some cases), you can get complimentary items such as a small cake, a token gift, or even a free upgrade.

13. Offer to write a review

You can tell the hotel that you would like to post a review in [TripAdvisor](#) or other hotel booking sites where it is featured. For this, you could possibly get a free upgrade, discounts, or complimentary meals. At the worst, you get no perks at all but you'll be treated like royalty. No hotel wants to get a bad review, that's for sure!

14. Shun the food and drinks in your room's mini bar.

Hotels normally provide complimentary drinks upon your check-in. But unless it's an emergency (really late at night), avoid consuming the drinks and food that are kept at the mini bar of your room. Or if you did consume them, do replenish them as soon as possible, before you check-out in order to avoid extra charges. You'll be shocked to know how much the hotel charges for even a small bag of potato chips or bottled water. Instead, buy your drinks and snacks at the nearby convenience store or grocery to take to your room. And don't forget to buy some paper plates and disposable utensils so you don't need to call room service to bring you some, as this might cost you.

15. Check with the concierge about other freebies you are entitled to.

Being a hotel guest allows you access to almost all of the hotel's amenities for free. Certain room accommodation types also give you complimentary breakfasts and free refill of bottled water. Confirm those perks with the hotel, especially wifi connection. While this is an increasingly common hotel freebie, there are still some hotels that do charge you for wifi use. Know your entitlements!

16. Ask to see the rooms first before settling into one.

Unethical as it may sound, many hotels would offer the less attractive rooms first, especially if you reserved under a promotion. Yes, all rooms have the same amenities, but maybe the room you were assigned is at the farthest end of the hall when in fact a better room (great outdoor view or positioned near elevators) is actually available. Assert your rights as a paying guest to get a room that you'll be happy with.

17. Don't avail of the hotel's laundry service (unless it's part of your room package)

As with mini bar food and drinks, laundry services in hotels cost an arm and a leg. Instead, look for a local laundromat or dry cleaning shop nearby. And go for self-service facilities to save even more bucks. Or if you're staying for a longer term, why not bring your own laundry soap for handwashing undies and delicate outfits? You can use the shower area or sink to soak them in.

18. Use the room TV's USB port

Nothing to watch on television? Or maybe you don't like the free movie titles offered by the hotel? You can use the room's big screen TV to play Netflix movies right from your tablet or laptop. Big screen televisions have USB ports for you to plug in your device's connector cables. Now you can enjoy the latest movies of your choice in the comfort of your own room. Remember to buy some popcorn or snacks beforehand. And did you know that you can use the TV to charge your device, in case you forgot to bring your charger?

At Checkout

19. Be clear about the hotel's policies for checkout time

Most hotels are quite lenient about check-in and checkout schedules, usually allowing you to bring in your luggage a few hours ahead of check-in time, and letting you off on extra charges if you check out a bit later. If you're not in a hurry to get to the airport or train station anyway, you can ask to hang out in your hotel room for at least an hour even after checking out. Or you can request to keep your belongings (locked of course) in the hotel's storage area, which is normally free of charge, while you go for last minute shopping or dining after checking out.

20. Sign up for loyalty or membership programs

If you really enjoyed your hotel stay and want to return to the same hotel next time, why not register to be a member of the hotel's loyalty program? You can also request the hotel staff to inform you of any special promotions they might be offering in the future. Make sure to give your business card or contact information, and to get the hotel's business card as well. Likewise, you can register at a hotel booking site to be a regular member, especially if you've used the site's services more than once. Joining a loyalty program will come in handy for your next vacation.

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