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and ways
to indulge all
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travel101

Consider this your cheat sheet for **planning a cheaper trip**.

BY DAVID LAHUTA

[planes]

Find a low fare and you're good to go. Here's how.



➔ book wisely

Skip Expedia, Travelocity and Orbitz—which often tack on service fees—and find the cheapest flights on meta-search engines like Sidestep and Kayak. Also, sign up for personalized airfare alerts on [airfarewatchdog.com](#).

➔ b.y.o. everything

Airlines are charging for onboard amenities that were once gratis, so plan ahead. Bring food that travels well (like nuts, dried fruit or sandwiches made with mustard), as well as headphones or a personal DVD player.

➔ bust a myth

For years it's been said that the best time to shop for airfare was on a certain weeknight in the wee hours, when new flights were posted. Big. Fat. Lie. To find the best fares, aim for a midweek departure, fly during off-peak hours and, most of all, be flexible with your travel dates.

➔ use 'em or lose 'em

Using miles is a great way to save money, but on some airlines—including United and US Airways—you'll lose them all if your account is stagnant for more than 18 months. To

protect yours, buy inexpensive items like magazine subscriptions on the individual carrier's website.

➔ clear your cookies

Search a travel site for airfare twice in a row, and you might get two different prices. That's because your computer stores bits of information, called "cookies," that alert the website that you've already been there. Clear them (by emptying your cache, usually found under "preferences" or "tools") and you'll be treated like a new customer. You might even find lower fares.

FINANCIAL BAGGAGE ALL SIX MAJOR U.S. AIRLINES CHARGE AT LEAST \$25 TO CHECK A SECOND BAG. GOOD THING YOU CAN EASILY MAKE UP THE DIFFERENCE.

1. Call a hotel directly instead of using its off-site toll-free number: The front desk is often privy to local promotions. Better yet, check the website for online-only discounts. 2. Most big cities have a daily or weekly transit pass that's more affordable than paying for public transportation à la carte. 3. Sign up for car rental-, airline- and hotel-loyalty programs before you reserve anything. Most are free to join and provide discount coupons and free upgrades.

[trains]

Some travelers can beat gas prices by hopping aboard a train.



Parents with a child in junior or senior year of high school

Buy one full-fare ticket and your teenager gets 50 percent off. ([campusvisit.com/amtrak](#))



Mom, Dad, child and infant

Kids ages 2 to 15 get 50 percent off adult fares, and a child under 2 rides free. (on weekend *Acela Express* service, [amtrak.com](#))

[automobiles]

Saving fuel is a gas, gas, gas!

SLOW YOUR ROLL

Fuel mileage decreases rapidly when driving over 60 mph, so lay off the gas. Also, avoid "jackrabbit" starts and stops. Slow and steady wins this race.



MAP IT

Type in an address or intersection at [gasprices.mapquest.com](#), and the site will create a map of nearby gas stations arranged by price.

CALCULATE YOUR COST

AAA's [fuelcostcalculator.com](#) helps predict how much you'll spend on gas, based on current prices, driving distance and your specific car.

SLEEP SMART

Reserve rooms that offer gas cards. [Bedandbreakfast.com](#), which represents nearly 7,000 B&Bs, offers free gas promotions at many of its member properties.

PACK LIGHT

Extra weight in the trunk can reduce fuel economy, and an overloaded roof rack, which creates wind resistance, only makes matters worse.

→ travel101

No-brainer moves can save you serious bucks.

[shoes]

Wearing the wrong footwear will cause monster blisters *and* a dent in your wallet from all the cabs you'll have to take.



FOR MEN

Blundstone 500 leather boots—made by a family-owned company since 1870—are lightweight, durable and have a lifetime guarantee. (blundstoneus.com, \$145)



FOR WOMEN

She can walk all day in hand-stitched leather **EL Naturalista Iggdrasil shoes**. (elnaturalista.com, \$160)



FOR KIDS

Keen Youth Targhee shoes slip on easily and are made to keep kids' feet nice and cool. (keenfootwear.com, \$55)



[snacks]

Hungry travelers make unhealthy, expensive mealtime decisions. **Charles Stuart Platkin**, author of *The Diet Detective's Count Down* (\$13, Fireside), suggests these treats.

- You'll find pieces of freeze-dried fruit like banana or pineapple (so plenty of vitamins and fiber) in bags of **Funky Monkey**. (funkymonkeysnacks.com, from \$2.20)
- **Popchips Original Potato Chips** are made by applying heat and pressure—like popcorn. (popchips.com, from \$1.50)
- With **You Bars**, you pick the base—almond butter or organic dates, for instance—then choose the other ingredients, like nuts, seeds and berries. (youbars.com, about \$38 for a box of 13 bars)
- Even so-called healthy muffins can pack upwards of 400 calories. **Vitalicious VitaTops** are only 100 calories and taste like the real thing. (vitalicious.com, 4-packs from \$4.50)

[how you save]

Every Day with Rachael Ray readers reveal their secrets.

"Our main expense is food, so we've learned to research the best bakeries in town and pick up fresh pastries to eat in our hotel room. Sometimes we'll eat these for an early snack, enjoy a later breakfast and skip lunch."

"We're staying in motels a short drive away, so our money stays in our state, and we use less fuel."

"We take one grand-slam summer vacation instead of a lot of shorter weekend trips."

"We charge our gas and groceries on a card that gets miles, and cash those in for a yearly family trip."

[games]

Think of travel games as cheap babysitters.



- Unzip the metal tins containing these **Go Games** and find mini versions of chess or pachisi. (flight001.com, \$12, ages 4+)



- **Banagrams** challenge players to create words until all the letter tiles are gone. Everyone plays at once, so there's no waiting for your turn. (flight001.com, \$16, ages 7+)

- Create your own **scavenger hunt** at any art museum. Head straight to the gift shop and buy postcards of the paintings hanging on the walls. Then walk through the museum trying to spot those works.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LISA SHIN.



win it! The only thing better than a cheap trip is a free one! One reader will win a three-night stay at the Westin Aruba, valued at more than \$2,000. Enter to win at rachaelraymag.com/giveaway. See page 18 for rules.