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How to travel in luxury without spending a fortune



Jun 01, 2017



The vacation of your dreams is closer than you think if you plan your trip like a pro. Here Deborah Thompson, travel expert and editor-in-chief of the New Jetsetters website and magazine, shares her best advice.

“Luxury travel is about deciding what’s ‘splurge-worthy,’” she explains. “We try to have at least one amazing meal on vacation. The location of the venue — overlooking a spectacular landmark or gorgeous vista — adds to the appeal, of course.”

Fly in affordable style. Thompson often treats herself by opting for the mid-range version of a carrier’s options. For example, Air Canada’s Premium Economy Class offers a larger seat, extra legroom and other perks, but is a lot less expensive than business or first class on those long-haul flights to Asia.

Purchase access to Maple Leaf Lounge. Consider purchasing a one-time access to the Maple Leaf Lounge to freshen up, indulge and recharge with beverages, food and high-speed internet access.

Set a daily allowance. Plan what you want to do each day before you leave, allotting a specific amount for meals and entertainment. If you allot \$50 for breakfast and then decide you only want bagels and a coffee one day, the money saved can go towards a nicer dinner or a bottle of wine with your meal.

Dish out for dream digs. The highest-priced rooms are unaffordable for most of us, but if you look carefully at the different categories, you’ll likely find one that will be luxurious for you. Remember that the service you receive at a good luxury hotel will be the same for all guests, regardless of which room number is yours. Often, it’s not the size of the room that’s important, but the quality of the bed and linens, the upscale amenities, and a gorgeous bathtub with a view.

Purchase in advance. Always pre-buy museum, event and rail tickets. This helps plan your expenses in advance, meaning you’re not surprised when you reach the front of the line and find out your day’s budget is blown on just museum tickets. Getting your tickets in advance also lets you sign up for email alerts, meaning you’ll be able to score a great deal on your air fare and a freebie or discount at restaurants and attractions.

Check out the “shoulder season.” The cost of your dream room will usually be much less in the time periods between high and low seasons. If you choose the dates closest to when the high season rate begins or ends, you’ll have much the same weather.

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 