



After seeing exciting ads for a seaside resort hotel, we booked a weekend. In the ads, it showed happy visitors enjoying lush rooms, pool, beach and dining in fancy restaurants. Actually, for us the hotel was old and dirty, the food awful and the beach worse. How can we avoid this kind of rip-off? *PLJ, NYC*

A: Take all big-promise TV, smartphone and print travel ads with caution. Like the miracle drugs, fancy cars and other flowery product ads that are endlessly repeated, most is exaggerated promotion. Before you book, check several independent websites such as TripAdvisor that sensibly review travel destinations.