



Off-season vacations are cheaper

Despite what the ads say, there's really no such thing as a totally all-inclusive resort. All-inclusive means you'll get the basic meals and lodging for one price, but other features usually cost extra. They may include a variety of taxes, tips, alcoholic drinks, spa treatments, upscale dining, excursions and other add-ons.

That said, and if you're aware of what you may have to pay extra, all-inclusive resorts can be great bargains. Those single-pay vacations can also be more convenient when you need to put out just one price at the beginning, because you don't have to dig for money ten times a day, as is required on all other kinds of vacation travels.

When looking for the best deals, consider booking in the off-season. For example, all-inclusive resort hotel prices in South Florida from November through March can average \$500 a day and up, often way, way up. The same hotels may offer the same deals during the rest of the year for half the price.

For winter and ski vacations in Colorado's snow-capped mountains, prices from December through February at all-inclusive resorts are about the same high level as those in Florida, and are greatly reduced in summertime when the snow is gone. Mountain resorts in the summertime can offer glorious views, great hiking, boating and other warm-weather fun activities.

Before you pay for certain extras on an all-inclusive resort vacation, be sure you're aware of the prices for each of them. For example, if an excursion from your hotel to a local casino or sightseeing costs \$25 a person, consider gathering several others and take a local taxi at lower cost.

You can get the best deals at all-inclusive resorts by planning a group trip. Check with your local school, college, church or employer, to find out if you can get cooperation in organizing a group

vacation. In addition to getting lower prices for each person in the group, resorts and airlines often offer one free trip for each 10 or 15 people booked in a group. This can be passed on as additional savings to each person or the trip organizer can earn a free vacation.

Of course, some of the best deals at all-inclusive resorts are available way beyond the U.S. borders. Seasonal changes also affect prices at vacation destinations in the Caribbean, Mexico, Canada, Europe, Asia, South America and the Pacific islands. If you find a specific resort you're interested in visiting, go to its email ad and get all the information about its seasonal pricing. Additionally, the same off-season bargains abound on cruises, where everything is all-inclusive cruises, except for those nasty add-ons.

If you're interested in an all-inclusive experience at a resort or other vacation destination at the best possible prices, check frequently with your favorite hometown or online travel agency.