



Many of today's senior wanderers can remember not so many years ago when the best hotel rooms cost \$25 a night, and upscale hotel restaurants charged \$10 for a steak dinner and all the trimmings.

However, not wanting to be left out of the pricing robbery of consumers by the oil and airline industry, hotels now charge ten times that rate for rooms and meals. Another trick way to get into guest wallets is the infamous minibar. The only advice you need about those little iceboxes is: Hands off! Don't even touch the door handle! First, before you check into your hotel, request your room mini bar be locked. Even so, there may be a service charge just because the annoying thing sits there. You may also request that it be removed from the room so you're not obliged to pay a rip-off fee for that dubious privilege.

Seasoned senior travelers know why minibars should be avoided. The prices of the snacks, sodas, water and beer are usually as much as 300% more than you'd pay at the store just down the street from the hotel. The same applies to items you may need in the hotel lobby stores. Of course, if you're too important, rich or lazy to go out to get the stuff at normal prices, or it can be listed on your expense account, go ahead and pay the robbery prices.