



We don't have to remind seasoned senior travelers that basic costs keep rising everywhere. Piled on are also the surprise add-ons.

The quoted prices don't tell all, such as promising a Las Vegas hotel suite for just \$99.99 a night; or fly to Europe for merely \$399.99, or sail on a Caribbean cruise for a bargain \$999.99. What's not advertised is that you'll actually pay another 25% or more in not-so-hidden charges.

In hotels, aboard cruise ships and at other vacation havens, there are even more surprise charges, such as a resort fee of \$20 or more a night. Another add-on could be a \$5 turn-down service (replacing the free chocolate candy you used to find on your pillow). There may also be an internet charge, valet fee, honor bar and others, even if you don't use them. Can anything be done about rising hidden cost surprises? Answer: give it your best shot. When booking your \$99.99 bargain, before you buy, state clearly that you want to see the actual total out-of-pocket cost.

Then later, when checking out at the hotel or cruise ship desk, go over the list of add-ons and state firmly that you never used some or all of the useless items, and shouldn't have to pay for them. It's worth the effort, even if all you get is a less-friendly kind of turn-down.