

# THE SUN

## Ready, set, go: Cyber Monday travel deals

By Stephanie Citron,  
For The Baltimore Sun

**P**ractically everybody knows that Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, is when folks can score some of the season's best prices on items like electronics and fashion. Now savvy travelers have discovered that they too can land sensational deals if they wait just a few days later, for Cyber Monday, held this year on Dec. 1.

Of course, there are countless travel websites broadcasting great deals every day. So, are Cyber Monday deals really that extraordinary by comparison?

"Yes, I can say absolutely," says Robert Firpo-Cappiello, editor in chief of Budget Travel magazine. "Last year we saw Starwood Hotels [including the W, Westin and Sheraton brands] offering all of its Caribbean hotels for 50 percent off, and Liftopia [a ski website] held a week-long sale offering 75 percent off lift tickets at 120 ski resorts."

There were also cheap hotel/airfare packages for exotic travel ventures. For example, tour operators like [intrepidtravel.com](http://intrepidtravel.com), a company specializing in adventure vacations, offered 20 percent off all trips for the entire week beginning on Cyber Monday.

The most important thing to know about Cyber Monday travel deals is that they usually have shorter expiration deadlines than other travel sales offered throughout the year. So if you see a great deal to someplace you are dying to go, you'd best act swiftly.

There is often an opportunity to do some research in advance. If you have a favorite hotel or chain, subscribe to their email newsletter, where they alert members in advance of upcoming sales and special offers. You should also follow their Facebook page and Twitter site in the days leading up to Thanksgiving, where they often pre-announce and post teasers about upcoming deals.

For those who prefer to consider all of the options, there are reliable websites that act as clearing houses for travel deals, such as [budgettravel.com](http://budgettravel.com), [travelzoo.com](http://travelzoo.com) and [johnnyjett.com](http://johnnyjett.com), whose founder Johnny Jet advises following travel experts on social media.

"My best advice is to sign up and follow on Twitter/Facebook a variety of travel sites, experts and personalities...as [all of us] will sift through all the Cyber Monday Travel Deals and feature the best ones in our roundups." Daily updates from sites like [airfarewatchdog.com](http://airfarewatchdog.com) will deliver the latest sales directly to your laptop or smart phone. They also are the ones to announce early-bird specials from destinations, meaning you can preview — and often purchase — some Cyber Monday deals during the week leading up to Thanksgiving.

A relatively new Cyber Monday travel trend is Power Hour, where, during one designated hour, travelers can book even deeper discounts on a particular deal. For example, this year, Triumph Hotels, a small hotel chain of upscale boutique properties in NYC is offering 30 percent off on its properties, but during the Power Hour, they slash the savings to 50 percent, including on its suites.

Once you do find a deal, it is wise to investigate all of the factors surrounding your trip. First, do a quick comparison on discount sites like [Hotels.com](http://Hotels.com) to ensure this is a truly exceptional offer worth jumping on. Check for restrictions such as blackout dates, room category and location (with super discounts it is safe to assume you are getting the most basic room, unless otherwise stated), and cancellation policies. If the deal is tied to a package, make sure that you are interested in all of its components; otherwise, you might discover that simply booking the room on a discount site is a better bargain.

If you find an offer on a third-party website, check to see if it is also available on the destination's own website — booking it there will inevitably gain you better bargaining power on upgrades and more clout in case anything goes wrong. Overall, be wary of any unfamiliar third-party site.

Don't forget to factor in what it will cost you to get there. If you need to fly to the destination, check the airline's website and Twitter page for current specials. Be aware, too, that the airlines themselves cannot offer Cyber Monday travel deals because federal regulations do not allow them to announce their sales in advance of offering them.

"But that doesn't mean you can't get airfare savings" says Firpo-Cappiello. "Cruise lines and resort packages often include airfare. They will roll into their price some of the lowest airfare you can find. So, it's not that you can't get an airline deal on Cyber Monday, but you won't get it through the airline, you'll get it through the tour operator."

We've uncovered some phenomenal travel deals well worth pondering. Below are a few and more can be found at [baltimoresun.com/travel](http://baltimoresun.com/travel). Note that most deals are based on availability and at least some blackout dates will apply, so check your calendar closely.

### **New York**

**Triumph Hotels, NYC.** 30 percent off all room categories at any Triumph property for travel Dec. 2-March 31. (Hotel group includes The Iroquois New York, Hotel Chandler, Hotel Belleclaire, The Cosmopolitan, The Gershwin and The Washington Jefferson.) Book during "Power Hour," from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m., and take 50 percent off premium rooms and suites at any Triumph property.

*Book Dec.1 at [triumphhotels.com](http://triumphhotels.com) or call 855-787-4867.*