

How to bag the best holiday deal...

Whether it's booking a holiday at home or abroad, these clever tips and tricks from Jane Hawkes, aka Lady Janey, a consumer champion and travel expert, will help you make big savings

Be flexible

Jane says: 'If you want to save money, flexibility is key to everything from destination, activities, accommodation and transport, to the insurance and booking policies of the providers you choose.'

Avoid holiday hotspots

Jane says: 'You can make some real savings by opting for alternative holiday destinations. For example, rather than heading for your favourite beach resort with its premium price tag, maybe consider a city break. You can get the best of both worlds if the seaside is within short travelling distance.'

'Be open-minded and consider swapping islands for the mainland, or the coast for somewhere inland to find the best deals. Rather than the go-to coastal resorts, consider lesser known destinations, which will likely offer better prices.'

'Staying just a few miles outside of the main resorts, rather than in the centre, can prove to be a thrifty move.'

Try a house swap or house sit

Jane says: 'Why pay for accommodation when you can get it for free? Save money by choosing to house



Jane Hawkes

swap. In addition, you'll benefit from recommendations from your swap partner as to what to do in their local area, and where's best to eat and drink during your stay.

'Alternatively, consider becoming a house sitter. You get somewhere to stay and the owner has peace of mind knowing their house is in safe hands while they're away.'

Travel 'off peak'

Jane says: 'If you can be flexible when you travel, then you're more likely to be able to holiday for less. Midweek departures are less popular than weekends, as are flights at unsociable hours. The last two weeks of the summer holidays are usually a bit cheaper.'

'Travel overnight if your journey is by ferry and purchase a basic ticket as a deck passenger instead of

booking a cabin.

'Fridays are the most popular day for travel so try to avoid if possible. Consider unusual trip lengths (not seven or 14 days) to find the best-value prices.'

Don't fly direct

Jane says: 'Many people prefer to get to their destination as quickly as possible. So they are willing to pay more for direct flights. But if saving money is your priority, indirect flights might be a better option.'

'If you collect air miles, then you'll get points for each leg of the journey. Being flexible with what airport you fly to and from could also save you money.'

Consider your mode of transport

Jane says: 'Consider travelling by ferry, car, rail or coach instead of flying abroad. It's worth taking the time to compare the cost of different options depending on the number of passengers, route

and destination.'

Timely booking

Jane says: 'The first quarter of the year is often the best time to book flights, with January being the busiest month, as it's when summer holiday offers are released.'

'Aside from this, there are a few other booking tips to save you money — book tickets 12 weeks in advance (rail) and six weeks in advance (flights), book a cruise on a Thursday and package holidays on a Monday.'

Clear your online cookies

Jane says: 'If you've been looking at flights and hotels

for a while, clear your browser cookies before booking. This will stop websites hiking up prices simply because they can see you've visited before and are looking to book. You could also use incognito private browsing.'

Shop around for the cheapest flights

Jane says: 'Source the cheapest flights by using online price comparison websites. The best deals could be snapped up quickly or change with little notice. Make sure you don't miss out on a good deal by doing your research beforehand and knowing exactly what you are looking for before you start.'

Don't pay extra for seats

Jane says: 'Most seat allocation systems will try to seat groups on the same booking. If you check in early you should be able to get seats together without paying for the privilege.'

'If you don't mind where you sit, there's no need to pay to pre-book seats. Some

fares include free seat reservations or allow you to choose your seat at the time of booking.'

Book UK accommodation direct

Jane says: 'When you book direct, your host can save money on any online commission and booking fees. This means you could end up being quoted a better price and being able to negotiate additional benefits such as upgrades and free add-ons. Do your research on available options by using price checking sites. But then contact the venue direct.'

Booking a package holiday just for the flight

Jane says: 'It is possible for flights alone to cost more than a package holiday. So it's worth seeing which works out cheaper. There's no obligation to stay in the hotel or use any associated facilities if you have other plans.'

'Package holidays also come with greater consumer protection under The Package and Linked Travel Arrangements 2018.'

'Book your package holiday with a reputable travel agent rather than through a third-party website.'

Check out all-inclusive offers

Jane says: 'An all-inclusive holiday could save you money overall by the time you factor in local costs of food and drink and exchange rates.'

'All-inclusive deals generally include all meals, snacks and drinks (not always alcoholic ones) and often airport transfers too. These are costs that can otherwise quickly add up.'

Make the most of air miles and points

Jane says: 'Collect points and air miles using credit cards and supermarket loyalty to travel for less. Points can be



accrued not just through travel but through your everyday shopping too.'

Haggle

Jane says: 'If you don't ask you definitely don't get! Negotiate with your tour operator on price per person, rather than total cost, so the discounts appear smaller. See if a deal can be price-matched if not beaten. By opening up conversations, you could get a nice discount, upgrade or other perks.'

Holiday at home

Jane says: 'Consider a staycation. How about York instead of Rome, Bath instead of Paris, or Liverpool instead of Barcelona? From the Peak District to Northumberland, there are stunning parts of the UK to explore. So give a staycation consideration before forking out for expensive travel abroad.'

Sign up to hotel loyalty schemes

Jane says: 'When you join a hotel loyalty scheme, you usually receive perks straightaway. However, the benefits really kick in when you've built up rewards over a period of time. So choose a hotel chain you're likely to use the most to get the maximum benefit.'

Use key words in online searches

Jane says: 'Search for discounts

on UK hotel bookings and self-catering holidays by using websites such as vouchercodes.co.uk.

Alternatively, use key words in your searches such as "discount", "voucher" or "voucher code."

Avoid big events

Jane says: 'Check to see if any concert, sporting fixtures, festivals or events are taking place during your planned stay. Avoid these times if you can, as the increased demand for accommodation could result in an increase in costs.'

Check out free attractions

Jane says: 'Fun days out don't need to cost the earth. All destinations at home or abroad will have free attractions. Do your research before you go, so you can keep costs to a minimum. Contact the local tourist office on arrival to find out more.'

Know your consumer rights

Jane says: 'It's essential to check the Ts and Cs of bookings. Not just in terms of cancellations and refund policies, but to ensure you don't get caught out by any unforeseen extra charges. Always opt for providers who offer fair and flexible booking policies.'

● Follow Jane at ladyjaney.co.uk

