

If you've been dreaming about traveling but don't have enough money to go shopping in Paris on a given weekend, don't fret! Welcome to the wonderful community of budget travelers, who kick butt by getting creative and traveling despite limited budgets. Wondering how to save money both before a trip and during a trip? You've come to the right place. We travelers have got each other's back, so here's a list made with love that gives you everything you need to know about traveling on a budget:

## **Saving money**

When you don't have a trust fund and haven't won the lottery, but you still want to travel, the first step is to save money. Now, I know this can be difficult when you don't earn a lot and the cost of living is high. I've been there. While there are definitely legitimate circumstances that make it impossible for someone to save, the reality is that most of us can do it if we're motivated. How exactly? Just keep reading.

### **1. Make a realistic budget**

Every article about saving money will always start off with the most basic thing: Creating a budget. Having a budget is a necessary part of being an adult, and it is also one of the best ways to start your savings plan. To make a realistic budget, keep track of your daily expenses and then at the end of a month organize each category by how much money you're putting into each. This is as easy as downloading an expense tracking plan. Trust me, it will change your life forever.

Hate numbers and suck at Excel? Not an excuse! [Here's](#) a list of websites that do all the dirty budgeting work for you.

### **2. Cut unnecessary expenses**

Once you have a budget laid out, the first thing you should do is cut back on unnecessary expenses. It doesn't mean that you have to stop having fun, or doing things you love. After all, if travel is all about living life to the fullest, this should include the time when you're not on the road. You can, however, make some sacrifices and not spend as much on things you don't need. If you see that you spend a lot when you go out, keep going out, but limit yourself to a drink or two. If you take too many taxis/ubers because you're always late to work, then set your alarm 30 minutes before and take the bus. Things like cable, starbucks, and clothes can easily be replaced by cheaper/free alternatives. Of course, all the money you save from these things should go straight into your savings.

### **3. Save your change**

The 90's are coming back or so they say. And while it's great that everyone is getting their fill of Full House, how about bringing awesome stuff like piggy banks back? Anyone who doesn't believe in the power of piggy banks clearly hasn't used them right. Put in not only your unwanted coins, but actual bills of small amounts. I saved up all my \$1 and \$5 bills, which upped my savings considerably without me even noticing. If you want to be a complete pro

about it, you can also put in any extra cash you earn unexpectedly- birthday gifts, things you sell, money people owe you, etc. You'd be surprised how much small amounts can add up to big ones.

#### **4. Open up a high-yield savings account**

We all have given in to temptation and wasted our savings on things we don't need. To avoid this, the best thing you can do is open up a savings account that is not directly linked to your regular checking account. Shop around and look for a bank that gives you a good interest rate for letting your money sit still for a while. I personally use [Ally](#), as it has great rates and is very convenient. Again, any extra money that you have/save should go to this account (or your piggy bank), and should not be touched until you're ready to buy that plane ticket.

## **Making extra money**

Ok, so now you're saving more money, but at this rate it may take a couple of years to save enough for that epic South American trip. The solution? Figure out a way to make *more* money! Yes, this will mean less free time, and yes, it might be difficult, but it will all be worth it when you're trekking through the Amazon Jungle/skiing in the Alps/surfing in Australia/whatever awesome adventure you're dreaming about. Surprisingly, making extra money is not as difficult as some think.

#### **1. Get a part-time job**

Waitress on the weekends, babysit, work at a mall at nights, do whatever you need to do to make some extra cash. Even if it's just one day a week, those extra hours can go a long way when it comes to saving for your trip. Working two jobs is difficult, but sometimes you need to make the sacrifices.

#### **2. Get a side gig**

Unlike part-time jobs, gigs are more flexible and usually require less time. You can tutor someone, work an event, [take surveys](#), or sell one of your talents. My favorite site for this is [Fiverr](#), where you can sell anything from logo designs to pictures of your feet. With some extra hours of work in a week, you can be making hundreds of dollars a month. Some people even go into the thousands! Other sites where you can freelance include [Upwork](#) and [Freelance](#). Checking out your local Craigslist is also a good way to find out about gigs.

#### **3. Sell stuff**

Declutter your life and sell all the things you don't need. Whether you hold a garage sale, or sell on [Ebay](#), it'll be a win-win situation. You probably won't make the big bucks, but a few hundreds never hurt anyone, and having less things will make you feel better. If you don't have time or lack the motivation to sell your stuff, donate it. At least you'll get a tax cut from your donation, and that's money well-saved.

# Saving money while on the road

So now you have enough to get on that flight and ride into the sunset, but the saving doesn't stop there. Being a budget traveler means finding ways to make the most of our budget on the road as well. While it will take some creativity and malleability on your part, it's easier than it looks.

## 1. Compare, compare, compare

Getting the best price is imperative to traveling on a budget, and the best way to make sure that you get all the deals is comparing like there's no tomorrow. Sites like [Skyscanner](#), [Expedia](#), and [Kayak](#) help you compare prices for flights, hotels, and car rentals. They do all the work so you don't have to, but it's good to also compare between these sites and in the airline's/hotel's website just to make sure.

You should also compare on sites that offer alternative services. [Airbnb](#) is the perfect example of an awesome, often cheaper, alternative accommodation. Deal sites like [Groupon](#) and [LivingSocial](#) can offer discounts on flights, tours, and things to do. When you're buying something, check to see if you can find a deal for it on these websites.

## 2. Be flexible

While this isn't always an option, try stretching your flexibility as much as possible. Sometimes flights vary significantly from day to day. Leaving one day before or after can literally save you hundreds of dollars. Ask your boss, play with sick and vacations days, and figure out a way to be as flexible as possible. It will save you a *TON* of money.

Even if being flexible about dates is not an option, there are other things you can try. Choosing alternative destinations where your currency is strong at the moment, is an example. You can also try alternative airports. Your total trajectory might be longer, but your wallet will be fuller.

## 3. Rejoice in the share economy

There are now several places that help you travel for free. Yeah, you're hearing right. [Couchsurfing](#), for instance, lets you stay in people's places for absolutely free. Why? Because the world is actually pretty awesome.

If you're not into taking and not giving, you can do a work exchange. Organizations like [Workaway](#) and [Wwoof](#) offer free room and board for a couple of hours of work. Jobs range from cooking for a circus in Switzerland, to raising sheep in a Berber community, to helping out at a hostel in Cartagena. This is also a great way to meet local people and immerse yourself in the community.

## 4. Travel sustainably

Who knew that being a conscious traveler could also help you be a better budget traveler? It's a gift from the universe and can work in a number of ways: Buying local means supporting the

local economy *and* getting a cheaper alternative. Investing on a portable water filter will reduce your use of bottled water, and help you not waste your money (because who wants to pay for something they can get for free, right?). Volunteering in animal sanctuaries that care for the animals, instead of paying for attractions that exploit them is free and helps animals rather than hurt them. The list is endless and infinitely sweet.

## **5. Work and travel**

What better way to *save* money when you travel than by *making* money when you travel? Of course, not everyone can leave their jobs and go work in Nepal at the skip of a beat, but if you're able to, this is one of the greatest things you can do. Working as you travel can literally save you thousands of dollars, but it also lets you develop a more genuine relationship to the country and its people.

The most common ways to do this are teaching a language abroad and getting a [working holiday visa](#). You can also find a job related to your field, work as an Au Pair, apply for a creative visa, and a myriad of other things.

# **Turning travel into even more travel**

You return home thinking that your trip will satisfy your need to travel only to find out you're even worse than before. All you can think about is your next adventure, and you may or may not spend hours looking at your pictures and watching roadtrip movies/reading travel literature. We've all been there. Luckily, there are ways in which you can actually turn your recent travels into future travels. And they say you can't have your cake and eat it too, pshaw!

## **1. For the love of all that is holy cash into airline miles**

If I had a penny for every tear I've shed when I've seen loved ones throw away precious miles, I could buy all of you a round-the-world ticket. The truth is, miles can be somewhat complicated to navigate through, but it's nothing that a little bit of research can't solve. There are also many other ways to get miles other than by actually flying. Using the right credit card, filling out surveys, and buying at partner businesses can help you earn miles. You also don't need to always fly the same airline, as alliances like [OneWorld](#) and [Star Alliance](#) work a beautiful partnership system.

## **2. Stay in touch with people you've met**

Making friends abroad is actually an awesome way to budget travel. When you travel, you'll often meet people from all over the world. This gives you the chance to make awesome friends who will expand your worldview, and also be happy to be your local hosts and guides.

## **3. Put any extra money back to your savings**

Of course, the golden rule of budget travel is to put all excess money into your savings. If you are such a boss at budgeting that you manage to spend under your trip budget, reward yourself by putting that money back into your travel fund. Your future self will love you for it.

Traveling on a budget is a lifestyle, and it's one that can enrich you in many ways. Forcing yourself to be creative about saving money, making money, and spending money also helps you experience the world in different, often funner and more wholesome manners. Rejoice in your budget traveler status, and wear that badge proudly!