

ON THE ROAD? GET READY FOR FEES



Recently airlines have been charging fees for parts of your flight that previously were free such as meals and drinks and in some cases even using the toilets. Now it seems other travel services got inspired with cruise ships, hotels and car rental companies doing the same thing.

You may think that what you paid for your holiday package was a great deal, but if your trip ends up like that or Morginana Celestine-Lewis and Angie Taylor (her cousin) you could be greatly mistaken. They had booked a hotel room at Westin which is close to Los Angeles Airport at a cost of \$124 for the first night with a special discount for the second night where they only paid \$73 dollars because Angie Taylor was born in 1973. However when they checked out they discovered there were hidden charges for parking of \$25 a night plus \$2.50 parking tax. This was not mentioned by the hotel on their website when they booked it, or when they checked in. So with that additional cost they hadn't actually saved anything on the room and said they would have gone elsewhere had they known about it.

Before you travel it is well worth checking online sites to see what hidden fees there are.

The site called 'Airfare Expert' can tell you of all the hidden fees that various airlines can charge. You might also want to look at the site called '10 travel budget-busters to avoid' which gives you the hidden costs in all different aspects of the travel industry.

Most customers, when faced with these extra costs, have no option but to pay. You might get some perks if you are frequent fliers or traveling first class, but the ordinary traveler has very little choice about what they can do.

Ridiculous charges include some airlines making you pay for carry-on luggage as well as your checked in bags. This charge can vary from \$10 to \$35 and can be charged for both halves of your journey. One airline says it will increase this charge to \$100 for not paying in advance.

Some airlines charge you for printing your boarding pass, and others will charge if you need to upgrade your seat or if you need flight or holiday details resent.

The aviation marketing professor from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Blaise Waguespack says that everything on board is now for sale. Airlines are now making billions of pounds for these extra services, and it can make up to 30% of their revenue.

Hotels now frequently charge for wi-fi. They justify this by claiming that the large increase in customers using it means they have to pay for better services. Car rental companies often charge extra for a GPS in the car, which most drivers now class as essential. They can also charge for passes to get you past toll booths and for child car seats. They may also charge for additional drivers and if you return your car early. There may also be state taxes and airport charges which they claim you can't avoid, but aren't always stated at the time of rental.

In the cruise industry they are cashing in on this as well by charging customers to be given priority when boarding and eating. Although they claim everything is inclusive you can pay to be given priority in some restaurants and in activities. Although most activities are still free you can pay extra to have better services.

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