Data specialists from both ARC and Expedia Group analyzed ARC’s global flight data and Expedia Group’s lodging trends to distill actionable information to help people save money on travel. While it’s impossible to guarantee when to find the lowest prices, after examining the variables—including when travelers make their online bookings, the days they begin their journeys and the length of their trips—one central theme stands out: timing matters.

**Five key tips for saving on travel in 2019**

1. Book flights at least three weeks ahead of travel
2. Book flights on a weekend
3. Book hotel stays on a Friday night
4. Start the journey on a Thursday or Friday
5. Extend short, weekday-only trips to include a Saturday night

---

**1. Book flights at least three weeks ahead of departure**

From most parts of the world—regardless of destination—average ticket prices (ATPs) for economy and premium cabins tend to rise as the departure date gets closer. Waiting to book at the last minute can be an expensive gamble. Booking three weeks ahead of a trip is the “sweet spot” for fare savings.

**2. Book flights on a weekend**

Economy and premium cabin ATPs tend to be lower when booked on a weekend, usually on a Sunday. (New Zealand is one exception, where Tuesday is usually the least expensive day to book air travel.) Many people save up to 20%, and some can save as much as 36% by booking on a Sunday. The most expensive tickets tend to be booked on Thursdays and Fridays.

**3. Book hotel stays on a Friday**

Drawing from Expedia Group’s inventory of more than 895,000 properties offered, data analysts compared the average daily rates (ADR) across different reservation days. Results reveal travelers generally find lowest ADRs on Fridays. Unlike airfares, the most expensive day to book a hotel is generally on a Sunday.

**4. Start your journey on a Thursday or Friday**

Global trends show ATPs for most economy and premium cabin travel are lowest for flights departing on a Thursday or Friday. Travelers can save around 10% on airfares simply by choosing flights that take off on Thursday or Friday. Cost-conscious travelers should avoid starting their journey on a Sunday, as those trips generally have the highest ATP.

**5. Extend short, weekday-only trips to include a Saturday night stay**

For almost 75% of the weekday-only trips analyzed, the cost of economy class airfares dropped when the trip was extended to include a Saturday night. By extending weekday travel (Monday-Friday) to include a Saturday night in-destination, travelers can save around 25% of the weekday-only return fare. In other words, stay a bit longer in destination and you’ll probably save money on the total cost of the flights.

For some popular corporate travel destinations, where weekday travel is in high demand, the data shows return-airfare costs can be almost halved if travelers add a Saturday stay to a weekday trip. The London-New York City route is one example.

* Travel market size estimates based on Phocuswright data for 2018
1. Weighing the benefits of non-stop flights
Comparing the cost of non-stop, one-stop and two-stop journeys between a range of popular destinations revealed value is in the eye of the beholder. For many, a stretch or the chance for a stopover may be valued more than the cost. For others, the convenience of non-stop travel wins out.

**Our tips:**
- Don’t assume direct flights will cost more than those with stops. This is only true in some cases. Direct flights may actually cost less than flights with stops for a wide range of reasons, including newly added routes, low-travel season or travel to predominantly business-travel destinations over a weekend.
- Consider savings on the total costs of a trip: Travelers can unlock discounts on the total cost of a trip when they bundle flights and hotel stays, and in some cases with other travel products and experiences. For example, adding a flight to an existing hotel booking through Expedia.com can result in hotel savings of up to 43%.

2. Deciding between basic economy and other economy cabin fares
Travelers can face a conundrum when weighing their unique travel needs against the many available fare options. The best choice of fare type comes down to more than price—it will depend on the underlying motivator that is most important to the individual: cost, flexibility, or comfort.

**Our tip:**
- While travelers may save money by booking a basic economy fare (i.e., a fare with seat-only, no bag and potentially other limitations), it pays to choose carefully. If bags are added to a basic economy fare, the total cost of travel almost always exceeds that of other economy fares (i.e., where checked bags are included in the cost of the ticket).

3. Challenging the assumption that air ticket prices change when oil prices fluctuate
Analysts compared ATPs and commodity pricing trends over five years to investigate short term impacts of oil/jet fuel pricing changes on economy cabin airfares.

**Our tip:**
- When oil and/or airline fuel prices jump, travelers need not delay booking a trip based on the assumption that airfares will immediately rise. Comparing the price of commodities (i.e. oil/jet fuel) and ATP trends over many years show the days and weeks after an oil price jump may actually be the most cost-effective window to book flights, as any effect that fluctuation may have on ATPs is more likely to appear over a longer time period. This is due to a range of reasons, including when airlines purchase their fuel as well as their common ability to negotiate or set standard rates for fuel purchases over time.

ATPs for some of the world’s most popular domestic and international routes rose around 5% in 2018 (vs. 2017)**.
This increase happened against a backdrop of consistently low ATPs that had continued for many years in the U.S. and around the world, indicating that if this slight upward cost trend continues, now may the best time to book 2019 flights.

**The average ATP rise of 5% YoY based on analysis of ARC data based on popular air routes globally across all cabin classes 2017/2018.
About Expedia Group
Expedia Group (NASDAQ: EXPE) is the world’s travel platform. We help knock down the barriers to travel, making it easier, more enjoyable, more attainable and more accessible. We are here to bring the world within reach for customers and partners around the globe. We leverage our platform and technology capabilities across an extensive portfolio of businesses and brands to orchestrate the movement of people and the delivery of travel experiences on both a local and global basis. Our family of travel brands includes: Brand Expedia®, Hotels.com®, Expedia® Partner Solutions, Egencia®, Trivago®, HomeAway®, VRBO®, Orbitz®, Travelocity®, Wotif®, lastminute.com.au®, ebookers®, CheapTickets®, Hotwire®, Classic Vacations®, Expedia Group®, Media Solutions, CarRentals.com®, Expedia Local Expert®, Expedia® CruiseShipCenters®, SilverRail™, ALICE® and Travelocity®. For more information, visit www.expediagroup.com.

Footnotes

1. - Where relevant, USD exchange rate calculated on day of ticketing.
2. - Where relevant, USD exchange rate calculated on the date of ticketing.
3. - Where relevant, USD exchange rate calculated on the date of demand.
4. - Where relevant, USD exchange rate calculated on the date of ticketing.
5. - Where relevant, USD exchange rate calculated on the date of ticketing.
6. - Savings based on Expedia.com as at 18 January 2019: https://www.expedia.com/addonadvantage
7. - Cost of bag-as-extra fare comparison insights based on analysis of Expedia Group 2018 flight data. - Calculations drew on one-way and return, and/or 2x one-way-return flights.
8. - Other economy refers to non-basic economy fares in the economy cabin.
9. - Historic data for oil prices is based on West Texas Intermediate monthly benchmark. Historic data for Jet Fuel price is based on an average for U.S. jet fuel pricing across airports using BBL Commodities. Monthly Jet Fuel pricing and US Energy Information Administration were also core data sources used for comparing commodity pricing trends to ATPI fluctuations according to ARC data for return, economy-cabin travel ATPIs (generally the most price sensitive ATP cabin).
10. - Seventy-five percent (75%) of trips analyzed resulted in ATPI savings of 25% or more with the inclusion of a Saturday night stay.
11. - Median percentage saving shown, based on comparison of lowest-vs-highest ATPs, for all cabin classes, based on day of travel across a range of global origins-destinations. The variance-to-the-average ATPI savings for flights departing on a Friday (ie, when Friday was lowest ATPI day-of-week to fly) vs highest ATPI day of week to book, savings range spanned 5-16%. Where Thursday departures were lowest, travelers saved, on average, 9%.