

# Paris, Chicago and Beyond: How to Have a Luxury Trip for Much Less Than You Think

A high-end vacation doesn't have to mean spending big dollars. Here are 10 cities where you can have upscale experiences without paying premium prices.

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Luxury travel can be experienced in two ways: by paying top dollar or by paying less. Given the choice, wouldn't you pick the latter?

Of course, the idea of what luxury travel is can differ depending on the person. For some, it means hotels with butlers and fancy sheets and flying first class; for others, it's about hitting three-Michelin-starred restaurants and hiring the occasional private guide and car with a driver.

Ultimately, it doesn't matter how you define high-end travel. What matters is that it doesn't have to be had at a premium price.



The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Todd Heisler/The New York Times

## New York

A luxury vacation to New York City on a budget can be done, according to Eric J. Gordon, the owner of Beyond Times Square, a company that plans high-end New York City trips. "New York is expensive, but there are ways to have an upscale getaway without paying premium prices," he said.

Tips from Mr. Gordon:

**When to Go** Hotel room prices in New York are highest from September to the first week of November, and from Thanksgiving to New Year. They're also high in the spring and summer. In early November and from January through early March, however, they drop by around 20 percent. The city's hotel industry is driven by business travelers so nightly weekday rates at upscale hotels are as much as \$150 more than weekend rates.

**Eat Strategically** If high-end dining is a priority for you, Mr. Gordon said to plan your visit during Restaurant Week (usually at the end of January through early February, and at the end of July through early August), when a three-course lunch at some of the city's finest restaurants is \$29 and a three-course dinner is \$42. And, at any time of the year, many pricey restaurants like Estiatorio Milos offer comparatively affordable prix fixe lunch and dinner menus, usually during certain hours.

**Culture Is a Bargain** Some of the best sightseeing in New York is inexpensive. The Metropolitan Museum of Art has \$25 admission, and your ticket is also valid that day for the Met Cloisters, in Upper Manhattan, and the Met Breuer, a 10-minute walk away. The city also has free festivals and street fairs throughout the year, and Central Park and Hudson River Park host free concerts in the summer, spring and fall. Time Out New York lists events in town.

**Skip Cars** Relying on taxis or car services for transportation can add up to \$100 or more a day. Take the subway or walk instead. Mr. Gordon also recommended the NYC Ferry: a one-way ride is \$2.75, and the boats have Instagram-worthy views of the skyline. If a car is a must, try the ride-sharing app Via, whose rides are usually a moderately priced \$5 to \$7 a person.