



Travel

A Rare Chance to Save

Some of the world's most expensive cities just got more affordable. Here's where to find big winter deals.

By Laura Daily | November & December 2009

Tokyo The global recession and this city's slow winter make for serious savings — just avoid price increases during the New Year holiday. Sightsee on the new Tokyo Shitamachi Bus: a one-day pass is just 500 yen (about \$5). And buy souvenirs for a buck from 100-yen shops. For lodging, consider elegant Japanese-owned properties such as New Otani (800-421-8795) or Prince Hotels (800-542-8686), which can cost about \$150 per night. Or browse tours listed by the Japan National Tourism Organization (212-757-5640). We found a five-day deal for \$949, including airfare from Los Angeles, a hotel stay, and a day of guided sightseeing.

Aspen, Colorado Even this high-end snowy playground is adjusting to thinner wallets. Book before or after the holidays and pay up to 25 percent less for packages that include skiing, lift tickets, and ski rentals. Example: At the Limelight Lodge (800-433-0832), standard room rates are \$549 during Christmas week but drop to \$339 after New Year's. Wait until the season's last two weeks — March 27 to April 11 — to save up to 50 percent at most places. And you can skip the rental car. Most properties send shuttles back and forth to the nearby Aspen/Pitkin County Airport, and free ski buses are available (888-649-5982).

San Francisco The City by the Bay used to be the City Where You'll Pay: not cheap. Now you'll find deals from hotels, museums, and attractions on San Francisco's visitors' site (415-391-2000). Adults can buy a **CityPass** for \$59 for admission to five popular attractions — among them, the California Academy of Sciences and the Aquarium of the Bay — for a total of 49 percent off regular ticket prices, plus free cable car rides for seven days. Or see the King Tut exhibit at the de Young Museum through March 28. The exhibition's website lists 21 hotels offering discount room rates, free VIP tickets (usually \$27.50 to \$32.50), and a Pharaohs Gold Card for dozens of discounts from local retailers.

New York City 'Tis the season for a super deal in the Big Apple. A Manhattan room that was \$319 in 2008 recently averaged just \$215. And hotels are offering "Sunday Stays," giving you 20 to 30 percent off, plus free room upgrades. The city's tourism organization, NYC & Company (212-484-1222), directs you to discounts on Broadway shows, lodging, dining, and attractions from its 2,000-plus member businesses. Click on the "offers" tab on the nycgo.com home page to see the latest.

Vancouver, British Columbia The city will be a zoo during the Olympics, but deals abound after February 28, once the Games are over. Vancouver's tourism bureau (877-826-1717) reports that when the crowds scatter, hotels will slash rates and offer themed arts and sightseeing packages. And you can choose from 600 performances and exhibitions at the Cultural Olympiad festival, from January 22 to March 21. About 40 percent of the events are free, and ticketed shows run about \$18 to \$46.