

Travelsauro

Many people have asked me: How can you travel for so long? Are you rich or something? Is there any trick for traveling with little money?

I'm definitely not rich, but that doesn't mean I can't travel for years. Think about how much you spend living in a Western country and how much you would spend living in Vietnam or Cambodia, where the minimum salary is 125 euros a month.

If you think money is the problem, I can tell you that anyone can take a long trip. Yes, I said anyone! Obviously, if you start with some savings you have an advantage, but it's not an essential requirement. Just ask any of my Argentinean friends who left Buenos Aires with 10 pesos in their pockets and made it all the way to Playa del Carmen, Cartagena or California, where they ended up working and earning good money.

The key is to spend little money and manage it well. Today, I'm going to tell you about 36 tricks that, throughout the last six years, have helped me travel cheaply as a backpacker, spending little and even earning money along the way.

*"The Richest Man Is Not He Who Has The Most, But He Who Needs The Least"*



Here are some helpful **tricks for budget travel** and...some **tips for making money** while traveling!

## 36 Tips to Travel on a Budget like a Pro

### Flights

#### 1. Choose the right destination.

Before you take your backpack and send everything to hell, think about your trip, about how you are going to travel, transportation, budget, etc. It is a good idea to have an idea about the countries you want to visit. You won't spend the same money traveling in [South America](#) as you would in Canada, Europe or Japan.

The most popular options for a long backpacking trip are Latin America and Southeast Asia. Two beautiful regions that typically have "friendly" prices in. Some exceptions, like Brazil, [Chile](#), [Argentina](#) and Costa Rica, no longer have attractive prices for budget travelers. However, that doesn't mean you can't visit them without spending little money.

No worries, you can also travel around Europe without going bankrupt.

#### 2. Find a cheap flight.

My favorite flight booking site is, without a doubt, [Skyscanner](#). One of the great advantages is that you can search flights for the whole month with a comparison table. So, if you want to travel in March, you can select the whole month of March and get a table with all the flights for each day. This way, you know which day is the cheapest.

Skyscanner also gives you the option to select "everywhere" as the destination. It looks for the cheapest flights to different destinations all over the world.

**Tip:** Sometimes it's much cheaper to fly from other, nearby countries. For example, when I went to Cuba, the ticket from Madrid cost 450 euros. Searching with Skyscanner, I got a flight from Brussels to Cuba for only 200 euros! And the trip from Spain to Brussels cost me less than 20 euros with Ryanair. It was a pretty good deal.

To find the best deals, I recommend that you search for flights between two and three months before departure. After that, the prices usually go up.

According to some studies, the cheapest flights are booked at around 1 a.m., when the airlines adjust their rates. (To be quite honest, I don't know if this is completely true.) As for the days, flying on Tuesdays and Thursdays is often cheaper.

Although Skyscanner usually offers the best prices, once you've found your flight, you can check it on the airline's website. Sometimes it may be cheaper to buy the flight straight from the airline.

If you can be flexible and avoid traveling in August or Christmas, much better!

### Traveling within the country

#### 3. Hitchhike.

Hitchhiking is the cheapest option, although some people are not comfortable doing it. In my opinion, it's a great way to save on transportation costs and meet people along the way.

You can write your destination on a piece of paper or cardboard and wait for a nice driver to show up. You can smile, dance or jump when a car passes... a friendly and positive attitude can help you a lot in that situation.

That's how we traveled through Chile and Argentina, and despite their being two expensive countries in South America, we spent almost nothing on transportation.

Check out this website: [Hitchwiki](#), which is like the hitchhiker's bible. It will show you the best places to ask for a ride in each country, how to get there, interesting stops, etc.



#### **4. Use carpooling.**

Another good option, although not free, is [BlaBlaCar](#) (and other carpooling websites). The driver sets a route for a specific day and collects travelers to share the gas expenses. This option works very well in Europe and is spreading rapidly around the world. In the USA and Canada, you can find [ridesharing](#).

#### **5. Travel by bike.**

I've met many people while I traveled entire continents by bike. Without a doubt, this is a great way to save money, get a work out and visit many unexplored places.

**Note:** Firefighters and many temples usually give free accommodation to cyclists and bikers.

## 6. Take local buses.

Sometimes when I ask for transport (and they see I'm a foreigner), locals tend to recommend good buses, with AC, comfortable seats, etc. without realizing that I was looking for the classic "chicken bus" in which you have a sack of potatoes under your seat and a woman carrying a few chickens next to you, not only for saving money, but for getting in touch with the people and feeling how they really live in that country.

Ask for local buses and enjoy the experience.

If you decide to take an "executive" bus, try to travel during the night. That way, you will save a night in accommodation.

## 7. Check out low-cost airlines.

Personally, I love to travel overland. However, the distances in some countries can be huge and flying is sometimes much cheaper than taking the bus. In Colombia, you have **VivaColombia**; in Asia, **Lionair** and **Airasia**; and in Europe, **Ryanair**, **Vueling** and many others.

## 8. Find a ride on a sailing boat.

Did you know that many captains are looking for help during their sailing trips? In exchange for a few hours of cleaning or cooking, you get a free ride, living like a real sailor. If you like the plan, check out my guide for [traveling the Caribbean](#) on a budget.

There are a few helpful websites that post opportunities. [Crewbay](#) and [Findacrew](#) are the most popular.

You can also show up at the marina and ask around.



## Accommodation

### 9. Hostels.

Hostels are some of the best options when you are traveling on a budget. They are cheap and usually well located, and you get the chance to meet lots of people. Try to stay in a shared dormitory with more people. They are usually large rooms with several beds or bunk beds, in some cases up to 10, 15 or more beds, although most of them have from six to eight beds. I understand that many people prefer some privacy, but what do you do alone, in a private room, in a city where you don't know anyone? Nothing; you get bored.

Shared dorms are cheap, and after exchanging a couple of "Where are you from?", you have friends for the days you're staying in that place.

You can find hundreds of hostels on websites like [Hostelworld](#) or [Booking](#). My favorite technique is to check online for the area with more hostels; then I go to any of them and ask for accommodation. When they tell me the price, I tell them it's too expensive and I let them know that I'm looking for the cheapest hostel in the area. Most of the time they tell me which one is the cheapest. 😊

If you arrive at night or are very tired, it's worth booking a hostel in advance to avoid surprises. I recommend [Booking.com](#).

### 10. Airbnb.

If you've met other travelers (or if you are in a group) and are planning to stay for several days in the same city, [Airbnb](#) can be a good option. Sometimes you can find amazing prices, staying in villas with a big swimming pool, houses in front of the beach or small castles!

## 11. Couchsurfing.

One of the top tricks for traveling like a pro, [Couchsurfing](#) allows you to stay in homes all over the world, meeting great people and enjoying unexplored local places. Some people have had very good experiences and others not so good. Personally, I've always had great experiences. I even [lived for over a week in a real pirate ship](#) when I was traveling along the Caribbean. Pretty amazing, isn't it?

Look carefully at the profiles of the users and check the feedback given by other visitors. This way, you'll know that you are in good hands. It's a free platform, although making a gesture towards the host is well appreciated; you can bring a bottle of wine, cook a delicious dish, etc.



## 12. Make local friends.

Sometimes we can't understand how people from other countries can be so hospitable. Open your mind. In [Indonesia](#) and [India](#), for example, I stayed at the home of people I had met on the bus. After I spoke with them for a few hours, they asked me, "Where are you staying when we get to the city?" And I said, "I don't know, I'll find something!" Their response? "You don't know where you are staying? Please stay at my house with my family tonight." The best part of all was not that I didn't have to stay in a hostel, but that I shared a great experience with that family.

## 13. Camping.



Udin, my Indonesian "Uncle".

Another great way to not spend on accommodations. If you're planning a long trip, you can bring a [tent](#) and a [light sleeping bag](#) and pitch your tent almost anywhere. That's how I traveled with my friend Jabi throughout Patagonia and saved a lot of money.



#### **14. Sleep at airports.**

Did you know that you can sleep in many airports without a ticket? Check out [this website](#).

#### **Food**

#### **15. Choose local markets.**

Almost every city in the world has a few local markets where you can taste the typical food for a very reasonable price.

Street stalls and local restaurants are also good options—yes, those with red plastic chairs and a lady in the entrance cooking some greasy food. Ask the locals and they will recommend nice, cheap places. The more local people you see eating in a place, the better it is.

#### **16. Free food.**

In some Asian countries, you can eat for free. For example, if you go to any Sikh temple in India (and in other countries), you will be offered a simple but delicious lunch. In addition, it's a unique experience to share a meal with such great characters.

#### **17. Prepare your own meals.**

Bring a small, light stove and prepare your own meals. I usually carry a good stove, but during some trips, I even cooked using the Coca-Cola-can-and-alcohol technique. Have you heard of it?

**Check out this video:**

## **Volunteers**

**One of the keys** to extend your travels, meet new people and feel more like a local and less like a tourist.

## **18. Workaway.**

[Workaway](#) offers a network of volunteer jobs around the world; in some ways, it's like getting a temporary job. Let me explain: they don't pay you in cash, but they offer you accommodation and food in exchange for four or five hours of work a day. If you are in a country where the average salary is 200 euros and you work only half a day, you would earn 100 euros a month. If you get a bed and food instead of those 100 euros, it's not a bad deal at all.

The best part of all is that you can meet a lot of people, learn a new language and enjoy a unique experience.

You must pay **29 euros to sign up**, but you get a list of all volunteer opportunities all over the world. There are a lot of different jobs, in both the city and the countryside: working in a hostel, teaching languages, building adobe houses, working on farms, etc.

## **19. Woofing.**

It's basically the same principle as Workaway. The difference is that [Woofing](#) offers volunteer jobs, mainly on organic farms. The jobs are usually taking care of the garden, caring for animals, bioconstruction, composting, making cheese, collecting honey and many other activities.

Woofing is focused more on farms in rural areas, while Workaway offers all sorts of opportunities in both the countryside and the city. [Helpx](#) is a similar option.

**A few more tips to travel on a budget:**

## **20. Do not change money at the airport.**

Although I admit that I have found exceptions, airports usually offer the worst exchange rates.

On the other hand, you may arrive at the destination and have no local currency. You can change 30 or 50 euros for the first few days, then change the rest later.

## **21. Free walking tour.**

Many places offer free walking tours to show you around the city. They are typically offered by tourism students who get experience by offering tours and who earn some tips.

## **22. Get a local SIM card.**

Most local SIM cards don't cost more than one euro and can be very useful on occasions like booking

accommodation or transport. This way you prevent your roaming plan from ruining you.



Volunteering in Mexico

### **23. Communicate in the local language.**

What? Do you want me to learn Thai? Yes. The truth is, it's not that difficult. You don't have to become a translator, but learn how to say "Hello, how are you?", "Thank you, how much is it?", "expensive," "cheap" and numbers. It's essential to bargain and get the best prices.

They'll charge you more anyway, but instead of paying three times more, you're going to pay only double. : P

### **24. Bring your student card.**

Many museums, temples and tourist sites offer discounts up to 50 percent if you have a student card. If you don't have one, you can make a fake one; they won't notice.

### **25. Get travel insurance.**

This is a very personal option, but if you must go to a hospital in another country, the bills can be very expensive. Some travel insurances have very reasonable prices.

### **26. Check out blogs and forums.**

You can find great tips on [travel blogs](#) and forums that will help you save money.

## Tips for making money while traveling

There are hundreds of ways to earn money while you travel. I'm going to list some of the best known. Many of them have worked quite well for me.

### 27. Ask for work in the hostels where you stay.

If you are visiting India or Bolivia, I don't think it's worth it because the salary is so small. (It would be better to find a Workaway opportunity.) In Europe, on the other hand, you can get a decent salary for a few weeks' work. Sometimes they also offer you accommodation.



Working in a hostel in Cusco, Perú

### 28. Get a job in a bar.

Many bars and restaurants hire extra staff during the peak tourist months. The summer in Europe and the high season in Playa del Carmen are good places and times to look for work.

### 29. Sell tours for agencies.

In [Cusco](#), Cancun and many other places, agencies are looking for people to give away flyers and sell tours. Usually, you get a good commission if you manage to sell a tour.

### 30. Sell your own handicrafts.

At first it seems quite difficult but with a little effort, practice and originality, you can finance your travels by designing beautiful collars and bracelets.



Selling handicrafts in Trinidad & Tobago

### **31. Sell food.**

Learn how to cook brownies, pies, sandwiches or omelets and sell them on the streets and beaches.

### **32. Sell your photos.**

Do you take good photos? Print a few and sell them as postcards. If you put a little wooden frame on them, they are not postcards anymore, they are pictures and you can sell them for five times more.

### **33. Teach your language.**

Use your knowledge to teach your language in other countries, either privately or in academies.

### **34. Do you play an instrument?**

Let's play and dance! Prepare a good set of songs and play them on the subway or in a square. From time to time, smile and pass around the hat.

### **35. Sign up for Fiverr and sell your services**

Take a look at [Fiverr](#) because you can sell any online service: programmer, designer, translator, editor, composer...there are hundreds of possibilities!

### **36. Pick fruit.**

Canada, Europe and Australia are good places to make extra money during your travels. Sometimes it's difficult to get a visa to do it legally, but in many places you can pick fruit without a visa.

**The most important tip of all:**

### **Go with the flow and enjoy!**

It's normal that you will worry about how much you spend extend your trips, but honestly, don't obsess about that. It can ruin your trip. Follow these tips and have fun!

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**Do you have more Tips to Travel on a Budget? Please, leave a comment!**



[Travelsauro](#)

Hi, I'm Miguel; Adventure traveler, scuba diver and hiking lover. I have been traveling the world for the last 5 years and I hope my experiences, photos and hiking routes inspire you to travel the world too.

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