

Translating a Travel Ad

Avoid the road to ripoffs by understanding the language of travel ads. The illustration below reveals the real meanings of some travel words and phrases.

You may have to accept lots of restrictions and low-season or midweek departures to get this price.

Means you have the "opportunity" to do these things, but you'll have to pay for them.

Tourist-information offices can tell you about these charges. At most major resorts in the Bahamas, there is an automatic 15 percent service charge on food and beverages, plus daily baggage-handling and maid-service fees. Hotel taxes range from 8 to 10 percent.

Just a couple may be available at that price.

If you don't travel on the dates indicated, you won't get any money back.

DECADENCE ISLAND RESORT
 Sand, surf, fun!
 4, 5, & 7 nights
 from **\$395****
 per person, double occ.

Roundtrip air via FlyByNight Airlines**
 8 meals---CP
 Hotel with ocean view

Options include:
 lagoon dinner cruise
 water-skiing lessons
 poolside meals and beverages
 health spa on grounds
 guided snorkeling excursions

**taxes and tips not included
 **limited availability of seats

Prices as quoted are nonrefundable, nonchangeable. Not responsible for changes and omissions.

The rate is the price two people would each pay. Solo travelers are charged a higher rate. During school breaks, some packages' advertisements are for as many as four people sharing a room.

Continental Plan: a light breakfast, usually coffee, a roll and butter, and sometimes juice.

Your view could be across four lanes of traffic. And photos in brochures can be deceiving. Talk to someone who has been there, or call the tourist-information office.

The airline you're flying could be switched or even (rarely) your destination. In one case, a traveler with a ticket to Brussels was switched to a flight to Paris and given a rail ticket to his final destination.

Avoiding Further Confusion

Other phrases you may encounter while searching for travel bargains include the following:

Limited-time availability. The offer (often at an attractive price) may be good that day only.

MAP (Modified American Plan): two meals a day, usually breakfast and dinner. **AP (American Plan):** three meals a day, usually breakfast, lunch, and dinner. **EP (European Plan):** a fancy way of saying "no meals."

Courier flights at low, low prices! Often excellent bargains, but you can take carry-on baggage only—the courier company uses your checked-luggage space. Be ready to move on short notice. See "Newslines" on page 63 for information on a guide to courier travel.

Youth fares. Good rates to Western Europe for travelers under 24, but reservations can be made only 72 hours

before flight time. The best deals depend on when you travel. The peak season for traveling to Western Europe is June 15 to early August, and, for returning, mid-July to Labor Day. During those times, you might have to wait a few days for a flight. Council Travel Services (CTS) negotiates youth fares for anyone under 26. Call 212-661-1450 for information.

Bucket shops. These companies can get you drastically discounted tickets, usually for seats on foreign airlines. If your main goal is getting cheap air fares, says author Marion Joyce in *The Frugal Traveler* (Perigree Books, 1988, \$7.95), buying tickets this way is probably best. But watch for heavy restrictions and check the company's credibility with the Better Business Bureau.

—Lucy Izon