

Are Groupon Travel Deals Really a Bargain?

(Courtesy of Caroline Morse Teel, SMARTERTRAVEL)

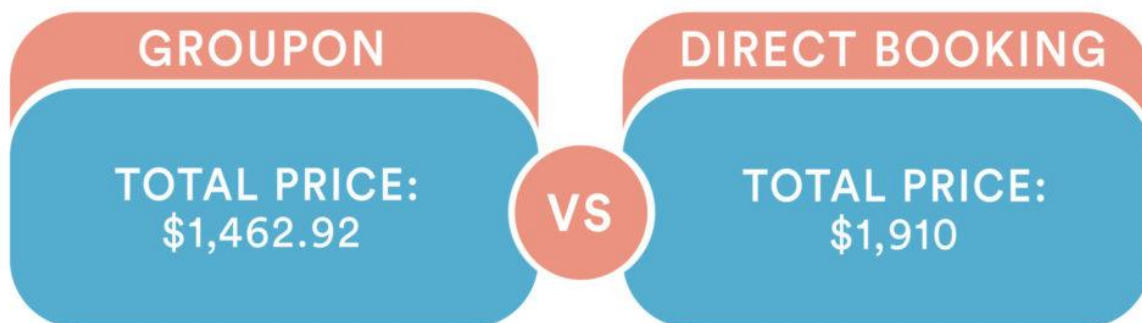
Groupon's travel deals can seem too good to be true. Can you really get six nights in Hawaii including airfare for under \$650? We investigated [Groupon Getaways](#) to find out if the deals are worth it—and the important catches you need to watch out for if you book.

Do Groupon Getaways Actually Save You Money?

No matter what Groupon deal you're considering, always price check it against the cost of booking it yourself directly. This will help you be sure that the Groupon is really worth it.

To find out if Groupon Getaways actually save you money, we compared three current Groupon travel deals against the cost of booking it on our own. We compared the prices based on two people traveling, as Groupon Getaways generally charges a single supplement fee for solo travelers. Here are the results:

Editor's Note: All prices were accurate at the time of writing, however, deal costs and fares are likely to change quickly.



This trip includes round-trip airfare from Los Angeles to Honolulu, along with four nights in a City Mountain-View room at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Alana – Waikiki. The cheapest Groupon option is for dates between March 10 and March 31.

Groupon Price for Two People

Total Price: \$1,462.92 / \$731.56 per person. The package price is \$649 per person and there is a \$20.64 daily resort fee.

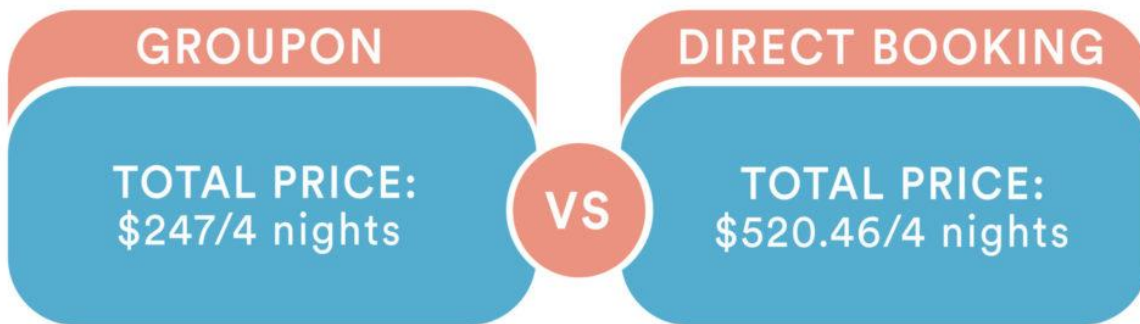
Cost to Book Directly for Two People

Flights: \$568 Total / \$284 per person. The cheapest round-trip flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu costs \$284 for a March 24 departure and March 28 return.

Hotel: \$1,342.38. Booking the same City Mountain View room directly through the DoubleTree's website costs \$1,342.38 (including the resort fee).

Total Price: \$1,910

In this case, booking through Groupon Getaways saves you a few hundred dollars.



A Superior Garden-View Room with VIP Amenities at the all-inclusive Cofresi Palm Beach Spa Resort is on a super sale through Groupon. There is a four-night minimum stay on the Groupon deal, and the cheapest rates are found for stays starting April 1. Only one voucher is needed for two guests sharing a room.

Groupon Price

Total Price: \$247 for 4 nights.

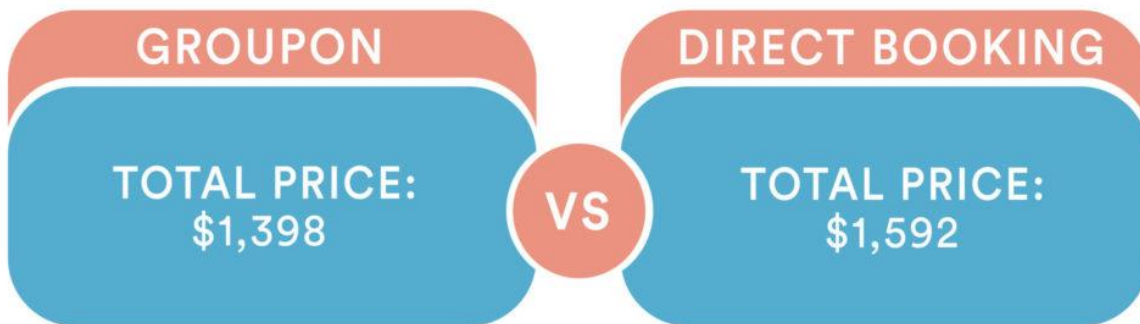
Cost to Book Directly for Two People

Total Price: \$520.46 for 4 nights.

The same hotel room costs more than double to book directly on [Cofresi's website](#)

However, one of the FAQs on Groupon's website should throw up a red flag regarding this hotel. "Will I be approached to attend a timeshare sales presentation? Our customers are never obligated to attend a sales presentation. If you are approached and decline a presentation, you will not lose the value of your voucher or have to pay additional fees."

Be sure to check the reviews carefully (both on Groupon's website and other sites to determine the quality of the hotel included in the deal.



Since this deal is also available directly from Gate 1 Travel, we compared it against booking it through Gate 1 as well as booking it on our own.

The cheapest package option includes round-trip airfare from New York (JFK) to Milan, an economy manual rental car, 5 nights at the Grand Hotel Plaza & Locanda Maggiore, and 1 night at the Hotel Novotel Milano Malpensa Airport. The \$699 price is valid for departures on October 11.

Groupon Price for Two People

Total Price: \$1,398 / \$699 per person

Cost to Book With Gate 1 Travel

Total Price: \$1,398 / \$699 per person

The price is exactly the same to book via [Gate 1 Travel](#).

Cost to Book Directly for Two People

Flights: \$812 total / \$406 per person on Tap Air Portugal.

Hotels: \$586 total: \$500 Grand Hotel Plaza & Locanda Maggiore + \$86 Hotel Novotel Milano Malpensa Airport

Rental car: \$194 total

Total Package Price: \$1,592

Booking this deal through Groupon or Gate 1 Travel saves you a bit of money compared to booking directly.

Watch out for the Fine Print

Always read the terms and conditions before booking a Groupon Getaway. You'll also want to carefully scrutinize what's included in the deal. Here are a few things to look out for:

- Single supplements: How much extra will you have to pay if you're traveling alone?
- Expiration date of Groupon voucher
- Age restrictions (many travel deals are for 21 and older)
- Cancellation policies
- Additional fees you'll have to pay at check-in
- Flight options (including number of stops and departure times)
- Rental car options (generally the cheapest car type with a manual transmission is included, so you might want to investigate how much an upgrade will cost you).

Should You Book Through Groupon Getaways?

Groupon Getaways are undeniably a good deal. However, be warned that Groupon Getaway costs can quickly escalate from the rock-bottom advertised cost. For example, the Tuscany package mentioned above is promoted at \$699, but will quickly increase to \$849 if you would rather fly out of Miami. Adding the hotel “upgrade” package will be another extra cost. Picking a different departure date can bring the cost up to \$1,049 per person. Make sure you pay attention to the extra price as you customize your trip.

Before booking, you should evaluate all of the options included in the deal. Independently research the hotel included in the Groupon Getaway. Is it in a good neighborhood? Does it have good reviews? Is it near the things you want to see and do? What bed types are included in the deal?

Also see if you can find out what flight options are included before committing. Is the flight nonstop or will there be layovers? Is the flight at a convenient time?

Booking a trip through Groupon Getaways can definitely save you money. However, if you would rather have a bit more control over your flight times and hotel choices, Groupon Getaways can also be a great jumping off point to plan your own vacation. For example, if you see a cheap package deal to Tuscany, it likely means that travel to Tuscany is pretty inexpensive during the dates that the Groupon is valid. You could then look up your own flights and hotels for the same time period and find something similarly priced that would give you more flexibility than booking with Groupon. However, if you’d prefer not to have to do all of the trip planning research, and just want someone to take care of all the details, a Groupon Getaway can be a great deal.