

When Is the Best Time to Book Holiday Travel?

(Courtesy of Caroline Morse Teel, SmarterTravel)

Despite what retailers want us to believe (put away the Christmas decorations please), the holidays are still a few months away. However, if you want to get the best deals on airfare for travel over Thanksgiving and Christmas, you should start thinking about booking your flights now. Experts at travel booking site [Hopper](#) recommend booking both Thanksgiving and Christmas flights no later than the week of October 10th.

When Should You Buy Flights for Thanksgiving?

To lock in the lowest rates, book your Thanksgiving flights by mid-October. Hayley Berg, Lead Economist at [Hopper](#), tells SmarterTravel, “Fares for Thanksgiving peaked at over \$400 in August, but have fallen around 9 percent into September as they do each year.” Berg expects fares to “remain at the current level until mid- to late October.”

According to Hopper, the average flight for a domestic ticket for Thanksgiving weekend will cost around \$350 this year.

For international airfare over the same period, expect to pay around \$795 per ticket. If you’re planning on traveling internationally, Berg recommends booking before mid- October to find the best deals.

When Should You Buy Flights for Christmas?

Expect to pay more if you’re traveling over Christmas than you will during Thanksgiving. Berg says that a “good deal” domestic airfare for 2022 Christmas travel is averaging around \$463 per ticket.

However, you don’t want to book your ticket too early—Hopper’s data showed that average ticket prices for Christmas have fallen 3%-5% since August. Start watching prices now, and be sure to lock something in by early October for a domestic flight.

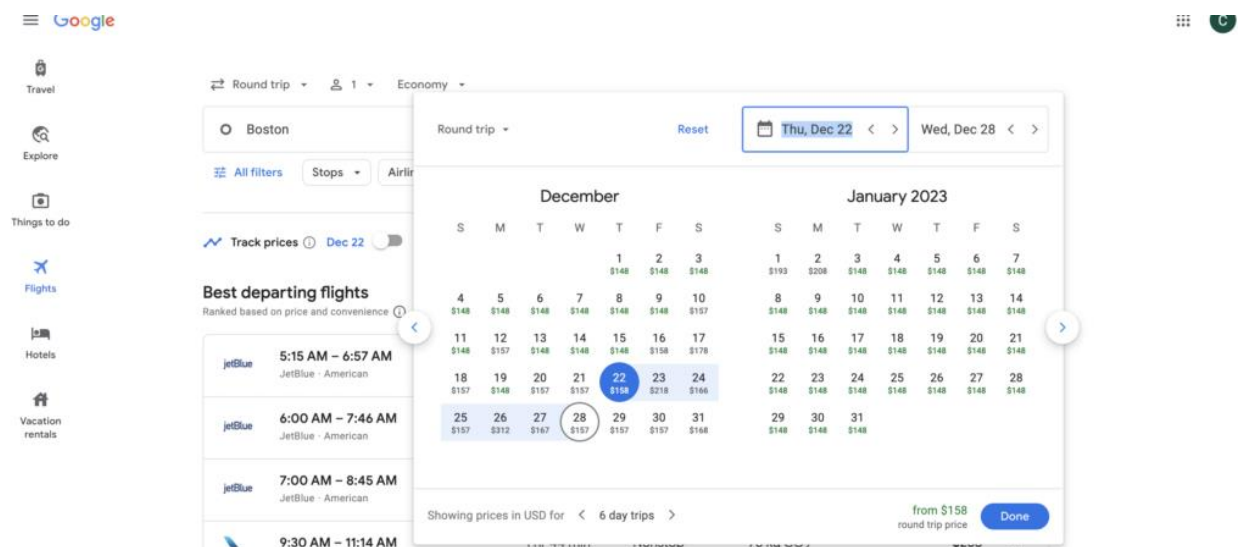
Looking to spend the holidays abroad? Buy that ticket now if you don’t want to overpay. Historically, international airfare around Christmas has started to increase in price beginning in September. With an average international ticket price forecasted to be around \$1,300 for this year’s holiday, you’ll want to book as soon as possible.

How to Get the Best Deals on Holiday Flights

If you can be flexible and extend your vacation (or work remotely), traveling on off-peak days will save you a significant amount of money. The Wednesday before Thanksgiving and the following Sunday are generally the busiest and most expensive days to fly.

For Christmas, demand is usually spread out a bit more over travel days. According to Kayak, in 2021, the most popular travel days around Christmas were Wednesday, December 22 and Tuesday, December 28. Since Christmas falls on a Sunday this year, and most offices will be closed on Monday, prices will likely be the highest to fly on the Friday before Christmas and the following Monday and Tuesday.

To easily see which days will be the cheapest to fly, use [Google Flights](#), which will show you a calendar of fares. For example, we searched for a flight from Boston to Washington, D.C., and you can see that returning on Wednesday instead of Monday can save \$155.



Google Flights

When Should You Book Hotels for the Holidays?

Unlike with flights, waiting until the last minute to book your hotel for Thanksgiving or Christmas can save you big bucks. According to Hopper, hotels in big cities will typically lower prices in the month prior to the check-in date, so waiting until the first week of November to book your Thanksgiving stay could save you up to 25 percent.