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World Tourism Day: Beware of (hidden) additional holiday costs

Soaring costs of living mean many will have to limit their travel budget this year. It is therefore all the more annoying when (hidden) extra charges pop up during a well-deserved vacation. For World Tourism Day, the European Consumer Centres Network gives consumers advice on how to detect and avoid such extra costs.

Additional costs in hotels

Who is not familiar with this situation? After a long journey, you're hoping to check in to your hotel room and rest for a bit straight away. However, early check-ins often come at an extra cost. Charges for breakfasts and parking have also become common practice. Local tourism taxes are levied in several European countries, such as Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany and Malta.

Low-cost hotels in particular sometimes charge user fees for room facilities such as TVs, safes, faster Wi-Fi or even cleaning. In Spain, guests are sometimes asked to pay extra for luggage storage. In the Netherlands, you may have to pay for the use of a hairdryer. Are you wanting to use a hotel bath robe? In France or Finland you will have to pay an extra fee.

Bringing your pet with you on holiday usually costs as well. Some accommodations may charge a special cleaning fee for bringing an animal companion. Furthermore, note that it is not common for airport transfers to be included in the price, for instance in Germany and the Czech Republic. Other fees you might run into are fees for beach facilities such as sun loungers. This is the case at public beaches in Spain, France and Italy.

Good to know: before agreeing to a contract, vacationers must always be informed of which costs are and aren't included and of how much any additional services will cost. This can be specified in the contract itself or in the general terms and conditions. If additional services are offered at the location (towel rental, use of faster internet etc.), this must be clearly indicated beforehand or on-site.

Additional costs for package tours

Under European package travel law, tour organisers are allowed to increase the price of a package tour by a maximum of 8% under certain conditions, even after booking. This may only happen if:

- the contract contains a price adjustment clause;
- the traveller was informed of this clause by means of a form before the contract was concluded;
- this clause provides not only the possibility of an increase but also a decrease in the price of the trip;
- the price increase is communicated at least 21 days before departure;
- the calculation of the new price is transparent;
- the costs of fuel and kerosene, port or airport taxes have increased, or the exchange rates have changed. Other cost increases may not be passed on to the consumer.

However, if the cost increases were foreseeable at the time of booking or if one of the above conditions is not met, consumers may refuse payment. Conversely, the price increase is also effective without consent if all the above conditions are met.

In case of price increases of more than 8%, organisers must inform the consumer and request that they explicitly accept the increase within a certain period or withdraw from the contract. If the consumer does not respond within this period, consent to the price increase is implied. A timely response is therefore important.



Visit the [ECC-Net website](#) or the website of your [local ECC](#) for more information on package travel.

Additional costs for flights

Travellers must be informed of the airfare – including all taxes, fees and surcharges – before booking. However, airlines will often charge extra for additional services that used to be included in the ticket price. Examples: airport check-ins (rather than online check-ins), checked baggage, seat selection, meals etc.

Tips on how to recognise & avoid additional costs

- Read offers carefully and check which services are included before you book. Contact the hotel or the tour operator in case of doubt.
- Read customer reviews to see if other guests have complained about unexpected additional costs.
- Ask for the bill before the end of your stay to detect extra charges early on.
- If you have to pay to be able to check in or out at all, note "payment subject to reservation" on the invoice. Immediately write to the hotel management or the organiser.
- Book cancellable rates. These might be slightly more expensive, but may save you high cancellation fees in the end.
- Before choosing an extra travel insurance: check if the insurance on your credit card is sufficient.
- If you book "all inclusive," you will have fewer surprises when it comes to food and beverage costs.
- Book well in advance.
- Use a less popular airport.
- Book in the off-season or on weekdays that are less busy.
- Instead of using the hotel parking, switch to free public parking lots.

Press contact:

Please contact the [European Consumer Centre in your country](#) for more information.