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Hotels try harder to lure guests on Christmas Day this year
 By Barbara De Lollis, USA TODAY
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Are you toying with the idea of getting away on Christmas Day?

If so, you might be able to get a discount as some hotels try harder this year to lure guests on Dec. 25 - typically not a peak travel day.

Regardless of their location near ski slopes, on the beach or in cities, hotels may be more flexible with rate because chances are higher this year that their business that day is down from 2009.

Advance hotel bookings in North America's biggest lodging markets for the night of Dec. 25 made through last week, in fact, are 16% below what they were a year ago, according to travel market tracker Rubicon.

Rubicon analyzed advance hotel bookings through last week in the top 25 North American markets specifically for the night of Dec. 25 this year and last year.

The analysis also revealed that demand is down in each of the 25 major markets, with the exception of Denver (up 7%) and Houston (up 1.3%). Furthermore, the average rate for Dec. 25 is flat vs. a year ago, although rates climbed in San Diego (up 6%), Washington, D.C. (up 5%) and Los Angeles (up 4%).

A few deals across the price spectrum that you might consider as you shop:

- South Florida luxury: The Trump International Beach Resort in Sunny Isles Beach - about a half hour's drive from Miami Beach - is [offering a free-night stay on Christmas Day](#) if you book at least five nights. You must arrive between Dec. 20 and 25.

- Economy lodging around the USA: In a first, most Red Roof hotels (80% of the 345 locations) are offering a [30% discount on Christmas Day](#). You must book 10 days in advance either online or by phone (800-RED-ROOF). Guests may also get 20% off the days before and after Christmas, although only 40% of the locations will offer this deal.
- Upscale ski lodging in Vermont: Killington Grand Resort and Spa has a ["Ski and Stay Free Christmas" offer](#) for guests who arrive between Dec. 19 and Dec. 25 for a minimum of four nights. The deal includes free lodging and lift ticket on Christmas Day. You must depart by New Year's Eve. See the website for fine print.
- Upscale ski lodging in Colorado: Crested Butte Mountain Resort is offering a free lift ticket and lodging when you stay over Dec. 25. See the [resort's site for the fine print](#), including how you must book the deal. The deal requires a minimum stay of five nights.
- Mid-priced lodging in Annapolis, Md.: Take 30% off regular rates at the Country Inn and Suites location in scenic Annapolis, which features free Internet access, a pool and a breakfast buffet. Owner Mark Patel says business is not down, but he's cutting rates this year for the first time. "I like to see new people come through the door," he told me. A quick check on the [hotel's website revealed rates](#) ranging between about \$95 and \$130.

Lia Batkin of In The Know Experiences, a members-only, Virtuoso-affiliated travel agency based in New York and Los Angeles, tells Hotel Check-In that Christmas Day is a slower day to check into hotels, but it's "not dead." Some customers - especially her Jewish clients - have been booking it this year.

"A lot of people who do not celebrate Christmas will travel on that day," Batkin says.

Interestingly, Batkin's also seeing younger people in the 20-to-30-year-old age group travel in groups take the full week off, including New Year's Eve.

Readers: Do you plan to be away on Dec. 25 this year? If so, did you get a good deal?