

How to plan a trip with friends

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Exploring the world with friends allows you to broaden your horizons and helps everyone in your group get to know each other better. If you are planning a **trip with friends** , the following suggestions will help you plan the perfect trip.

Choose the right friends and set expectations from the start

First, let's get things straight: You can make friends with a variety of people, but that doesn't mean they'll all be good travel companions. Choosing your travel companions wisely and being upfront about your expectations can make the difference between a memorable group trip and a forgettable one. So how do you know if you've never traveled together?

Consider factors like preferences, budget, and personality. That doesn't mean you have to agree on every single one of them, but think about where you might appreciate differences and where they might cause disagreement.

For example, if your art lovers expect you to join in on every group activity, but you don't like museums, you might get annoyed if they linger too long. On the other hand, if you have independent friends who are comfortable with being apart for an afternoon, you can do whatever makes you happy while they spend another 90 minutes admiring antiques at the museum.

Have an honest discussion with your friends—and yourself—about the following:

1. Will they want to plan every hour or are they open to spontaneity?
2. Do they want to go and see it all, or do they prefer things to be slower?
3. Are they night owls who want to party until dawn or early risers who want to wake up with the sun?
4. Is their budget for street food and hostels or Michelin-starred dinners and luxury hotels?
5. Do they want to spend all their time with a group, or occasionally branch off and do their own things?



Be upfront about your finances

Money can cause a lot of friction between people, and friends are no exception, especially if you have different financial expectations for the trip. If you can only afford hostels but your friends want to stay at a resort, let them know. There's no reason to go into debt to please someone else.

Be upfront about how much you can spend — and how you want to spend it — from the start. While you may have the same budget as your partner, you may find that while you love splurging on a nice meal, they spend more on shopping.

Be clear not only about how much you can afford to spend on the entire trip, but also how much you're willing to spend on accommodations each night, how much you're comfortable spending on meals and activities, and how you prioritize your spending. Again, you don't have to agree, but it's a good idea to set expectations about what happens when you have different budgets and priorities.

Discuss the destination

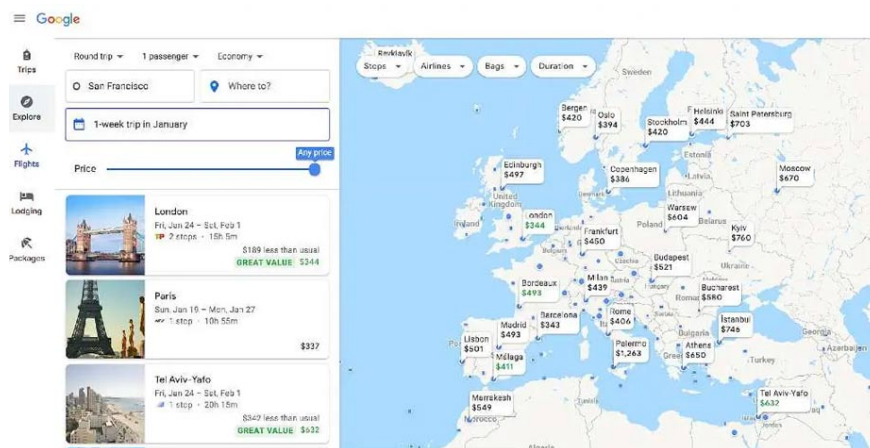
Deciding on a destination can actually be the most difficult part of the entire trip planning process. How do you choose a place that everyone will be happy with and can be reached relatively cheaply?

Ask each friend to write down their three to five favorite destinations, taking into account the time it takes and everyone's budget. You can easily do this over email or on paper.

Once everyone has added their input and voted, compare everyone's answers and see if there are any common destinations. If not, think about common factors. Did you all choose a beach destination or a European city? This can help narrow down the choices.

Use the right tools to get the best fares

Skyscanner is a handy tool that helps you find the cheapest flights from any airport within a selected time period. The Google Flights Explore map app is similar. Enter your departure airport and it will show you the cheapest places on the map to fly to on specific dates or within a time period such as a weekend, a week or two weeks in a given month. You can enter a specific area or move the map to narrow down your options.



Plan carefully together in advance

The more people involved, the slower the planning process — and speed is almost a determining factor in whether or not your hunt for cheap airfares will be successful. The ideal time to get the best airfare is two to eight months, so you'll want to start searching for flights as early as possible, especially if your dates and destinations are set or you're traveling during a peak season like summer or a holiday. Start tracking prices by setting up flight alerts for when prices drop.

If your dates and destinations are flexible and you want to go wherever the deal is, talk to your friends about your available dates in advance so you can cut down on back and forth and take advantage of a great deal when you see one. And remember, the 24-hour rule means that in most cases you can cancel your flight within 24 hours of purchasing it so you don't miss out on a deal while you wait for your friends to confirm the dates.

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