

The Penny-Pinching Traveler

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Hello World!

My name is Miranda Penny and I LOVE TO TRAVEL. Unfortunately, I don't have a whole lot of expendable income, so when I travel, I have to choose the best destinations to fit my budget!

I live in St. John's, Newfoundland, which normally does not make travel easy or cheap. Newfoundland is an island on the east coast of Canada, and trying to get off the island can be a challenge with regards to both time and money. Luckily for us Newfoundlanders, Westjet (a Canadian airline) has in recent years begun flights direct from St. John's to London, in the United Kingdom. Of course, as anyone knows, once you get to London, the rest of Europe is just a hop, skip and a few dollars away!



www.pennypinchingireland.com
Giant's Causeway, Ireland

In this issue you will find:

- **5 Tips for Traveling in Ireland**
- **The Sisters Suggest!**
- **Stockholm on a Budget**
- **London on a Budget**

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5 Tips for Planning Your First Trip to Ireland

TIP 1 – LOSE THE IDEA OF “MUST-SEE” SITES

The Cliffs of Moher, Ring of Kerry, Dingle, Glendalough and her ancestral home – Cork. Nice places all, but they are “must-sees” in your mind because that’s what the travel brochures promote—most of which are funded by the Irish Tourist Board which also sinks big money into building up and improving said sites.

There’s no need to zig-zag across the entire country just to see cliffs, beautiful seaside drives and a monastic village. There are many of these and other fabulous sites all over Ireland. Think in terms of what interests you, then pick a region and find your desired sites in that section of the country.

TIP 2 – THINK ABOUT YOUR BEST CHOICE FOR TRANSPORTATION

Do you want to drive a car? If so, consider renting through a travel agent instead of booking on line. Car rental is dicey in Ireland. Prices are up and down and hidden costs abound. As often as I travel to Ireland, I still find that my travel agent who works consistently with Irish vendors gets the best rental car deal for me. Renting a car and driving yourself gives the best option for flexibility and freedom. But if you’re an insecure driver, consider another options, like a bus tour!

Bus Tour – Book yourself on a coach tour. A tour operator with a bus full of people has first priority at venues, hotels and attractions. You also have the benefit of a private guide. Coaches are a great way to make friends and travel stress free.

TIP 3 – THINK ABOUT WHAT APPEALS TO YOU BEFORE YOU PLAN THE TRIP

Don’t let the adverts dictate what you see. Think about it ... what do you like? Do you like castles, scenic cliffs, megaliths, stone circles, pubs, small towns & villages, beaches, mountains, food, golf, fishing, hiking, monastic ruins, music, dance, visual arts, history, museums, literary heroes, agriculture, gardens, manor houses, horseback riding, shrines, secluded islands, churches, and festivals? Ireland has all of these. Identify a few things that appeal to you and pick a region. If you love mountains and cliffs and hiking, the North has wonderful

The Mourne Mountains, Northern Ireland



options. For a combination of golf, history, museums, food, pubs, visual arts the area around Dublin might serve well. Fishing fiend? Think about Galway and Ballina (in Mayo). You can let your preferences dictate the region you choose, or let the region lead the choices you make for destinations. Either way, you're a winner in Ireland.

TIP 4 – DON'T BE AFRAID TO CONSULT A TRAVEL BLOGGER

I get tons of requests for advice on where to travel to Ireland or how to put a tour together. I love that my readers feel comfortable enough to ask. Most of us love to interact with our readers.

TIP 5 – ACCOMMODATIONS – BOOK YOUR FIRST NIGHT BEFORE YOU LEAVE – TRY NOT TO MOVE AROUND TOO MUCH

Unless you're traveling at peak season or to a region during a popular festival, it's not necessary to have all your accommodations booked before you

leave. But you definitely want your first night booked. A bed and breakfast is still a great option for self-guided touring. They are affordable and allow the visitor to spend time with the most hospitable people in Ireland. Use an online database or travel app like Bed and Breakfast Ireland to find a place for your first night. Then play it by ear for the rest of your trip. Also consider staying at least two or more nights in one location. It's so tiring to have to schlep all your stuff each day to the next location. Ireland is a small enough country that you could stay in one town and venture out to several areas that are within a 50 mile radius.

So decide what you like, decide how you'll travel (car, bus, car hire) pick a region, consult a travel blogger, and book your first night's stay before you leave. You're bound to be able to squeeze every bit of uncomplicated fun out the trip.

(<http://travelhag.com>)

The Sisters Suggest!

I have a few sisters and they have a few suggestions for awesome destinations that won't break the bank!

**Rachel (fun and friendly)
Barcelona, Spain**

**Diana (classy and stylish)
Lyon, France**

**Clara (off the beaten path)
Split, Croatia**

Stockholm on a Budget: It's Really Possible!

TRANSPORTATION

Coming and Going To Arlanda Airport

Your budget starts to feel threatened right at leaving the airport. A one-way ticket in the Arlanda Express, the faster way to get to the center, can cost as much as 282 SEK (around 30EUR). You can save by booking online in advance though.

A cheaper alternative is the bus. I used the



Flygbussarna, which is less than half the price of the train (99 SEK each way).

There are other public transportation options – a combination of bus and suburban trains – but they are considerably more time-consuming.

Getting Around Stockholm

The good news is that Stockholm is a relatively small city. You can easily walk around the old town and even the nearby areas/islands without the need for a public transport.

You'll need public transport, however, to reach some areas of the city. When the time comes, do not use single tickets as they're far more expensive. Instead, get a top-up SL Access card (20SEK, non-refundable) which you then must top-up with a minimum of 100 SEK or a 1, 3 or 7-day travel card.

This is the most inexpensive way to get around the city and includes journeys in all public transports of Stockholm, including ferries to Djurgården, where some of the best museums are located. Another option is biking. The bike public system is open for everyone in Stockholm and for 165 SEK you can get a card that give you access to free unlimited use for three days. You can only take one for a maximum duration of three hours though.

ACCOMMODATIONS

You know what's coming. Yes, hotels in Stockholm are damn expensive and there's little you can do about it.

The farther you go away from the city center, the more affordable the hotels are.

But do it too much and you'll find yourself wasting valuable time and money on public transport. Aim for something in between.

The final options for hardcore budgets are Couchsurfing and AirBnb. Apart from the lower prices, you have the possibility of doing some meals at home. Even if it is only breakfast, that's already some SEK saved!

FOOD AND DRINK

If you want to indulge in the Swedish sit-down restaurant experience, do it at lunch time. The *Dagens Rätt* (lunch menu) can cost as low as 90 SEK in some places, even in the center. It includes the dish of the day, water, bread and a free salad buffet. Not bad for roughly 10EUR, huh?



Dinner is a different story. A meal for two with no alcoholic drinks in a *random* restaurant will easily cost you 500

SEK (around 55 EUR). This makes the evening the ideal time to lower your standards a bit and indulge on street or fast food. There is a lot of choice available, from the many hot dog kiosks, food trucks or the Swedish hamburger



chain MAX. There are a lot of cheap Thai food spots, too. Avoid eating in the

tourist areas and in Drottninggatan, the main shopping street. Market halls like the Östermalms Saluhall are full of healthy options, too.

Alcohol is the quickest way to ruin your budget in Sweden. It's hard to find a place selling beer for less than 50 SEK and I've seen glasses of wine for 130 SEK (14 EUR).

If you absolutely must drink, try to do it during the happy hours or buy your bottles at Systembolaget. This is the Swedish government's liquor store and the only way to buy alcohol in Stockholm.

On other note, tap water is a great alternative to go with a meal. I know it sounds depressing, but water in Stockholm is really pure and sometimes they even serve it in a jar with berries

inside. Use it to refill your water bottle, too (instead of buying new ones).

SIGHTSEEING

If you're visiting Stockholm for the first time, you'll want to see the icons of the city.

Well, a great way to get to know the city is by doing a free walking tour. Taking one on the first day of a trip is one of my top travel tips to save money anywhere. In Stockholm, this will take you through the main attraction: Gamla Stan the old town. Stortorget, the main square, is particularly impressive.



Another unique sight is the metro system. Presumed to be the largest art exhibit in the world, Stockholm's T-Bana stations house a unique collection of sculptures, artworks and exhibitions. There are free art walks to get to know this underground

beauty. And all you need to come along is a metro ticket!

As a true first-world capital, there are literally loads of museums in Stockholm so it's very easy to hurt your budget when trying to go to every single one of them. Try to be selective here. Make choices. For instance, as much as I enjoy Schlager music, it didn't make sense to splash almost 200 SEK in the ABBA Museum.



Tip: I always ask myself a question: *Would I enter a similar place in my home town?* It helps put into perspective what can be of good value for me to visit and what can be just a waste of time and money.

However, many of the museums in Stockholm are completely free of charge. Try looking into the Nationalmuseum, Medieval Museum and the Moderna Museet for a free injection of culture. Some paid museums might also have free exhibits throughout the year.

(<https://www.geekyexplorer.com>)



Here are my tips on how to do London on a budget!

Full of culture, history and class, London is at the top of many travelers' bucket lists. The city is also touted as one of the most expensive cities in the world, but if you take the right precautions, it doesn't have to be.

THE OYSTER CARD

The Oyster Card is a quick pass into the public transport system. You can load the card with multiple rides within the zones you'll be traveling. Depending on how many rides you pre-pay, it can be more than 50 percent cheaper than single ride tickets. The other plus side is that it grants you rides on the bus and light rail systems as well.

Without this, you can easily spend £15 or more per day on transportation alone.

FIND THE FREE THINGS

One of the benefits of a city as huge as London is that there are loads of free things to see and do. There are lists and lists of free attractions, museums, spectacles, and what have you—as long as you keep your eyes open.

The Tate Modern, National Gallery, Museum of London, and British Museum are all—you guessed it—free! Wander around the beautiful outdoors at Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, and Hampstead Heath.



The Changing of the Guard, a fun and historical event that nobody should leave London without seeing, will cost you nothing.

There are also loads of free events throughout the city. Keep your eyes and

ears open for art exhibitions, bookshop readings, and lunchtime concerts—all without a price tag.

And don't miss East London's street art scene. While Banksy may be Britain's most famous street art export, there are also a series of street art pieces situated in locations around East London, including the distinctive mushroom sculptures of Christiaan Nagel.

The Time Out app is a great resource for local events and festivals. Or you can wander aimlessly in the streets of London—there's always something going on.

EATING ON A BUDGET

Cheap eats are everywhere—be on the lookout for traditional cafés and delis where you can pick up premade sandwiches, as well as food carts.

Dive into English eateries by stopping at Caff, a blue-color diner with simple food. An all-day breakfast costs between £3 and £5; you can get the fried mashed potatoes and cabbage for just £4.

On a bright and sunny day, buy a handful of fresh groceries from one of the local markets like Borough Market. Fruits, veggies like celery or carrots, wine, cheese, and a bottle of olives make for the perfect picnic in one of the city's many parks.



GET THE LONDON PASS

If you're a museum nut, invest in the London Pass. This tourist card will set you back £79, but it is good for two days and grants you access to 32 attractions and free public transportation.



It includes many of the London highlights, such as Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, and Britain at War Museum. If you do a lot of indoor sightseeing, individual museum tickets can add up.

Save money by getting a London Pass for your first one to two days in the city. If you want to hit the big leagues, you can also do it inexpensively: Buckingham Palace is just £11, the art deco Eltham Palace is £6, and John Keats' home is £3.

AIRPORT TRANSFERS

How you get into the city from the airport depends on your budget. You can catch the Tube (aka London Underground) for as little as £5 but you'll have to deal with your bags.

If you pack light, it's not a problem—otherwise, you may want to arrange a taxi to meet you upon arrival. Try not to catch one directly from the airport—these are often expensive.

***Helpful Tip:** If you want a little more comfort, opt for the Heathrow Express, which costs about £22 for the trip. The earlier you book, the cheaper your fare can be!*

FREE WALKING TOURS

Take a free walking tour—both Sandemans and Undiscovered London offer free tours of the city. Though the guides are not professional, they are local

and are usually enthusiastic students and volunteers who love taking travelers on a trek through their city.

This is a terrific introduction to the highlights in town, and it is often coupled with a few anecdotes and hidden spots from your guides. **Remember to tip them afterward!**

(<https://theblondeabroad.com>)



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