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New York Times Tells Consumers to Use an Agent for Luxury Travel

by [Jessica Montevago](#) / November 19, 2019

Michelle Higgins, author of the Fix column for The New York Times, learned first-hand that when booking a high-end vacation, using a travel agency can mean scoring perks and benefits that would cost hundreds, at no cost to the traveler.

During a two-night stay at the Enchantment Resort in Sedona, Arizona, she and her daughter were surprised with an upgrade to a two-bedroom, two-bath suite with a kitchenette, a fireplace and dual balconies facing the red rocks of Boynton Canyon — a significant boost from the \$299-a-night double queen room they had reserved.

“The complimentary daily breakfast could be taken in the room or at the hotel restaurant. And moments after a bellhop whisked us to our spacious suite in a golf cart, a room service attendant arrived with a fruit and cheese platter and a personalized welcome note,” Higgins wrote in her recent New York Times article.

She continued: “The V.I.P. treatment hadn’t come at extra cost or because they thought we were someone special. (I don’t disclose my New York Times affiliation). I had simply booked the hotel the old-fashioned way — **through a travel agent.**”

“To save money and enhance the quality of your trip at no cost to you, look for an adviser . **Because of longstanding partnerships with travel companies and the sheer volume of bookings these groups generate for hotel, airline and cruise partners, they are able to negotiate special rates and perks on behalf of their clients,** from free cocktails and room upgrades upon arrival to spa treatments and late checkouts.”

Example , The cheapest option was a nonrefundable rate of \$623.38 for two nights or \$718.76 with flexible cancellation, she wrote, and the Travel Advisor rate for the same room was the same as the flexible rate and included daily breakfast (a \$30 credit per person per day) and \$100 credit towards spa or golf.

“In other words, if my daughter and I both had breakfast each day, which we certainly planned to, the Virtuoso deal was better than if I booked through the hotel directly. Because my daughter was too young to go to the spa and neither of us play golf, my adviser offered to apply the credit to food and beverages instead. Sold.”

Aside from the deals, advisers can also ease the hassle of planning a vacation — especially for complex trips. Cruise lines, in particular, rely heavily on agents to send bookings their way, partly because there are so many choices involved in buying a cruise, from multiple room categories to dozens of restaurants and hundreds of land excursions.

Bottom line, Higgins wrote, for travelers looking for V.I.P. treatment on their next trip and who are planning to pay at least \$300 a night for a hotel room anyway, **it can make sense to talk to an agent.** “**All those extras come at no additional cost when using a travel advisor.**”