

# Travel Web sites worth a click

Washington Post

## Officialtravelguide.com

**Who it's for:** Trying to find the official tourism sites for an area you want to visit? This site links you to visitors bureaus across the globe.

**Pros:** You can search by continent, country or state. Most comprehensive for destinations in North America. California alone offers links to more than 70 individual convention and visitors bureaus across the state. Also offers hotel and vacation bookings.

**Cons:** Results are not displayed alphabetically. Map search contains fewer results than word search. Many foreign countries aren't included (no Italy?).

## Gladtravel.com

**Who it's for:** Anyone looking for a bargain place to stay in high-priced Hawaii.

**Pros:** Run by Global Adventure Travel, the site lists about 1,300 lodging options throughout the Hawaiian Islands for \$99 or less per night. Taxes and extra fees are clearly stated. Room set-up, amenities and location are described. Also includes such details as whether smoking is allowed and what languages are spoken.

**Cons:** Very few properties include pictures. Works best when few parameters are entered during search process. Too many stipulations result in limited choices.

## Sportsgroupie.com

**Who it's for:** Geared to those who plan their

vacations around playoff schedules. The name says it all.

**Pros:** Great resource for sports schedules. Offers sports tickets, hotel and flight booking, and sports-oriented vacation packages.

**Cons:** Travel-planning aspect of the site just links you to other places, namely [Kayak.com](http://Kayak.com).

## Airfarewatchdog.com

**Who it's for:** Those who travel fairly frequently and are airfare-involved. Best for the guy who likes to brag about how little he paid for the flight.

**Pros:** This is basically a one-man show. George Hobica, a travel writer who does a weekly column for Copley News Service, is the wizard behind the curtain, and he knows his stuff. Offers a daily low airfare report from individual cities, which you can receive by e-mail. Humans make sure that the deals being touted by the airlines actually exist. Good links to airline sites.

**Cons:** Ads are interspersed with content.

## Reservemy.com

**Who's it for:** Don't know which hotels are close to where you're going? This site will find them.

**Pros:** Plug in an address and the site spits out a list of the closest hotels, including the distance from your targeted address. Listing is accompanied by a map or satellite image that pinpoints your desired destination, then shows where each hotel is in proximity to it. You can even ask for a hybrid display that shows a satellite image overlaid with a map.

**Cons:** The site is in the testing stage, so there

are frequent bugs. Sometimes addresses come up wrong, especially if they are incomplete. Does not include all nearby hotels. Be patient while it's searching.

## Travelpost.com

**Who's it for:** Travelers who want to post online scrapbooks of their travel adventures, and those who want to look at them. Also for travelers looking for hotel ratings.

**Pros:** Lots of reviews of individual chain hotels, especially handy for driving vacations. You can keep your blog entries private or share them with the world. Upload your photos and plot your travels on a personal travel map.

**Cons:** Part of the hotel review database is purchased from a research outfit, so the reviews sound stilted, with frequent similar phrases, such as "this place made me feel entertained."

## Turnhere.com

**Who it's for:** Visually oriented individuals who want the inside scoop on offbeat and interesting neighborhoods and topics.

**Pros:** Professional videos that, as of last week, profiled places in four foreign countries, 12 states and D.C. (Dupont Circle and Shaw); the site plans to add 20 to 50 additional films to its Web site each week. Films are short (two to five minutes), but they get inside the heart of each place. Videos can be downloaded to iPods and other mobile devices. Also includes links to various tourist sites.

**Cons:** More color than facts. Don't click on the site unless you have time to kill: It's addictive. //