

Trip Itinerary and Budget Project

Objectives of this project are:

- To make you familiar and comfortable with setting a budget and sticking to it
- To learn how to research and book travel options
- To weigh the pros and cons of different options and make a decision

Situation: It's Christmas break, and you are ready to take a vacation to relieve some stress and have a good time. Your task is to plan and budget for a trip that lasts for 5 nights and 6 days (leaving Dec. 26 and returning on Dec. 31).

Stipulations:

1. As with most every vacation you will ever take, you have a budget. You've diligently saved up for this trip over the last few months and can spend **\$1500** on it total. This includes EVERYTHING! You will lose points on the project if you go over budget.
2. Your destination must be at least 200 miles from home. Going to the next town over for 5 nights will not be considered a vacation for this project. In fact, I'd prefer you leave the state. The point of this project is to figure out how to research different destinations and plan a long-distance trip on a budget. You are allowed to drive to your destination.
3. You **MUST** pay for lodging and transportation. For this project, you are not allowed to stay with a relative or friend. While that is a budget-friendly option in reality, you will not always want to take a trip to a place where you have relatives. I want you to learn how to budget for and book lodging as well. The same goes for transportation: if you drive, you have to pay for gas. Hitch-hiking or bumming a ride with a friend for free are not options.
4. Having said that, you **MAY** share lodging with a same-gender friend. In that case, you would divide the cost of the hotel room, motel, cabin, etc.
5. You must have at least **ONE** major excursion or activity planned for each day. Saying you are going to Florida but staying in your room playing video games every day will **NOT** fly. That is not a typical vacation. You also must eat at least one meal out per day. If you want to buy groceries for the other meals that day, you can, but remember to put that in your budget. (Also, check if a fridge and microwave are available at your lodging). No food can be free.

Requirements:

When all is said and done, you should hand in **FOUR** parts for this project, listed below. I have itemized them below, and on the next page, explain them in detail.

- Trip Overview
- Overall itemized budget
- Detailed itinerary of each of the 6 days **WITH COSTS**
- Trip review

Over for explanations of parts

Part I: Trip Overview

In this section, you will give me an overall look at your trip. Your trip overview needs to include **all** of the following, numbered and answered.

1. A description of your chosen destination (to describe your destination, try finding it on Trip Advisor or looking at its tourism/visitor website) and WHY you chose this place.
2. An explanation of who you are traveling with and what (if any) costs you are splitting and with whom.
3. Any concerns you have about this trip or things you need to take into consideration (Example: "I'm going to a warm climate, so I have to pack both warm and cold-weather clothes, since it's chilly in IL in Dec." OR "I'm driving and need to take into consideration possible inclement weather.")
4. What the climate is like at this destination at the end of December.

Part II: Itemized budget of entire trip

You must first research the ACTUAL cost of how much each section will cost before you fill this out. Don't allot only \$400 for lodging if the hotel you're staying at costs \$200 a night, for example.

In your budget, you must tell me your choice for EACH of these criteria AND the cost of each. Remember, it can't add up to more than \$1500.

1. Lodging (hotel, motel, hostel, cabin, condo, etc.)
2. Transportation (plane, car, bus, train, etc.) *For this, you need to look up actual flights, bus schedules, train schedules, etc. Also consider what transportation you will use once at your destination.
3. Excursions and activities (what you will DO while on vacation). If you're unsure, Google the city and/or visit their Tourism Website.
4. Money for food (research area restaurant prices). Trip Advisor is a great website for this!
5. Money for souvenirs
6. Incidentals/emergency money (MUST have some in your budget for this!)

Total budget: _____

Sample budget (my figures are fictional; you need to actually put real figures down after you research. You may also NOT use my trip below as your trip for this project.)

1. Lodging: The Sheraton Safari in Orlando, FL: \$100/night or \$500 total

2. Transportation: Airfare on American Airlines from O'Hare to Orlando airport: \$250 total, round-trip. Once in Orlando, I will use the free hotel shuttle to get me to my attractions.
Taxis to/from airport: \$50

3. Activities: 3-day Park Hopper Disney Pass (\$200). This allows me access to all Disney parks. My other two days will be taken up by Downtown Disney (free except for food and souvenirs) and shopping at the outlet mall (figured under "souvenirs")

4. Budget for food: Food can be expensive in the Disney parks, so I will only eat one meal there per day. I will stop at a nearby convenience store for food to eat for my other meal that day, and my hotel has free breakfast. Total: \$50/day or \$250.

5. Souvenirs: \$150 to put towards shopping

6. Incidentals: \$100 for emergencies/unknown costs

Total: \$1500

*Chances are, you will not end up exactly at \$1500. Remember, my figures were just estimated; you will actually be inputting real figures from your research.

Part 3: Detailed daily itinerary

In this section, you must make a DETAILED itinerary of every day of your trip. When I say detailed, I mean you write down everything you do that day AND what it will cost. This part should take the longest because it involves a lot of researching on your part, which will be necessary when planning a trip. At the end of each day, you will total your expenditures for that day. For ongoing costs like lodging or transportation/airfare, you can put them on just day one of your itinerary.

Below is a sample of one day. Remember, my figures are estimates; yours will be exact from research.

Day 1, Dec. 26 (sample):

1. My parents drop me off at O'Hare, and I meet up with my friends. (Transportation to the airport is the **one** case where it can be free) Cost: free
2. We fly to Orlando and land around noon: \$250 for round-trip tickets
3. We grab a taxi and split the cost 3 ways (\$15/person) and head to the Sheraton Safari.
4. I check into my hotel (lodging for the week is \$500 total). (Here, if you wanted to share the room with a friend, you could split this cost).
5. We decide to head to Downtown Disney tonight. My hotel has a free shuttle, so I take that.
6. Downtown Disney is free, but we eat dinner at Planet Hollywood there. My food costs \$35 with tip.
7. We walk around and sight-see, but I don't buy any souvenirs today.
8. We take the free hotel shuttle back.
9. We decide to stop at the convenience store next door to pick up groceries for the week. Out of our allotted food money, we spend \$100 a person on groceries (my room has a microwave and fridge).
10. We go to bed at 11:00.

Total for day 1, which includes airfare, groceries for the week, and hotel: \$900/\$1500 (seems like a lot, but remember, this takes into account most of my food and my airfare/hotel for the entire trip) You would do this for every single day of your trip (6 days total). Your last day of the trip may very well just be waking up, taking transportation home, and eating.

Part IV: Trip Review

This is the very last part you will complete, after you have finished your itinerary for your entire trip. This part should answer **all** of the following:

1. What surprised you about planning and budgeting for a trip?
2. What would you change about this trip if you were to actually take it in real life?
3. What was the hardest part about planning and/or budgeting for this trip?
4. What resources did you use to find your information? Which were most helpful? Least helpful? Why?
5. What questions do you still have about setting up budgets, managing money, planning trips, etc?

Things to consider when doing this project:

- It is very often cheaper to book vacation packages, rather than book air and hotel separately. Sites to check for package deals: Travelocity, Expedia, Orbitz, Hotwire
- Remember, you only have 5 nights and 6 days. Keep that in mind when deciding how far you want to travel. A 3 hour flight? Probably not a big deal. Wanting to fly to Europe on a 9 hour flight? Really going to take a chunk of your vacation time, plus catching up from jet lag.
- Consider what the weather is like when booking your destination. It will be winter here. If you plan a trip to say, Colorado, you're going to be talking ski trip, not camping and swimming.
- Prices often go up near the holidays. Remember you have a strict budget and look for deals where you can get them. The travel sites I listed above often have special deals listed on the front page of their website. Browse those for ideas.
- If you are considering renting a car, please realize it is MUCH more expensive to rent to drivers under the age of 25, and most rental car companies require you be at least 18.
- Again, make sure you list accurate prices for everything. If you do decide on a package deal, you can list transportation and hotel together in one lump sum. Otherwise, you need to price each out separately. If you plan to drive your own car, research gas prices not just here, but at your destination.
- If you're flying, there are many nearby airports (Peoria, Bloomington, St. Louis, O'Hare, Midway), so price check all of them. Some are cheaper than others, and some airlines (like Southwest) are cheaper than others.

Need help? Please ask! This project can be very eye-opening, informative, and enjoyable, but you will probably want to tear your hair out if you get behind because we're moving along at a good clip. This means if you're absent, you want to do your make-up work right away outside of class. If one part takes longer for you, you will want to work on this outside of class to catch up.

And, of course, remember this is a SCHOOL project. Everything must be school-appropriate, or your grade will be reduced HEAVILY based on severity.

Think a 6 day trip for \$1500 is impossible? Not so! In my very quick research, I already found these deals that fit in your budget:

- Las Vegas air+hotel for \$725/person on Travelocity
- Miami air+hotel for \$884/person on Travelocity
- Los Angeles air+hotel for \$887/person on Expedia
- Phoenix air+hotel for \$718/person on Orbitz

And there are many others! Try browsing different travel websites for destinations that interest you or look at their special deals. A piece of advice would be to prioritize your trip. If you are going to be out doing lots of activities, you could stay in a cheaper hotel or motel or even a hostel. Also, flights that are not direct are often cheaper than direct flights. If you don't mind a layover, it's a great way to save money.