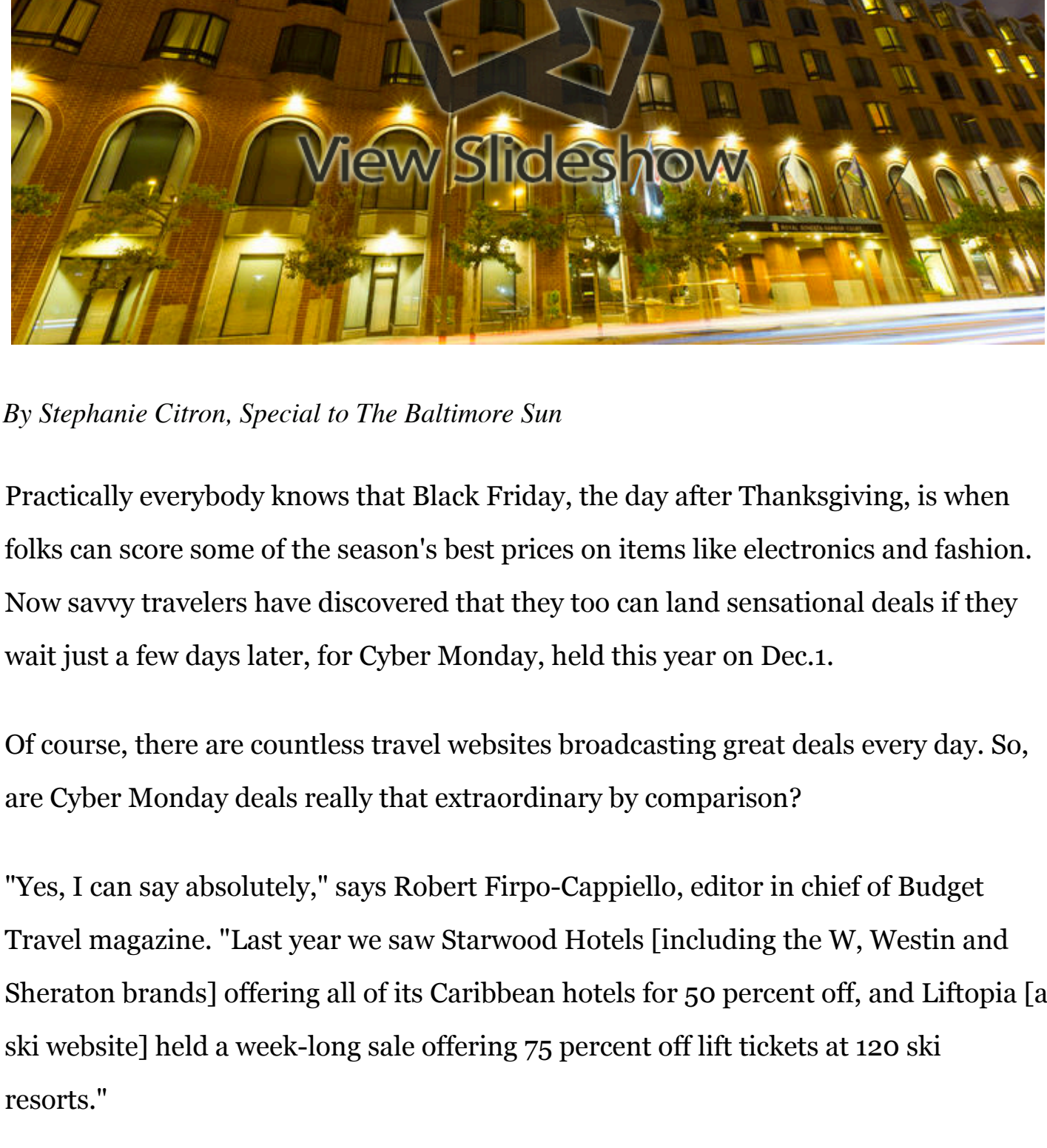


Ready, set, go: Cyber Monday travel deals



By Stephanie Citron, Special to The Baltimore Sun

Practically everybody knows that Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, is when folks can score some of the season's best prices on items like electronics and fashion. Now savvy travelers have discovered that they too can land sensational deals if they wait just a few days later, for Cyber Monday, held this year on Dec.1.

Of course, there are countless travel websites broadcasting great deals every day. So, are Cyber Monday deals really that extraordinary by comparison?

"Yes, I can say absolutely," says Robert Firpo-Cappiello, editor in chief of Budget Travel magazine. "Last year we saw Starwood Hotels [including the W, Westin and Sheraton brands] offering all of its Caribbean hotels for 50 percent off, and Liftopia [a ski website] held a week-long sale offering 75 percent off lift tickets at 120 ski resorts."

There were also cheap hotel/airfare packages for exotic travel ventures. For example, tour operators like intrepidtravel.com, a company specializing in adventure vacations, offered 20 percent off all trips for the entire week beginning on Cyber Monday.

The most important thing to know about Cyber Monday travel deals is that they usually have shorter expiration deadlines than other travel sales offered throughout the year. So if you see a great deal to someplace you are dying to go, you'd best act swiftly.

There is often an opportunity to do some research in advance. If you have a favorite hotel or chain, subscribe to their email newsletter, where they alert members in advance of upcoming sales and special offers. You should also follow their Facebook page and Twitter site in the days leading up to Thanksgiving, where they often pre-announce and post teasers about upcoming deals.

For those who prefer to consider all of the options, there are reliable websites that act as clearing houses for travel deals, such as budgettravel.com, travelzoo.com and johnnyjett.com, whose founder Johnny Jet advises following travel experts on social media.

"My best advice is to sign up and follow on Twitter/Facebook a variety of travel sites, experts and personalities...as [all of us] will sift through all the Cyber Monday Travel Deals and feature the best ones in our roundups." Daily updates from sites like airfarewatchdog.com will deliver the latest sales directly to your laptop or smart phone. They also are the ones to announce early-bird specials from destinations, meaning you can preview — and often purchase — some Cyber Monday deals during the week leading up to Thanksgiving.

A relatively new Cyber Monday travel trend is Power Hour, where, during one designated hour, travelers can book even deeper discounts on a particular deal. For example, this year, Triumph Hotels, a small hotel chain of upscale boutique properties in NYC is offering 30 percent off on its properties, but during the Power Hour, they slash the savings to 50 percent, including on its suites.

Once you do find a deal, it is wise to investigate all of the factors surrounding your trip. First, do a quick comparison on discount sites like Hotels.com to ensure this is a truly exceptional offer worth jumping on. Check for restrictions such as blackout dates, room category and location (with super discounts it is safe to assume you are getting the most basic room, unless otherwise stated), and cancellation policies. If the deal is tied to a package, make sure that you are interested in all of its components; otherwise, you might discover that simply booking the room on a discount site is a better bargain.

If you find an offer on a third-party website, check to see if it is also available on the destination's own website — booking it there will inevitably gain you better bargaining power on upgrades and more clout in case anything goes wrong. Overall, be wary of any unfamiliar third-party site.

Don't forget to factor in what it will cost you to get there. If you need to fly to the destination, check the airline's website and Twitter page for current specials. Be aware, too, that the airlines themselves cannot offer Cyber Monday travel deals because federal regulations do not allow them to announce their sales in advance of offering them.

"But that doesn't mean you can't get airfare savings" says Firpo-Cappiello. "Cruise lines and resort packages often include airfare. They will roll into their price some of the lowest airfare you can find. So, it's not that you can't get an airline deal on Cyber Monday, but you won't get it through the airline, you'll get it through the tour operator."

We've uncovered some phenomenal travel deals well worth pondering. Below are a few and more can be found at baltimoresun.com/travel. Note that most deals are based on availability and at least some blackout dates will apply, so check your calendar closely.

Maryland

Four Seasons Hotel Baltimore. Get 30 percent off their best available rate for Friday and Saturday nights in January.

Book Dec. 1 at fourseasons.com/baltimore/offers

Royal Sonesta Harbor Court Hotel. Sonesta is offering up to 25 percent off on all of its U.S. hotels and resorts during the promotion; rates may vary by location. Valid on new reservations only for stays through March 31.

Book Dec. 1 at sonesta.com, use code Cyber2014.

Hotel Monaco, Baltimore. For Kimpton Karma Rewards members only (its free to sign up online) 20 percent off VIP Mediterranean Spa Suites and King Premier Spa Rooms from Nov. 28 to March 1.

Book Friday, Nov. 28 to Dec 2 at monaco-baltimore.com, use code CYBER.

Inn at 202 Dover, Easton. A three-continuous-night package offering the third night's stay free (a 33 percent discount) in December, February or March. Book between noon and 3 p.m. and receive a \$25 dinner credit and bottle of champagne. Blackout dates of Dec. 31, Feb. 14 and Feb. 27-28 are excluded.

Book Dec. 1 at innat202dover.com. Click availability and in reservation notes section, add code: Sun1129.

The Dunes Manor, Ocean City. The \$289 package deal includes two-night oceanfront stay on Friday and Saturday, commencing Dec. 5, Dec. 12 or Dec. 19; breakfast buffet and keepsake photo with Santa on Saturdays; baked cookies and hot chocolate each day at 4 p.m.; and tickets for North Park Festival of Light show. Children under 14 dine half-price, under 3, dine free. Additional buffet vouchers available for \$13.50 plus tax. Complimentary holiday entertainment includes Christmas-themed movies, Christmas carol sing-alongs by the piano, and more.

Book now through Dec. 18 at dunesmanor.com. Use rate code HOLI

Taylor-Made Deep Creek Vacations, Deep Creek Lake. Offering five new specials via the website each hour throughout Cyber Monday. The specials are only good during the hour that they are posted. Offers are on participating properties only and not retroactive, nor valid with any other promotion or discount. Sneak peek: Book a March weekend for American Pride and receive a 20 percent discount; book Celebration at Deep Creek for a weekend in September and get a 15 percent discount.

Book Dec.1, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at deepcreekvacations.com

Inn At Perry Cabin, St. Michaels. Winter Indulgence Deal includes a free room category upgrade at time of booking for travel Nov. 29- March 31. Daily a la carte breakfast for two, \$50 resort credit per room, per night, and access to resort amenities. Black out dates include Dec. 31 and Feb. 14-15.

Book Nov. 28 to Dec. 5 by calling 410-745-2200 and mentioning Cyber Monday.

New York

Triumph Hotels, NYC. 30 percent off all room categories at any Triumph property for travel Dec. 2-March 31. (Hotel group includes The Iroquois New York, Hotel Chandler, Hotel Belleclaire, The Cosmopolitan, The Gershwin and The Washington Jefferson.) Book during "Power Hour," from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m., and take 50 percent off premium rooms and suites at any Triumph property.

Book Dec.1 at triumphhotels.com or call 855-787-4867.

The Jade Hotel, NYC. Cyber Monday Post-Holiday Respite. Pay \$500 and receive a (consecutive) two-night stay, a complimentary bottle of prosecco upon arrival, \$150 food and beverage credit redeemable at Grape & Vine restaurant, the lobby lounge, and room service. Available Jan. 2-Feb 28. Taxes not included.

Book Dec.1 at thejadenyc.com, use booking code CYBERMON, or call 212-375-1300.

Maritime Hotel, NYC. 25 percent off all bookings for travel between Dec.12 and March 31.

Book Dec.1 at themaritimehotel.com; use rate code: MARIMON.

The Peninsula Hotel (NYC and Chicago properties). Get up to 30 percent off rooms and suites, spa treatments and dining.

Book Nov. 28 to Dec. 1 at peninsula.com and use code NYCYBER or CHICYBER.

Gurney's Montauk Resort & Seawater Spa, Montauk. The Hamptons' only year-round resort is offering 30 percent off all rooms for one or more nights. Book during "Power Hour," from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., and take 50 percent off private oceanfront cottages. Valid for travel through April 30.

Book Dec.1 at gurneysinnc.com or call 631-668-2345.

The Thayer Hotel, West Point, Hudson Valley. Take 45 percent off of our best available rate for rooms and suites. Full pre-payment is required at time of reservation. No refunds or cancellations will be accepted. Cannot be combined with any other packages, promotions, or offers.

Book Dec.1 at thethayerhotel.com, or call 845-446-4731, Ext. 1.

Washington DC

Embassy Row Hotel. Take 30 percent off best available rate for stays Nov. 28 to Labor Day 2015. Offer includes one-night valet parking and complimentary Wi-Fi.

Book Nov. 28 to Dec. 1 at embassyrowhotel.com; use code BTCYBER.

The Melrose Georgetown Hotel. Get room rate of \$89 per night for stays Dec.1-Jan. 11. New Year's Eve excluded.

Book Dec.1 at melrosehoteldc.com; use code CYBR13.

Virginia

Westin Alexandria. Take 20 percent off Web Rate for stays Nov. 24-Feb. 1. Must be prepaid and is non-refundable.

Book now through Dec. 7 at westinalexandria.com; use DAILYDI rate plan.

Morrison House and Lorien Hotel & Spa, Alexandria. Rooms at both properties beginning at \$145 for stays Nov. 28-March 1. Prepaid and non-refundable, blackout dates apply, \$5 donation per room night booked to The Trevor Project.

Book Nov. 28 to Dec. 2 at morrisonhouse.com or lorienhotelandspa.com; use rate code GIVE.

Woodlands, including Williamsburg Inn, Williamsburg Lodge and Williamsburg Woodlands, all in Williamsburg, Va. Suite Rewards deal offers one night free when you book at least two consecutive nights, Nov. 30 to March 26, in a suite at any of the three properties.

Book Nov. 29 to Dec. 1 by calling 855-296-6627; must mention the code CYBER.

Stonewall Jackson Hotel, Staunton. A \$90 Bed & Breakfast Package including room, breakfast for two and parking on stays through March 31.

Book Dec. 2, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at stonewalljacksonhotel.com, use code CYBER.

Pennsylvania

Loews Philadelphia (and all Loews hotels, except where specified). Save 20 percent on all reservations. The deal is prepaid and cannot be modified or canceled. Subject to availability. Taxes and gratuities not included. Not applicable to groups, negotiated or third-party rates. Cannot be combined with any other promotional offers, nor applicable to existing reservations.

Book Dec. 1 at loews.com, by phone or via Loews' social media channels (Facebook and Twitter). There is no special code and the discount will be automatically applied.

The Lodge at Glendorn, Bradford, Pa. Take 20 percent off stays of two nights or more, Jan. 2-Feb. 28, in one of the 12 private cottages or four suites in the Main House, \$100 Forest Spa credit, a signature Relais & Chateaux cookbook.

Book Dec. 1 at glendorn.com, and use code CyberMonday, or call 800-843-8568.

The Lodge at Woodloch, Hawley, Pa. Midweek rates at this Poconos resort begin at \$199 per person, per night and weekend rates begin at \$299 per person, per night, December through March.

Book 8 a.m., Nov. 28 to 8 p.m., Dec. 1 at thelodgeatwoodloch.com

Fairville Inn, Chadds Ford, Brandywine Valley. Thirty percent off stays of two or more nights, good for any night, Jan. 2-March 29, in the room of your choice, or save 20 percent for a one-night stay (Sunday through Thursday) with a complimentary upgrade to the best room available at check-in. Also receive 25 percent discount on in-room massages, full breakfast, afternoon tea, discount admission to Longwood Gardens, Winterthur, and the Brandywine River Museum. Cancellation charges apply.

Book by Dec. 15, 2014 at fairvilleinn.com or call 610-388-5900; must reference the "Baltimore Sun Special."

New Jersey

Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa, Atlantic City. From Dec. 2 to Feb. 26, midweek overnight stay in a classic room, with complimentary Internet begins at \$79; midweek overnight stay in a Fiore Suite, with complimentary Internet, begins at \$109. Blackout dates apply, including Dec. 24-Jan. 2.

Book Dec. 1 at theborgata.com, use code CYB79 for classic room or CYB109 for Fiore Suite.

Tropicana Casino and Resort, Atlantic City. Cyber Monday 24-hour sale offers rates from \$29 on stays Sunday through Thursday, Dec. 2-Jan. 29. Rates are based on double occupancy and do not include taxes. Not valid on Dec. 31.

Book Dec. 1 at tropicana.net; use code TCYB14 or call 800-345-8767.

The Chelsea, Atlantic City. Room rates begin at \$55 for stays between Dec. 1 and Feb. 28.

Book Dec. 1 to Dec. 12 at thechelsea-ac.com; use promo code: CYBER14.

Cape Resorts including Congress Hall, The Star, Virginia Hotel, Red Cottage and Pink Cottage. Mid-week room special beginning at \$69 for stays Dec. 1-Feb. 28. Guests can also purchase these dining deals: \$50 voucher at Blue Pig Tavern for \$35 and \$100 Ebbitt Room voucher for \$75.

Book Dec. 1 to Dec. 12 at caperesortscom; use promo code: CYBER14.

Delaware

The Dogfish Inn, Lewes. Receive \$99 weekday or \$139 weekend rate for rooms Jan.2 to Feb. 28. No blackout dates, but rooms are first come, first serve, and bookings cannot be canceled. Deal includes all rooms except "The Sweet".

Book Nov. 28 to Dec. 1 at dogfishinn.com; use code "Cyber Monday".

The Atlantic Sands Hotel & Conference Center, Rehoboth Beach. Get a 30 percent discount on rooms through March 31. Applies to new reservations only.

Book Dec. 1 at atlanticsandshotel.com, using code CYBER.

More destinations

Vail Resorts, a luxury mountain resort company with properties throughout the western U.S. Take up to 45 percent off lodging at any Vail Resorts property throughout 2015 spring ski season. Certain blackout dates apply and vary by destination.

Book Nov. 27 to Dec. 3 at snow.com/CyberMonday

Liftopia, offering ski lift tickets at hundreds of U.S. ski resorts. Save up to 80 percent off all-season, multiple-day and single-day lift tickets.

Book Nov. 24 to Dec. 1 at liftopia.com

Atlantis Resort, Paradise Island, Bahamas. Savings of up to 50 percent on nightly rates; kids under 12 eat breakfast and dinner free with the purchase of an adult meal plan. The rate is non-refundable and based on double-occupancy for stays in the Beach Tower Terrace. A minimum two-night stay is required. Valid for travel Dec. 1 to March 31.

Book Nov. 28 to Dec. 2 at atlantisbahamas.com or call 888-783-4620; mention Atlantis Black Friday/Cyber Monday Deal.

Kimpton Hotels. Save up to 20 percent off all rooms for stays Nov. 28-March 1. Offer is prepaid, non-refundable, based upon availability, blackout dates apply. For every booking, Kimpton will donate \$5 to The Trevor Project, a leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth ages 13-24.

Book Nov. 28 to Dec. 2 at kimptonhotels.com. Early access to Kimpton Karma Rewards Members (free online signup) beginning Nov. 26.

W Fort Lauderdale, Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Up to a 20 percent discount on all room types for travel Jan. 3 - May 31.

Book Dec. 1 at wfortlauderdalehotel.com/offers.

JW Marriott Cancun Resort & Spa, Cancun, Mexico. Take 50 percent off leisure rates, starting at \$165 per night for travel April 12 - June 30.

Book Dec. 1 at jwmarriottcancun.com; use promo code 1CL.

CasaMagna Marriott Cancun Resort, Cancun, Mexico. Take 50 percent off leisure rates, starting at \$105 per night, for stays April 12 - June 30.

Book Dec. 1 at casamagnacancun.com; use promo code 1CL.

San Juan Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino, San Juan, Puerto Rico. Up to 40 percent off leisure rates (starting at \$149 per night) for stays Jan. 1-June 30. Prepayment is required.

Book Dec. 1 at marriott.com; use booking code D3Q.

JW Marriott Camelback Inn Resort & Spa, Scottsdale, Ariz. Rates for travel Dec.1-22 begin at \$149 per night (about a 42 percent savings) and includes a round of golf at either the new Ambiente golf course or the classic Padre Course.

Book Dec. 1 at camelbackinn.com; use promo code 16C.

Hyatt Regency Aruba. Celebrating Cyber Monday with two promotions: Room Discount Deal offers 20 percent off the deluxe room rate throughout 2015 with a five-night minimum stay. Package includes a flight tasting of fine tequila at Mexicado restaurant for two, a \$50 spa credit at ZoiA Spa and a \$50 credit to restaurant Footprints. Foodie & Spa Goer Deal includes \$100 per night resort credit, good through April 18, at any of the property's restaurants and ZoiA spa, flight tasting of fine tequila at Mexicado restaurant for two and complimentary champagne or welcome cocktail at check-in. Five-night minimum stay required.

Book Dec. 1 at aruba.hyatt.com or call 800-633-7313. For Room Discount deal use code ARUA15, For Foodie/Spa deal use code ARUB15.

Divi Resorts, Aruba. Unlimited stays are 50 percent off at three Divi Resorts in Aruba for travel April 18 -June 30 and Aug. 15 – Dec. 15, 2015, with no minimum stay. Kids 12 and under stay and eat free. Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach Resort rates start at \$149 plus tax; Divi Village Golf & Beach Resort rates start at \$114 plus tax; Divi Dutch Village Beach Resort start at \$106 plus tax. Also includes up to 50 percent off Divi Vacations air and hotel packages.

Book Dec. 1 at resorts.com or call 800-367-3484.