



## BUSINESS

# Where to Vacation With a Strong Dollar

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## How to get better deals for vacations abroad

The U.S. dollar is at its strongest point in years compared with many other key currencies—and that means it's übercheap for Americans to travel internationally.

There are several factors driving the dollar's rise. Among them: euro-zone instability, economic slowdowns in Asia and South America and “the perception that everything is great in the U.S.,” says San Francisco–based investment manager Axel Merk, citing domestic growth.

As a result, since January 2014, the greenback's purchasing power has grown 15% against the euro, 10% against the yen and 21% against the Argentine peso. In Russia, where falling oil prices and harsh European sanctions have upended the economy, the dollar is up 49% against the ruble.

To best leverage those discounts abroad, experts suggest paying in cash or getting a credit card that doesn't charge foreign-transaction fees, which can add up quickly. Moreover, if the exchange rate shifts in your favor after you've booked a hotel, consider calling to renegotiate the nightly rate.

Unfortunately, says Kimberly Wilson Wetty, a travel agent in New York City, flight prices won't drop unless demand does. But no matter. “Once you're in these countries,” she says, “your dollar will go so much further.” ■

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