



## 11 Ways to Outsmart Marketers at Their Pricing Games

Ways to get around dynamic pricing when you order online

By [Judy Colbert](#)

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*Credit: Adobe*

Whether you call it dynamic pricing, surge pricing, demand pricing or time-based pricing, marketers' maddening practice of changing prices according to demand and supply is here to stay. Long practiced in the travel and hospitality industries, this system of jacking up what you pay based on when, where or how you order has expanded to almost any event, product or service with a limited availability. But there are ways to get around dynamic pricing, if you're savvy.

A few examples of dynamic pricing:

- A hotel charges more for New Year's Eve

- Airlines and Amtrak raise rates for holiday travel or lower them at other times due to excess availability
- Airlines and hotels notice you've been searching online for a particular flight or hotel, so they up the price because they know you're a motivated buyer
- Sports teams hike or drop ticket prices according to the day of the week, time of day, teams and players playing and competing events

When [Uber](#) announced its surge pricing for certain rides, that created a lot of stir and animosity. People saw it as price gouging. There was a logical reason for the increased prices, though. More people want a lift on New Year's Eve than other nights, for instance, and fewer people want to drive that night. The solution was to make it more financially attractive for drivers to work then rather than party.

## 11 Ways to Get Around Dynamic Pricing

So how can you get around dynamic pricing and beat marketers at their own game? Here are 11 ways:

- 1. Clear your computer's [cookies](#) or cache whenever you're looking to buy an airline ticket or hotel room online.** That way, the airline or hotel won't know you've been to its site already.
- 2. Shop on one gadget (your smartphone or tablet, say) and buy from another (your laptop).** Because the phone or tablet costs a lot of money, the retailer may think you can afford more and raise prices accordingly.
- 3. Use different [browsers](#) to shop and buy.** That way, there won't be breadcrumbs.
- 4. Don't sign in to your frequent stay, [frequent flyer](#) or frequent buyer program while shopping online.** Instead, wait until you're ready to buy, if at all. Otherwise, you'll be tracked and since the hotel, airline or retailer know you're partial to its brand, you might be charged more, based on the assumption you won't look elsewhere or question the price.
- 5. Use incognito mode when shopping online.** The [Google Chrome](#), [Safari](#) and [Firefox](#) browsers show you how to do it using their navigation tools.

Here's why you might want to do this: Your IP address gives you away. A flight or cruise ticket might be a different price depending on your ZIP code or whether you're booking from the U.S. or the European Union. So, you might use a VPN (Virtual Private Network) that disguises your IP address. Just remember to change that location each time you search. Sign up for a free trial or pay the small monthly fee if you're going to be doing a lot of travel.

**6. Be coy.** You could back out of the purchase before you hit the "buy" button. Then, you might get an email hours or days later from the site saying you left the item in your shopping cart and if you purchase now, you'll get a discounted price.

**7. For airfares, check flight prices at neighboring airports.** They may have lower rates.

**8. Try to avoid events and travel that are on holidays and school vacation days.** Pretty much everything from cruises to Broadway shows cost more then.

**9. Make food delivery orders in the afternoon and non-peak dining hours.** That's when restaurants often charge less.

**10. Create a price watch at [Camelcamelcamel.com](https://www.camelcamelcamel.com).** That's Amazon's price tracker. After you sign up, you'll be notified when a price is reduced.

**11. For a [cruise](#), try to buy when the itinerary is first published.** That's when prices are generally lowest and you have the best chance of receiving the specific cabin you want. You'll need to pay in full, usually 60 to 75 days before the cruise.

By [Judy Colbert](#)

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