

OTA Insider: When and How to Use Online Travel Agencies Without Getting Burned and Maximize Your Points in the Process

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Definition of OTA: Online Travel Agency (also known as third party bookings)



MYTH:

JGOOT Teaches NEVER EVER book with an OTA!



REALITY:

There are some things to be aware of when booking with OTA's...but they can be AWESOME earning multipliers and not a definite NO!

Many OTAs can be found on Rakuten and earn Amex points! Some code as travel and can be used for stacking! Most big OTAs have loyalty programs that can add up to big savings!



Expedia / Hotels.com / Vrbo — “One Key”



Booking.com: Genius program



Orbitz Rewards: “Orbucks”

WHAT ABOUT THE CHASE PORTAL?



We do NOT recommend booking to spend points in the portal. The only exception MIGHT be the new “Points boost” program, but still only meets the bare minimum for JGOOT standards.



Paying in “cash” with your CSR or CSP can earn 8x or 5x respectively! Great for balancing UR with MR, which many find easier to earn.

THINGS TO BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT



Flights are most risky

- Cancellations or serious delays require working with the OTA, not directly with airline.
- Customer service can be spotty.



Hotels

- Always contact property to confirm booking on their own site.
- Loyalty programs are not honored: perks/qualifying nights