

Ballpark E-Guides

Tell 'Em Kurt Sent You!

An aerial view of a busy baseball stadium plaza, likely Fenway Park in Boston. The image shows a large crowd of people walking on the sidewalk, with the stadium seating and field visible in the background. In the foreground, a man wearing a blue baseball cap, sunglasses, and a black t-shirt is smiling and giving a thumbs-up gesture. The text is overlaid on the image.

**Eight Websites That
Make Your Life Better
As A Baseball Fan!**
(other than Ballpark E-Guides!)

By Kurt Smith

www.BallparkEGuides.com

Introduction

When talking about baseball and going to baseball games, people often say to me: "I remember the good old days, when you could walk up to the box office and buy a ticket on the day of the game". I don't mean to be insulting, but I remember those days, and they weren't all that good.

I remember when you had to get in a car and drive to the box office or the local ticket outlet or call the team on the phone to get tickets for a game. I remember when at those outlets you dealt with one provider, like Ticketron, and you paid their fees or you didn't go. And if you asked if there were any ticket deals, they'd most likely laugh at you.

I remember the days of classic ballparks like Memorial Stadium in Baltimore, where you drove to the game and were jammed bumper to bumper in the parking lot. Unless you were a local with season tickets, you likely didn't know about any alternatives. I remember the days when if you went on a road trip, the best discount on a hotel room you could hope for was through your AAA membership—which cost \$45 a year and almost wasn't worth it.

It's not that I'm immune from that "things were better back in my day" worldview. Maybe some things were better about baseball back in my youth, like the price of tickets. In my forties, I'm not much of a gadget whiz—I am still marveling at the abilities of a smartphone—so I like to think I'm not a tech snob. But even given the choice, I wouldn't go back to the days of long phone calls for tickets, limited hotel options and ridiculous parking issues when it comes to enjoying the greatest pastime ever devised by man.

Imagine taking a baseball road trip to see a few ballparks. (I know, you do it every day. So do I.) Think of all the things you can do now with this marvelous tool called the Internet. You can plan your route, book a hotel, buy game tickets, order gear to wear at the game, find out what restaurants are in the area and what people think about them, search for bargains and seek out attractions along the way...all without getting dressed!

In case you're too young to remember the pre-Internet dark ages, let me describe to you what this used to be like.

Planning your route would likely involve buying a road atlas, from which you would then have to either memorize the route or write down directions for where you wanted to go.

To book a hotel you'd need a travel guide of some kind, and to find out what specials a hotel was offering you'd either use the ads in the travel guide or call each of the hotels and haggle with them, if you wanted the best deal. (And you paid for long distance minutes on the phone back then!) If you wanted cheap, the easiest answer was Motel 6...but you didn't expect much as far as a nice room.

Buying tickets would at the very least mean another phone call, and a discussion that could last a half hour as you decided on which seats were available that you wanted. And that was after you got your hands on a seating chart from the team...and even that wasn't always so easy. (Incidentally, remember those sleazy brokers you had to deal with for sold out events? Except in Wrigleyville, they're something of a lost relic...and I definitely don't miss them.)

Introduction

You might be able to find souvenirs or team gear at a department store or specialized shop, but you'd be very limited in what you could get, or you could buy it at the ballpark at an inflated price.

If you went back in time several decades and went to a ballgame or two in 1982, you might enjoy watching Cal Ripken Jr.'s rookie season or seeing the Brewers become the American League champs. But you would probably consider all of the above hassles to be a massive inconvenience that you had genuinely and thankfully forgotten. You can try it, if you want...all those old methods still exist. With all due respect, though, I'll bet you wouldn't be calling them the good old days if you tried.

For all of its pitfalls and occasional dangers, the Internet has made our lives immeasurably better in so many ways, especially if you're a baseball fan. Going to a game is so much easier...we can order tickets, parking, gear and practically anything else online just sitting at a computer, and all we have to do is show up.

In this eBook I'm going to share with you some of my favorite websites, smartphone apps, and services for making the ballgame experience cheaper, easier, or less time-consuming. They should all save you time, money, and aggravation. If you know of an entity that does any of it better, by all means let me know!

If after reading this you want to know much more about how to save time and money and avoid pitfalls at your favorite ballpark, be sure to check out a Ballpark E-Guide. It's a great deal for both the print and digital edition, and they provide plenty of information on getting tickets, finding a great seat, getting there and the food at the ballpark...so that you enjoy the game the way every American should!

Some disclosure here: many of these websites are affiliates of Ballpark E-Guides, so by clicking the links in this eBook and patronizing these fine websites, you help keep the Ballpark E-Guides train rolling...which is greatly appreciated.

Thanks for your interest in Ballpark E-Guides. I hope you enjoy this eBook and that it makes your game days better.

Best Regards,
Kurt Smith
www.BallparkEGuides.com

Hotwire



Favorite Website #1:

[Hotwire](#)

When I first discovered [Hotwire](#), you might as well have arranged a blind date for me with Pamela Anderson for how excited I was.

Hotwire, if you didn't already know, is a website that provides hotel rooms, rental cars, and flights for often less than half of the asking price. How they do it, I don't know; they have some sort of arrangement for selling unbooked hotel rooms that hotels can't move. Whatever, I'm not complaining.

I first used Hotwire on an eight-ballpark road trip in 2003. Some of the deals I scored were a Crowne Plaza in Toronto for \$28 a night (this was, in fairness, during the SARS scare, when people were afraid to come to Toronto), a Baymont Inn in St. Louis for \$26 a night, and a very nice American Inn and Suites suite in Kansas City for somewhere around \$44. I also stayed at a Four Points Sheraton in Minneapolis for under \$50, and not only did they have a shuttle to get me to the Metrodome, they had a restaurant with the best breakfast burrito I've ever eaten.

A three-star hotel with a great restaurant for under \$50 a night! Before Hotwire, I paid more than that for a Motel 6 in Houston.

On that same trip I wanted to stay in the Mariemont Best Western in Cincinnati, which got good reviews, so I booked that separately. With a AAA discount booking on Best Western's website, the Mariemont—a nice but lesser hotel than most of the ones I stayed in—was about \$70 a night, easily the most expensive room on the trip...and also the smallest. I cracked my head on the chandelier twice just trying to get around. (Don't get me wrong; except for the headache, it was a fine hotel.)

So for about two weeks I was saving probably close to \$40-50 a night on hotels...or close to \$500 on the trip for lodging expenses. Read that again, I'll wait.

Ever since then I've used Hotwire for every trip, to varying degrees of success. I usually have good luck with a two and a half or three star hotel, and a two star for when I want to go cheap. But I've *always* saved serious money using Hotwire, and I don't even bother with other travel sites anymore.

As an example, I looked at hotel prices in Boston for July 15-18, 2016. Here is what Hotwire had at this writing:

- A 3 ½ star hotel in Canton for \$83/night
- A 4 star hotel at Logan Airport for \$189/night
- A 2 ½ star hotel in Haverhill for \$67/night

Man, Boston is expensive. 3 ½-4 stars could be a Doubletree, Sheraton or Hilton; 2 ½ stars could be La Quinta, Comfort Suites or Best Western.

Compare that with the best deals on Travelocity:

- Courtyard in Canton (3 stars) - \$119/night
- Hyatt Regency Airport (4 stars) - \$217/night
- Best Western Merrimack Valley (2 ½ stars) - \$125/night

Hotwire

Look at the difference in price for a 2 ½ star hotel in an area north of Boston. Almost half.

The only catch with Hotwire is that you don't know the name or the address of the hotel until after you book it, and there are no refunds, so there is some risk I suppose (you can buy trip insurance now for about \$8 a night). And sometimes room and rental car taxes that help pay for the new stadiums will make you grumble.

But the way I see it, if you've never been to a city or to a hotel in the area anyway, what's the difference? I've stayed in hotels booked with Hotwire that I didn't like, and I've stayed in hotels I didn't like booked directly through the hotel. You're taking a risk anyway...you might as well do it for less money.

They're even kind enough to share reviews of hotels from users, and right there on the page with the list of deals they'll give you the percentage of people that recommend the place. Generally, you'll be fine with anything recommended by 85% of customers.

By the way, it's not just for hotel rooms...Hotwire also digs up very low prices on rental cars and flights too, and I have had no problem using it for that either. Again, you don't know who the rental car company or the airline is going to be, but it's worth it for the money you're saving.

If you haven't tried Hotwire yet, give it a whirl on your next trip. I'm confident you will never go back.



VRBO.com

Favorite Website #2 VRBO.com (Vacation Rentals By Owner)

I first discovered VRBO when I mused to a friend about how few hotel rooms were available for an upcoming vacation to the Jersey Shore. She suggested VRBO to me and I haven't gone back to the shore motels since.

At VRBO, vacation home owners list their properties and the dates available; you can enter search parameters like whether a place is pet-friendly or has a pool or Wi-Fi. Instead of paying for just one room, or even a nice-sized suite at a hotel, you'll be staying in someone's home...and it will likely be much more spacious and have a refrigerator, a decent coffeemaker, a microwave, even a washer and dryer.

We have used VRBO every time we've gone on a beach vacation, and it's so much better than staying in a cramped motel. We've been able to pick perfect locations, cook more breakfasts in our staying quarters and save money that way, and we've stayed in places large enough to split the cost with friends and relatives. That's the very nice thing about VRBO; you have so much more flexibility with regards to location, amenities, and costs than you do just searching for hotels.

I love Hotwire for one or two night stays and when traveling alone, but if I were staying in, say, Chicago for a week with friends or family, I would look at my options on VRBO as well. If you're doing a four ballpark trip where the ballparks aren't terribly far apart, say Chicago-Milwaukee-Detroit or Boston-New York-Philadelphia, VRBO might work very well for you, especially if you're taking a family or sharing the costs with friends.

As I write this, here are some offers for a 1-week stay in Chicago from Sunday, July 3, 2016 to Sunday, July 10, 2016:

- An apartment two blocks from Wrigley Field that sleeps 6 for \$175 a night
- A Lakeview apartment a mile from Wrigley that sleeps 6 for \$207 a night
- A Roscoe Village apartment that sleeps 6 for \$250 a night

Keep in mind that this is in Wrigleyville; hotels walking distance to Wrigley will not be cheap. And yes, "sleeps 6" is a loosely defined phrase. But with VRBO you can search all over the Chicago area and the suburbs; you can choose whatever is convenient for your needs.

VRBO also includes reader reviews when available for each property, and generally people gush about the convenience and location of most of the homes. Homeowners want to have a good reputation, so the places you stay in will very likely be clean and comfortable.

The only drawback of it is that you have to bring your own sheets or towels or things like that; but aren't you kind of glad they make people do that? You also don't get your bed made while you're out. That's never been a big deal to me.

VRBO is a great resource for finding rentals with a family or a group of ballpark roadtripping friends. Especially if you don't want to stay in a cramped hotel.



Favorite Website #3:
[SeatGeek](https://seatgeek.com)

When I first started using [SeatGeek](https://seatgeek.com), I marveled at how much the event ticket buying experience has improved since my first Rush concert. The story about that in a minute.

SeatGeek is a ticket search engine, which goes through a plethora of ticket outlets on the web—Vivid Seats, TicketsNow, RazorGator, etc. (they have an on/off relationship with StubHub that is off as I write this) and lists all of the tickets these outlets have available for the event you're searching for. If you're looking for the best deal on available pasteboards for a baseball game, SeatGeek is a huge time saver...and they'll find it for you.

Not only that, they'll tell you what the total price of the tickets are...not that initial asking price before those "by the way" fees kick in just as you're hot to buy. Those fees really aggravate me, not so much because it makes the ticket cost more but because I've been deceived on the actual price. SeatGeek lets me know ahead of time, at least as far as what they can find out. Some outlets will surprise you with another fee, I've learned, but SeatGeek gets close.

Even better yet, SeatGeek features an algorithm that shares a "Deal Score" with the user...in other words, they'll tell you with a green, yellow, or red dot what tickets are overpriced or a bargain. You can rank the available tickets by deal score, and get the best value for your money. You can search for the lowest price ticket too, but I love the value option.

What this means is that at the very least, SeatGeek has greatly narrowed the market margin, and you are far less likely to pay more than what the market will bear for a ticket. This in turn helps keep ticket prices down for low demand events...and requires that sellers compete on price. It may make things tougher on the seller, but it sure is a lot better for you!

Here are a couple of examples of what I've found just as I am writing this:

New York Mets at Philadelphia Phillies, Citizens Bank Park 4/20/2016:

- Section 129 Field Level, Phillies' price \$70 plus fees, going for \$47 fees included at ScoreBig
- Section 209 Pavilion, Phillies' price \$38 plus fees, going for \$24 fees included at ScoreBig
- Section D Diamond Club, Phillies' price \$130 plus fees, going for \$102 fees included on UberSeat

New York Mets at Atlanta Braves, Turner Field 4/22/2016:

- Section 145, Outfield, Braves price \$26 plus fees, going for \$7 fees included on UberSeat
- Section 404, Upper Deck behind home plate, Braves price \$18 plus fees, going for \$10 fees included on UberSeat
- Section 101, Hank Aaron Seats, Braves price \$88 plus fees, going for \$71 on ScoreBig

SeatGeek

You get the idea. Anything sold on ScoreBig, UberSeat, or any of dozens of third party sites will be right there for you to see.

Now for perspective on just how great that is, here is the story of when I bought tickets to see my first Rush concert in 1984. (Another "good old days" tale...)

Since the Internet appeared, camping out for concert tickets has become rare, but in those days it was pretty common. My good buddy Mike Lucas and I rode our bikes about four miles at 3:00 AM to the nearest Ticketron outlet, and sat on concrete for seven hours waiting for it to open. (Try sitting on concrete for one hour to get an idea of what that was like.)

And because some jerk decided to make a list of the order of the line, people who signed the list the night before showed up the next morning, after sleeping in a warm comfortable bed, and got in their "list" place in line, making the line a useless, jumbled mess. We ended up with about the worst seats available for my first concert to see my then-heroes.

It isn't a fond memory, and it makes me laugh when I hear people talk about the "good old days" of walking up to the venue and buying a ticket. No thanks.

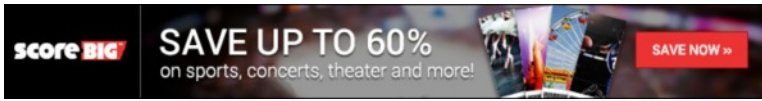
There are other search engines for tickets, like FanSnap or TiqIQ. They're both good in their own way, but I really love the "deal score" on the SeatGeek website. Sometimes I just want to go cheap, but sometimes I want a great seat for the least amount of money too. SeatGeek makes both avenues possible.

SeatGeek makes clear that they do not buy or sell the tickets, they only search. But they do have a buy button on tickets that you click on, which takes you directly to the site offering the tickets. One blogger wrote about SeatGeek, "Never use Ticketmaster or Craigslist again". And I still remember a sore butt from sitting on concrete that would appreciate that.

I love SeatGeek. You will too. Check them out.



ScoreBig



Favorite Website #4:

[ScoreBig](#)

ScoreBig is to SeatGeek what Priceline is to Hotwire...you can nail down great deals on tickets for events with ScoreBig as well, but you bid on tickets rather than seeing the available price. You can score ridiculous deals on ScoreBig if you're lucky enough...and ScoreBig will actually let you know if you have a good chance of landing your offer.

On ScoreBig, you select an event and the website lists available tickets for you by tiers; ScoreBig will show you the seating sections in each tier, and you enter a dollar amount that you'd like to pay. ScoreBig will show you what your potential of scoring a deal at that price is; if the bar reaches into the green then your odds are fairly good. You get three bids at a seating section; if they are rejected you're locked out of that section for an hour.

So should you use SeatGeek or ScoreBig? As Deion would say, "Both." You'll notice that a lot of the deals on SeatGeek are from ScoreBig, so there's no harm in trying to bid on that section on ScoreBig for a few less bucks than what's offered on SeatGeek. You'll have an idea of what will be accepted, so you might be able to stretch it a few bucks further. At worst, your offer will get rejected and you can just buy the seats through SeatGeek.

Here is what I found on ScoreBig for the games I described on SeatGeek:

New York Mets at Philadelphia Phillies, Citizens Bank Park 4/20/2016:

- Section 129 Field Level – considered 6-star seating. \$47 on SeatGeek; a bid of \$40 gives an average success potential.
- Section 209 Pavilion – considered 3-star seating. \$38 on SeatGeek; a bid of \$30 offers a very good chance at a successful deal.
- The Diamond Club seats don't offer a bid, so SeatGeek is your best deal there.

New York Mets at Atlanta Braves, Turner Field 4/22/2016:

- Section 145, Outfield, considered 2-star seating. \$7 on SeatGeek; a bid of \$5 gives an average success potential.
- Section 404, Upper Deck behind home plate, considered 1-star seating. \$10 on SeatGeek; a bid of \$6 offers an average success potential.
- Section 101, Hank Aaron Seats, considered 6-star seating. \$71 on SeatGeek; a bid of \$65 offers an above average potential of success.

That doesn't mean, of course, that you will get the same seats that SeatGeek offered at that price. But if you're not particularly picky about where you sit, you can get an even better deal on a relatively equivalent seat than you would on SeatGeek.

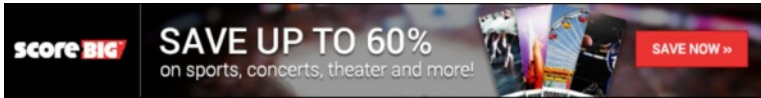
Let's say you want to try the Hank Aaron seats in the last season at Turner Field. You can score a seat for just \$71 on SeatGeek, but there's no harm in trying a bid of \$60 on ScoreBig and landing a fantastic deal on the premium seats at the Ted.

Just some things to be aware of. You have to put in your payment info beforehand, and if your bid is accepted your credit card is immediately charged. Fair's fair. And

ScoreBig

remember that you're just getting what's available in the tier where you bid; if you've paid attention to your Ballpark E-Guide you might be a little pickier (say, to avoid an obstructed view of a scoreboard), and that would be worth paying a few extra bucks on SeatGeek to know what row you'll be sitting in. It matters.

But if you're a serious bargain hunting fan, use them both. Oh, and one other thing...ScoreBig runs specials, and they may offer you a coupon when you sign up with them. So wait until you're about ready to use ScoreBig before setting up an account.



ParkWhiz

ParkWhiz™

Favorite Website #5: [ParkWhiz](#)

I am sure it's happened to you. It's happened to me a hundred times. Sitting in ungodly slow ballpark traffic, waiting for an opportunity to look for a spot, let alone find one. Circling the ballpark at 3 MPH, wondering if you're going to miss the first pitch even though you arrived early. Finally settling on the first spot you find, paying double what you think is already unreasonable, and leaving your car both relieved that you found a spot and irritated at what you paid for it.

Think about how every baseball fan deals with that. Do you just accept that as part of the game? I did, for many years...or I would take public transportation, simply because it was so much easier to be on a train with a hundred sweaty fans.

But what if your spot was reserved for you, and you had already paid an amount that you could decide on beforehand? That, my friend, is the beauty of [ParkWhiz](#).

ParkWhiz is simply StubHub for parking spots. Their website lists the spaces available for events in the city you're visiting, from parking garages to local businesses with smaller lots. You find something you like, reserve the spot online and pay for it then, and then print out the reservation and bring it with you to the ballgame.

Mapquest the address or plug it into your GPS (assuming yours works better than mine), and suddenly all of this hassle is gone. OK, you may still crawl in traffic, but at least you know where you're going and that there's a spot waiting for you.

ParkWhiz is especially useful in places like Chicago or Boston, whose ballparks were built long before anyone considered that people might want to drive one of those horseless carriages to the game. Driving to Wrigley or Fenway is especially nerve-racking and patience-trying, and available parking is not only scarce but expensive. If you must drive to the ballpark there, and there are occasions when you will want to, it's extremely nice to have your spot booked beforehand.

Here are some examples of what ParkWhiz offers for some April Friday night games, looking at it as I write this.

Wrigley Field: Braves vs. Cubs, April 29, 2016

- Gym 1 Park, .5 miles away, \$22
- LAZ Parking, .8 miles away, \$14
- Public Parking, .8 miles away, \$18

(The Cubs charge close to \$50 for lots not much closer than this.)

Yankee Stadium: Rays vs. Yankees, April 22, 2016

- iPark Parking, .4 miles away, \$7
- Stable Car Parking, .5 miles away, \$10
- Park-It Management, .7 miles away, \$9

(The Yankees charge \$35 to park in lots not much closer than this.)

Tropicana Field: Blue Jays at Rays, April 29, 2012

- Courtesy Parking, .3 miles away, \$6.55
- Game Parking, .5 miles away, \$6.33

ParkWhiz

- 410 Central Avenue, .8 miles away, \$5.50

(The Rays are selling pre-paid parking passes for this game for \$20.)

Tropicana Field will almost always have plenty of parking close to the ballpark, and you shouldn't have to search long for a cheap spot. In some cases you can park for free in the Rays lots, but for this game parking is \$20 if you buy in advance from the Rays.

But neither Wrigley Field nor Yankee Stadium offer that luxury, and as you can see, if you must drive, ParkWhiz will definitely save you a few bucks. But it isn't even so much the savings that's valuable. It's being able to head right to your spot and not worry about having to find one that is a worthwhile value.

Also, ParkWhiz will show you a picture of the lot, and you can even read readers' reviews of the spot, which is especially nice if you're concerned about the ballpark neighborhood.

Not all ballparks are well covered by ParkWhiz; for some reason Citizens Bank Park in Philly and Citi Field in New York are not served well despite the opportunities to do so in both cities. But at most ballparks, if you plan to drive, ParkWhiz is always worth a look. If you don't, you may end up wishing you had...

ParkWhiz™

Megabus/Boltbus



Favorite Website #6 (tie):

[Megabus](#) and [Boltbus](#)

[Megabus](#) and [Boltbus](#) are not affiliated with Ballpark E-Guides, but you should know about them, especially if you're making a day trip to another ballpark.

I live in New Jersey, a state that makes visiting drivers think of one thing above all else: "HOW MANY &#!%@&! TOLLBOOTHS ARE IN THIS &#!%@&! STATE?" Going to New York City from where I live, by car anyway, costs a nice chunk of change just on tolls alone. The NJ Turnpike, which you almost have to use if you want to arrive that day, costs close to \$10 each way and continues to rise in price frequently.

If I were going to Yankee Stadium the George Washington Bridge, without an EZ Pass, is \$15 (yes, you read that right). To go to Citi Field I'd pay \$15 for the Goethals Bridge and then \$16 for the Verrazano Narrows Bridge, along with about \$9 for the Turnpike round trip.

So to go to a Yankees or Mets game (or a Red Sox game, since I need to go through New York to get to Boston) I am looking at over \$40-45 just on *tolls*. The good news is, Jersey still has a beach, so there's still one reason left to come here. Thankfully, Megabus and Boltbus now provide at least a partial remedy for us.

In 2011 I visited Yankee Stadium to see if I could show the money-saving benefits of a Ballpark E-Guide (it turned out to be the day Derek Jeter scored his 3,000th hit). One thing I needed to do was find the cheapest way to get there, which until Boltbus came along was no easy task.

As I've said, going by car would have meant about \$30 in tolls, not to mention gas and parking. So obviously that's out. You can take a NJ Transit train for about \$30 round trip, but that still means some gas to get to the station and parking isn't free there either. More convenient perhaps, but not cheaper.

Boltbus (and Megabus) runs buses from 30th Street Station in Philadelphia, and Boltbus runs from the Cherry Hill Mall in New Jersey, to 34th and 8th in Manhattan; from there one can get on the B or D train to Yankee Stadium. The whole bus ride was \$21 round trip, plus the extra few bucks for the Philly and New York public transit. It wasn't easy to get to...I had to use a PATCO train to Philly and then a SEPTA train to 30th Street—don't ask me why I didn't just go to Cherry Hill—but the Boltbus saved me close to \$50.

Boltbus has several routes in the northeast and northwest of the country; Megabus is available in many big cities in the U.S. and Canada and usually has a route to the nearest few metropolises.

As I write this the Megabus deals below are available for Philly to NYC, on Sunday, April 24, 2016, to see the Yankees take on the Rays:

- Depart 6:00 AM, arrive 8:10 AM; total cost \$11
- Depart 7:00 AM, arrive 9:10 AM; total cost \$11

Megabus/Boltbus

Here are Boltbus's options from the Cherry Hill Mall:

- Depart 8:20 AM, arrive 10:00 AM; total cost \$9
- Depart 9:20 AM, arrive 11:00 AM; total cost \$10

That same day most fares home are \$15 on a Megabus and \$12 on a Boltbus, again a great bargain compared to Turnpike tolls and gas.

Both services also boast of \$1 fares when the trip is scheduled. If you book early enough you should find a great deal. That's a great advantage for road tripping baseball fans, who usually know well in advance what game they'll be attending. Imagine paying a buck to get from New York to Baltimore. Even without a dollar fare, it's still a great savings.

Megabus and Boltbus are typical bus services; they're not perfect. People sometimes complain about their punctuality (no bus service is always on time), and not even these nice buses are comfortable for long rides. But for the most part you'll get an air-conditioned ride with WiFi and other creature comforts, without having to steer through traffic.

Best of all, it's dirt cheap.



Lyft



Favorite Website #7:

[Lyft](#)

I usually advocate against using taxis to get to and from a ballpark; especially before and after a game. You will probably run into heavy traffic with the meter running. Not to mention that you may be trying to hail a cab along with dozens of other folks.

That still applies, but there are times when a baseball fan needs a ride. Maybe if they're on the road without a rental car and need to get to a train station, or maybe after an extra inning game that lasts after the last train leaves, or maybe they've enjoyed the nearby party scene a bit much and shouldn't drive. Stuff happens.

That's why I have the Lyft app on my phone. It's a nice backup plan to have.

If you didn't already know, Lyft is a ride-sharing program. Rather than a taxi company that owns a fleet of yellow cash machines with questionable interior sanitation, Lyft employs people to drive their own cars and give people rides to places. They can be found in most any major city, so a ballpark traveler should be okay.

The Lyft app is incredibly simple to use...and it's miles ahead of trying to hail a cab in city traffic. You open the app, ask for a ride from your existing location, and in short order (truly...like in five minutes, no fooling) someone driving a car with a pink mustache on the grill will be there to pick you up. Once you're dropped off you pay for the ride on your phone, and you can tip the driver through the app if you want.

Chicago is a great example of a city where Lyft could come in handy. Driving to Wrigley is a pain and parking is expensive. Public transit isn't the most enjoyable option for people that have an aversion to standing on a crowded train car. And with the Wrigleyville tavern scene being what it is, you might want to leave your car overnight and get a ride. (Which you can do thanks to my buddies at CubParking.) It's easy to see why Wrigley is one of the most popular Lyft destinations in Chicago.

I read an article recently from someone who tried to do without a car for a month, using only ride-sharing services like Lyft and Uber. To his surprise (and mine), he actually saved money using the rideshare services everywhere as opposed to using his own car...to the supermarket, to work, etc.

His case may have been unique, but I don't doubt there could be some savings with Lyft compared to a rental car. If you're in a city like D.C. or New York where you can combine ride shares with public transit, you might be able to scrap the rental car.

If you're planning a road trip and are thinking about ways to save money, look into Lyft and see if you can avoid using a rental car. Even if you don't, it's a good idea to have the app on your phone for the reasons I've listed here.

One last thing, like with ScoreBig, Lyft will often send you special offers when you sign up, so wait until you think you'll be ready to use it.

Groupon



Favorite Website #8:

[Groupon](#)

In the past I had recommended Restaurant.com for trying out great eateries while you're on the road and saving money. Nothing wrong with them, but I've discovered that Groupon has you covered with that too...not to mention experiences in the city, hotel and rental car deals, and yes, even occasional baseball ticket scores.

Like Lyft, [Groupon](#) is geared to travelers visiting a certain destination, and Groupon also has a very useful app that alerts you on your phone of major deals that you might be interested in. I've noticed that many of the restaurants that are found on Restaurant.com can be found on Groupon too, with deals that save just as much money. When you're looking for a place to eat on the road, Groupon is especially helpful, but it's not bad for finding stuff in your own locale, too.

As I write this here are some deals on Groupon for baseball fans:

- Nationals tickets for April games, \$67 ticket for \$32
- White Sox game and patio party pass, \$57 ticket for \$40
- Down The Line Wrigley Rooftop, \$84 ticket for \$59

That's not to say that you'll find all kinds of discounted baseball tickets; your best bets for that are to pay attention to the team's e-mail newsletter and look for low demand games on SeatGeek. But for novelty stuff, like the Wrigley Rooftops, or for savings on nearby taverns and restaurants after the game, you can definitely search on Groupon.

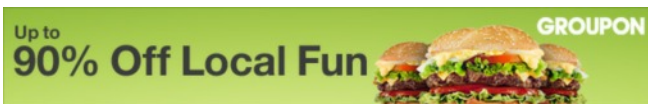
Here are some deals currently available if you'd like to dine in Manhattan after a Yankees or Mets game:

- Build Your Own Burger Bistro, Upper East Side: \$20 certificate for \$10
- 212 Steakhouse, Midtown: \$60 certificate for \$32
- Big Nick's Pizza, Midtown: \$20 certificate for \$13

There are many, many more, but most of them are in the gift card for 60% off range.

And that's not all...if you're visiting New York City, with Groupon you can do a #39 bus tour for \$22, rent a bike in Central Park for \$9 instead of \$20, even see a comedy show for four for \$20 instead of \$100. You might actually want to visit Groupon before you decide what other things you're going to do while you're in town.

And it's great for your own city too...next time you're including dinner in your ballgame plans, have a look...I'm looking forward to trying the burgers at JJ Bootleggers in Philly!



Epilogue: Thanks!

I hope that you find all of the websites I raved about in this eBook to be very helpful to you, whether it's either on your next trip to a local ballpark, or on a trip to see a ballpark an overnight stay or more away. All of these websites have been great for saving me money, time and aggravation, and it's my job to know about that kind of thing!

In the interest of full disclosure, know that most (but not all) of the companies listed in this eBook are affiliates of Ballpark E-Guides, meaning that if you patronize them using the links contained in this eBook, Ballpark E-Guides will receive a percentage of the sale.

But rest assured that I wouldn't have chosen these products and services if I wouldn't recommend them for free anyway. Megabus and Boltbus are not affiliates, but I still recommend them both highly for cheap travel, and this eBook wouldn't have been complete without them.

Thank you for your interest in Ballpark E-Guides. It makes you good people in my book! And if you found this eBook helpful, I hope you'll patronize the affiliates (clicking on the links contained here is your way of saying "Ballpark E-Guides sent me!"), and that you'll have some time to check out a [Ballpark E-Guide](#) for your next visit to the ballpark. They're just \$8.99 for the print and digital edition, and I believe you'll find each one to be well worth the investment.

You are helping to keep the Ballpark E-Guides train rolling, and I always appreciate your support.

Best Regards,
Kurt Smith

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