



Planning a safe and enjoyable
accessible
travel experience



TAPOOZ TRAVEL



Overview

1. Accessible travel planning guidelines
2. “Do-and-don’t” and typical pitfalls
3. Real-life accessible travel case studies
4. Q&A





Accessible travel planning guidelines

- 1 How and where to find accurate destination information
- 2 How to build a realistic travel budget
- 3 Domestic vs. international travel
- 4 Independent travel vs. group travel
- 5 Traveling with a family member

1

How and where to find accurate destination information

There are dozens and dozens of online sites. Finding relevant information can be confusing and very time-consuming. Different categories with a wide range of quality and accuracy:

- Informative sites (usually managed by reviewers and bloggers)
- Commercial booking sites
- Discussion forums
- Accessible travel guides
- Organizations and associations
- Accessible travel professionals

accessiblego.com: Accessible Travel Made Smart

<https://accessiblego.com>

Get accessibility details and community reviews for hotels, flights and more.

[Hotels](#) · [About us](#) · [Travel Ideas](#) · [Write Review](#)

[Disabled Accessible Travel - European Accessible Travel ...](https://disabledaccessibletravel.com)

<https://disabledaccessibletravel.com>

Wheelchair **accessible travel** services, adapted transfers, customized private tours, offshore excursions, mobility equipment hire, adapted accommodation.

[Destinations](#) · [Accommodations](#) · [Tours](#) · [Transfers](#)

[5 Websites for Accessible Travel & Vacationing | Enabling ...](https://enablingdevices.com)

<https://enablingdevices.com> > [blog](#) > [five-websites-for-accessible-travel-an...](#)

Jun 20, 2018 - Options for **accessible travel** are becoming more and more prevalent. In fact, according to Smarter Travel, "travel by people with disabilities, ...

[Wheelchair Travel - Accessible Cruises - Disability Resources](https://www.accessiblejourneys.com)

<https://www.accessiblejourneys.com>

Accessible Journeys offers wheelchair **travel**, **accessible** cruises, and wheelchair tours, for slow walkers, wheelchair travelers, their families and their friends.

[Wheelchair Traveling: Accessible Travel Info - Trip Ideas ...](https://wheelchairtraveling.com)

wheelchairtraveling.com

WheelchairTraveling.com is your resource for **accessible travel** & resources for those traveling with a disability. Pick the right place for your next trip!

[Destinations](#) · [Accommodations](#) · [Tips](#) · [Interests](#)

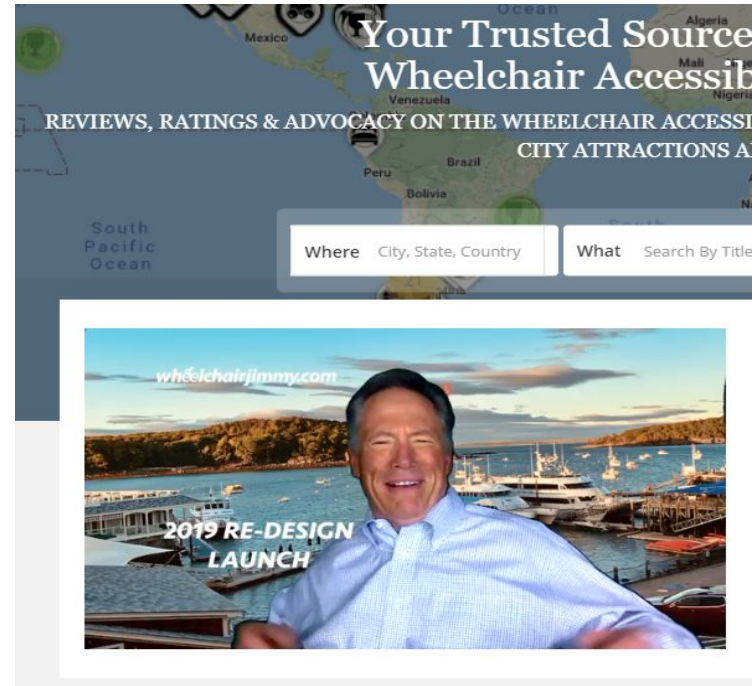
[HOME PAGE](#): Home: Society for Accessible Travel and



Informative sites

- <https://wheelchairjimmy.com/>
- <http://wheelchairtraveling.com>
- <https://www.curbfreewithcorylee.com/>
- <http://martynsibley.com/>
- <https://emerginghorizons.com/>

Personal, first-person experience
Typically unbiased, but sometimes not



Commercial booking sites

Often offering free information in combination with commercial bookings and/or for-a-fee services and/or products retails

- <https://accessiblego.com>
- <https://yoocanfind.com>

A work in progress

A little impersonal

Accuracy of information varies

Not always unbiased (commission and/or fee based)

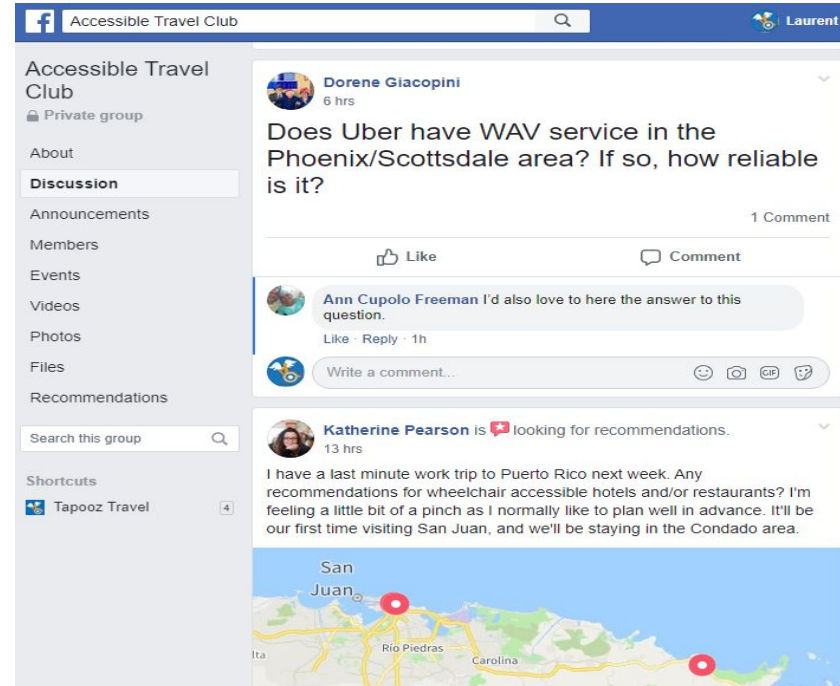
The screenshot shows the Booking.com website interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for 'Plan', 'Reserve', 'Share', 'Write Review', and 'Forum'. Below the navigation, there is a large banner for 'Accessible Travel Made Smart' with the tagline 'Making travel more accessible, together.' The banner features a person with a backpack. Below the banner, there is a search bar with the following fields: 'Where are you going?' (with a dropdown menu), 'Check-in' (with a calendar icon and date '11/8/19'), 'Check-out' (with a calendar icon and date '11/10/19'), and 'Rooms' (with a dropdown menu showing '1'). A 'SEARCH' button is located to the right of the search bar. A small badge in the top right corner of the banner area reads 'Winner, Booking.com Startup Competition'.

Discussion forums

Great place for real-time discussions and tips. Typically facebook groups.

- www.facebook.com/groups/accessibletravelclub
- Facebook TFA Travel for all News Exchange Floor
- facebook.com/groups/accessibletravelusacanada

Addictive ... in a good way.
Can be a little overwhelming
Asking the right questions is key

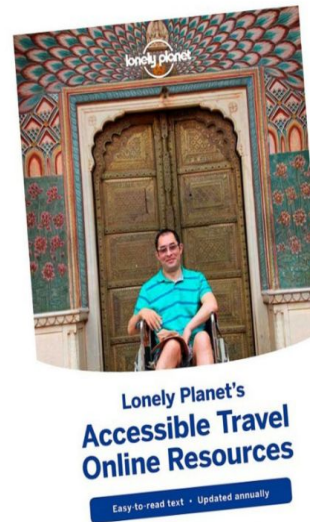


The screenshot shows a Facebook group page for 'Accessible Travel Club'. The page header includes the Facebook logo, the group name, a search bar, and the user 'Laurent'. The left sidebar contains navigation options: About, Discussion (selected), Announcements, Members, Events, Videos, Photos, Files, Recommendations, a search bar for the group, and Shortcuts (Tapooz Travel). The main content area features a post by Dorene Giacopini asking, 'Does Uber have WAV service in the Phoenix/Scottsdale area? If so, how reliable is it?'. Below the post are 'Like' and 'Comment' buttons, and a comment from Ann Cupolo Freeman. Another post by Katherine Pearson is partially visible, asking for recommendations for wheelchair accessible hotels and restaurants in San Juan, Puerto Rico. A map of San Juan is shown at the bottom of the page.

Accessible travel guides

- Candy Harrington's travel guides
- Bonnie Lewkowicz's Bay Area and California accessible guides
- Lonely Planet has a section on accessibility for each destination
- Lonely Planet Accessible Travel Resources Guide (free online)

With the growth and strengthening of the accessible travel market, more guides are expected. When ... is the question.



Accessible Travel Online Resources - 2019 edition (PDF)

3rd Edition Aug 2018

eBook PDF \$0.00 USD ~~was \$0.00 USD~~ [ADD TO CART](#)

Hard of hearing or vision-impaired? A wheelchair user or slow walker? Fibromyalgia, MS or spinal-cord injury? None of these should stop you from experiencing the joy and benefits of travel. We at Lonely Planet believe that travel is for all, no matter what their abilities or limitations.

We also know that the first barrier to travel for many people who have access issues or a disability is a lack of information, combined with a fear of the unknown. We hope that this collection of online resources will go some way towards filling the information gap and alleviating unfounded fears, either by providing information directly or by introducing you to a host of people who haven't let their disability get in the way of their love of travel.

The world's largest list of online resources for accessible travel – cited by the UNWTO as an example of best practice in accessible tourism – has almost doubled in extent compared with the last edition, with hundreds of new entries, including coverage of several new countries.

Organizations and associations

Typically, focused on specific disabilities and/or topics. Many publish their own magazines. Other are regional organizations with a focus on promoting local (NYC, Miami, etc.)to national accessible travel.

- www.amputee-coalition.org
- www.unitedspinal.org
- www.christopherreeves.org
- <http://www.keroul.qc.ca/> (Canada)
- www.accessibletravel.org (Europe)

- www.abilitymagazine.com
- [www. disabilityhorizons.com](http://www.disabilityhorizons.com)
- www.newmobility.com

NEW MOBILITY
life beyond wheels

The magazine for active wheelchair users

Home Subscribe About This Month's Articles Classifieds United Spinal Store Advertise E-Mag

New Mobility Magazine

October 2019

Untangling Spinal Cord Complications

No one wants to worry about losing more function or suffering from increased pain, but scar tissue and cysts in and on the spinal cord can cause just that for a small percentage of people with SCI.

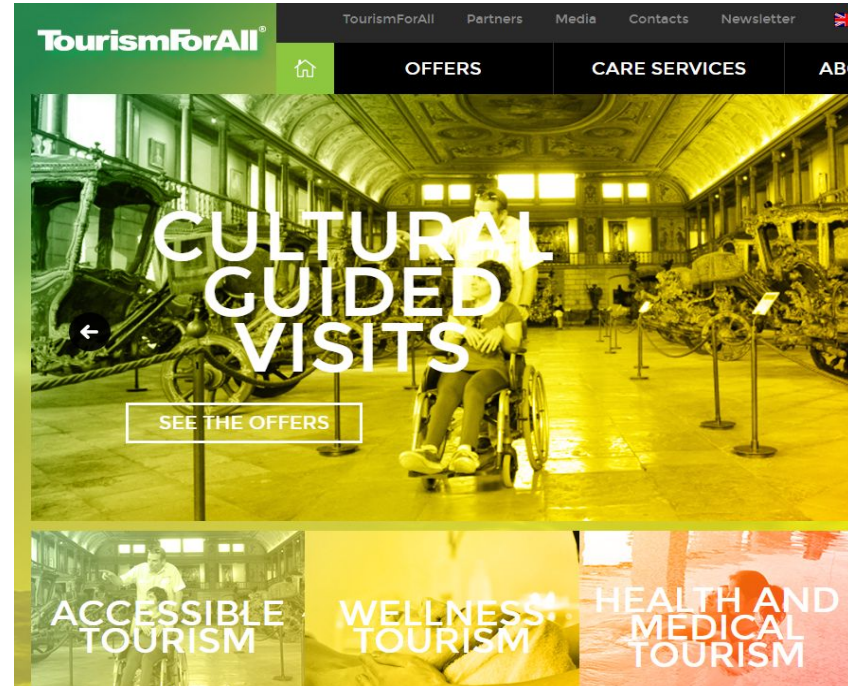
Accessible travel professionals

Very few true travel companies in the US dedicated to accessible travel. Even less that will cater to independent travelers as opposed to packaged group travel. Only a handful that offer US destinations.

- Tapooz Travel (independent travelers and small groups)
- Dignity Travel (small group travel)
- Easy Access Travel (mostly group cruises)

More companies overseas serving their own markets

- Rome and Italy Group (Italy)
- Tourism for All (Portugal)
- Handitours (Scandinavia)
- Accessible Travel Netherlands (Holland and Belgium)



2

Building a realistic travel budget

Treat it as a project.
Back of the envelope is OK (barely). Spreadsheet is better!
Rule of thumb: start at US\$ 200 per person/per day

Transportation:
To and from the destination
Transfers and in-city transportation
Public vs private
New services (Uber etc.) and city-wide dispatchers

Accommodations:
Hotels (from boutiques to big brands), Airbnb and other options
Become a reward member
Room type
Time of the year and days of the week



2 Building a realistic travel budget

Equipment:
What and where
On-site rental

Tours, activities and visits:
Prioritize
Guided and self-guided tours
Buying tickets online
Free stuff and public performances
Get the local guides and apps (TimeOut, Tix Today, etc)

Food budget:
Breakfast at the hotel ?
Pack a picnic / visit farmers' markets
Plan ahead. Most menus are online.

Miscellaneous:
Dietary considerations
Other issues



3

Domestic vs. international travel

- ADA standards are US domestic rules and regulations, not international.
- Accessibility and mobility standards varies from country to country, though Europe is moving to formalize EC standards. It is a work in process. No uniformity yet, even within countries.
- Case by case basis. Best is to ask the experts (travel professionals and local companies).
- Consider the rewards of unique experiences vs level of acceptable discomfort
- Other considerations: language issues, local customs, social norms and acceptance of people with disabilities.



4

Independent travel vs. group travel

3 main issues to consider:

- Timing
- Budget
- Character

Independent travel offers a high level of customization. But group travel offers the chance to experience a destination in a social setting. Typically, escorted by professionals. Main issues are taken care of.

Best of 2 worlds: small, intimate, thematic group travel. Limit to about like-minded 10 travelers.



5

Traveling with a family member

Discuss priorities and what kind of experience you are looking for.

It is important to carve time out for each person so each traveler will enjoy (at least some aspects of) the trip!

Plan activities and visits carefully.

Get assistance when needed. From hiring a person for the day to full homecare for the stay. Ask the experts!





“Do-and-don’t” and typical pitfalls

1

Securing the right accommodations

4

Travel insurance

2

Mobility/accessibility equipment: bring along or rent on-site

3

“Accessible activities” true or false

1

Securing the right accommodations

Define precisely what you need: optimal accommodations vs acceptable accommodations

Hotel type and location

Room types

Beds and bathrooms types

Understanding the way large hotel brands operate.

The pitfalls of reserving your accommodations through an online booking site ([expedia.com](https://www.expedia.com), [hotels.com](https://www.hotels.com))



1 Securing the right accommodations

Better is to book directly with the hotel itself. Most accessible rooms are listed with pictures. Some chains are better than others. Then, always call and talk with Guest Services director.

Best is to book with a travel professional that has experience and often a personal relationship with the hotel's management. Get a name!

You can negotiate!

The Concierge is your friend!



2 Mobility/accessibility equipment: bring along or rent on-site

Define what you need: optimal situation vs acceptable situation

Cost vs convenience considerations

Most mobility/accessibility equipment are available in most larger markets: New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, DC, Miami, Las Vegas, etc. and selected overseas destinations (Portugal, France, etc.)

Most common: chairs, scooters, medical beds, commode shower chairs, transfer benches, etc.

Pre-delivered and installed on-site. Coordination with the hotel: work with a professional.



Transport	\$45	\$105	\$50	Travel	\$125	\$275	\$50
Standard / Hemi	\$55	\$115	\$50	Folding	\$195	\$450	\$50
Lightweight	\$65	\$130	\$50	Standard	\$175	\$400	\$50
Bariatric (22", 24" Wide)	\$85	\$195	\$50				
Reclining Back	\$90	\$225	\$50	Bariatric	\$190	\$450	\$50
Extra Wide (6", 28", 30" Wide)	\$100	\$250	\$50	Tilt-in-Space	\$215	\$480	\$50
Manual Wheelchair Accessories				Powered Wheelchair Accessories			
Elevating Legrests	\$5	\$12	N/A	Elevating Legrests	\$10	\$25	N/A
Anti-Tippers	\$5	\$12	N/A				

Mobility Scooters*



Folding Ramps



Wheeled Travel	\$125	\$275	\$50	3-Foot Folding Ramp	\$25	\$60	\$50
Wheeled Travel	\$145	\$295	\$50				
Folding	\$195	\$450	\$50	6-Foot Folding Ramp	\$35	\$90	\$50
D 3-Wheel (400 lbs.)	\$180	\$400	\$50				
Extra HD 4-Wheel (500 lbs.)	\$190	\$425	\$50	10-Foot Folding Ramp	\$65	\$185	\$50

Hospital Beds



Premium Hospital Beds



3

“Accessible activities” true or false

Check carefully. Read reviews and ask questions on the discussion forums.

Accessible guided tours: a new and encouraging trend like Airbnb, freetoursbyfoot, etc.

National and State Parks: commitment to accessibility

Shows and events: yes, but call ahead

Some tours are marketed as “accessible” but are problematic: i.e. Hop-on / hop-off in main markets.

Theme parks: get specific information on the rides and activities. Universal, Disney, Kennedy Space Center are very good at providing accurate information. Others are less so. Do your research.



4

Travel insurance

ABSOLUTELY !

Repeat: absolutely !

Define what you need: optimal vs acceptable

Compare and do your homework. Read the fine print.
Take insurance with a large, recognized, reputable company.

Good primer to start:
www.ricksteves.com/travel-tips/trip-planning/travel-insurance

Good experience with <https://www.worldnomads.com>
(but this is not an endorsement)





2 real-life accessible travel case studies

1

A New York family vacation

2

Taking the European leap: Portugal



A New York family vacation

Background story:

A couple wanted to celebrate her 20-years old son birthday by taking a vacation with him to New York. The son, Christopher has a form of muscular dystrophy and is using a motorized wheelchair. He needs specialized equipment for sleeping and prefers a roll-in shower in the bathroom. Christofer had very specific tours and activities he wanted to do. At the last minute, the husband could not travel but the mother asked two other relatives (also in their twenties) to come along in order to help. There was a fair amount of anxiety about the feasibility of the trip. New York can be daunting.

Accommodations:

We arranged for a large accessible family suite for the son and his two relative in combination of a single standard room for the mother at the Hilton Millennium by the UN Plaza. Though it is in the sought-after “Midtown Manhattan”, being on the east side and further away from Times Square provided a measure of peacefulness and a much better rate.



A New York family vacation

Equipment:

Working closely with a reputable medical equipment rental and the guest services director at the hotel, the medical bed and other specialized equipment were delivered and installed in the accessible room prior to the family's arrival. As it happened, upon arrival the guest realized that the mattress was too soft for his specific condition. He provided the specification of the mattress he uses at home. It was replaced the next day.

Transfers and transport:

Given the type of chair and number of people traveling, optimal solution for getting from the airport to the hotel was with a dedicated accessible transfer service. During their stay, the family used then a combination of public transportation (bus lines), accessible taxis (called via the central accessible dispatch) and Uber Wave. And a fair amount of walking and rolling!





A New York family vacation

Activities:

Over the course of the 11-day visit, the family undertook a lot of activities and visits. Some were pre-booked, other were decided on a daily basis depending on the energy and desires of the travelers. Based on the work done in advance planning, all were vetted for accessibility.

- A cruise around Manhattan
- A show on Broadway (the Lion King)
- The Observatory at OneWorld Tower.
- The Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island
- Walk and picnic in Central Park
- Walk the Highline
- The Metropolitan Museum of Art
- Attending a Gospel mass in Manhattan
- Botanical Gardens

... and much more





Taking the European Leap: Portugal

Background story:

Kim and Allison are childhood friends. Both are in their early thirties and very outdoorsy. Allison had a car accident a few years ago and suffered a spinal cord injury. She is now a T4 paraplegic, very physically active and uses a manual wheelchair. Apart from a transfer shower chair, she does not need other specialized equipment in hotel but prefers an accessible tub.

This was the first time that the two friends traveled together to Europe. They had a long bucket list of things they absolutely wanted to experience (Kim is a surfer. The waves of Nazare are world-renowned) but also wanted plenty of time for last minute improvisation of their schedule. We work with them to plan their 15-day trip to Portugal.



Taking the European Leap: Portugal

Accommodations:

Kim and Allison arrived in Porto (in the North of the country) then traveled south to Lisbon with a couple of stops (Coimbra and Batalha) along the way. At each destination, we had arranged for accessible hotel rooms with two beds and accessible bathrooms. The hotels were comfortable and centrally located to allow for independent exploration of their respective neighborhood.

Transfers and transport:

We provided Kim and Allison with a dedicated guide/driver with a wheelchair accessible van for the duration of the trip. Daniel met them at the arrival in Porto and was their companion all through the trip until their departure from Lisbon airport. Daniel is a very expert and professional person. In coordination with Kim and Allison, on a daily basis he was able to be as hands-on or hands-off as required by the guests.

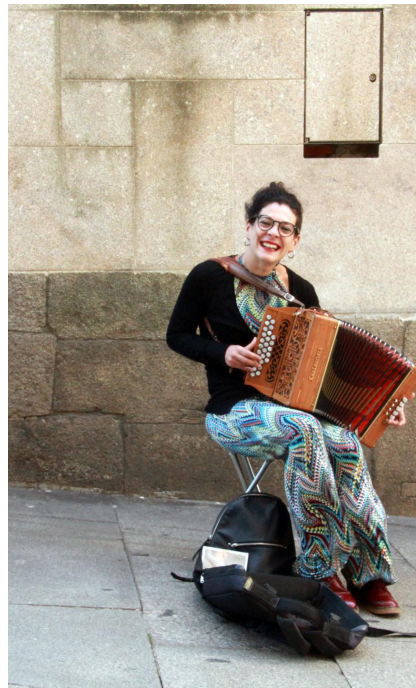


Taking the European Leap: Portugal

Activities:

Over the course of the 15-day visit, Kim and Allison undertook a lot of activities and visits. Some were pre-booked/pre-planned while many others were decided on a daily basis depending on their energy and desires. Daniel acted as the facilitator of these activities and was instructed to be as flexible as possible. Where needed, Daniel also provided physical assistance to Allison to navigate the streets of the old cities with her wheelchair. Among other things:

- Visit and wine tasting at Sandeman's Cellars in Porto
- Douro Valley and wine tasting at selected wineries
- Moliceiro (Gondola like) boat ride along the canals of Aveiro
- Funicular and surfing in Nazaré
- Tile painting workshop and visit the Azulejos museum
- Guided tour of Lisbon and Belem landmarks
- Tour and visit Moorish Castle (with the use of a Swiss-trac)
- Visit of the Queluz Palace





Thank you.

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TAPOOZ TRAVEL

tours & adventures for travelers of all abilities, families & friends

