

What the New Google Travel Means for Your Hotel Bookings

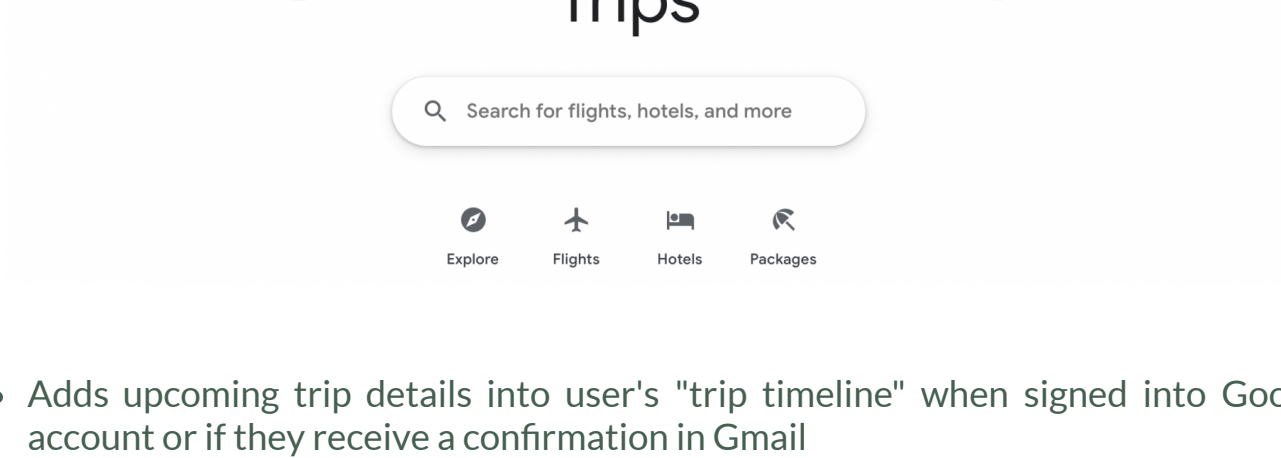


Googles' Goal: "one place for all of your trip planning and details"

Answer: google.com/travel

"Our goal is to simplify trip planning by helping you quickly find the most useful information and pick up where you left off on any device. We'll continue to make planning and taking trips easier with Google Maps, Google Search and google.com/travel - so you can get out and enjoy the world."

Richard Holden
Vice President
Product Management, Travel

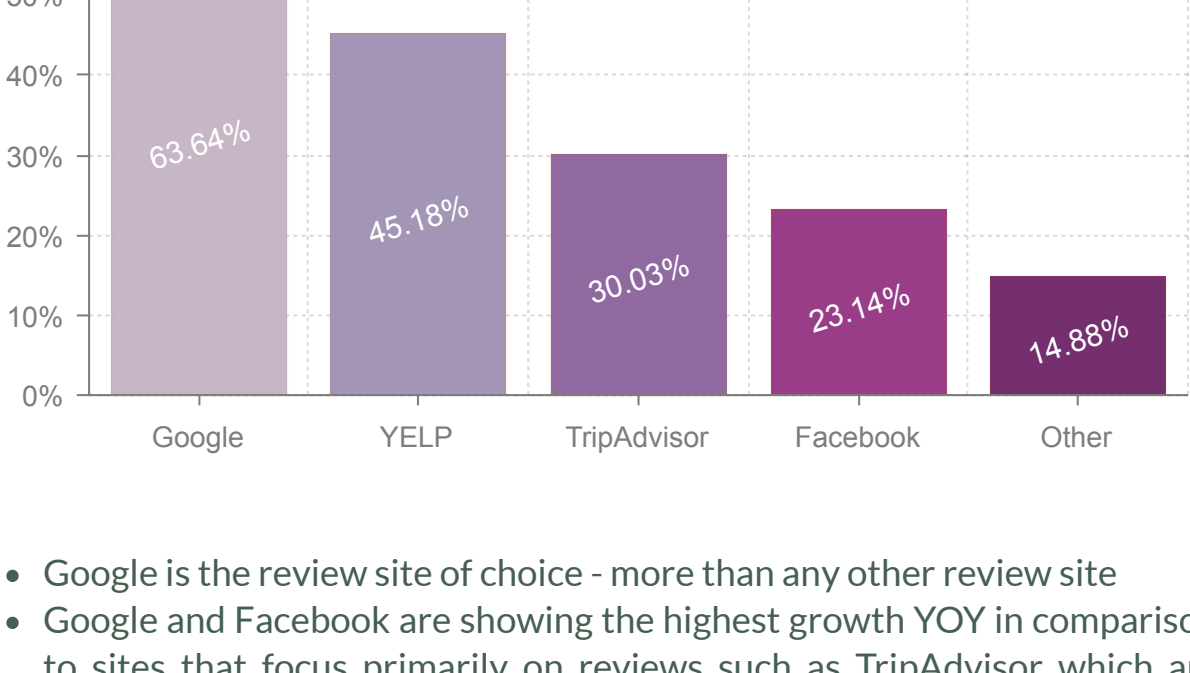


- Adds upcoming trip details into user's "trip timeline" when signed into Google account or if they receive a confirmation in Gmail
- Capability to make edits to traveler's "trip timeline"
- Offers weather forecast for upcoming or potential trips
- Keeps track of user's trip research across Google devices. Individuals can pick-up where they left off when planning at a later time.
- Highlights restaurants in the area on Google Maps to help travelers get the lay of the land by pointing out popular neighborhoods
- Personalized recommendations based on user's past searches: i.e. a vacation package featured in Google Hotels shows a stay at an XYZ Hotel in New York City on August 13-18 for two people paired with an ABC Airlines flight from LA Airport is available at \$1,325 and is advised since the components of this travel if booked separately would be at a \$1,830 cost
- Looking ahead: will be enhancing with "things to do" at the travel destination including events that might be happening during their travel at that destination, or places of interest based on user's profile

SOURCE: blog.google.com

Decision Source: Review sites checked most when making decisions

Google first began showing review stats with a localized search at the end of 2010 and at that time it was aggregating reviews from other sites. Google then acquired Zagat and shifted its focus from aggregating reviews to hosting its own. By 2018 this shift affected the entire online review ecosystem.



- Google is the review site of choice - more than any other review site
- Google and Facebook are showing the highest growth YOY in comparison to sites that focus primarily on reviews such as TripAdvisor which are seeing lesser growth YOY
- Google has become the major force in online reviews
- Google currently is very proactive about soliciting reviews from users
- Google for hoteliers now includes enhancing hotel pages with review filters, search and sorting options

SOURCE: [2018 ReviewTrackers](https://2018.ReviewTrackers)

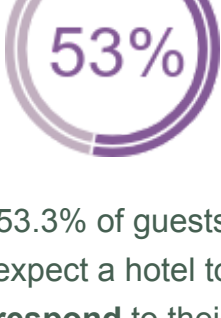
Changes made in Google's review product

- Google now displays reviews from other sources such as TripAdvisor, Expedia, Booking.com in addition to reviews from Google users
- It has an enhanced tool that lets users search by a particular topic of interest with new review filters - i.e. local transit station nearby, nearby point of interest, hotel amenity such as a pool
- The impact of Ranking plays a big role when users are looking for a hotel organically on Google. The model they have put in place takes into account many organic factors including:

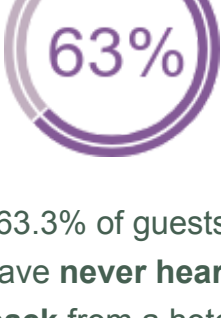
- location
- customer ratings
- availability of useful information in a listing
- review volume impact - more reviews = better information from guests
- continual steady inbound volume of reviews posted by users

SOURCE: support.google.com

Guest expectation is becoming more demanding



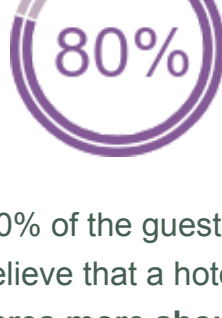
53.3% of guests expect a hotel to **respond** to their online review **within 7 days** which is an increase of +1.6% YOY



63.3% of guests have **never heard back** from a hotel after leaving a review



45% of the guests say that they are **more likely to visit** a hotel if it responds to negative reviews



80% of the guests believe that a hotel **cares more about them** when its management responds to their reviews

SOURCE: ReviewTrackers

Review volume can have positive impact on a property's visibility

Due to the new review search feature, visibility of your hotel depends on:



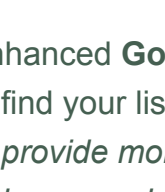
- More reviews because it leads to better information from guests – peer to peer is the key
- Most recent reviews plays a bigger role - it helps to have a steady inbound flow of reviews. Appears that their algorithms will give it even more weight than volume of reviews
- In an effort to increase volume of reviews coming into your Google My Business page, Google has made it easy for your guests to leave a review through your hotel's Guest Satisfaction Survey software, adding a link to leave a review and can be responded back with the use of your Google My Business platform. Their goal is to have ALL reviews visible, not just 3rd party reviews but reviews of guests that were booked Hotel Direct.
- Major addition – peer to peer conversations; Google Maps users can ask and answer questions about your hotel real time. It is important to monitor answers for accuracy about your hotel and respond quickly and thoroughly to their questions for others who are considering your Hotel for their stay.

Management of Review capabilities – including conversations on Google Maps:

- Block a review – for example, a profane review or a review that violates Google policy
- Flag an inappropriate review – for example, a review that is meant for another hotel nearby with a similar name to your hotel; "north" vs "south"
- Request that outdated photos or photos that are no longer relevant to your hotel, i.e. prior to renovations, be removed



SOURCE: Google My Business



Google My Business Insights

Enhanced **Google My Business Insights** focuses on how customers use Search and Maps to find your listing, and what they do once they find it. *"We've launched subjective attributes to provide more information in your insights tab! Customers can submit subjective attributes to help you and their fellow customers."*

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It provides you different ways to understand how your customers interact with your Google My Business listing as follows:

- How customers find your listing - keeps track of how many customers found you and how they found you
- Search queries - Shows you the queries used to find your business on Google and track of common terms and search trends for your business. These queries should help you create better posts with Google and even Ads to engage your customers.
- Where customers find you on Google - Google Search or Google Maps?
- Customer actions - shows how customers behave after they found your listing on Google
- Direction requests - keeps track of where customers were when they request directions to your business
- Phone calls - displays when and how often customers called your business through your business listing
- Photos - displays the number of photos associated with your listing and how often they're viewed compared to similar businesses

SOURCE: Google My Business

Key Takeaway

- Google has taken a huge next step, putting all the pieces together, by including flights, hotels, packages, and trip-planning tools on a dedicated website and in Google Search and Google Maps. Google's foothold in travel just got even larger.
- More than 6 in 10 consumers look to Google for reviews when searching for their next travel destination. This will continue to grow as users become more acquainted with Google's new travel planning portal. Google is currently trying other search and recommendation products for individuals to take advantage of in creating a one-stop-shop experience, which will make them even more popular for Hotel and travel searches.
- Google is currently picking up share of reviews from TripAdvisor. Hotels should pay close attention to their listing and make sure guest comments are responded to quickly and efficiently.
- Keep in mind that Google users can ask and answer questions about your hotel real time . It's wise to monitor these answers and respond quickly and thoroughly to any questions.
- Take advantage of the tools provided through Google Insights for your Hotel to see how your guests find you, what terms they use when doing a search and how much impact do visuals play in decision making, i.e. photos of your Hotel vs. your competitors and take actions for increased visibility.

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