

Cash down

Travel portals look beyond plastic money to tap the huge market of those who'll deal in cash only



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What is it?

If you're looking to book flight tickets or make hotel bookings on the Net, but are worried about disclosing your credit card details, well, worry you not as some travel portals are now willing to accept cash.

How does it work?

In case of Yatra.com, SMS "cash" to 2622 and you'll be called by their customer care centre within 30 minutes to help you with your bookings. After this, Yatra.com or its logistics partners — companies like DTDC — will send its staff to the address given by you at a given time (within 24 hours of the telephone call). In case you are making hotel bookings or are purchasing a holiday package, the staff will hand you the voucher and collect the money. But if you have booked

flight tickets, you are given the flight itinerary and the money is collected. Later, either an e-ticket is sent to you or the PNR number is sent via SMS. However, your booking will be confirmed within 24 hours of the company receiving the cash.

If you are making your bookings through Make-mytrip.com, you can either request for the cash to be collected from your home or make the payment at any of the portal's walk-in centres. The website has such centres in Delhi, Bangalore and Ahmedabad. In case you opt for the former, the process is similar to that adopted by Yatra.com.

Is this service available in all cities?

No. Makemytrip's reach is much larger. It provides this service in 28 cities which includes the four metros, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Ahmed-

abad, Pune and others. Yatra's service is available in a total of 12 cities like Ahmedabad, Baroda, Goa and Ludhiana.

What's in it for me?

Well, for one you do not have to reveal your credit card details online or to a call centre employee. And two, no more worry lines about those mounting credit card bills.

Take it or leave it?

Like we told you, a service of this kind is best suited to those of you who do not like disclosing important credit/debit card details online or to call centre employees.

What are the damages?

Both travel websites are providing this service free of charge at present. But Yatra does plan to levy a charge in a few months time. However, given that a facility like this will boost volumes for

You only have to SMS Yatra to avail of the cash-payment facility. The portal will send someone to collect the money, and hand over the voucher

travel portals (Yatra says its business from this service will grow to 25-30 per cent of total transactions from the current 7-8 per cent), it will be a while before it really does

do so. Meanwhile, be prepared to pay between Rs 2 to Rs 3 per SMS (this depends on your mobile service provider) in case you are booking through Yatra.