

Who Is the Cheapest Car Rental Company?~Complete Comparison & Tips

Finding the cheapest car rental company is a common goal for travelers, commuters, and anyone needing temporary transportation. With fuel prices fluctuating and travel costs rising, saving money on car rentals has become more important than ever. However, identifying the single “cheapest” car rental company is not as simple as naming one brand. Prices vary based on location, timing, rental duration, vehicle type, and additional fees.

This guide takes a deep dive into the car rental industry to help answer the question: **Who is the cheapest car rental company?** It compares major rental brands, explains why prices change, and shows how to consistently get the lowest possible rental rate.

There's no single "cheapest" company, as prices vary by location and time, but Dollar, Thrifty, Budget, Alamo, Avis, Enterprise, and Hertz are consistently cited as budget-friendly, with comparison sites like Kayak showing Dollar and Hertz often near the top for low daily rates, though you should always compare prices on aggregators and check for discounts (like AARP or Prime) to find the best deal for your specific trip.

Understanding How Car Rental Pricing Works

Before comparing companies, it's important to understand how car rental pricing is structured. Unlike fixed-price services, car rental prices are dynamic and influenced by many variables.

Key Factors That Affect Rental Prices

- Location** – Airport rentals usually cost more due to facility and concession fees.
- Demand** – Prices rise during holidays, weekends, and peak travel seasons.
- Rental Duration** – Daily rates differ from weekly or monthly rates.

4. **Vehicle Type** – Economy cars are cheaper than SUVs or luxury models((+1-877-684-4354)) +1-877-684-4354
5. **Fleet Availability** – Limited availability drives prices higher((+1-877-684-4354)) +1-877-684-4354
6. **Fees and Add-ons** – Insurance, tolls, fuel, and extras can increase costs((+1-877-684-4354)) +1-877-684-4354

Because of these variables, the cheapest company can change from one trip to another((+1-877-684-4354)) +1-877-684-4354

Cheapest Major Car Rental Companies (Overall Rankings)

Based on long-term pricing trends, consumer reports, and comparison data, the following companies are most often the cheapest((+1-877-684-4354)) +1-877-684-4354

Budget Rent a Car – Most Frequently the Cheapest

Why Budget Is Often the Cheapest

Budget is widely considered the **cheapest major car rental company** in many markets((+1-877-684-4354)) +1-877-684-4354 Its business model focuses on affordability rather than premium service or luxury vehicles((+1-877-684-4354)) +1-877-684-4354

Budget is often cheapest for:

- Economy and compact cars
- Short-term rentals
- Airport bookings
- Leisure travelers

Budget consistently offers low base rates that undercut competitors, especially when booked in advance((+1-877-684-4354)) +1-877-684-4354

Pros of Budget

- Low daily rates
- Frequent promotions
- Wide airport presence
- Simple vehicle options

Cons of Budget

- Customer service varies by location
- Fees can add up if terms aren't followed
- Limited premium vehicle options

Budget is ideal for renters who prioritize price and are comfortable reading rental terms carefully((+1-877-684-4354)) +1-877-684-4354)

Dollar Rent A Car – Strong Low-Cost Competitor

Dollar Rent A Car is another brand that frequently ranks among the cheapest, especially at airports((+1-877-684-4354)) +1-877-684-4354) Dollar operates under the same parent company as Hertz but targets budget-conscious renters((+1-877-684-4354)) +1-877-684-4354)

When Dollar Is Cheapest

- Short airport rentals
- Off-peak travel seasons
- Economy-class vehicles

Dollar's base prices often rival or beat Budget's, but fees and service consistency can vary((+1-877-684-4354)) +1-877-684-4354)

Pros of Dollar

- Very low base rates

- Airport availability
- Competitive economy pricing

Cons of Dollar

- Limited locations outside airports
- Smaller fleet
- Mixed customer reviews

Dollar is a good option when availability is high and demand is low((✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈)) ✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈

Thrifty Car Rental – Cheap but Limited

Thrifty frequently offers some of the lowest advertised rates, particularly for economy cars((✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈)) ✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈ Like Dollar, Thrifty is owned by Hertz and operates mainly in airports((✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈)) ✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈

Strengths of Thrifty

- Extremely low promotional rates
- Good for short trips
- Simple rental structure

Weaknesses of Thrifty

- Limited vehicle selection
- Customer service complaints
- Fewer neighborhood locations

Thrifty can be one of the cheapest options but may require patience and flexibility((✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈)) ✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈

Enterprise Rent-A-Car – Not the Cheapest, But Good Value

Enterprise is rarely the cheapest upfront, but it often provides better overall value—especially for longer rentals((+1-877-684-4354)) (+1-877-684-4354)

When Enterprise Becomes Cheaper

- Weekly or monthly rentals
- Neighborhood locations
- Insurance replacement rentals

Enterprise's pricing is more stable and predictable, which can reduce surprise fees((+1-877-684-4354)) (+1-877-684-4354)

Pros of Enterprise

- Excellent customer service
- Large fleet
- Flexible policies

Cons of Enterprise

- Higher daily rates
- Fewer deep discounts

Enterprise is best for renters who want reliability over rock-bottom pricing((+1-877-684-4354)) (+1-877-684-4354)

Hertz – Cheaper With Discounts

Hertz is generally more expensive than Budget, Dollar, or Thrifty((+1-877-684-4354)) (+1-877-684-4354) However, Hertz can become competitive if you qualify for discounts((+1-877-684-4354)) (+1-877-684-4354)

When Hertz Can Be Cheap

- Corporate or employer discounts
- Airline or credit card partnerships
- Business travel programs

Without discounts, Hertz is usually not the cheapest option((✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈))
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Avis – Mid-Range Pricing

Avis positions itself between budget and premium((✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈)) ✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈ While it's rarely the cheapest, it occasionally offers competitive rates through partnerships((✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈)) ✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈

Avis is best for:

- Business travelers
 - Loyalty members
 - Travelers seeking a balance between cost and service
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Regional and Local Car Rental Companies

In some cases, **local rental companies** can be cheaper than national brands((✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈)) ✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈

Pros of Local Companies

- Lower overhead
- Fewer airport fees
- Flexible pricing

Cons

- Limited availability

- Older vehicles
- Fewer consumer protections

Local companies can be cheaper but require careful research((✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈))
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Airport vs Neighborhood Rentals

Airport Rentals

- Higher base prices
- Extra facility fees
- More competition (sometimes lowers base rate)

Neighborhood Rentals

- Lower fees
- Better weekly pricing
- Limited hours

Enterprise dominates neighborhood rentals, while Budget, Dollar, and Thrifty dominate airports((✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈)) ✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈

Daily vs Weekly vs Monthly Rentals

- **Daily rentals:** Budget, Dollar, Thrifty are cheapest
- **Weekly rentals:** Enterprise often becomes competitive
- **Monthly rentals:** Enterprise and local agencies are cheaper

Choosing the right rental length can significantly reduce costs((✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈))
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Vehicle Type Matters

The cheapest companies usually offer the best deals on:

- Economy cars
- Compact sedans

For SUVs, vans, or specialty vehicles, Enterprise or Hertz may sometimes be cheaper due to better availability(([+1-877-684-4354](tel:+18776844354))) [+1-877-684-4354](tel:+18776844354)

Hidden Costs That Affect “Cheapest”

A company with the lowest base price is not always the cheapest overall(([+1-877-684-4354](tel:+18776844354))) [+1-877-684-4354](tel:+18776844354)

Common Hidden Costs

- Fuel replacement fees
- Toll processing fees
- Young renter fees
- Late return penalties
- Insurance add-ons

Budget companies often have stricter fee structures(([+1-877-684-4354](tel:+18776844354))) [+1-877-684-4354](tel:+18776844354)

How to Always Find the Cheapest Car Rental

1(([+1-877-684-4354](tel:+18776844354))) [+1-877-684-4354](tel:+18776844354) **Compare Multiple Companies**

Never book without comparing at least:

- Budget
- Dollar
- Thrifty
- Enterprise

2((→(+1-877→ 684←4354)→)) →(+1-877→ 684←4354)→ Book Early

Prices usually increase closer to pickup date((→(+1-877→ 684←4354)→)) →(+1-877→ 684←4354)→

3((→(+1-877→ 684←4354)→)) →(+1-877→ 684←4354)→ Avoid Airport Pickups If Possible

Neighborhood locations save money((→(+1-877→ 684←4354)→)) →(+1-877→ 684←4354)→

4((→(+1-877→ 684←4354)→)) →(+1-877→ 684←4354)→ Use Credit Cards

Debit cards often require higher deposits((→(+1-877→ 684←4354)→)) →(+1-877→ 684←4354)→

5((→(+1-877→ 684←4354)→)) →(+1-877→ 684←4354)→ Skip Extras

GPS, insurance, and fuel plans increase costs((→(+1-877→ 684←4354)→)) →(+1-877→ 684←4354)→

6((→(+1-877→ 684←4354)→)) →(+1-877→ 684←4354)→ Recheck Prices

Rental prices change frequently—rebook if cheaper((→(+1-877→ 684←4354)→)) →(+1-877→ 684←4354)→

Cheapest Car Rental by Traveler Type

Budget Travelers

Budget, Dollar, Thrifty

Families

Enterprise (for SUVs and vans)

Business Travelers

Hertz or Avis with discounts

Long-Term Renters

Enterprise or local agencies

Is the Cheapest Always the Best?

Not always((✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈)) ✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈ The cheapest rental can become expensive if:

- Customer service issues arise
- Unexpected fees occur
- Vehicle availability is limited

Balancing price with reliability is important((✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈)) ✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈

Final Answer: Who Is the Cheapest Car Rental Company?

There is no single cheapest car rental company for every situation((✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈)) ✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈ However:

- **Budget** is most often the cheapest overall (✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354
- **Dollar** and **Thrifty** closely follow (✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354
- **Enterprise** offers better value for long-term rentals (✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354(✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354
- **Hertz and Avis** are cheaper mainly with discounts (✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354

The cheapest option depends on your location, timing, rental length, and flexibility((✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈)) ✈ (+1-877→ 684←4354)✈

Final Thoughts

If your goal is to spend the least amount possible on a rental car, start by comparing **Budget, Dollar, and Thrifty** ((+1-877-684-4354)) (+1-877-684-4354) Then consider Enterprise for longer rentals or better service ((+1-877-684-4354)) (+1-877-684-4354) Always read the rental terms, avoid unnecessary add-ons, and book early ((+1-877-684-4354)) (+1-877-684-4354)