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Travel Package Selection User Interface

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TRAVEL PACKAGE SELECTION USER INTERFACE

ABSTRACT:

When selecting elements of a travel package, consumers are inundated with information and options. This paper articulates challenges that a typical traveler encounters when attempting to make his/her selections and proposes a number of graphical user interfaces (GUI) that resolve those problems.

KEYWORDS:

- User Interface design
- Dropdown menu
- Travel package selection
- Flights, hotels, cars
- Itinerary

BACKGROUND:

A user research study, based on the observation of consumers testing existing popular travel package search tools, revealed that a preferred travel package selection GUI would enable a traveler to:

1. Simplify comparison: provide information in a consistent and predictable way
2. Reduce clicks: provide all relevant information in one place, emphasizing items of importance

3. Be transparent: show what's included and excluded
4. Allow for customization: enable users to make an individualized/concrete selection
5. Be helpful: highlight benefits of a given package
6. Stay neutral: do not “advertise” offers

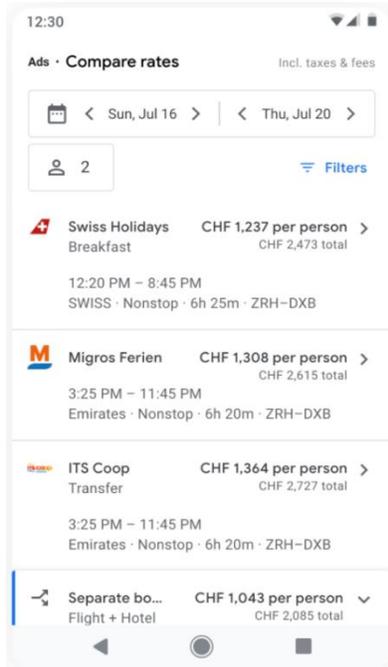
The proposed GUIs discussed herein seeks to illustrate many of these identified ideal characteristics.

To highlight the core principles the design improvement, a baseline design is provided below:

The screenshot displays a 'Compare rates' interface with the following details:

- Header:** 'Ads · Compare rates' (left), 'Incl. taxes & fees' (right).
- Filters:** Dates 'Thu, Sep 10' and 'Mon, Sep 14', '2' passengers, 'Meals', 'Transfer', and 'More filters'.
- Options:**
 - TUI CH:** All inclusive · Transfer. Swiss Air (6:15 AM – 10:40 AM, Nonstop, 4h 25m, ZRH-HRG). CHF 665 per person, CHF 1,330 total. 'Visit site' button.
 - Migros Ferien:** All inclusive. Edelweiss Air (6:15 AM – 10:40 AM, Nonstop, 4h 25m, ZRH-HRG). CHF 695 per person, CHF 1,390 total. 'Visit site' button.
 - Hotelplan:** All inclusive. Edelweiss Air (6:15 AM – 10:40 AM, Nonstop, 4h 25m, ZRH-HRG). CHF 705 per person, CHF 1,409 total. 'Visit site' button.
 - Separate bookings:** Flight + Hotel. Pegasus (10:55 AM – 12:30 AM⁺¹, 1-stop, 13h 35m, ZRH-HRG). CHF 712 per person, CHF 1,424 total. Expandable arrow.
- Footer:** 'More booking options' link.

Desktop UI - Baseline



Mobile UI - Baseline

In testing, these baseline UIs posed a number of issues:

- Relying on a drop shadow and blue highlight to emphasize a user's focus, the subtle delineation of the user's selection failed to provide a clear contrast between one offer or another making comparison difficult
- Users often didn't use filters (like meals or transfers) even if they intended to and it was unclear that each provider might have more options available
- This interface presented only minimal information, not enough for a user to start making decisions

To address these issues, a number of alternatives were tested - each of these focused on:

- Providing more consistent comparison
- Surfacing available options to the user
- Pushing the user to a decision

Pauschalreise buchen

Anzeigen Preise vergleichen Inkl. Steuern & Gebühren

Sa., 18. Apr. < > Mo., 20. Apr. < > 2 Zwischenlandungen Flugzeiten Weitere Filter

Alle Angebote 210+ offers
 All inclusive 90+ offers
 nur Frühstück 100+ offers

Tui.com Frühstück · Transfer	12:45 – 17:10 Lufthansa · 1 Stopp · 4 h 25 min · TXL-PMI	332 € pro Person 663 € insgesamt	>
Lufthansa Holidays All-Inclusive	15:25 – 18:10 Eurowings · Direkt · 2h 45m · TXL-PMI	373 € pro Person 746 € insgesamt	>
ITS.de Transfer	15:25 – 18:10 Eurowings · Direkt · 2h 45m · TXL-PMI	420 € pro Person 839 € insgesamt	>
Weitere Buchungsoptionen			
Getrennte Buchungen Flug · Hotel	16:20 – 19:05 easyJet · Direkt · 2h 45m · TXL-PMI	141 € pro Person 281 € insgesamt	∨

Desktop UI - Alternative #1

Alternative # 1 provided a user with the ability to see a quick summary of available offers. The options were presented in separate tabs, grouped by meal preference (e.g., all, all inclusive, just breakfast).

Experimentation revealed that this option was the least palatable to users. The UI didn't work if a user had more than one preference and users tended to ignore the latter two tabs entirely to ensure that they did not miss out on a good deal.

Pauschalreise buchen

Anzeigen Preise vergleichen Inkl. Steuern & Gebühren

Sa., 18. Apr. < > Mo., 20. Apr. < > 2 Personen Zwischenlandungen Flugzeiten Weitere Filter

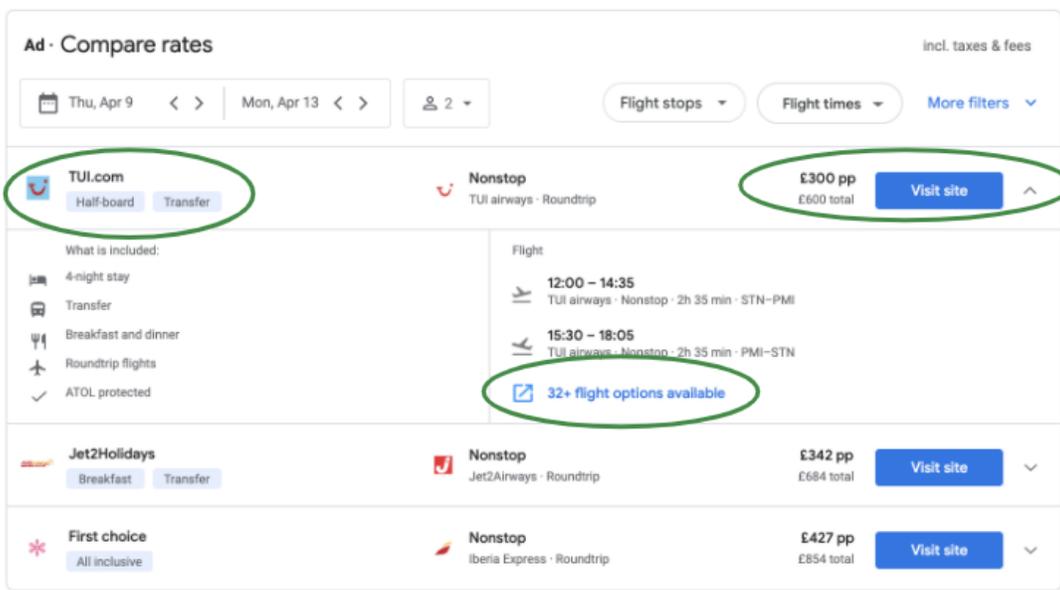
All inclusive x Halbpension x Frühstück x Transfer x

 Lufthansa Holidays All inclusive	 1 stop - Hin- und Rückflug Lufthansa · 4 h 25 min · TXL-PMI	332 € pro Person 663 € insgesamt
 All-inclusive Frühstück, Mittagessen, Abendessen und Getränke enthalten	 12:45 – 17:10 Lufthansa · 1 Stopp · 4 h 25 min · TXL-PMI	Angebotsübersicht 2 Nächte 2 Reisende All inclusive und Transfer Hin- und Rückflug Weiter zu Lufthansa Holidays
 Transfer Kostenloser Transfer	 09:00 – 13:25 Lufthansa · 1 Stopp · 4 h 25 min · PMI-TXL 32 weitere Flüge vorhanden	
 ITS.de Frühstück Transfer	 Direkt - Hin- und Rückflug Eurowings · 2 h 45 min · TXL-PMI	373 € pro Person 746 € insgesamt
 TUI Transfer	 Direkt - Hin- und Rückflug Eurowings · 2 h 45 min · TXL-PMI	420 € pro Person 839 € insgesamt

[Weitere Buchungsoptionen](#)

Desktop UI - Alternative #2 (emphasis added in green)

Alternative #2 enabled an expanded accordion (to show additional detail), added branded badges to enhance easy visual recognition of the service providers, and filtering chips to help users focus their search. While the enhanced level of detail and quick branding identification did help users understand the offers more quickly, the functionality of the filtering chips often was confusing.



Desktop UI - Alternative #3

Alternative #3 also relied on an expanded accordion to display additional package detail, incorporated branded badges and chips to indicate package characteristics, and added a “<additional> options available” but standardized the call to action with a consistent “Visit Site” button.

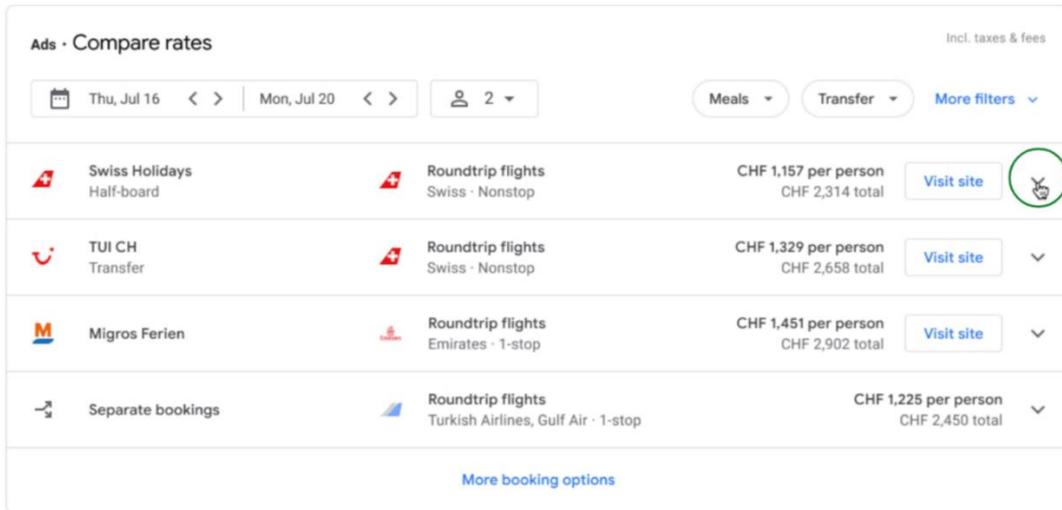
Users appreciated the completeness of information but felt that the additional options were too hidden.

DESCRIPTION:

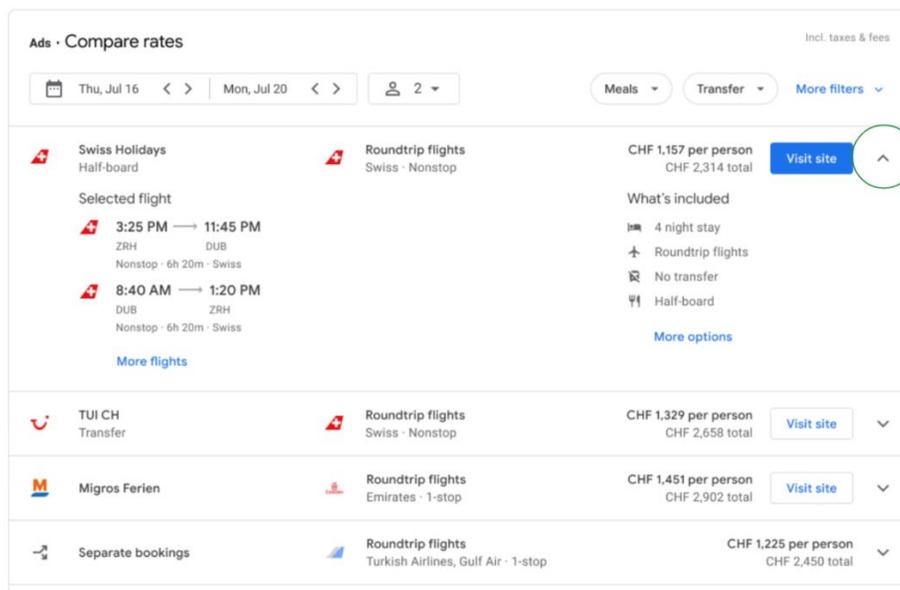
Following the evaluation of the baseline travel package UI and the proposed alternatives 1-3, the following Alternative #4 UI was proposed. This solution sought to address the identified problems of creating a UI that enabled a user to have the ability to consistently compare offers; see all available options; and make a decision more easily and rapidly.

Consistent Comparison

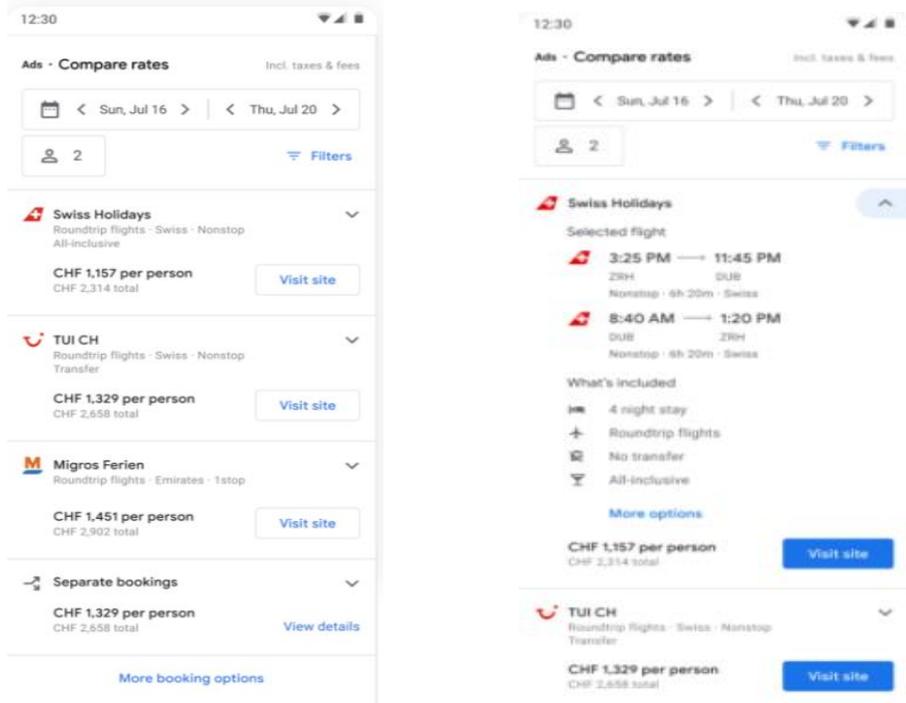
The most prominent element of the proposed UI is the collapse of package details. A dropdown arrow/secondary action is added to surface this concept visually to travelers. This device provides a simple and consistent means for consumers to find more information about available options. Moreover, the UI could be designed such that the entire row would be a tap target, not just the arrow.



Collapsed View with Dropdown Arrow - Alternative #4 (emphasis added in green)

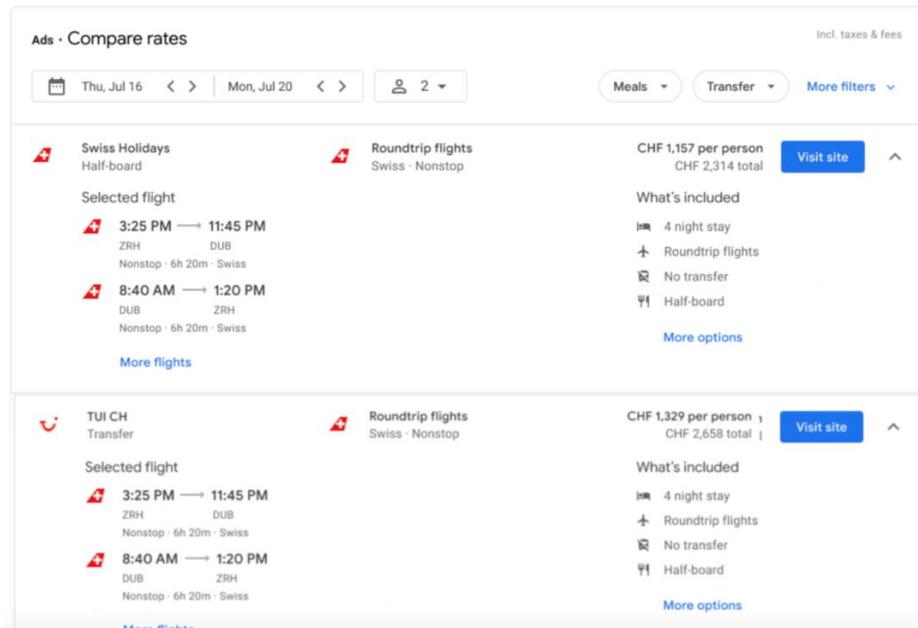


Expanded View with Dropdown Arrow - Alternative #4 (emphasis added in green)



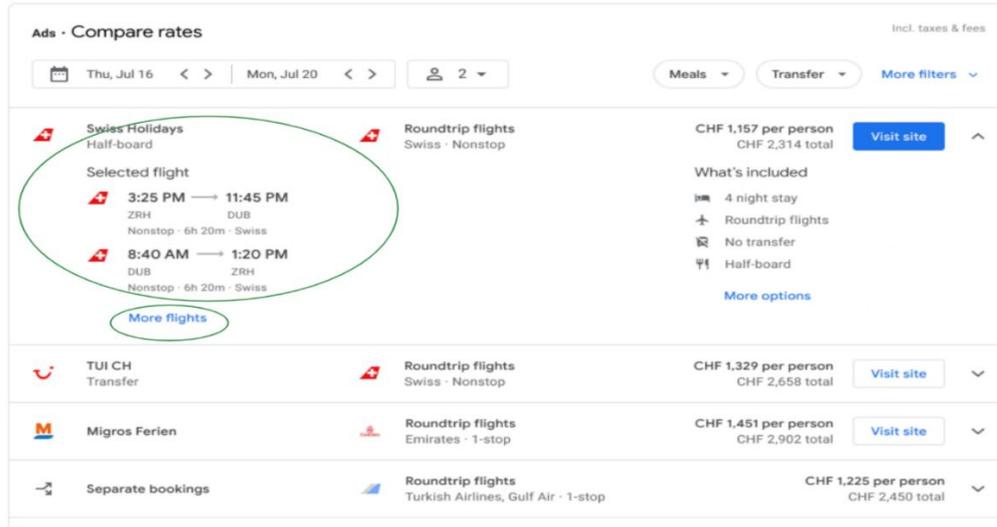
Collapsed View Mobile - Alternative #4 Expanded View Mobile - Alternative #4

More than one accordion can be expanded at one time so that travelers can view the details of multiple offers concurrently.



Desktop View with Multiple Options Expanded - Alternative #4

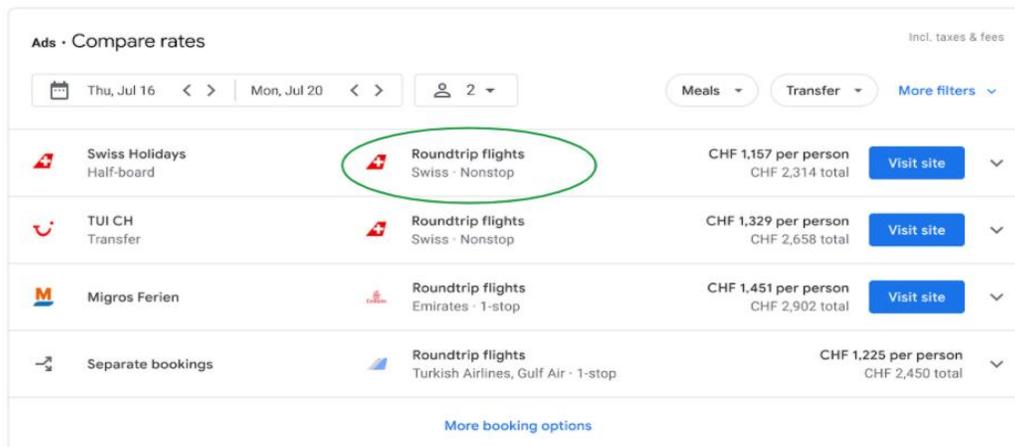
Other visual devices that help users quickly and consistently compare available options include the standardized rich flight summary and “More flights” indicators.



The image shows a travel package comparison interface titled "Ads · Compare rates". At the top, there are filters for dates (Thu, Jul 16 to Mon, Jul 20), number of people (2), and options for Meals, Transfer, and More filters. The main content area displays four travel packages. The first package, "Swiss Holidays Half-board", is highlighted with a green oval. It includes a "Selected flight" section with two flight segments: 3:25 PM ZRH to 11:45 PM DUB (Nonstop, 6h 20m, Swiss) and 8:40 AM DUB to 1:20 PM ZRH (Nonstop, 6h 20m, Swiss). Below this, a "More flights" link is also circled in green. To the right of the flight details, the price is listed as CHF 1,157 per person (CHF 2,314 total), and a "Visit site" button is present. A "What's included" section lists 4 night stay, Roundtrip flights, No transfer, and Half-board. Below the first package, three other packages are listed: "TUI CH Transfer" (CHF 1,329 per person), "Migros Ferien" (CHF 1,451 per person), and "Separate bookings" (CHF 1,225 per person). Each package has a "Visit site" button.

Expanded Desktop View with Available Options - Alternative #4

By consolidating “Flight summary” details to be more generic (i.e., roundtrip and number of stops vs. specific flight details) the proposed UI enables a quick “apples to apples” comparison of key package characteristics.



The image shows a collapsed version of the travel package comparison interface. The top navigation and filters are identical to the expanded view. The main content area now displays only the package names and their prices. The "Swiss Holidays Half-board" package is circled in green, and its price is CHF 1,157 per person (CHF 2,314 total). The other packages are "TUI CH Transfer" (CHF 1,329 per person), "Migros Ferien" (CHF 1,451 per person), and "Separate bookings" (CHF 1,225 per person). A "More booking options" link is located at the bottom of the list.

Collapsed Desktop View with Consolidated Details - Alternative #4

Surfacing All Options

By explicitly showing what is included and excluded in a package, travelers have optimal transparency and Travelers are given access to additional options to modify the package amenities with the “more options.”

The screenshot displays a flight comparison interface titled "Ads - Compare rates". At the top, it shows the dates "Thu, Jul 16" and "Mon, Jul 20", and the number of travelers "2". There are filters for "Meals" and "Transfer", and a "More filters" dropdown. The main content area lists several travel packages:

- Swiss Holidays**: Half-board, CHF 1,157 per person (CHF 2,314 total). Includes a "What's included" section circled in green, listing: 4 night stay, Roundtrip flights, No transfer, and Half-board. A "More options" link is also present.
- TUI CH**: Transfer, CHF 1,329 per person (CHF 2,658 total).
- Migros Ferien**: Roundtrip flights (Emirates - 1-stop), CHF 1,451 per person (CHF 2,902 total).
- Separate bookings**: Roundtrip flights (Turkish Airlines, Gulf Air - 1-stop), CHF 1,225 per person (CHF 2,450 total).

Each package includes a "Visit site" button and a chevron icon. A "More booking options" link is located at the bottom of the list.

Expanded View with Option to Select Links with Additional Information - Alternative #4