

How to Use Priceline's "Name Your Own Price" – Simplified

goingawesomeplaces.com/how-to-use-priceline-simplified

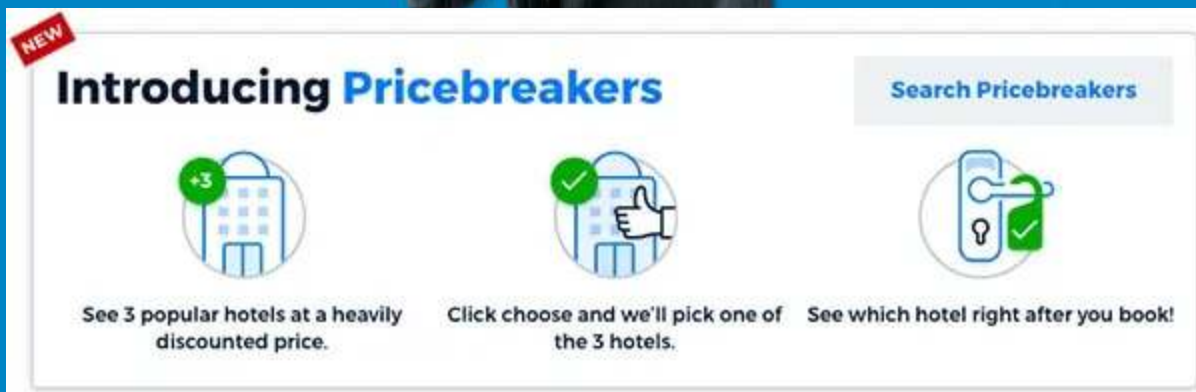
Will Tang

Bidding on Priceline with "Name Your Own Price" to get the best deal on hotels seems like a daunting task for those that don't know how to do it but it really isn't that hard. My goal for this article is to break it down into the easiest way with an example, screenshots and everything. After this you'll be bidding on Priceline in no time!


This is "Name Your Own Price" for dummies.


"Name Your Own Price" Is No Longer In The System


Since early 2020, links to the "Name Your Own Price" program for hotels have disappeared. While there haven't been any official announcements for it, it's likely that we won't see it come back but if it does we'll be sure to update the pages here.



NEW
Introducing Pricebreakers [Search Pricebreakers](#)

 See 3 popular hotels at a heavily discounted price.

 Click choose and we'll pick one of the 3 hotels.

 See which hotel right after you book!

The new program that they have is called "Pricebreakers" where you get to see sets of 3 hotels at a set price. You pick the set that interests you and they pick one of the 3 hotels.

In the below, learn about how it used to work. If they bring it back, it should still come in handy.

Priceline Background

Priceline is a website that sells discounted everything from hotels, car rentals and flights.

When you do a normal search for hotels on it you can get some decent deals but the tricks it to learn how to use the bidding tool called "Name Your Own Price".

Name Your Own Price

So what is Priceline's "Name Your Own Price" and how did it work?

In the past I was consistently able to find **hotels for under \$100** all around the world and in the early 2000s this was the best way to get the best deals on hotels.

Why not hostels you ask? Sure, there's [Hostelworld](#) but there was a time when I was travelling often with larger groups of people. The cost of the hotel split 4 ways is cheaper than paying for a bunk in a hostel.

What's the catch? Well the catch of course is that when you're bidding there are 3 sections to consider: *Region, Star Rating and Price*. The correct combination of the 3 if accepted will land you a hotel somewhere that meets those criteria. Of course, you don't know what the hotel will be but there are tools that give you better odds instead of throwing a dart with your eyes blind folded.

You're allowed to bid multiple times in a day but the stipulation is that you have to change Price and one of lowering the star rating or adding one more region. The name of the game is coming up with as many acceptable combinations as possible before quitting for the day.

If you've failed, keep trying. You can re-try from scratch every 24 hours.

It was fun. Okay fine, it was stressful as well especially when doing this down to the wire but there was some excitement around beating the system and getting an insanely good price on hotels.

Sample Case Study

For the below steps, we'll be focusing on a specific example to give you an idea of how "Name Your Own Price" works.

- Let's say I want to book a one room in Toronto, Canada for 2 from December 30 to January 1.
- You're looking to stay in the downtown core.

Steps for how to use "Name Your Own Price"

Here's a step-by-step breakdown of how to find the best deals on hotels with Priceline's "Name Your Own Price".

Head to Better Bidding

[Better Bidding](#) is my favourite forum site that gives you a good starting point for what hotels are available via Priceline and at what average rate. This is basically a forum where people simply post what they've won based on certain criteria so it's a massive database if you will.

Search for your city of interest.

In this case study, Canada is in its own section and then further click into “Priceline – Canada”. You’ll have to use the search to narrow it to “Toronto”



The Canada subforum on www.betterbidding.com



















Find out how much others have been winning bids for

Things to focus on when you’re researching on this forum:

1. What is the average price people are winning for your region of interest.
2. What kind of hotels are people getting.

From a quick browse of the 4-star hotels, the lowest price seems to be \$75 and the highest is beyond \$100. Great so now we have a starting point. You can also look into some of these forum posts as they sometimes have a lot more detailed information about exactly all the steps they took to win.

Topic

-   **3.5* Toronto (Downtown North) Delta Chelsea**
\$70 ... 11/18/12-11/19/12
-   **4* Toronto (Downtown South) Hyatt Regency Toronto**
\$99 ... 11/30/12-12/2/12
-   **4* Toronto (Downtown North) Marriott Toronto Bloor Yorkville**
\$105 ... 11/16/12-11/18/12
-   **3.5* Toronto (Downtown North) Delta Chelsea**
\$85 ... 11/14/12-11/16/12
-   **2* Toronto (Downtown North) Super 8 Toronto**
\$45 ... 10/31/12-11/1/12
-   **4* Toronto (Airport East YYZ) Toronto Airport Marriott Hotel**
\$95 ... 10/31/12-11/2/12
-   **4* Toronto (Downtown South) Renaissance Toronto Downtown ...**
\$110 ... 11/12/12-11/13/12
-   **4* Toronto (Downtown North) Marriott Toronto Bloor Yorkville**
\$75 ... 10/28/12-10/29/12
-   **3.5* Toronto (Downtown North) Delta Chelsea**
\$85 ... 10/27/12-10/29/12
-   **4* Toronto (Downtown North) Marriott Toronto Bloor Yorkville**
\$105 ... 12/29/12-12/31/12
-   **3.5* Toronto (Downtown North) Delta Chelsea**
\$88 ... 10/26/12-10/28/12
-   **Westin Prince Hotel Toronto**
Does Priceline or Hotwire still offer this hotel?
-   **4* Toronto (Downtown South) Thompson Toronto**
\$83 ... 10/28/12-10/29/12
-   **4* Toronto (Downtown South) Hilton Toronto**
\$110 ... 10/27/12-10/28/12
-   **4* Toronto (Downtown South) Renaissance Toronto Downtown ...**
\$77 ... 10/19/12-10/20/12
-   **4* Toronto (Downtown South) Hilton Toronto**
\$110 ... 10/26/12-10/28/12
-   **4* Toronto (Airport East YYZ) Toronto Airport Marriott Hotel**
\$70 ... 10/19/12-10/20/12
-   **4* Toronto (Downtown North) Marriott Toronto Bloor Yorkville**



List of all the winning bids on Priceline in the Canada subforum of Better Bidding

Get to know your zones

So what kind of hotels might we be interested in? Let's say I'm okay with **Downtown North** and **Downtown South**.

What's next?

Okay so back in the Canada sub forum, click on "Priceline/Hotwire Hotel Lists and Tips for Canada" and then "Priceline Hotel List – Canada".

Scroll down to Toronto North and Toronto South and you'll see a list of possible hotels that people have been winning.

Toronto (Downtown North)

- 4* Inter-Continental (on Bloor) [REVIEW](#) / [tripadvisor review](#)
- 4* Marriott Bloor Yorkville (previously 3*) [REVIEW](#) / [tripadvisor review](#)
- 4* Marriott Toronto Eaton Centre (previously 3*) [tripadvisor review](#)
- 4* Pantages Hotel--
- 4* Sutton Place [REVIEW](#) / [tripadvisor review](#) (CLOSING 6/15/2012)
- 3.5* Delta Chelsea (DOWNTOWN NORTH) [REVIEW](#)
- 3* Courtyard by Marriott [REVIEW](#) / [tripadvisor review](#)
- 3* Hilton Garden Inn City Centre (Dundas St)
- 3* Holiday Inn Downtown Centre (30 Carlton St)
- 3* Holiday Inn Midtown (280 Bloor)
- 3* Metropolitan Hotel-- (previously 4*) [REVIEW](#)
- 3* Ramada Plaza Toronto Downtown
- 2.5* Best Western Primrose
- 2.5* Bond Place (previously 3*) [REVIEW](#)

Toronto (Downtown South)

- 4* The Fairmont Royal York
- 4* Hilton Toronto [REVIEW](#) / [tripadvisor review](#)
- 4* Hyatt Regency (previously 3.5*)
- 4* Inter-Continental (on Front Street West) (previously 3*) [REVIEW](#) / [tripadvisor review](#)
- 4* Le Royal Meridien King Edward [REVIEW](#) / [tripadvisor review](#)
- 4* One King West Hotel
- 4* Renaissance (previously 3*) (SOUTH) [REVIEW](#)
- 4* Sheraton [REVIEW](#) / [tripadvisor review](#)
- 4* Thompson
- 4* Westin Harbour Castle [REVIEW](#) / [tripadvisor review](#)
- 3.5* Novotel (previously 3*)
- 3* Hilton Garden Inn Downtown (Peter St)
- 3* Radisson Admiral Harbourfront
- 3* Residence Inn
- 3* Strathcona-- [tripadvisor review](#)

List of the possible hotels in the Toronto Downtown North and Toronto Downtown South regions.

This list is as updated as the admin has done so. From my experience it's pretty accurate.

Decide on your strategy

Now is your time to formulate a strategy. Where do you want to start, what is your max, and at what increments you are going to take (I usually do \$2 or \$5).

Head to Priceline and find the "Name Your Own Price" page

Now that your legwork is done, time to dive into [Priceline](#)

The first part is straight forward, enter in the details on the home page and click on "Search Now!"



Enter in your details on the Priceline homepage

In the next screen, ignore the options that it pops up with and click on the banner on the right side that says “Name Your Own Price...save up to 60% off...”.



Click on “Name Your Own Price”.

Choose your zone, star, and set a price

Start off with exactly what you’re looking for (Downtown South, 4*, \$75) [in the screenshot I’m putting in \$1 so I won’t win].

Fill in your name and click to go next.

Step 1: Choose where you want to stay

Choose more than one area in Toronto, ON (change city) to improve your chances.

- 1 Brampton – detail map
- 2 Burlington - Oakville South – detail map
- 3 Don Valley – detail map
- 4 Downtown Toronto North – detail map
- 5 Downtown Toronto South – detail map
- 6 Markham – detail map
- 7 Mississauga – detail map
- 8 North York East – detail map
- 9 Oakville - Mississauga South – detail map
- 10 Scarborough - Pickering – detail map
- 11 Toronto Airport East – detail map 🏆 Best deal
- 12 Toronto Airport West – detail map
- 13 Toronto East – detail map
- 14 Toronto Lakeshore Area – detail map
- 15 Toronto West – detail map
- 16 Vaughan - North York – detail map

Step 2: Choose the star level for your hotel

The minimum **Guaranteed Amenities** are shown for select star levels in your chosen area(s). Some star levels may not be available in all areas.

4-Star Deluxe ★★★★★ 🏆 Best deal

8+

3½-Star Upscale-Plus ★★★★½

7+

3-Star Upscale ★★★★

7+

2½-Star Moderate-Plus ★★★½

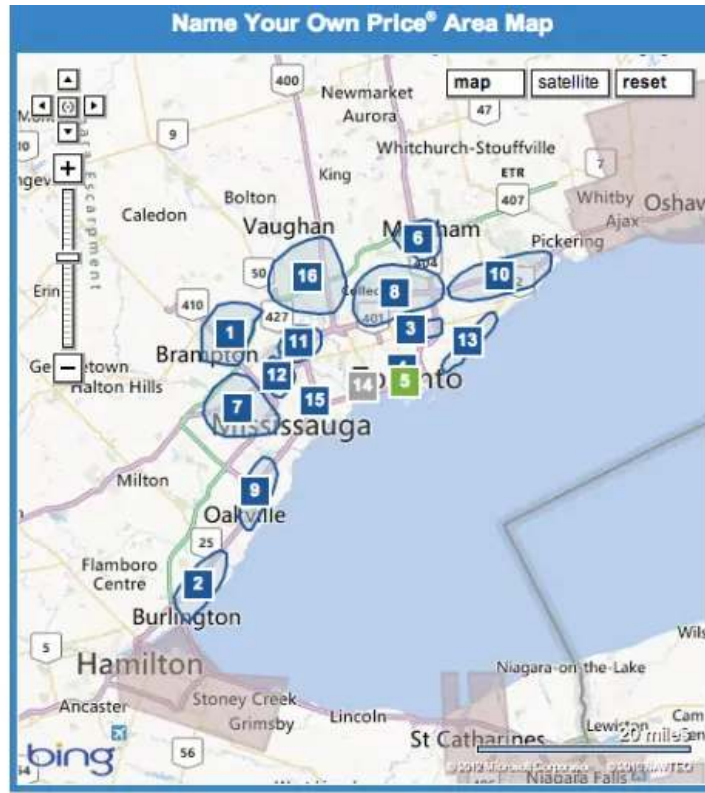
7+

2-Star Moderate ★★★★

7+

1-Star Economy ★★★

7+



See more great deals in nearby areas:

- [Oshawa, ON](#)
- [Hamilton, ON](#)
- [St. Catharines - Niagara, ON](#)
- [Kitchener, ON](#)
- [Buffalo - Niagara Falls, NY](#)

Priceline hotel participants are major national brands or quality independent hotels. We screen participating hotels carefully and update our information constantly to ensure you always receive quality accommodations. We will find you a room in a hotel willing to agree to your price in the shaded area.

Step 3: Name Your Own Price® (per room night)

Total charges, including taxes and service fees, are shown on the next page. You're protected by our **Best Price Guarantee**.

Name Your Own Price® Per Room, Per Night (\$USD) \$ <input type="text" value="1"/> .00	Median retail price for a 4 star hotel in the area selected is \$235 . Name a lower price, or click here to shop and compare prices.
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Enter your first bid selection.

Sometimes you'll get this screen telling you how ridiculously low your bid is to pressure you to bump it up. Click on "Skip this Page" and ignore.

We Want You To Get Your Hotel Room

Based on past priceline customer requests for hotels in this area, your offer price of \$1 has **almost no chance of being accepted**.

You should, as a general guideline, expect to pay an average price of \$235 per night for a 4-star hotel in the Toronto, ON area if you called the hotel directly.

Remember - we will only accept one request for the same star level, city area and dates in a 24 hour period. So if you need a specific zone or star level - be sure your first offer price is your best price!

<p>Name Your Own Price \$ <input type="text"/> .00</p> <p>Per Room, Per Night (\$USD)</p> <p>Median retail price for a 4 star hotel in the area selected: \$235.</p>	
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[◀ PREV](#) [SKIP THIS PAGE](#) [NEXT ▶](#)

Really? \$1 has no chance?

Next is a summary page.

Make sure you don't get the insurance. Enter your initials and click on "Continue"

Please Review Your Request

4 Star Deluxe Hotel, Downtown Toronto South Area ★★★★★

Check-In Date: **Sunday, December 30, 2012**

Check-Out Date: **Tuesday, January 1, 2013**

Region: Toronto, ON

City Area: Downtown Toronto South

Check-In Time: Guaranteed late night arrival

Check-Out Time: Check-out times vary by hotel

Room 1: William Tang

Number of Rooms: 1

Guaranteed Amenities: Guest Score 8/10 or Higher

Number of Nights: 2

Offer Price Per Room, Per Night: US\$1.00

Subtotal: US\$2.00

Taxes and Service Fees: US\$7.00

Total Charges: **US\$9.00**



We Recommend Trip Protection

Life is uncertain...plan for the unexpected.

Get up to **100% Trip Cancellation and Trip Interruption Protection** and much more.

[\[-\] Hide Details](#)

- ✓ **100% Trip Cancellation and Trip Interruption Protection** reimburses for cancellations due to unforeseen illness of traveler, family members and traveling companions, death in the family, job loss or other specified events.
- ✓ **24/7 Live Travel Assistance** A real person available to assist you any time of the day with last minute flight or hotel changes, luggage locator services, cash transfers, medical assistance services and emergency services.

[View Terms and Conditions](#)

Yes! I'd like to purchase Trip Protection for \$5.00 per room, per night.

No, thanks. I prefer to decline Trip Protection.

Review your bid.

You will then have to fill out all your information including credit card. There's no way around this because if you win, you have to pay.

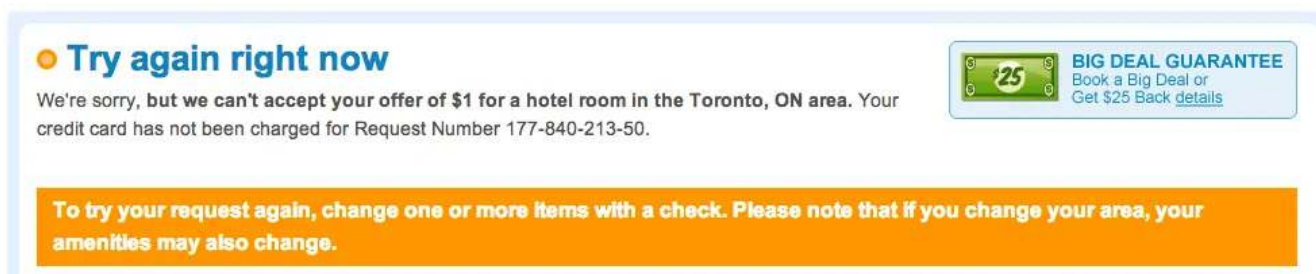
Subscribing isn't a bad idea especially if you're going to be doing multiple days of bidding.

Also deselect to box that automatically subscribes you to their spam.

When done, click on "Book Now"

Getting to your first results

It'll chug away and your first try will probably be a fail.



The screenshot shows a notification box with a blue header and an orange footer. The header contains a blue circle icon and the text "Try again right now". Below this, the main text reads: "We're sorry, but we can't accept your offer of \$1 for a hotel room in the Toronto, ON area. Your credit card has not been charged for Request Number 177-840-213-50." To the right of this text is a green box with a white "\$25" and the text "BIG DEAL GUARANTEE Book a Big Deal or Get \$25 Back details". The orange footer contains the text: "To try your request again, change one or more items with a check. Please note that if you change your area, your amenities may also change."

What failing looks like

Second iteration

Next iteration, add the other acceptable region you're willing to work with. You will most likely not be flexible on the star rating so keep that the same. Bump up your bid by \$2 or \$5.

Repeat all the same steps.

THE BIG SECRET:

If you win, that's awesome. Otherwise, let's say you've run out of regions you're willing to stay in but you want to keep bidding.

Now here's the secret I can let you in on. Most of the time you'll be looking for the 4-star hotels however there are a ton of small regions in a city that don't have 4-star hotels. So on the re-bid, simply slowly add these regions in.

But how do you find out those regions that don't have a 4-star hotel?

That's when we turn back to our trusty [Better Bidding](#) forum and back to the list of all the possible hotels for each region.

For the case study, Brampton, Burlington- Oakville South, Lakeshore, Oakville – Mississauga South only 3-star hotels. So on your next re-bid. Bump your price by another \$2-\$5 and add Brampton.

Essentially you're getting a free rebid on Downtown South and North 4-star since any of the subsequent regions you add don't even have 4-star hotels.

Keep doing this until you run out of regions.

Try every 24 hours

Try again in 24 hours and eventually you should get a pretty killer price.

That said, know your limits though as you'll feel the pressure to keep increasing your price but there'll be a certain point where it might just be cheaper to book directly with the hotel or use something like [Booking.com](https://www.booking.com).

Notes to consider about Priceline

- Obviously a specific hotel can never be guaranteed
- Remember that there's always a service fee and tax added so you're not just paying Rate X # Nights
- Everything in USD
- There is no cancellation so if you're bidding be sure that you're actually ready to book and pay
- Double occupancy is guaranteed but if you're looking to squeeze more people in you will either to research all the possible hotels in the region to see if the type of rooms people are winning can support more than two people and be okay with the risk that you may get a room that is only for two (i.e. 2 single beds commonly found in Europe)
- There is no guarantee that you'll get a double bed or two singles but this is much easier to swing your way by either calling in advance or asking when you get there. Most front desk people are willing to change that for you

Don't forget about Hotwire

While I know the focus on this piece is on Priceline, [Hotwire](https://www.hotwire.com) works very similarly when it comes to zones and mystery hotels.

Hotwire, luckily does not have any complicated bidding system. It simply shows you the stars, zone, and fixed price.

Deal of the day

Enhanced safety

★★★★☆

Hot Rate 4-star Hotel

in Calgary Intl Airport (YYC) North area

7.7 miles from search location

4.4/5 **Excellent!** (3,206 Expedia reviews)

Free parking | Free internet | Bed choice

Expedia ~~\$81~~
\$59
per night

What hotel will I get? ☺

Enhanced safety

★★★★☆

Hot Rate 3.5-star Hotel

in Calgary Intl Airport (YYC) North area

5.2 miles from search location

4.7/5 **Exceptional!** (1,015 Expedia reviews)

Free parking | Free internet | Bed choice

Expedia ~~\$94~~
\$69
per night

What hotel will I get? ☺

Enhanced safety

★★★★☆

Hot Rate 3.5-star Hotel

in Calgary Intl Airport (YYC) South area

3.3 miles from search location

4.3/5 **Excellent!** (1,007 Expedia reviews)

Free parking | Free internet | Bed choice

Expedia ~~\$96~~
\$73
per night

What hotel will I get? ☺

The key to having confidence that you'll get a hotel that you're looking for is to again use BetterBidding.

Simply navigate to the subforum the city is located in and do a search on that zone name to see what comes up.

Alternatively, go to the compiled list of hotels put together by the BetterBidding team.