

Amazon starts travel service Amazon Destinations

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The site that sells everything from toilet paper to toys can now send you on a romantic getaway.

Amazon is expanding its travel service online, dubbed Amazon Destinations, the latest effort by the e-commerce site to bolster its service offerings.

The travel service offers deals on hotels and getaways in three metro areas, Los Angeles, New York and Seattle, and their surrounding regions.

Amazon has offered travel deals since 2012 but those were mainly flash deals with discounted rates. Now, hotels can offer rooms at published rates as well as deal packages and discounts. Some examples of hotels included are Suncadia Resort near Seattle, which has a golf course and hiking trails, or Two Bunch Palms, a hot springs spa resort in Los Angeles.

The travel service is part of Amazon's local site which offers discounts on restaurants, entertainment, travel and other offerings from local businesses.

It pits Amazon against travel service sites like Expedia and TripAdvisor. Amazon has been broadening its online service offerings across the board. Last month it launched Amazon Home Services, where businesses can sell to customers services like house cleaning and small renovation

projects like TV wall mounting and garbage disposal installation.

The Seattle company is seeking to balance investments in new areas with turning a profit. Amazon.com Inc. reports first-quarter results on Thursday.

Shares rose \$4.89 to \$394.40 in afternoon trading.

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