



A Day In...

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I won't waste any time, Let's get started!

Money saving airfare tips

Competition in the airline industry has pushed down some airline fares to incredibly reasonable prices. The key word in the previous sentence being "some." What if the fares for where you want to go are painfully high? Well, if you can be flexible about when you travel, your chances of finding a bargain airfare are very good.

Pick off-peak seasons to go to your destination. Not only will airfare be cheaper during off-peak times, but so will your hotel and car rental. You'll also benefit from lighter crowds. If you can be flexible about when you go, traveling during off peak seasons (for your destination) is the best way to get a good deal.

Explore alternate days of the week and times of day to travel. Even moving a flight from morning to afternoon or from Monday to Tuesday can save you significant dollars.

When booking online or going through a travel agent, don't use specific dates, but rather give a timeframe of when you would like to travel. Then you can see the full variety of fares available.

Use alternative airports. Most major metropolitan areas have more than one airport serving them. Traveling to and/or from the lesser used airports can make a big impact on your fare.

If you're concerned about winding up too far from your intended destination, check with your travel agent. Many airports are connected by airport bus, getting you swiftly and easily from one regional airport to another.

A Day in New York City

Getting To New York:

Served by three major airports, two train terminals and a massive bus depot, New York City is the most important transportation hub in the northeastern USA. John F Kennedy Airport (JFK), 15 miles (24km) from Midtown Manhattan in southeastern Queens, is where most international flights land. Recently voted the third-worst airport facility in the world by business travelers, JFK is best avoided.

La Guardia Airport in northern Queens is 8 miles (13km) from Manhattan and services mostly domestic flights. If you're arriving or departing in the middle of the day, La Guardia is a more convenient choice than JFK. Newark Airport is in New Jersey, directly 10 miles (16km) west of Manhattan.

Eating In New York:

Need some recommendations? Try the relaxed gourmet cuisine of Portuguese restaurant Alfama on 551 Hudson Street (especially on Wednesdays); the funky yet provincial Italian hotspot, Max on 51 Avenue B; and in the summer there is always the 79th Street Boat Basin for sunsets, barbecued food and great atmosphere.

Getting Around In New York City:

There are 5 main ways to get around New York, they are;

By Subway

By Taxi

By Car

By Bus

By Foot

The subway isn't the cleanest form of transportation---homeless people live in stations and even in subway cars---but since everyone uses it all the time, central Manhattan is generally considered safe.

Nighttime is not necessarily a dangerous time to travel as long as you are taking a popular subway line, abstain from flashy jewelry, and are not going to one of the outer boroughs. Stay away from the platform's edge, and board the train during non-rush hours from the off-peak waiting area, marked at the center of every platform (this area is monitored by cameras, and the conductor's car often stops here).

Once you board, try to be in the same subway car as other people you think are safe and

stay near the middle to be close to the conductor (you'll see his face from the platform).

During rush hour and in crowded stations like 42nd St.-Times Sq., hold your bag with the opening facing you to discourage pickpockets. A real concern for women is sexual molestation---there are quite a few crazies who ride the subways to brush up or grope others. If this happens, be loud in your indignation.

When dealing with taxi drivers, remember that they know where they are going better than you, so don't presume to know the best route to somewhere because it's what you've heard.

Remember to tip at least 15% and a minimum tip of at least 50 cents if not more.

Where To Stay:

Lambda Mews - New York City North Chelsea Guest House in fabulous residential loft. Located on West 30th Street between 5th Avenue and Broadway. Spectacular views of the Empire State Building are yours when you stay in my stunning 2,600 square foot loft.

An exclusive elevator takes you takes to the 6th floor with entry directly into my spacious living room. Because of this room's extra large windows it almost seems as if the Empire State Building is in the room with

you, making for an unforgettable New York City memory.

More Where to eat:

If you're looking to splurge, try one of the Upper West Side's well-known and expensive restaurants, Cafe Luxembourg between Amsterdam and West End Aves, attracts the pre-performance crowd from Lincoln Center with its French-inspired food: cassoulet, escargots and interesting salads.

Prices range from \$15 at lunch to \$25 at dinner for main courses. Don't even try getting in here without a reservation.

What To See:

Waterfront Museum - Visitors can enjoy visual and performing arts programs and educational tours in marine history aboard the Lehigh Valley Railroad Barge #79.

Skyline Cruises - Skyline Cruises offers tours of all types, schools, international tourists, senior citizens, etc... completely customized to your specifications. Times, locations, food & beverage options, multi-lingual narration's and entertainment.

Madame Tussaud's - The American idea of wax museums will be changed forever when you visit Madame Tussaud's in the heart of New York. The Museum features over 175 wax

figures of celebrities, sport figures and singers.

Carnegie Hall - Carnegie Hall is a world famous concert hall. For more than a century, Carnegie Hall has set the standard for excellence in performance.

Central Park - Central Park was the first landscaped public park in the United States. The park offers over 840 acres of landscaped and recreational areas that include a zoo, a theater, sports facilities, lakes, food, entertainment and lots more.

Where To Shop:

Calvin Klein 654 Madison Ave between E 60th and 61st Sts, is a study in elegance by the media savvy designer.

Barney's 660 Madison Ave between E 60th and 61st Sts, has become famous for treating potential customers as too fat, too poor and, in the men's department, too straight. This is the hip and haughty clothing chain's flagship store.

Valentino 747 Madison Ave between E 64th and 65th Sts, displays the creations of one of the world's best-known couture designers.

The massive Giorgio Armani 760 Madison Ave between E 65th and 66th Sts, shows that the world-famous designer can't stand to be

outdone by anyone. Armani's gorgeous clothes fill four floors.

Prada 841 Madison Ave between E 69th and 70th Sts, showcases the Milan company's expensive and trendy offerings. The shoes start at \$300.

Entertainment:

Go to the Blind Tiger Ale House on Hudson st and sample Ale's from all over the world. Great place to meet singles.

A Day in London

Getting to London:

Which Airline Should You Choose

By Laura Quarantiello

The latest headlines are often what many travelers use as benchmarks to help decide which airline to choose. Recent accidents, crashes, mechanical problems, labor disputes, delays, financial difficulties and so on, are hot fodder for the media. No one planning a trip wants to go anywhere near an airline that is having even a hint of these kinds of troubles.

Any odds maker will tell you that a recent accident makes the chance of that same airline having another accident anytime in the near future a remote possibility at best. An odds maker will also tell you that a labor dispute among baggage handlers might make the

probability of your bags being lost greater than it would normally be. But we don't want to play the odds; we want to work with facts.
"

There are four main things that we passengers are concerned about when flying: Our safety, our comfort, our possessions (baggage), and our time. That gives us four questions to answer before booking a flight on a particular airline. (The web link after each of the questions is a site you can check for info.)

1) What is the airline's safety record?

[<http://www.1800airsafe.com>](http://www.1800airsafe.com)

2) Do they have many consumer complaints?

[<http://www.nasdac.faa.gov/internet>](http://www.nasdac.faa.gov/internet)

3) Are they known for baggage irregularities?

[<http://www.dot.gov>](http://www.dot.gov)

4) What is their on time record?

[<http://www.bts.gov >](http://www.bts.gov)

Let's face it. no matter how we crunch the numbers, there are simply no guarantees that the flight you take won't be late, that your baggage won't be lost or mashed like a leather potato. The facts and figures you turn up on the web can serve as a general guide, but they can't provide you with a hard and fast answer.

You can easily go a little nuts trying to

juggle all those statistics. After all, perfection is hard to come by - especially in the airline business! The information you turn up on the web can improve your chances of having an easier and more comfortable flight, but there are absolutely no guarantees. So no matter what the numbers may show, the real choice of which airline you pick probably comes down to just one question: how much is that ticket going to cost me?

About the author: **Laura Quarantiello** is the author of a number of "how-to" books, including "On Guard: How You Can Win the War Against the Bad Guys" and "Air-Ways - The Insider's Guide to Air Travel." Get more info about these and other exciting books at:
<http://www.tiare.com> >

If you are after cheap first class and business class airfares go to
<http://www.airawards.com>>

Getting To London From Heathrow

You can get to London by either:

Car

Bus

Taxi

Train

Car

It takes approximately 45-60 minutes to get to central London from Heathrow. When leaving Terminals 1, 2 and 3, follow exit signs to the access/exit tunnel. Follow signs to the M4 motorway, which will eventually bring you into London. Terminal 4 is on the main A30 road. The M4 and M25 orbital are signposted. Again, follow signs to the M4 which will eventually bring you into London.

Bus

The Airbus links Heathrow Terminals with many London hotels and some main line rail stations. It departs every 20 - 30 minutes and takes approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes. Airbus A1 - Serves Victoria London via several London hotels. Airbus A2 - Serves Russell Square via Euston rail station and also drops off at some West End hotels. Airbus Direct - Serves many central London destinations from Terminal 4 with additional services from Terminals 1, 2 and 3. One Way: £6 Round Trip: £10 Tel: +44 (0)181 897 2688 There is also an all night bus service from Heathrow to central London. Taxi Follow the signs in each terminal Arrivals areas for taxi ranks. The journey time to central London is approximately 45-60 minutes and will cost you between £35 and £45. Train Heathrow has two rail services to central London. In addition to the London Underground

is the Heathrow Express service to London Paddington station.

Getting Around In London:

The Tube

The Underground or the Subway is known as the 'Tube' in London. It is fast and convenient and allows you to shoot across the entire length of London without a clue as to the traffic chaos above. It is relatively inexpensive and there are weekly or monthly passes known as Travelcards. Stations are easy to come by and usually within walking distance of each other. However, because of its convenience the tube is often crowded and can be stifling in summer.

If you are on a commuter's schedule, realise that so is the rest of London.

The Tube covers Zones 1 and most of Zone 2. It also covers part of Zone 3 in the North and West. In the case of Heathrow airport, the Tube will take you all the way there.

The Tube conveniently links up with London Bus stops and British Rail stations.

Red London Buses

The famous red London buses are very easy to use and a popular means of transport. They are frequent and, because of the lack of

doors, you can hop on hop off whenever the bus slows down enough. If a traffic jam strikes, hop off and you'll be there before your bus catches up. The current mayor of London is trying to phase out the old buses in favour of new double-deckers with doors - let's hope it doesn't happen!

Buses link residential areas of London where the Tube tracks don't go, and also criss-cross Zone 1 as an alternative to the Tube. A ride on the bus in Zone 1 is £1.

Travelcards can be purchased that are also valid for bus travel. Travelcards can be bought at any London Underground station or from News Agents bearing the Travelcard sign. To purchase your first Travel Pass you will need to bring a passport sized photograph.

When the normal services stop, night buses take over. They run less frequently however are very useful services to get you home when the tubes shut down at around 1am.

Night buses usually start around midnight and have the letter 'N' before the usual bus number. They seem to congregate around Trafalgar Square and the nearby streets that radiate out from the square, so head that way when the clubs close and you're desperate to get home for some sleep.

British Rail

British Rail is the above-ground equivalent of the Tube. These trains can be excellent to use if you live out of Zone 1 and just off a Tube line and want a speedier option than the bus. British Rail will take you in to Zone 1, but not far, as the Tube takes over from there for obvious town planning reasons.

Main British Rail stations closest to the centre of London are Paddington and Victoria servicing the West and South West, King's Cross and Euston servicing the North, and North East, Waterloo servicing the South and London Bridge and Liverpool Street servicing the South East and East.

If you'll be using this service frequently, you can purchase a British Rail TravelCard.

Black Cabs

These famously shaped taxis, where you can face the other members of your party limousine-style, are a good way of getting around. The drivers know London like their own backyard and you will see would-be drivers zipping around town on mopeds with books open in front of them. They are studying for their Black Cab test. Quick trips in and around Central London aren't too expensive but this probably wouldn't be your main mode of transport.

Mini Cabs

Can be useful because they travel into parts of London, i.e. Zone 2 and beyond, where you will be pushed to find a Black Cab. But be wary of them too. These are not registered or licensed or checked-out in any way. These are the normal looking cars parked on the side of the road asking if you need a lift. They are not metered and you will need to agree on a fixed price for the ride before getting into the car.

These are co-ops of drivers who form a cab company. If they don't find you first, you can call their office number (you should see minicab business cards distributed around) or approach the office in person. Please be careful using minicabs for the obvious reason that they are not licensed cabbies. If you are female and travelling late at night, please try and find another way home. Night buses come in handy when the Tubes close down for the night.

On Foot

A bit of a stroll down the Thames Walk or a walk from Buckingham Palace/St James Park over to High Street Kensington will keep the grog and pub food from taking too much of a toll. London is one of the best cities to explore on foot. You see all the little lanes and shops, pubs and theatres that you would otherwise miss Tubing from A to B.

Where To Stay:

Brunel Hotel, Bayswater

Ideal location from which to explore central London. Close to Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens and within walking distance of Paddington Station. All the bedrooms have en-suite facilities, telephone, hairdryer, television with satellite channels and tea and coffee making facilities.

Where to eat:

Destino, a Latin-inspired restaurant, bar and deli, has opened at 25 Swallow Street, off Regent Street. The ground floor deli serves brunch, lunch and dinner, and has an evening lounge bar, with a range of South American beers, tequilas and cigars.

What To See:

Buckingham Palace. The Queen opened Buckingham Palace to the public for the first time in 1993 to raise money for repairs to Windsor Castle.

The Tower of London. According to Shakespeare, the young princes and heirs of Edward IV were slaughtered here by their wicked uncle, Richard III.

Westminster Abbey. Resting place of the royals, is one of the most visited churches in the Christian world.

British Airways London Eye. Paris has the Eiffel Tower, New York the Empire State and now London has the British Airways London Eye - an extraordinary symbol for an extraordinary city. The world's largest observation wheel offers a spectacular way to take in over 55 of London's famous landmarks in just 30 minutes!

Where To Shop:

Lulu Guinness, 66 Ledbury Road, London W11 2AJ

Manolo Blahnik, 49 Old Church Street, London SW3 5BS

Louis Vuitton, 198-9 Sloane Street, London SW1X 9QX

Gucci, 32-33 Old Bond Street, London W1X 4HH

Entertainment:

The new Red Rock Café/Bar at 12 Swallow Street, off Regent Street, is the place to go if you're up for something like an "American-style biker bar meets "Coyote Ugly" experience. Red Rock has an all-female bar staff who dance and parade atop the bar to classic rock anthems.

Live bands perform on stage, and a juke box plays rock and soul tracks from the mid-60s

to the late 90s. Red Rock stocks a wide range of bottled beers, spirits and cocktails has a North American-inspired menu; and decor featuring a 1960s Harley Davidson bursting through the brick wall above the bar. Arm wrestling, air guitar and karaoke competitions are among the attractions. It is open 5pm to 3am Monday to Saturday, with a door charge from 11pm.

SEE BRITAIN IN STYLE

Chilled champagne, a bubbling Jacuzzi, a four-poster bed draped in the finest white linen. Or perhaps a sumptuous banquet in a medieval castle, cruising along country lanes in a vintage Rolls-Royce, or gliding across the English Channel on a gleaming yacht. A luxury break can mean many different things in Britain - holed up in a gorgeous hotel room, shopping on Bond Street, or enjoying some retro-glamour on an Agatha Christie-style train journey - anything as long as its wildly indulgent and just that little bit naughty.

Indulgence is big in the UK right now; a clutch of stylish new hotels has opened in 2003 that redefines country-house chic. Whatley Manor in the Cotswolds, Cowley Manor in Gloucestershire and The Grove in Hertfordshire have joined Seaham Hall and Babington House in a new wave of hotel design; fuss and frippery are long gone, replaced with muted colours, clean lines and

relaxed attitudes - breakfast at 4pm and dinner at midnight - if you wish - and indulgent treatments at top-notch spas inbetween. Spa-lovers are well served in every corner of the UK; from thalasso treatments at St David's Hotel in Cardiff to oriental massages at OneSpa in Edinburgh.

In London, hotels increasingly offer bespoke packages for top-end travellers - the Mandarin Oriental in Hyde Park can organise helicopter tours over the city, private boat tours along the Thames, or a shopping day at Harvey Nichols (situated just across the road) with a personal shopper. Combine a night at The Royal Opera House (opt for the Grand Tier box, seats 4, at £170pp) with supper at Gordon Ramsay at Claridges, where the approx cost of £150 for two ensures you are hanging out with London's hippest crowd. A limousine is the only way to cruise London by night (book through Valliant Chauffeur Drive) but by day, take a private tour in a Black Taxi, with an authentic 'cabby' as your guide, from £75 for two hours.

If the city streets seem too hectic to be truly luxurious, opt for somewhere a little more intimate. Foodies should head to Padstow in Cornwall, where high-profile chef Rick Stein has added to the Seafood Restaurant he opened 28 years ago, with a café, brasserie and deli - or to Ludlow in Shropshire, which has the most Michelin-starred restaurants outside London; try the Merchant House or

Overton Grange. For a weekend of culinary indulgence, check into Le Manoir au Quat' Saisons in Oxfordshire, home to Raymond Blanc and one of the most sumptuous seven-course suppers in the country - a snip at £95pp.

If you want to explore in style, then simply hop on the train. Not just any train; take in the peaks and lochs of Scotland on the Royal Scotsman - all polished mahogany, shining silverware and views to die for. Or discover English towns such as Bath or Brighton on the Venice-Simplon Orient Express British Pullman, which offers day and evening excursions from £250pp, in carriages which date back to the 1920's, with original brasswork, mosaic floors and the driest of dry martinis. For the ultimate ride, the Northern Belle can be hired exclusively, and you decide the train's itinerary, with champagne all the way.

So when is the best time to come for an indulgent few days? If you're in the market for serious glamour, the months from April to August - traditionally known as the 'season' are the glitziest in the social calendar. Kicking off with the Grand National at Aintree, and taking in the Chelsea Flower Show, Wimbledon, Royal Ascot, Henley Regatta and the 'Proms' concerts, some serious dressing up is required, so head to Burberry or Stella McCartney's new flagship store, both on New Bond Street, Harvey Nicks in Leeds, or the brand new Bullring centre in

Birmingham for a touch of quintessential British style. All of the events offer top-notch hospitality; opt for a box at Royal Ascot (from £500pp), or book tickets to the Courtyard Enclosure at Henley (£45pp) and a picnic hamper to go with it.

The summer months are also the best time for exploring the seas around Britain, from the Irish Sea in the north to the English Channel in the south. Hebridean Island Cruises offer the chance to visit some of the most far-flung islands, on small boats that offer gorgeous cabins - all tartan fabrics and marble bathrooms, with plenty of local whisky on hand if the wind gets up. If you fancy just a day cruise, the Masterbuilders Hotel in Lymington offers a day sailing on its private yacht, the Master George, over to the Isle of Wight for lunch at its sister hotel, the George in Yarmouth (approx £1,000 for eight hours sailing).

Cooler months are perfect for exploring Britain's castles and country houses; forget walking boots and windcheaters and dress up for jazz luncheons or wine tasting evenings at Castle Ashby in Northamptonshire, or even a traditional English houseparty weekend, with the chance to try clay-pigeon shooting, falconry and carriage ride (from £295pp). Leeds Castle, in Kent, hosts open-air concerts and firework spectacles, but you can also hire out a private room for 12 people or more, for a right royal feast. For

the ultimate in privacy, hire your own country hideaway - Rural Retreats have a huge selection of chocolate-box cottages throughout the country, including Rectory Cottage in Wiltshire, which boasts an Aga, open fire, beautiful bedrooms with fluffy towels and white linen, gorgeous views and an idyllic courtyard garden (from £251 for a two-night break).

But whatever you do, and wherever you stay, there is one indulgent tradition that shouldn't be missed. Whether it's hand-cut sandwiches, fresh pastries and a glass of champagne at the Lanesborough or Landmark hotels in London, a luxury Fortnums hamper opened on a lazy afternoon, or toasted teacakes at Bettys Team Rooms in Harrogate, Yorkshire, open since 1919, make sure that at sometime, somewhere, you remember to stop for tea.

Contacts: VisitBritain: www.visitbritain.com
Whatley Manor : 0044 1666 822888,
www.whatleymanor.co.uk Cowley Manor : 0044
1242 870900, www.cowleymanor.co.uk The Grove:
0044 1923 807807, www.thegrove.co.uk St
Davids' Hotel: 029 2045 4045 Covent Garden
Opera: 00 44 7304 4000,
www.royaloperahouse.org Black Taxi Tours: 00
44 207 935 9563, www.blacktaxitours.co.uk
Rick Stein's restaurants and rooms:
www.rickstein.com Le Manoir au Quat Saisons:
0044 1844 278881, www.manoir.co.uk Orient
Express Trains: www.orient-express.com The

Master Builder's House Hotel: 0044 1590
616253 Leeds Castle : 0044 1622 765400,
www.leedscastle.co.uk Castle Ashby: 0044 1604
696696 Bettys Tea Rooms:
www.bettysandtaylor.co.uk Rural Retreats:
0044 1386 701177, www.ruralretreats.co.uk

To have a safe road a trip: **Prepare yourself, your** **passengers, your vehicle**

You may have taken any number of long road trips before and think you know just how to do it right. When you make your plan, however, consider these points.

About your car

Obviously, you will want to make sure that your tires have plenty of tread, and there are no operational problems that should be corrected. Make sure all fluids are at the right levels and there are no leaks. Once on the road, keep an eye on warning lights so you know if your engine is overheating.

About yourself

While you're busy with packing, calling to have your newspapers held, and planning rest and fuel stops in advance, remember to think about yourself. Don't leave things to do that will take you into late the night before you leave.

Get a good night's rest before you start. And remember that hunger and lack of exercise can contribute to the fatigue caused by driving for long periods of time. Know where you can stop, eat, exercise, and nap before you

leave.

About your passengers

It's a good idea to have one of your passengers be a licensed driver so you can alternate. Be sure to take any medications those in the car might need. If you are taking kids, games, videos, and snacks will keep them entertained so they don't hassle you while you are at the wheel.

About other drivers

Know how you will react when another driver cuts you off or makes a rude gesture. There are thousands of roadway aggression incidents each year. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that about one-third of all motor-vehicle collisions could be traced to aggressive driving.

A Day in Paris

Getting To Paris:

Most international airlines use Paris's major hub airport, Paris Charles De Gaulle (code-CDG), which is 26km North East of the centre. Quick, free shuttle bus to the airport train station with easy rail connections to central Paris (about 40 minutes).

There are also regular airport express buses (45 minutes) to various destinations. Reasonable (if not exactly wonderfully low) prices.

Getting Around In Paris:

The most charming of Paris' public transport options, the underground Métropolitain (and its sister system, the RER), is a simply massive network. No matter where you are, chances are there's a metro station within a few blocks.

Likewise, the public bus system covers everywhere, but its hours are laughable and don't even try to hop aboard on Sunday or a holiday. The Noctambus network takes over in the heavily trafficked areas once both the underground and the day buses go to sleep.

Métro stations are marked with an "M" or with fancy "Métropolitain" lettering designed by Art Nouveau legend Hector Guimard.

The first trains start running around 5:30am, and the last ones leave the end-of-the-line stations (the "portes de Paris") for the center of the city at about 12:15am.

Hold onto your ticket until you pass the point marked Limite de Validité des Billets on the way to the exit. Do not count on being able to buy a métro ticket late at night; some ticket windows close as early as 10pm.

Stay away from the most dangerous stations at night (Barbès-Rochecouart, Pigalle, Anvers, Châtelet-Les-Halles, Gare du Nord, Gare de l'Est). If concerned, take a taxi.

Where To Stay:

Hotel Manufacture -8 RUE PHILIPPE DE
CHAMPAGNE - 75013 Paris

Located in the Gobelins district in the South of Paris just minutes from the Pantheon, this is the perfect hotel for business people and visitors seeking charm and quality.

This elegant establishment, decorated with taste and style, is a pleasant blend of the past and modern times

Where to eat:

Brasserie Lipp

151 blvd Saint Germain, 6e, metro Saint Germain des Prés. Politicians rub shoulders with intellectuals and editors while waiters in dinner jackets serve pricey à la carte dishes at this old-time, wood-panelled café-brasserie.

What To See:

Don't forget to buy the Michelin Map no. 10 (PARIS 1:10,000) - an excellent map showing every street and alleyway.

Eiffel Tower. This towering edifice was built for the World Fair of 1889, held to commemorate the centenary of the French Revolution.

Notre Dame. Built between 1163 and 1345 on the Ile de la Cité, the original Roman core of Paris. One of a string of famous Gothic cathedrals in northern France, built in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries

Louvre Museum. A museum since 1793, the Louvre started as a royal palace. It has recently (1982-97) been completely - and radically - renovated, vastly improving it. Worth visiting even if you do not have time to

Arch De Triomphe. Built in the early nineteenth century to celebrate the victories of Napoleon's 'Grande Armée'. Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, with eternal flame, underneath.

Where To Shop:

Christian Dior: 30 Avenue Montaigne, 75008

Loius Vuitton. 54 Avenue Montaigne, 75008

Emporio Armani. 149 Boulevard Saint Germain, 75006

Valentino. 17-19 Avenue Montaigne, 75008

Gucci. 2 Rue du Fbg St. Honore, 75008

Entertainment:

Batofar

What looks like a mild-mannered tugboat moored near the imposing Bibliothèque Nationale de France is a rollicking dancing spot that attracts some top international DJ talent. It's open 6pm to 2am Tuesday to Sunday

Rex Club

This huge club is indisputably the hottest

place in town for techno and attracts Paris' top DJ talent. It's open 11pm till dawn Wednesday to Sunday

A Day in Christchurch

Getting To Christchurch:

Christchurch International Airport is a modern facility, well equipped for the daily arrival and departure of large groups of visitors.

Christchurch is the gateway to some of the world's finest scenery, such as Mount Cook, Fiordland and the Southern Lakes. The airport is a stepping stone for a huge number of visitors and touring groups.

Travel Times To Christchurch

Sydney 3 hours 05 minutes

Melbourne 3 hours 35 minutes

Brisbane 3 hours 40 minutes

Singapore 10 hours 20 minutes

Narita 11 hours 20 minutes

Seoul 12 hours 45 minutes

Los Angeles 13 hours 45 minutes

The airport is serviced by the major airlines of Air New Zealand, Air Pacific, Freedom Air, Singapore Airlines and Qantas Airways. These airlines have connecting flights with most international airlines, which makes travelling to Christchurch simple and efficient.

Domestically, Air New Zealand, Freedom Air, Mount Cook Line and Origin-Pacific provide a comprehensive schedule of daily flights to and from Christchurch, while other smaller airlines operate to outlying areas.

Getting Around In Christchurch:

Your own car is a very good option if you're here for 8 weeks or more (there's affordable BBH insurance for peace of mind motoring);

Rental cars are very affordable by world standards;

Cycling is excellent;

Hitching is fun (take normal precautions) & meet the locals;

Shuttle buses are often door to door.

Trains are daily and a rare treat on some

amazing lines;

Airplanes are fastest with spectacular views.

Ferries cover the deep wet bits between islands.

Where To Stay:

Charlotte Jane Boutique Hotel - Once an exclusive private school for girls, now a boutique hotel with rooms with roaring fire places and four-poster beds. Room rates start at around \$125 USD a night.

Where to eat:

Le Bon Bolli - In the heart of the city, amazing authentic French cuisine without the over the top price tag.

What To See:

Cathedral Square. While surrounded by high rises, Cathedral Square is still dominated by the Christchurch Cathedral.

The Arts Centre. On the weekends this precinct comes alive with an outdoor market.

Orana Wildlife Park. Set on 80 hectares of land within the McLeans Island recreational area, 18 kilometres or about 30 minutes drive from Christchurch's Cathedral Square, Orana Park has been designed with the emphasis on

natural settings for the animals. Here you can view them close-up, with few fences, wire or cages.

Find out more about adventure travel in Christchurch by visiting -

<http://www.tourism.net.nz/region/christchurch/attractions-and-activities/adventure/>

Where To Shop:

J Baltimore And Co: City mall

Quinn's Fashion. 195 Papanui Road, Merivale

Tango. 211 High St

Ginger Meggs. 7 Saint Albans St

Entertainment:

Cafe Bleu Nightclub. 88, Cashel St Mall City

Southern Blues Bar. 198 Madras St
Christchurch

Protecting Your Home While on Vacation

Discontinue milk, newspaper, and other deliveries by phone or in person ahead of time. Do not leave notes.

Arrange for lawn care and have someone remove advertising circulars and other debris regularly. On the other hand, several toys scattered about will create an impression of occupancy.

Notify the post office to forward your mail or have a trustworthy person pick it up daily. Apartment house tenants should also heed this hint since stuffed mail receptacles are a give-away when no one is home.

Inform neighbors of your absence so they can

be extra alert for suspicious persons. Leave a key with them so your place may be periodically inspected. Ask them to vary the positions of your shades and blinds.

When you leave, do not publicize your plans. Some burglars specialize in reading newspaper accounts of other people's vacation activities.

If you find a door or window has been forced or broken while you were away, DO NOT ENTER. The criminal may still be inside. Use a neighbor's phone immediately to summon police.

Do not touch anything or clean up if a crime has occurred. Preserve the scene until police inspect for evidence.

A Day in Sydney

Getting To Sydney:

Sydney's main airport is located 15 minutes south of the CBD at Botany Bay. A secondary airport for light commercial and private use is located at Bankstown (40 mins from CBD).

Most visitors to Sydney arrive at Kingsford Smith airport.

Airport transfers are readily available from the airport and there is a regular train service straight to the city.

Getting Around In Sydney:

Sydney's public transport network consists of buses, trains, taxis, ferries and a few private bus companies serving outer suburbs.

Scheduled bus and rail services are generally reliable and comparatively cheap. There are different types of fares covering the network. Pre-paid daily, weekly and monthly TravelPasses for separate or combined bus/train/ferry travel are worth buying for both regular commuting and occasional use

If you want to hire a car most overseas drivers can use their overseas license in Australia for up to three months, provided that the license is in English. Failing that, you can carry an official translation of your license or an International Driving Permit.

Travel by taxi is quick and easy. Taxis operate on a meter system which is government controlled and tipping is not compulsory. Taxis can be hailed on the street or booked by telephoning any one of the various taxi companies.

Where To Stay:

Four Points by Sheraton Sydney. Conveniently located near the central business district, the Sydney Convention Centre and downtown shopping, offers spectacular views across Darling Harbour. From \$157.00 USD

Where to eat:

VII 7 Bridge St. Lunch (fixed price menus) \$65/85/110, dinner \$110/140. Open noon-1.30pm Tues-Fri, 7pm-9pm Tues-Sat. If you're hankering for truly fine cuisine, then the labour-intensive delights at VII will have your mouth watering.

The food is modern Australian, but influences from as far as Japan and France are detectable, and the service is impeccable.

Make reservations for the weekend well in advance.

What To See:

I highly recommend you do the Sydney Harbour and Bondi Beach Scenic Flight.

Sydney Opera House. Designed at the vast scale of the harbour itself, its low edges contain enough visual appeal for human interest. More remarkable is that the scheme makes no reference to history or to classical architectural forms.

Sydney Harbour Bridge. The harbour is the defining characteristic of the city. Its multiple sandstone headlands, dramatic cliffs, rocky islands and stunning bays and beaches, make it one of the most beautiful stretches of water in the world.

Where To Shop:

Queen Victoria Building. 455 George St. The magnificent QVB, with dozens of shops on four levels, is the city's most beautiful shopping centre. You'll find Jag, Guess, Osh Kosh, Jigsaw, Crabtree & Evelyn, Portmans, Country Road, Esprit and Oroton here, among others.

Paddington Village Bazaar. St John's Church, 395 Oxford St. Open 10am-4.30pm Sat. One of Sydney's most popular markets, it offers everything from vintage clothing and funky designer fashions, to jewellery, massage, food and holistic treatments.

Bondi Beach Market. Cnr Campbell Pde & Warners Ave. Open 9am-4pm Sun. At the northern end, of Campbell Pde, this market is good for hip clothing, swimwear, jewellery, furniture, knick knacks, bric-a-brac and beautiful-people watching.

Centrepont Shopping Centre. Cnr Pitt & Market Sts. Centrepont, beside the Imperial Arcade and beneath AMP Tower, has four storeys of fashion and jewellery shops.

Entertainment:

Sydney 2000 Dinner Cruise. Sydney's most elegant way to dine afloat, the John Cadman Cruising Restaurant is synonymous with luxurious dining and first class service with Captain Cook Cruises.

Enjoy a three course a la carte dinner from the extensive menu, prepared by International chefs with a comprehensive selection of fine Australian Wines.

A Day in Rome

Getting To Rome:

Most international airlines use Rome's Fiumicino airport - (code - FCO). Direct trains run to various stations in Rome, including the main station, Roma Termini.

Not that quick or cheap, but a reasonable (just) frequency. The airport is around 30km from the centre - it is often referred to as Leonardo Da Vinci. Estimated transfer time into city centre > about 1 hour 20 minutes from flight touchdown

Getting Around In Rome:

Rome is a large city, but the historic center is quite small and most of the major sights are within a reasonable distance from each other. Therefore, walking is a perfectly manageable mode of transportation in the heart of the city.

Leonardo da Vinci (Fiumicino) airport is 26km (16mi) southwest of the city. One of the most convenient ways to get into town is by the Stazione Termini direct train, which usually runs hourly from the airport.

The city bus company is ATAC, and most of the main buses terminate at the bus station outside Stazione Termini (where you can get a map of the bus routes). Buses run from around 6am to midnight, with some services running throughout the night.

The easiest and most commonly used form of transportation is the bus. Extensive bus and tram routes connect the university with the historic center and extend far into the surrounding suburbs. The compact electric buses of Line 119 take a handy route through the center of Rome that can save some time.

Where To Stay:

HOTel Modigliani - near the Spanish Steps in a good location for getting around (metro station close by), walking distance to the

Villa Borghese, good restaurants around there, and up in the neighborhood above the Steps. Looks nice.

Hotel Santa Maria - in Trastevere, a fun neighborhood for wandering around, feeling the atmosphere of Rome, loads of good dining around here. The hotel is charming, located in a former convent and they've retained the cloister garden.

Where To Eat:

La Fiaschetta at Campo dei Fiori is a good place for an inexpensive meal of antipasti and wine.

What To See:

Pantheon

Dedicated to the seven planetary divinities, this is one of the most impressive monuments of Augustan Rome, which is circular in architecture and whose interior is encased in marble.

Colosseum

Perhaps the best-preserved of the monuments of ancient Rome, this huge marble structure was built to hold more than 50,000 spectators who witnessed the slaughter of wild beasts and bloody contests of might by gladiators.

Spanish Steps

These elegant steps by Francesco de Sanctis (1723-1726) consist of twelve flights of varying width, which descend to the scenic Franciscan Church of Trinita dei Monti, dating from 1503

Piazza Navona

The most outstanding square of the Baroque period in Rome features Bernini's Fountain of Rivers at its center as it faces Borromini's church, Sant' Agnese in Agone.

Where To Shop:

Dolce e Gabbana. Piazza di Spagna 82-83

Fendi. Via Borgognona 36-40

Gianni Versace. Via Borgognona 24-25

Giorgio Armani Boutique. Via Condotti 77

Gucci. Via Condotti 8

Porta Portese. Rome's biggest and best-known flea market. It is held every Sunday until around 1pm in the area extending south from the Porta Portese.

Prada. Via Condotti 92-95

Entertainment:

There is an excitement attached to entertainment in Rome. Cinema and theatre are popular pastimes in Rome with around 40 films on an average weekly. The main theatres offer a selection by great Italian playwrights. As in any other major city Rome's nightlife is constantly changing.

Roman clubs are of an extremely varied group and most clubs arrange different theme nights. And finally, don't forget the passion for sport. Football is Italy's National sport but there are other activities that attract a large crowd in Rome. Tennis, baseball and marathons are a few examples of these.

A Day in Singapore

Getting To Singapore:

Singapore's impressive Changi airport (code - SIN) is located around 20km north east of the main central areas of the city. The easiest route into the centre by far is to take a quick, regular and efficient MRT (Mass Rapid Transit) train to any of a number of city stations.

Buses are still available into the city, though we feel the arrival of the MRT has made these redundant - at least for international visitors. Passengers overburdened with luggage may wish to take a taxi - rides into the city are usually quick and not that expensive (particularly if sharing the cost with a friend). Estimated transfer time to downtown > about 45 minutes from clearance of immigration procedures

Many of the world's top airlines have frequent flights to Singapore. Among them are British Airways, United Airlines, Air France, Air New Zealand, Qantas Airways, Cathay Pacific, Thai Airways and of course, Singapore International Airlines.

Getting Around In Singapore:

The efficient and clean public transportation in Singapore makes getting around the Republic a breeze. Singapore's transportation network offers access to every corner of the island, either by bus, MRT (Singapore's underground rail network), taxis, rented cars and motorbikes or even by foot.

Public buses operate from 6 in the morning to midnight everyday and fares are a little cheaper than the MRT, and far more comprehensive. There are also several bus routes especially useful to sightseers. Singapore has two main bus companies plying

its roads - the Trans-Island Bus Services and the Singapore Bus Service.

Most fares depend on distance travelled and range from 50c to S\$1.10 for non-air conditioned buses, and 60c to S\$1.40 for air-conditioned comfort. There are buses charging a flat rate to the destinations displayed on the destination plates in front of the bus.

A useful tip for travellers is to avoid rush hour traffic between 8 to 9 in the morning, and 5 to 7 in the evening. Singapore at anytime outside these hours still remains a pleasure to roam about in.

Where To Stay:

Hotels are plentiful in Singapore and many are world-class, you'll have to kick yourself if you can't find any around. However, I don't think they have any really low cost dorms or rooms for backpackers. Hotels in Singapore may cost a bit more, but the service offered is very good.

In Orchard Road, a great place to stay is The Four Seasons Hotel. The rooms are spacious with tasteful artwork. I think there is like an attendant for each guest.

Where To Eat:

Singapore is where you need to be if food and flavor have a special place in your heart:

few spots on earth offer the variety of culinary temptations that can be found in the Lion City.

Chinese, Malay, Indian, or European - the huge range of choices are made even more appealing by the fact that eating in Singapore can be extremely inexpensive.

The Moomba. Upper Circular Road, serves great Australian food.

Michelangelos and Sistina. Authentic Italian food at Holland Village

What To See:

Wild breakfast at Singapore Zoo.

Fancy breakfast with one of the Singapore Zoo's famed animals? This coach tour will give you the experience in a new concept in animal keeping with the zoo's beautifully landscaped gardens and very few cages and of course you will enjoy a 'Wild Breakfast' with the friendly 10 metre python, the Orang Utan and a small-clawed otter

Thian Hock Keng Temple in China town.

Where To Shop:

Singapore's main shopping district is at Orchard Road. You can find almost anything you can imagine in the shopping centers here.

There is this place called The Forum; which has the biggest Toys 'R Us in Singapore, kids love it.

Electronic goods are sold at duty-free prices in Singapore, and there are many great deals around. Many items are available immediately from their global launch in Japan or Europe.

Best places to shop for electronics in Singapore are at Sim Lim Square, Lucky Plaza and Far East Plaza. You can find everything from digital cameras, DV camcorders, DVDs, cell phones and even GPS equipment. Techie types are really spoilt for choice here.

Entertainment:

The hip and trendy like to hang out at Zouk and Velvet Underground. The two clubs are easily the best clubs in the island.

Thos who appreciate classical music would want to check out The Singapore Cultural Theatre and the Victoria Hall.

A Day in Vienna

Getting To Vienna:

Vienna's Flughafen Wien Schwechat handles over eight million passengers a year, the

majority flying to/from London (two hours). The state-owned Austrian Airlines and virtually co-owned Lauda Air are the country's main carriers, with flights to the USA, Asia and Australia, and within Europe. The departure tax is factored into the price of the air ticket.

Vienna is Central Europe's main rail hub, so connections to Bratislava, Ljubljana and other major European destinations are good. London-Vienna via Eurostar to Paris takes around 15 hours.

Getting Around In Vienna:

Vienna has an excellent public-transportation system with reliable, clean and convenient service. Moreover, taking public transportation into and within the city is a lot less stressful than dealing with Vienna's heavy traffic.

Buses

Buses generally fill in the gaps where there are no trams or U-Bahn services such as some outer suburbs and the central Innere Stadt.

Tram (Strassenbahn or BIM)

Vienna's extensive tram network has more than 30 routes. Trams are generally an efficient way of getting around with trams on most routes departing every five to ten minutes.

Trams run underground in some parts of the city centre.

U-Bahn

Vienna's five U-Bahn lines are the easiest way to get around the city, with frequent trains running from around 5am till just after midnight. Trains generally run every five minutes during peak periods and every seven to eight minutes off-peak.

S-Bahn

The S-Bahn is like an overground version of the U-Bahn

Where To Stay:

For Old World splendor and lavish decor you might try the Hotel Sacher. It's right in the center of the city, next to the Opera. Even if you decide not to book a room, you can enjoy the ambience of this great hotel while sampling a slice of the famous Sachertorte in the hotel restaurant or in the pastry shop.

Where To Eat:

Traditional Viennese food is generally quite heavy and hearty with meat strongly emphasised.

Drei Husaren. Although only opened in 1933, this place plays heavily on nostalgia for the

days of the Empire, with a menu packed full of Austro-Hungarian specialities. Daily noon-3pm & 6pm-1am.

Kervansaray. This is the city's top fish and seafood restaurant, which specializes in lobster (Hummer), though a few meat dishes are also served up. On the ground floor, in the Hummerbar, there's a slightly cheaper array of dishes available.

Steiereck. The Steiereck is considered by many Viennese to be the best restaurant in the city (if not the entire country). It serves up international and Austrian dishes with an emphasis on Styrian cuisine, has an impressive wine list, superb cheeses, and a bargain set brunch for around öS100/€7.27. Mon-Fri noon-3pm & 7pm-midnight.

The Moomba. Upper Circular Road, serves great Australian food.

Michelangelos and Sistina. Authentic Italian food at Holland Village

What To See:

Monument Gegen Krieg Und Faschismus

This Monument against war and Fascism is located behind the hotel Sacher on Albertinapl, and graphically commemorates the suffering caused by WWII. The monument was sculptured by Alfred Hrolicka in 1988.

Austrian Resistance Museum

(Mon, Wednesday & Thurs 09.00-17.00)

This museum has a range of various displays and exhibits that tell the story of the Austrian Resistance.

Where To Shop:

The biggest and best-known market is the Naschmarkt, extending for over 500m along Linke Wienzeile.

Eduard Kettner.

Furnkranz-Couture.

Wiener Messing Manufaktur.

CF Rothe & Neffe.

Entertainment:

Krah Krah.1, Rabensteig 8. With an excellent selection of draught beers and snacks, this place is always packed. Occassionly, live jazz music is provided.

Atrium. 4, Schwarzenbergplatz 10, U-Bahn Karlsplatz. A long-established lively disco. Extremely popular with students.

A Day in Amsterdam

Many of the world's airlines fly directly to Amsterdam, but it might be cheaper for you to fly to a nearby city such as London and get to Amsterdam by bus or train. Many airlines will offer you a free side trip within Europe, so ask around and see what offers are available.

Amsterdam is well connected to the rest of Europe, including Britain, by long-distance bus. Buses are consistently cheaper than trains, but on some services you'll get a lungful of cigarette smoke.

Getting Around In Amsterdam:

Amsterdam has a very good public transport system, with trams, buses, a metro and taxis. And, of course, plenty of good bicycle lanes.

The best way to get around Amsterdam is by tram. You can buy tickets onboard from the driver or conductor at the back, but it's cheaper to buy a 'strippenkaart' from GVB sales points, supermarkets, tobacco or newspaper shops, or the Amsterdam tourist office.

One of the fastest and most enjoyable ways to get around and see the city is by bicycle. There are special lanes purely for bikes, which makes negotiating the city much easier.

Two points of caution though: always lock your bike up well, with preferably two locks, and lock it to something immovable.

Where To Stay:

Ambassade Hotel.

This literary retreat draws publishers and authors - recent guests include Donna Tartt and Nicci French - and part of the appeal is surely the library of 1,000 or so signed books.

Where To Eat:

Cafe Pacifico at 31 Warmoesstraat. It is one of Europe's first mexican restaurants. If you are looking for a WIDE selection of tequila they can help you with that, too.

Fantasia. Marnixstraat 417, Authentic Italian food.

What To See:

For a refreshingly different view of Amsterdam, try a canal boat tour. The canals provide a leisurely pace from which to observe Amsterdam's unique architecture and street life.

You can find a convenient departure either in the daytime or evening hours from many locations throughout the city.

Koninklijk Paleis, Royal Palace.

Originally built as the City Hall, Louis Napoleon turned it into the Royal Palace during his short-lived reign over the Netherlands. Today it is only rarely used by the Dutch royal family for ceremonial occasions. It was last used during the wedding of Prince Willem and Maxima. The sculptures and artwork inside are worth seeing.

The Vondelpark.

The Vondelpark is a very popular place on warm, sunny days with the Dutch and tourists alike. The park extends over several hundred acres with bike paths, walking paths, an open-air concert venue, three large outdoor cafes and the Film Museum.

Cannabis College.

Curious about cannabis? Want to learn more about hemp products? Need some marijuana growing tips? The friendly staff at the Cannabis College are ready to answer all your cannabis questions.

Where To Shop:

Traditionally, shops and markets are closed all day Sunday and Monday mornings. Normal shopping hours are 09:00 or 10:00 to 18:00

(17:00 on Saturday) although some are now beginning to stay open later in the evenings and about half of the shops on the main shopping streets are even open on Sundays.

There is late-night shopping on Thursdays until 21:00, when most shops on the main streets are open.

Metz & Co. Leidsestraat 34-6. Metz & Co is a good place to shop for special gifts: designer furniture, glass and Liberty-style fabrics and scarves are all sold here.

De Bijenkorf. De Bijenkorf Dam 1. De Bijenkorf is to Amsterdam what Harrods is to London and Bloomingdale's is to New York. There's a good range of clothing - both designer and own-label - kidswear, jewellery, cosmetics, shoes, accessories and a wonderful household goods department.

Entertainment:

Amsterdam's club scene is unequalled anywhere. There are lots and lots of venues for the young, and young at heart here in Amsterdam.

The biggest rave of the year is Dance Valley, held in the countryside in mid summer. Almost a dozen huge circus tents feature live acts and DJs that play simultaneously all day long. The Leidseplein is the center of the nightlife with the famous Paradiso and

Melkweg venues nearby, and many smaller places all over the city.

A Day in Prague

Getting To Prague:

All domestic and international airlines use Prague's Ruzyne international airport - (code-PRG). Fairly inexpensive minibus connections available to central Prague (17km away, over 30 minutes). Alternatively, there are public buses that call at the Nove Butovice underground station

Prague, the capital of Czech Republic, is situated in the heart of Europe.

Prague International Airport is served by dozens of international carriers from most major cities. A convenient Airport Shuttle Bus service operates between the airport and the center of Prague. Other means of transport are available as well.

Trains run daily between Prague and most major European cities; Paris, Amsterdam, Munich and Vienna are some major hubs.

Getting Around In Prague:

Central Prague is very compact and walkable. If your hotel is in the Old Town, or almost anywhere in Prague 1, you can probably walk wherever you want to go. If you need transportation, Prague offers a multitude of options.

Metro: Prague's metro is fast and reliable. There are several metro lines and all come thru the center of the city, with the main stops at Staremeska (Old Town) and Mustek (Wenceslas Square). It costs only 12 crowns per trip (about 40 Eurocents). There are discount cards for 3 or more days, but you are unlikely to need public transport that much to realize any savings.

Trams: The trams are very convenient and travel surface routes that the metro misses. Especially useful to visitors are the lines that run along the river. The trams use the same tickets as the buses and metro, and transfers are allowed between them. Trams allow you to see much more of the city than the metro, but they can get very crowded during the rush hour.

Buses: Like the trams the buses run outward from the city towards the suburbs. These can be useful if your hotel is outside the city center or you have a reason to venture further.

Taxis: Public transportation peters out around 1:30 am so many people need to take a taxi back to their hotel late at night. Prague's taxi system is notorious for ripping off unsuspecting tourists.

Their methods are many, but often involve no meter or a meter that runs too fast. The best idea is to negotiate a price before going anywhere. It shouldn't cost more than 300 crowns (about 10 Euros) to go anywhere within the center of the city, up to around 500 crowns for outlying regions.

Where To Stay:

Prague has a long tradition of hospitality having hosted generations of travellers, thinkers and invading armies. However, to the modern guest this may not be immediately apparent as the tradition of customer service is somewhat shorter. Generally, centrally-located hotels are more expensive because of their proximity to Prague's sights, but the further you travel into residential Prague, the cheaper the rooms become.

Élite Hotel. Praha 1, Ostrovni 32.

With a history that dates back to the 14th century, the hotel Élite, a member of the Small Charming group, is another of those gems that keep popping up.

Where To Eat:

One of the great pleasures of life is to dine well. In Prague this pleasure is considered to be part of life, not something reserved for special occasions. In fact few European capitals can claim a greater variety or more sophisticated cuisine than can be enjoyed in Prague's hundreds of restaurants.

And when you consider the low cost of dining out in Prague, you can understand why it's so hip to visit this culinary mecca.

U Fleku Brewery and Restaurant. Authentic Czech food in the heart of the city.

Govinda Vegetarian Club. One of the best vegetarian restaurant in the worlds is in the middle of Prague city.

What To See:

Visit Hradcany. (Prague Castle) The largest ancient castle in the world - 570m (1870ft) long, an average of 128m (420ft) wide and occupying 7.28 hectares (18 acres).

Visit the Strahovsky Klaster. (An old monastery)

Don't miss Prague Castle's less famous attractions, such as the network of tunnels the communist government built in 1950 for easy access to the bomb shelters.

Where To Shop:

Bila Labut. Na porici 23, Nove Mesto, and also cnr Vaclavske namesti & Wilsonova, Nove Mesto.

Krone. cnr Vaclavske namesti & Jindrisska, Nove Mesto

The city has a number of open-air markets where you can buy not only fresh produce but also souvenirs, clothing and the odd antique

Dejvice market. Take the Praha Dejvice exit from metro Hradcanska and turn left onto Dejvicka

Havelska markets. Produce and souvenir market near south of Old Town Square.

Entertainment:

Prague is not only a major historical and cultural site but a fun city to visit. It offers many restaurants, traditional Czech pubs, jazz clubs, concert halls, discos, etc. One can attend the ballet, opera, philharmonic, or theater for just a few dollars.

The Prague Spring International Music Festival, the Agharta Jazz Festival, and the Prague Dance Festival (Tanec Praha) attract some of the world's top talents as well as audiences from around the world. Prague is

also the home to many museums and galleries such as the National Museum, the National Gallery, the Prague Castle Picture Gallery, the Mucha Museum, etc.

Simple Planning Makes for a More Enjoyable Vacation!

June is "Rebuild Your Life" Month... time to think of ways that you can rejuvenate yourself and reconnect with those you care about most. If your vacation includes travel, I encourage you to plan at least one trip that is purely vacation. Make the first day of summer (June 21) your deadline for finalizing summer travel and vacation plans.

The annual family vacation is typically a time for fun and relaxation... if you plan ahead. For those who don't plan accordingly, it can also be a time of disaster, stress, and heartache. Unfortunately, most people don't associate planning with fun. I've

learned that leaving even the smallest details unattended to can be a recipe for disaster. I'll illustrate my point by sharing some personal experiences.

--> Confirmed Airline Reservations... Ha! Six years ago my family planned a summer vacation to Alaska. Because Alaska only has a couple months of warm weather, we knew that the month of July would be a busy time to travel there. That's why we purchased our airline tickets six months in advance. With paid tickets in hand, I called the airline the day before to confirm our reservations. They confirmed that we had paid reservations for the flight.

The next day we got to the airport 1.5 hours before departure time. That's when we were told that the flight was oversold and we did not have confirmed seats on the plane. I said, "How can this be? We bought these tickets six months ago! We were among the first passengers to purchase tickets for this flight! And we're here early... most other passengers have not even checked in yet!!" The agent behind the ticket counter explained to me that, because we had purchased the tickets so far in advance, seat assignments were not made at the time of purchase. (We since learned that most airlines do not have their computers set up for seat assignments until 60-90 days out.) Those who purchased tickets or called to request seat assignments within 60 days of departure had reserved

seats. We were placed on the waiting list.

Our story had a happy ending. We got the last three seats available... all in First Class! Although we had a favorable outcome, our vacation could have ended in disaster. This is one lesson I will never forget! I've just purchased airline tickets for December to Hawaii. Although the flight is almost sold out, the airline will not make seat assignments until 90 days prior to departure. Guess who has a reminder in her tickler file to call the airline in September! (Learn more about setting up your own tickler file at http://www.orgcoach.net/companystore/tickler_file.html)

--> Guaranteed for Late Arrival to the Hotel... Ha!

The summer following our trip to Alaska, our family vacationed in Minnesota. Our flight was scheduled to land very late in the evening, so I asked our travel agent to set up a guarantee for late arrival when she booked the hotel reservations. Our agent confirmed that she had given the hotel our credit card to hold the room. As planned, we arrived at the Doubletree Hotel at about 11:30 PM. When I went to the registration desk to check in, I was told that there were no rooms available. I was shocked! I presented them with a printout from our travel agent, which confirmed our guarantee for late arrival.

In search for a greater understanding of what a "guarantee for late arrival" meant, I asked to speak with the manager on duty. I asked him, "If we had not checked in tonight, would the hotel have billed our credit card for the room, even though there are no rooms available?" That's when I learned that the Doubletree Hotel's guarantee was only a one-way guarantee. He confirmed that this was their standard policy. Having difficulty comprehending this policy, I reframed the question: "So if we are paying for the room, why is someone else sleeping in it right now?" He informed me that the guarantee did not obligate them to provide accommodations in their hotel; it simply meant that they guaranteed we would have a place to sleep that night. As I stood at the counter, the desk attendant spent the next 20 minutes calling other hotels and motels in the area. Finally he informed me that they would put us up at no charge at the Prime Rate Motel down the road! Hardly the accommodations we had planned on... and "down the road" was 15 miles away!

When we returned home from our trip, I called the Doubletree Hotel headquarters in Phoenix to see if this was their corporate policy, or just the local policy for that particular location. I was shocked when their customer service rep informed me that this was "standard practice in the industry," adding that "the airlines do it all the time." From now on, when I know I will be checking in

late, I ask explicit questions about a hotel's policy regarding guaranteed late arrivals.

--> *How High Do Mosquitos Fly?*

Of course, some things are simply beyond our control, and no amount of planning can guarantee a flawless vacation. I remember one of my first trips to Jakarta, Indonesia, where my husband's brother and his family live. We had made the long flight halfway around the world, and I was exhausted. (A quick geography refresher: Jakarta is near the equator, and it is very hot and humid there.) We were staying in a nice hotel with the modern comforts of air conditioning and purified water... two important elements for me.

When we checked into the hotel, we were informed that they would be doing some electrical work on the elevator shafts, and would therefore be turning the electricity off for the entire hotel from 2:00 AM to 8:00 AM while they did the work. I thought to myself, "Well, by then I will be asleep and I won't even notice it."

Boy, was I wrong! At 2:40 AM I woke up in a sweat. By 3:00 AM I was really hot and sticky. I had a brilliant idea! We were on the 12th floor, and I decided to open the windows to let in some fresh air. There were no screens on the windows, but I figured that we were high enough off the ground that it

would be safe to open them. I made an assumption that mosquitos would not fly that high. Again, I was wrong. Within a few minutes I had 32 mosquito bites covering my body and more were buzzing in my ear. Now I was not only hot and sticky, but I also felt like one huge, itchy, miserable welt. (My husband only had two mosquito bites. For some reason, mosquitos have always liked me more than him.) We ended up leaving our hotel room and walking around the lobby the rest of the night.

--> Ten Tips for Planning Your Vacation

I hope that by sharing my personal experiences, you will avoid learning similar lessons the hard way. And it goes to show that those little details in the planning of a vacation can make a huge difference in the outcome. You can make your next vacation relaxing and enjoyable by following these simple vacation planning tips.

1. Keep your vacation planning information in one place. Create a labeled file folder ("Hawaii Vacation") and use it to keep your airline, hotel, car rental information, as well as maps or AAA guide books, tourist information, contact information for people you know in that city, etc.

To read about some programs related to travel that you can download onto a handheld organizer, check out the applications mentioned on the Handango Website.

<http://www.handango.com/summertravel.jsp>

2. Plan ahead for your wardrobe. Think about all of the activities you might do, and imagine what you'd want to wear for each activity. For example, on the beach you might want a swimsuit, cover-up, slip-on footwear or water shoes, a sun hat, sunglasses... maybe even a face mask, snorkel, and some flippers. Will the kids want shovels and buckets to build a sand castle? Do you need to supply your own beach towel, or will you be staying somewhere that supplies this for you? What about waterproof sunscreen? The more you can visualize yourself on the beach, the better prepared you will be. One helpful tool I've found for wardrobe planning is a Website that offers historical weather averages for thousands of cities around the globe. <http://www.worldclimate.com/>

3. Use a travel checklist. I've created a Packing List to get you started. Once you've tailored this to your needs, keep it in the travel file you've created. This will help you remember to pack both the basic necessities, as well as some of the more obscure things you might not remember but would want to take with you. <http://www.orgcoach.net/packlist.html>

4. Let children pack their own travel bags, and make sure their bag is small enough that they can carry it themselves. Help them select things they can do on the road or in

the air: Walkman and cassettes or CDs, books, handheld video games, portable crafts, card games. Talk about seating arrangements ahead of time to avoid conflict among siblings about who will sit where.

5. Pack a carry-on that is small enough to stay with you at all times. Include necessities that you must have, in the event that you get separated from your other luggage for a day. If you need to take medication on a regular basis, be sure this is with you, and not in your checked luggage. If you are combining a business and vacation trip and need something for a presentation the next day, take it in your carry-on rather than checking it.

6. Plan early to get the best selection and to get early booking discounts.

If you're really adventuresome and are not particular about where you want to go, you can also book reservations last-minute. There is some risk involved in doing this, but you can also get some great deals this way. CheapTickets sells surplus seats, aka "distressed inventory," at some great bargains. If you have any concerns about your safety while traveling to a particular destination, you might check out a Website that offers a report on global hot spots to avoid. <http://www.cheaptickets.com/>
<http://www.airsecurity.com/hotspots/HotSpots.asp>

I've recently found a wonderful Website called SideStep, which does a search of more than 70 travel-related Websites and finds the best AVAILABLE flights, hotels, and rental cars on a given date. Many Websites will find the "best deals" but when you go to the site you discover that they are sold out for the dates you want. This site does not waste your time if a flight is sold out. For more links to some helpful travel-related sites, visit the travel section of my Links to Great Sites page. <http://www.sidestep.com/>
<http://www.orgcoach.net/links.html#TRAVEL>

For who insist on combining business and pleasure during your travels, I offer 10 Tips to Tame the Paper Tiger When You Travel.
<http://www.orgcoach.net/traveltips.html>

7. If you're driving, you may wish to map out your trip ahead of time and make hotel reservations along the way if you are traveling during peak vacation time. Mapquest offers a helpful Website for mapping out your route and estimating travel time under normal driving conditions. <http://www.mapquest.com/>

8. If you're traveling to another country, check out the Currency Converter for International Exchange Rates. If you'd like to master a few useful phrases in a foreign language, visit the Foreign Language Assistance Website. It even contains some sound clips so you can pronounce words

properly. <http://www.x-rates.com/calculator.html>
<http://www.travlang.com/languages/>

9. If your vacation plans include staying home rather than traveling, plan how you will spend your vacation to rejuvenate yourself. Perhaps there are some local attractions that you've been wanting to experience but have not had the time to experience. Are there people you want to connect with? Get clear about what you want to do and who you want to do it with, and then plan to make it happen.

If your vacation includes having a friend or relative flying in to visit you, you can check the status of a flight to see if they will arrive on time. You can even get a real-time map of the plane and its progress, based on radar data. <http://www.flightview.com/>

Visit Earthcam to view hundreds of images from all over the world without leaving your chair. The digital images are updated regularly, and some are live.
<http://www.earthcam.com/>

10. This is the most important tip of all: pack the right attitude. Let go of the "what if" and enjoy the moment. Remind yourself what matters most, and focus on that. If this is a vacation to get away and relax, then focus on activities and thoughts that will be relaxing. If your goal is to reconnect with family and build memories together, that can

be done regardless of circumstances (missing a flight, not getting tickets to an event you wanted to attend, etc.). If your goal is to sight-see and take in some special attractions or shows, then plan ahead and make the reservations necessary to ensure that you can do what you want to do when you get there.

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10 Tips for Hassle-Free Business Travel

If you're a road warrior, these travel tips will help reduce the stress of your journeys.

1. Choose your Travel Modality Wisely Planes, trains or automobiles: what's the choice to be? While air travel is clearly the only way to go for long journeys, shorter trips of a couple of hundred miles might be faster via train, bus or auto.

When making your decision, consider time spent traveling to and from airports, plus time spent lining up for check in, security and departure. Also consider the effects

inclement weather can have on your travel choice. It's no fun hearing the announcement that your plane can't land due to poor visibility and you'll be returning to your departure airport.

2. Consider Alternative Airports If you're flying, consider alternative airports that are outside the city you're going to visit. As a rule, these airports have fewer flights, less overbooking and less delays than their larger counterparts.

3. Obtain an International Drivers License If traveling outside your own country, an international driver's license will be more readily recognized than your locally issued driver's license. The cost is not prohibitive and in most regions, the licenses are easily obtained by showing your local driver's license. Inquire at your local Automobile Association.

4. Get Your Maps Before You Leave Home Travel is less stressful if you know how to get around. Before leaving home, obtain maps of your destination city. One approach is to visit web sites such as City Search (<http://www.citysearch.com/>) and print out maps. Place your printed maps in plastic folders for protection against the elements. Trying to read a road map while standing on a rainy street corner has its obvious disadvantages.

5. Carry Electronic Documents Rather than Hard Copy Rather than carry heavy stacks of brochures or sales letters, take electronic documents on diskettes and have them printed at a local printing service. Similarly, if you are working a booth in a trade show, it's a good idea to carry electronic documents in case you run out of the stack you shipped from the office.

6. Find Hotels that Cater to Business Travelers Hotels that cater to business travelers will have Internet capabilities and offer access to business machines such as faxes and photocopiers.

7. Remember Adaptors and Converters If you're traveling to a foreign country, remember that you might need special voltage adaptors for electricity. You might also need plug adapters to accommodate both electrical plugs and telephone jacks. A good travel store will be able to help you decide what's needed.

8. Use Calling Cards When you're staying at a hotel, the phone bill can be a major expense. The cost of calling your family, checking your voice mail and checking your email is best handled by using a telephone calling card or a corporate credit card.

9. Check your Cellular Service Cellular phone companies regularly offer new rates. Check to be sure you're getting the best deal -- some now include long distance charges in the

monthly fee. If your business travel will take you to small, out-of-the way towns, your digital phone might not work. You will need an analog or dual digital/analog phone for such trips.

10. Protect Yourself Against Theft Before leaving home, make copies of your travel documents (passport, airline tickets, travel insurance, credit cards and itinerary).

Take copies with you and leave a copy with a contact at home. Take special precautions for your electronics. See what your local travel store has to offer in terms of protective luggage.

You can purchase laptop cases that disguise the fact that they're used for laptops, or laptop cases that look old and battered. And of course, you already know how fast and savvy a pickpocket can be. Avoid carrying important documents in your purse or hip pocket.

About the author: **June Campbell** How to Write Business Plans, Business Proposals, JV Contracts, Human Resource Package, More! No-cost ebook "Beginners Guide to Ecommerce". Business Writing by Nightcats Multimedia Productions <http://www.nightcats.com>

Now get out there and start travelling!

