

"I gotta get away!"



Vacation destinations are becoming more adventurous than ever before. Great river vacations are available in England and Ireland.



Planning the perfect vacation requires a lot of preparation to ensure that once your trip begins, you can enjoy your destination without worrying about the details.

Spontaneity is a common desire when it comes to vacation, but if you aren't careful, you could end up spending much more money and missing out on local attractions and cultural nuances.



Destination Ahead

Selecting the right vacation destination is about personal preference. Return to nature by travelling to national parks in Canada or the jungles of Central and South America. Tourists seeking to discover the Old World will enjoy a trip to popular European countries like England, France and Italy. More adventurous travelers may want to book a safari to Tanzania, Africa, or perhaps plan an Australian walkabout.

Try Something New

Southeast Asia, China, Japan and India are among the trendy new choices for North American tourists. Experts attribute the cultural diversity and high value of the dollar for the boom in visits to Asia. A spin on a more common vacation spot can be found in Europe in the form of river cruises. Travelers are able to visit different inland countries in a more intimate fashion than traditional ocean liners.



Plot Out Your Course

Once you decide where you are going, it is time to make all the accommodations. Generally, airlines will accept reservations for up to a year from the present date. The growing popularity of travel websites makes comparing hotels overseas and booking a reservation a snap. Pick up a guidebook for the country you will be going to, which will include information about the area's notable landmarks, the best eateries and local customs. It's also important to start planning out your finances so you have time to save up for your big trip.

Passport, Please

Due to recent legislation¹ Canadian citizens flying to or through the United States must present a valid Canadian passport (or valid NEXUS card when used at a NEXUS kiosk at participating airports). As a result, there may be major delays in the processing centre.

If you are planning any international travel and don't have a passport or your previous one has expired, be aware that processing times for passport applications received by mail takes 6 weeks, 5 weeks if submitted through a receiving agent such as Service Canada or Canada

Post or 2 weeks if submitted in person (these standard processing times may change depending on the volume of applications received and are not guaranteed). Applicants who apply in person at a Passport Canada Office may qualify for services that provide processing times as short as 24 hours, for an additional fee. As of January 31, 2008, Canadians entering the United States by land or sea will be required to present a government-issued photo ID, such as a driver's licence AND a birth certificate or a citizenship card OR a valid passport.

¹ www.pptc.gc.ca

Don't forget to explore the unexpected places along the way. Often, the most memorable moments are spent off the beaten path.



The Top Vacation Spots



Hot Tips for Cool Savings

Travel during the off-season. The popular destinations will be the most crowded and expensive during the peak seasons like summer. Beat the crowd and save some money by travelling in winter or early spring. Don't be locked into thinking that you can find the climate you want only at certain times of the year. As winter comes upon us, why not think about travelling south and enjoy summer all over again. Researching climates worldwide is a great way of seeking that perfect getaway.

Enroll in customer advantage programs. Many people are familiar with frequent flyer programs, but there are also similar programs with most major hotel chains that will save you loads in the future. Your credit card company may also have a beneficial travel program.

Check for money-saving amenities. Unless they are on a cross-country road trip, most tourists will spend an average of three nights at the same lodging. Selecting one with features such as complimentary breakfast or Internet access will ring up the savings.

Do plenty of homework for airline tickets. Sometimes you will need to check out several different travel websites and airlines to find the best ticket prices. Because things change, bundled flight packages can save big bucks or they can cost a lot more, so do your research.

Resources Online

Popular travel sites will help you compare different prices and outline most of your options:

www.travelocity.ca
www.expedia.ca
www.flightcentre.ca
www.travelzoo.com
www.farechase.ca

It's a good idea to do your research and look for savings elsewhere, particularly on sites that don't stand to profit from your decision:

www.caa.ca
www.tripadvisor.com

Most Popular Destinations

London, United Kingdom
Cancún, Mexico
Paris, France
Sydney, Australia
Varadero, Cuba

Most Popular Canadian Destinations

Whistler, British Columbia
Canadian Rockies, Alberta
Ottawa, Ontario
Quebec City, Quebec
Vancouver, British Columbia

Best Value Destinations

Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
Mayan Riviera, Mexico
Varadero, Cuba
Ocho Rios, Jamaica
Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

Best Family Destinations

Orlando, Florida
Maui, Hawaii
Varadero, Cuba
Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
St. Lucia, Caribbean