



TRAVEL TIPS

To Travel For Less: Follow A Few Tips From The Experts

(NAPSA)—Planning an exciting, action-packed and affordable vacation may be easier than you think.

According to the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA), despite the economic downturn, leisure travel is steadily increasing. Travel values are more widespread than ever, giving consumers the opportunity to take much-needed vacations.

Whether visiting relatives or sneaking off on a weekend getaway to indulge in life's little pleasures, planning a vacation can be simple and affordable.

"Weekend travel has significantly increased during the past few years, mostly due to the outstanding deals that are being offered to travelers," said Joanie Flynn, vice president of leisure marketing for Hilton Hotels Corporation and a travel expert with more than 15 years of experience in the hospitality industry. "The current trend in the travel industry is to present incentives and fun packages to consumers to help stretch their dollars."

Flynn offers these helpful hints for planning a budget-conscious, fun vacation.

- First things first. Determining the "when" and "why" of a vacation will make budgeting for vacations simple. It is easier to find deals for accommodations,



Incentives help travelers stretch their vacation dollars.

airfare and activities once the parameters of the vacation have been established.

- Ready, set, research! The more time spent gathering information about a travel destination, the better prepared a traveler will be to estimate probable costs. Read travel magazines and the travel sections in the Sunday newspaper to get ideas on the latest travel trends and hot deals. Also, talking to a travel agent about the specifics of the vacation may uncover unknown travel specials and incentives.

- Surf the Internet. Surveys show that only 40 percent of Americans use the Internet to

plan vacations and trips. Checking airline, hotel and car rental sites can reveal special discounts and incentives that are only available online. Also try search engines and city and state tourism boards for ideas on when to travel and the availability of any special destination activities.

- Look for special packages. Many hotels and resorts offer trip packages that not only feature discounted rates for the current stay but also include bonus coupons and rebates for savings in the future. For instance, the Easy Escapes package, available at more than 530 participating Hilton, Conrad, Doubletree and Hilton Garden Inn hotels, offers a variety of airline, car, food and beverage coupons that will save money on future travel expenses through July '04.

- Flexibility is key. Booking early and having flexibility with travel dates and times allows travelers to capitalize on various airline and hotel specials, which can equal big savings.

With smart planning and some creative thinking, a relaxing and enjoyable vacation doesn't have to break the bank. For more information, or to make reservations at any Easy Escapes hotel, travelers may visit www.hilton.com/families or www.doubletree.com/families or call 1-800-HILTONS or 1-800-222-TREE.