

TIPS ON TRIPS



Planning A Stress-Free Road Trip



(NAPSA)—A good old-fashioned road trip inspires a sense of adventure and offers the opportunity to visit unique and exciting American landmarks. Each year, millions of families take to the highways on a long-distance road trip, and, let's face it, the time spent on the road is not always viewed as a very memorable part of the vacation.

This no longer needs to be the case. Using a few of the newest tricks, tips and features offered by online mapping services, you can increase the tech quotient of your next road trip and keep the printed map folded up in the glove compartment.

Get directions before you go

It is no myth that men are less likely to ask for directions. According to a recent Harris Interactive survey, women are more likely than men to not only ask their significant other for directions, but they are also more likely to ask for directions from the person or place to which they are traveling.

With some simple advance planning, you can avoid spending any portion of your road trip driving around lost by joining the millions of people who now turn to online mapping services for customized driving directions. In particular, Yahoo! Maps serves up 1.8 billion miles of driving directions each month—that's enough to circle the globe almost 72,406 times!

Take the scenic route

The beauty of a road trip is that it isn't always about getting from point A to point B. Driving for an extended distance offers the flexibility of being able to easily visit multiple destinations. Take into consideration the many wonders you may pass along your route and stop to "smell the roses." Printing your driving

directions using a mapping service that allows for multipoint routing means you'll get to visit the World's Largest Ball of Twine yet stay on track to your final destination. Yahoo! Maps was the first to offer the ability to map out multiple destinations, but some other providers have since followed suit.

Schedule plenty of breaks

Everyone wants to get to his or her destination quickly, but nothing makes the family crankier than driving for hours on end cooped up in the close quarters of a car. Be sure to schedule plenty of rest breaks, which can include everything from short walks to meals to overnight stays in a motel. And if you aren't sure what you might find along the way, you can plan ahead when printing driving directions by using the integrated local search that exists within most online mapping services today. You can find restaurants, gas stations, hotels and parks that are directly on your driving route, and with user ratings and reviews also integrated in search results, you can find the most highly recommended local places that you might ordinarily have missed.

Plan for the unexpected

Hitting heavy traffic can be one of the most aggravating aspects of a road trip. Not only are you moving at a snail's pace, but you are in an unfamiliar location and don't know how to circumvent the situation using side streets. The Internet can help. With the assistance of a Web-enabled mobile device or from your home computer before you hit the road, you can get live traffic data so you can see whether you'll be on your way again in five or 50 miles.