

TIPS ON TRIPS

Getting In Gear For A Family Road Trip

(NAPSA)—Even if gas prices are high, experts say domestic travel is generally more affordable than going abroad. And a road trip is one of the best ways to see and learn about places in your own backyard while spending quality times with your loved ones.

In fact, Lonely Planet guidebooks picked the United States as its top travel destination for 2008. According to TripAdvisor, 41 percent of Americans will stay within our borders due to unfavorable exchange rates. Whether it's across the country or a few miles down the road, there are things you can take with you to help make the trip one of your most memorable—and, in some cases, affordable—vacations ever.

- **Finding Your Way:** GPS systems can help keep you on track—and taking the most direct route to your destination will help you save fuel. Target carries an exclusive Garmin unit that provides preloaded maps of the U.S., along with text-by-speech, for under \$350.

- **Keeping Them Occupied:** Cutting down on the “Are we there yet?” factor is a huge part of an enjoyable road trip. After you've exhausted the “license plate game,” look no further than modern technology. A fully charged Nintendo DS or portable DVD player can be enough to soothe adolescents in the backseat. For a few more dollars, you can pick up a splitter that allows a couple of pairs of headphones to connect to either of the devices, keeping the noise level down so you can con-



Getting out on the road can be a great way to vacation—and the right gear might make it even better.

centrate on the road. Memorex even makes a DVD model that has a swiveling screen, ensuring the best viewing for all passengers.

- **Staying Connected:** Satellite radio has become extremely popular for those who don't like scanning radio stations as they fade out from city to city. In addition to the vast assortment of music it offers, satellite radio helps you keep up-to-date with news, traffic and your favorite sports team. There are two companies in the market: XM and Sirius. Both offer the same general types of programming and the receivers are relatively affordable. You can get a base XM unit from Audiovox for less than \$50, plus the monthly subscription fee for the service.

- **Saving Gas:** You can cut down on driving by consolidating your vacation-planning errands. Visit places such as Target—instead of three or four stores—when you stock up for your trip. You can get all the necessary gadgets and items such as snacks and camping equipment, all in one place.