

Traveling During Troubled Times by Jenny Reed

IT IS NOT HARD TO TURN ON THE TELEVISION to hear news of soaring gas prices, the cost of war, airline woes and a slumping economy. It is enough it seems to keep anyone for traveling these days particularly internationally. However, that is not the case. Despite recession worries, travel trend watchers say Americans aren't giving up their vacation plans just simply being more cost conscious. With these economic challenges, comes creative ways to travel. The cruise lines, tour companies and resorts are stepping up to the plate with special deals and packages. Nationwide summer travel booking figures show most of the leading destinations this year are not linked to the euro. In addition, there are still countries and destinations where the U.S. dollar is strong. From the Caribbean and South America to Asia and simply staying in the U.S., there's still hope for an affordable vacation. The top spots include Alaska, Orlando, Cancun, Honolulu, Dominican Republic and Argentina.

The cruise industry has been reaping good business from vacationers attracted by the value of seeing several destinations in one trip and the ability to pay for the package in dollars before leaving. The cruise industry projects 12.8 million people will take a cruise this year, up 200,000 from last year. Do you remember as a child getting up in the wee hours of the morning to be piled into the family car to drive to a vacation destination? There is a surge in these "drive time" vacations again. Georgia and the surrounding states have beaches, mountains, state parks and lakes to explore. From a cruising perspective, the Atlanta area is an easy drive to such ports as Mobile, Jacksonville, Tampa, Charleston, and Port Canaveral. Here are some key things to remember when planning your trip:

TRAVEL OFF-SEASON—Every destination has a season that is considered a "value season". This means lower prices and fewer crowds.

GO WHERE THE DOLLAR IS STRONG—Visit or cruise to such areas as the South America, Barbados, Jamaica, or Switzerland. Passports are required for international air travel.

BUNDLE YOUR TRAVEL—Very often you can save money by booking package deals that include the airfare, hotel, meals, car rental etc.

USE PROMOTIONAL "CITY CARDS" TO SAVE ON ATTRACTIONS—Cities around the world offer City Cards/ Passes to tourists that promise savings through discounts on top tourist attractions and public transportation.

BE CREATIVE WITH THE PLANNED ACTIVITIES—Plan a picnic lunch, hike along a bubbling stream, fly kites on a windy day, or skip rocks across the mountain lake.

TRAVEL WITH EXTENDED FAMILY OR WITH GROUPS OF FRIENDS—Split the car rental bill or car-pool, split the room costs and take a half price vacation.

SEEK THE ADVICE AND SERVICES OF A SEASONED TRAVEL AGENT—Unlike a mega online travel seller, these experts not only provide invaluable and personalized service but can often times get unadvertised deals. It is nice to be able to talk to the same person when you have a question.

So plan ahead, seek advice and travel! Don't let the talk of recession or bad media take the place of truly enjoying time together with your family. Whether it is long weekend at the lake or a cruise to Alaska, relax and enjoy the escape from reality. It is amazing what being away from the cell phone, television, email, and work can do to regenerate the soul!



***JENNY REED** has over 16 years of travel experience. She plans cruises and land vacations worldwide. She can be reached at 678-947-5115, via email at jenny@OurCruisePlanner.com or via her website at www.OurCruisePlanner.com*

CONTACT: jenny@OurCruisePlanner.com

Copyright 2008 Impact Times. The information contained in this article may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or otherwise distributed without the prior written authority of Impact Times.

May 07, 2008