

Champagne Vacations on a *Beer Budget*



"Are we there yet?" chimes in a little voice from the back seat as Daddy grips the steering wheel a bit tighter. All too often, weary vacationers wonder why they bothered. Bored kids, crowds, muggy weather, and a hotel that was a far cry from the brochure photo put a damper on their expectations. The difference between gripping a steering wheel with white knuckles and gripping a paddle in white water may just be a matter of time invested in up-front planning.

Brainstorm. How do you envision your next vacation? A houseboat adventure, a dude ranch, a castle exploration? Or, a romantic getaway? Celebrate a festival, luxuriate at a European spa, jet to Fiji. Dream big. Surprise yourself.

Research. Head off disappointments by doing your homework. What do you want to see and do? Seek personal recommendations and referrals from friends, family and business associates or consult your travel agent. Learn the stories—the history, the background, the color—of the places you'll visit to gain a deeper appreciation and joy in your travels. Involve your children in the process.

Save. Wealthy or not-so-wealthy, everyone loves a bargain. On every airplane and cruise, and in every hotel, you'll find that travelers have paid very different prices for the same seat or berth or bed. Don't be the one spending top dollar; shop for the best deals.

"Champagne tastes on a beer budget? It's all in the mind. People in love with life create their own bubbles, carry effervescence within them, make no effort to match the thoughtless travel expenditures of the pampered rich. The [best vacations] are available to the creative and young at heart."

—Arthur Frommer

Finding Your Champagne Vacation

adventurevacation.com - America's adventure travel experts, outfitters, guides.

ricksteves.com - Number one source for European travel.

fadors.com - Hundreds of guidebooks to destinations around the globe.

msnbc.com/news/BT-ENCYCLOPEDIA_Front.asp - Frommer's great insights.

Visit **SeeAmerica.org**, click on "See America's Byways," click on "Start Your Trip." The United States map connects you with selected scenic routes and the official tourism site of every state.

Getting the Beer Price

onetravel.com - "Every money-saving tip in the book."

bestfares.com - Quickfare Finder™ searches airlines for the lowest fares.

priceline.com - Name your own price—airfare, hotels, rental cars, more.

- ♦ Lowest airfares - the sooner you book the better.
- ♦ Off-season travel - save big and avoid crowds.
- ♦ Comparison shopping - some travel agents guarantee to beat any other price.
- ♦ Credit card frequent flyer programs - a mile for every dollar spent adds up.
- ♦ Membership savings - AAA discounts, credit unions, travel clubs, AARP.

Time Shares. Save \$200 and more on getaways by listening to a time share pitch. If you buy a time share, consider secondhand or foreclosures. Resales cost a fraction of the original price.

