

THE VOICE OF WALNUT VALLEY TRAVEL SERVICE

620-221-3143

Winter, 2007

Without a Travel Agent, You're on Your Own!



WINTER CONTEMPLATION

I'm beginning to feel a bit like Mark Twain when he said; "the rumor of my death has been greatly exaggerated." Walnut Valley Travel is alive and well



Barbara

and we are working very diligently to bring you the travel products that best fit your needs and budgets. Yes, the role of the travel agent has changed and the way we do business has changed, but our value, as your travel partner has not.

You can get airline tickets on the Internet.

The fares will be the same as the ones we quote you, with one exception. Most Internet sites charge a \$5.00 or \$10.00 fee, our service fee begins at \$25.00. Please note it is a service fee. We check all airline fares and schedules that meet your parameters, we will keep you updated on schedule changes, we will counsel you regarding the financial situation of various airlines, we also know which airlines have contract negotiations pending and might be facing work stoppages. We can't know everything, but we stand a much better chance of giving you good advice than a computer screen does. The airline tickets issued by our office can be changed and exchanged. We do business here in Winfield, you can meet with us face to face and we'll be here every business day. There used to be a sign in a parts store in Winfield which said, "We know other stores sell their parts for less, they know what they're worth." It's the same situation with service fees – you get what you pay for.

The products we are selling have changed from predominately airline tickets from point A to point B to more complex itineraries. Cruises, all-inclusive vacations and complicated itineraries are now where we spend the majority of our time. Because we know the suppliers and their products and how we can combine them to best serve our clients, travelers are coming to us for help. Anyone whose trip involves multiple cities and countries will especially benefit from our services. Internet travel sites are not set up to

plot complex trips, but we are. Remember that our service continues through the completion of your trip. We have had numerous times when a client has called us from an airport. When flights are delayed or cancelled, we can many times have a passenger re-booked by the time they reach the head of the line they are standing in. Airline agents are very pleased to have most of their work done for them so that they can merely reissue the ticket and get the passenger on their way. Just as the new commercial for H & R Block points out that the software box can't answer questions, we also provide that human element working for you!

By using our services, you save time to use for other projects. Would you trust yourself to handle questions of law or medicine? Using a professional travel agent to help make the best purchases in travel makes just as much sense as it does to trust professionals in the fields of law or medicine

SPRING IS COMING

Spring break travel has become more and more popular with families. If you are even considering the possibility of travel during Spring Break, you need to plan NOW. In fact it really is not too early to plan your summer travel as well.



WE ALL WANT TO DO IT TOGETHER

Just as destination weddings have become more and more popular, destination celebrations are meeting a need and providing a solution. Family reunions on cruise ships or at DisneyWorld provide entertainment for every age and still let the entire family meet together for meals or other activities. No one has to clean their house or plan meals for a group. Even though we just put the Christmas decorations away, it's not too early to begin to plan



a Destination Christmas for 2007. What a great idea!! Come in and talk with us, we'll work with you to find the perfect destination to fit not only your budget but your family and friends as well.

YES, VIRGINIA, YOU CAN LOCK YOUR LUGGAGE

Remember that Walnut Valley Travel Service is your headquarters for the TSA approved luggage locks. These combination locks (you set your own) allow you to lock your checked bags without the worry of unauthorized personnel opening them. TSA has a master key which they can use to check your bags and then relock them. If you lock your luggage with unauthorized locks, the locks will be broken by TSA in order to inspect your bags. The locks cost \$10.00 and the combinations are easy to set.

THE LATEST ON PASSPORT REQUIREMENTS

Congress has delayed the deadline for the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative until January, 2008. However, this only applies to passengers traveling by land or ship. If passengers are traveling to or from the United States by air, a passport is required as of January 8, 2007. This means that passengers who are cruising to Alaska and flying to Vancouver to board the ship will need to have passports. Passengers on an Alaska cruise



whose cruise terminates in Vancouver will also need passports to re-enter the United States by air.

A recent situation faced by some of our cruise passengers brings up another situation where passports will be required. We had some clients whose flight was delayed and would not arrive in Florida in time to board their cruise ship. The airline was able to transport them to their first port of call in the Caribbean where they were able to board the ship. This would no longer be possible if the clients do not have passports because they are leaving the United States by air. Another possible situation that might come up would be if you become ill while on a cruise. If your illness should be serious enough that you would need to be transported home by air, you would not be able to enter the United States without a pass-

port. A very real situation of a “Man Without A Country”.

Please take our advice and obtain your passport as soon as possible. It is valid for 10 years making the cost less than \$10.00 a year.

HOW TO COPE WITH LUGGAGE LIMITS

With the new regulations on liquids and gels in carry-on luggage, many people are worrying about having their essentials with them when they arrive at their destination. You can ease the hassle of luggage or weather delays



with these tips. Changes in rules for carry-on luggage has meant more bags are being checked, but airlines haven't had time to hire enough workers to meet the demand. You may expect the percentage of lost and delayed luggage will rise as a result.

- 1). If you're traveling with another person, or if you're checking two bags yourself, cross-pack your luggage. Each checked bags should contain at least one change of clothes for each person, enough for the 24 hours it usually takes for a bag to be returned.
- 2). While more people are opting to check bags, weight limits haven't increased. Most carriers allow 2 pieces weighing up to 50 pounds each. If you go over that limit, the charge usually is \$25 for luggage weighing 51 to 70 pounds and \$50 to \$85 for an additional checked bag. These prices are each way and vary by airline.
- 3). If you don't want to check luggage, check with your hotel. Some are offering more toiletries. You also can substitute dry versions of your normal liq-

uid or get toiletries.

4). To be prepared in the event of a flight cancellation, check before you head to the airport which airlines offer flights on the route you're traveling. If your flight is canceled or has a significant delay, you can ask to be put on another carrier's flight. If you booked your flight with us, call us while you are in line and we can usually have you rebooked by the time you reach the front of the line. Gate agents are very accommodating to passengers who have already spent the time to find out their options.

BEING SAFE WHILE TRAVELING

Travel should be fun. Anyone who's been nicked by a pickpocket or caught in an anti-American protest knows that unforeseen circumstances can ruin a great time whether you're on the other side of the earth or close to home. Following are a few suggestions for avoiding danger.

- 1). Dress to blend in. Travel experts say locals can spot us a mile away. Americans wear shorts, sneakers, U.S. flag logos and expensive jewelry. Their advice: wear clothing that blends in and leave your bling at home.
- 2). Empty your pockets. Never carry large sums of cash. Take just enough for taxis or small purchases while you're out for the day. Keep money and credit cards in a money belt, not in a purse or your pocket.
- 3). Do some reading. Research the country you'll be visiting. Check news sources for information about political developments or civil unrest. Learn about local laws and customs, and treat everyone with respect.
- 4). Watch your back. Be aware of your surroundings. Don't wander down an empty or poorly lighted street. Hold tightly onto your belongings in crowded areas such as train and sub-

way stations, where pickpockets thrive. 5). Be wary of taxis. Never get into an unmarked or unlicensed taxi. If possible, use only taxis waiting in front of hotels.

OTHER SERVICES

Walnut Valley Travel Services offers some other products of which you may not be aware.

Foreign currency—buy a supply of the currency for your destination prior to departure. You'll have the necessary money to pay for taxis from the airport or to tip a bellman. Most currencies can be obtained within 24 hours; some may take a 48 to 72 hour turn around time. The cost is no more than the local banks.

Destination reports—we can prepare a complete report on most travel destinations. These reports contain information on sightseeing, restaurants, accommodations, shopping, transportation, health concerns as well as sample travel itineraries and sports and theater offerings. They can be tailored to your specific requests or interests. The cost is \$9.95 per report. They are very useful for class assignments as well as comparing differing vacation possibilities.

TSA approved locks—as discussed elsewhere in this newsletter, these locks can save you worry and concern about your unlocked luggage as it moves through the various airports on your trip.



WALNUT VALLEY TRAVEL SERVICE
P. O. BOX 537
WINFIELD, KS 67156

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