

Travel Safe this Summer

April 2010

With summer just around the corner, you may be dreaming of weekend getaways and tropical vacations. But before you jump on the next "great deal" that delivers to your e-mail in-box, take a moment to review the below travel tips. They've been compiled to help you ensure your summer vacation is full of fun deals and not expensive scams.

1. **Question offers for "free" trips.** There are many legitimate travel contests out there. However, there are also many contests and advertisements for "free" trips that are just schemes to get you to buy a product or service. Remember, it's never "free" if a purchase is required!
2. **Know exactly what's included.** Cheap vacation packages often have hidden costs, so review all of the details before making a commitment. Remember to confirm who is responsible for transportation and if any additional hotel stays will be needed.
3. **The deal may not be as good as you think.** You may be required to book the trip through a specific travel agency that charges expensive fees, making the trip cost more than if you booked through your own travel agent or made the arrangements yourself. Or, you may be required to bring another traveler along at full price.
4. **Be aware of restrictions.** The best travel deals often are only available on off-peak times. Make sure that your preferred dates are available and check if there are specific rooms you need to book for the special price.
5. **Confirm arrangements.** If you're booking through an agent or travel company that you haven't worked with in the past, confirm your transportation, hotel and excursion confirmations directly with the specific companies to make sure the arrangements have been made.
6. **Do your own research.** Get information from local travel agents and other sources like books, magazines and trusted Web sites. Investing just a little time may help you uncover deals that are far cheaper than the "free" or "bargain" travel offers you've received.
7. **Pay with a credit card.** The protection built into credit cards like Financial Center's Visas help protect you if the travel company doesn't uphold its end of the bargain. If you use your Financial Center Visa, you'll also have access to other travel protection like rental car insurance.

Sincerely,

BURT
Financial Center Credit Union