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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**TRAVELING SMART THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**  
*Juggling Economical Hardships with Holiday Traditions*

**SAN DIEGO, October 22, 2008** – Every year families try to uphold their holiday traditions for the sake of creating lasting memories. This year families will need to try even harder to keep these customs, especially families routinely traveling during the holidays. According to MSNBC.com, U.S. airlines will be reducing their domestic capacities by up to 16 percent resulting in higher ticket prices, limited seating and additional fees for everyone. For Thanksgiving weekend alone, there will be 11 percent less flights available according to USA Today.

A recent poll conducted by Travelocity.com revealed that 19 percent of those surveyed do not plan on traveling this holiday season due to the faltering economy, but 78 percent replied that they intend on traveling at least once during the holidays. Since airlines have cut 3000 flights per day this holiday season, travelers will be hit with less seating and higher fees. So, the question lingering in the minds of many is, “How do I travel this holiday season without breaking the bank?”

**Consider these tips from Debt-Free America while you are planning your holiday vacation because a well-organized trip during economic hardships should not leave you miserable in the end.**

**Research and plan your vacation early.**

According to Rick Seaney, CEO of FareCompare.com, many travelers expect ticket prices to gradually decline as the days slowly wind down to Thanksgiving or Christmas, but the truth of the matter is that with the economy going through hard times, ticket prices will remain high even as the plane fills up.

Researching early (preferably Monday afternoons to Wednesday mornings) will increase your chances of finding a cheaper flight, reasonably priced restaurants and pleasant attractions.

**Travel during off-season.**

Considering the downslide in the American dollar, you should weigh the advantages of traveling to a place during its off-season. Prices for souvenirs and at restaurants are usually lower. Likewise, you should look into locations where the currency will not put you in debt after your holiday vacation.

**Pack sparingly.**

Recently, many airlines have started charging for luggage being checked-in. You should attempt to pack what you need into a carry-on bag in order to avoid the hassle of checking your bag and then having to pay an extra fee.

Also, instead of bringing gifts to the airport, Travelsense.org, an online travel guide, suggests that you should look into shipping the gifts ahead of time and then wrap them when you get to your destination. This will save you the extra cost of checking your luggage and the hassle of traveling with extra bags.

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### **Make use of public transportation.**

Airline tickets are expensive and if you cannot afford to fly, you should look into taking a bus or train to your destination. Depending on where you are going, transportation companies such as, Greyhound and Amtrak could offer tickets lower to that of a plane ticket.

### **Consider a road trip.**

Many travelers prefer taking their automobiles with them on vacation because they are able to pack more and pace themselves on their own schedule. But if you choose this option, be sure to stay fuel conscious. According to an article published on Forbes.com, the American Automobile Association of New York expressed that drivers should maintain speeds between 50 to 60 mph, which results in the best mileage.

Furthermore, drivers planning on taking a long trip should get their vehicles inspected to make sure that their tires are inflated properly and their vehicles are in proper working condition.

### **Travel on a full stomach.**

Whether you are flying, taking a train, bus or driving your vehicle this holiday season, you should pack your meals to go. Aside from cutting flights, airlines are beginning to cut free meals from their flight pattern. On MSN Money.com, the average cost of meals on an airplane was \$3.50 per passenger last year. To avoid having to pay added expenses, consider bringing some healthy snacks to keep your stomach from growling.

Now, if you decide to travel by train or bus or drive your own vehicle, you should also pack along some snacks to dodge all the high-priced restaurants that will tempt you along the way.

Among the many things that you could do this holiday season, spending money on transportation will be easier and less expensive, if you follow these helpful tips. Happy and safe travels!

*Debt-Free America is a 501(c)3 non-profit, community service organization offering confidential and professional credit counseling, debt management programs, and financial education to consumers nationwide. Debt-Free America is dedicated to providing FREE services to help financially distressed families and individuals effectively manage their personal finances. The Board members and operations staff have a long-term commitment to helping anyone in debt crisis, and even those not in a debt crisis. Debt-Free America has been in the business since 1997 and is now serving over 16,000 clients nationwide. Visit them on the web at [www.debtfreeamerica.com](http://www.debtfreeamerica.com).*

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