

How to Vacation Without Overspending

With proper planning, you can have a pleasant vacation without the worry of putting yourself in debt. Traveling can be very expensive, especially with the current high price of gas and airfare. It is very easy to spend more than you intended to. Plan to set a vacation budget and stick to it so that you don't spend more than you can afford. Consider the following suggestions in order to have an enjoyable vacation that is affordable as well.

Ask for a discount. The tourism business is very competitive. Hotels are often willing to give you discount accommodations, as well as other travel-related expenses, but only if you ask. Request the best deal possible on hotels, transportation, and other expenditures, such as tours and attractions. You may not receive a discount every time, but often you can save just by asking for a discount.

Avoid tourist traps. If you think that there is a chance you may be waiting in long lines at your selected attractions, consider some unconventional activities. Many times the expensive attractions may not be the best vacation experiences. Use the Internet for research and ask friends and relatives if they know of less expensive places to visit at your destination. By checking into some other attractions, you may find yourself saving while having a more unique experience.

Buy what you will need before you go. Items such as film, sunscreen, and many other items are much higher at tourist spots than they are at home. Decide what you need and purchase these items before leaving for your trip.

Look for coupons. Search the Internet for discounts on attractions and other entertainment expenses. When you arrive at your destination, be sure to stop at the visitor's center. Here you may find coupons for discounts at local restaurants, as well as attractions. Use the coupons to determine the best deals. If you want to go to an exclusive restaurant, consider having lunch there. Lunch prices at expensive restaurants are often less than dinner prices.

Bring your own food. Accommodations are going to be your biggest expense, followed by food. You can save money by bringing snacks and non-perishable food items with you from home. Look for places that are equipped with microwaves and refrigerators. If your accommodations are equipped with a grill or stove, plan to cook a few simple meals while vacationing. If you don't bring food with you from home, locate a supermarket nearby and purchase food items there.

By putting some of these suggestions into practice, you may find that you can have a wonderful vacation experience without overspending.

For more information on this or related topics, contact Ruth Brock, Regional Extension Agent for Consumer Science and Personal Financial Management. She serves Blount, Cullman, Jefferson, St. Clair, Shelby, and Walker Counties. You can reach her at the Blount County office at (205) 274-2129 or email at brockru@auburn.edu.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and other related acts, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) offers educational programs, materials, and equal opportunity employment to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability.