

TIPS ON TRIPS

Rent Smart On Your Next Road Trip

(NAPSA)—Driving from here to there, or even driving from the airport to there, can be one of the most challenging aspects of any vacation.

Avoiding unnecessary stress and staying safe are two keys to ensuring great vacation memories.

So, when looking at the “transportation” aspect of your next trip, consider these tips:

- Sometimes it makes sense to rent a car, even when there isn’t an airplane involved. Why put hundreds of miles of wear and tear on your own car when you can rent a brand new car that might be more spacious than the one in your driveway?

- Whether renting for the entire trip or just at your destination, make sure you get a car that meets your needs. Most people associate car rentals with bland sedans, but minivans and SUVs make up about 16 percent of the vehicles offered by a company like Avis.

- Regardless of the time of year, book early. This is especially true during the summer and holiday seasons. Booking early may save you money, and also makes it more likely that you will get the vehicle type that best fits your needs.

- Check for special rates on the Web. Visit a car rental site like Avis.com or go to portals like Expedia.com or Trip.com. There are usually special deals, like “Free Saturdays” or other deep discounts that change frequently.

- When you get a quote over the phone or on the Web, make sure it reflects all fees and taxes. Some rental car companies may “unbundle” many fees, meaning that the daily rate initially quoted may grow significantly, based on airport fees, taxes, etc. Ask for “full cost pricing” up front, which the Avis reps at 1-800-551-1212 always provide.



It may pay to rent a car for your next road trip.

- Rental car companies expect cars to be returned with a full tank, so they charge a fuel service fee for the convenience of refilling your tank if you return your vehicle less than full. To avoid those charges, plan to fill up before you return the car to the rental lot. Or, if you expect to use at least half of a tank during your vacation and don’t want the bother of visiting a gas station, you may save time and money by purchasing a full tank of gas at the time of rental, when it is offered at market rates.

- Finally, remember to plan so that you can travel safely. If you are traveling with infants or young children, bring the appropriate child safety seats. If you cannot bring your own, rental car companies generally offer both child safety and booster seats upon request. Once at your destination, gather all the info you can at the rental counter. The Avis Cares program, for example, provides info on local driving regulations and even suggests local radio stations for news, traffic and weather reports.

Most importantly, remember that even when renting, defensive driving and common sense are the keys to a successful road trip. Of course, saving a few dollars doesn’t hurt either.