

Travel Tips

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What was the WEAC-Fox Valley Travel Committee has met for the past nine years. Committee membership is open to all active and retired members. During the year, we will be meeting at Appleton's Mary's North (Richmond St. off of 41) the second Wednesday of the month at 9:30 a.m. As the years have gone by, this group has also discussed topics of interest such as WEA-Trust / Benefits, Wisconsin Retirement System (fixed and variable), Medicare, Medicare supplements, investment tips, and WEAC.

In a recent *Money* magazine, there was an article on why flying to Europe has never been cheaper. Four major reasons were given for this.

1. Fuel cost has tumbled.
2. There is way more competition.
3. Airfare is breaking apart.
4. A strong U.S. dollar has driven away Europeans.

Based on this, the next step is how to get the best possible deals from the airlines. Flexibility is the first consideration. Summer time is still peak season yet flights generally cost less if you avoid the season's true peak and opt instead for departures in early June or late August. Switching your departure from the weekend to the middle of the week can save you hundreds.

Another way to save money is to look for budget hubs. Because of competition, you can save hundreds of dollars by tweaking your plans to fly to airports served by the low-cost carriers.

Connecting flights have always tended to be cheaper than nonstop to Europe. Once again, you can save over \$500 by doing this.

Timing your ticket search and purchase can result in additional savings. CheapAir.com crunched months of research data to conclude that the optimal time for booking flights to Europe for the least amount possible is roughly four months before departure.

Finally, you should consider narrowing your focus. Don't drive yourself crazy trying to see and do everything on your summer's trip. The professionals say the European flight market should remain competitive for the foreseeable future, and no one is expecting the dollar to tank against the euro anytime soon. Now is the time to take advantage of transatlantic flights.