



7 Tips to Simplify Your Next Group Trip

Let's face it – planning a group trip for family, friends, or a work group can be challenging, time consuming and involve quite a few logistics. Furthermore, group trips can quickly balloon into something you weren't expecting with a lot of competing thoughts, ideas, wants and wishes. As a travel advisor, I help people plan group trips of all varieties. Here are just a few of my suggestions to simplify your group trip planning process.

Group Travel Tip 1: Use a Travel Advisor

One of the wisest decisions to go ahead and make before you begin the planning process is to connect with a travel advisor well versed in group travel. I love helping groups plan incredible trips from start to finish. Whether it's business travel, a company retreat, family reunion, or sports team trip, I'm eager to help you make your trip exactly what you're looking for.

Using the do it yourself approach when planning a group trip often involves lots of research, time, and effort on the individual designated as the group coordinator. In a workplace, this may be an extra duty as assigned. However, the time consumed can quickly balloon and require more time than anticipated. Utilizing the assistance of an advisor gives your team their time back.

Similarly, in a family reunion or sports team situation, the added responsibility of coordinating a large trip can be stressful and time consuming. Furthermore, tensions can run high if priorities differ. Using a neutral travel advisor allows everyone's opinions to be considered and recommendations can be made on what best suits the group instead of one specific family member or family.

Hiring me to advise and plan also means you'll have a central point of contact dedicated to making sure your trip goes well. This means all questions, concerns, payments and special requests can be directed to someone who has systems in place to handle these requests. Having a central point of contact means requests can be handled in a timely and satisfactory manner, leaving participants to relax and enjoy the adventure.



Group Travel Tip 2: Start Planning Early

Planning early is tremendously beneficial when coordinating a large group of people. When you begin the planning process early, availability and options will likely be better. This is especially true when considering a cruise, or place like *Walt Disney World® Resort* where there are multiple options for staterooms or resorts with a vast range of prices.

Often, the best deals sell out first. On a cruise, this equates to specific categories of staterooms. In other locations, this may mean certain resorts and amenities are not available to enjoy. Additionally, depending on the lead time, cruise options like excursions and specialty dining, may not be available if you begin planning too late in the process.

Early planning affords everyone more time to budget for the trip. Additional time to save and pay for a group trip can equate to greater participation. Furthermore, it also diminishes stress as a smaller monthly contribution doesn't hit someone's budget quite as much as a larger one.

This is also true for corporate and company travel. Early planning equates to funds requested and allocated during budget cycles. This gives business leaders and decision makers clarity when making decisions which often leads to better outcomes.

Group Travel Tip 3: Communicate Clearly and Frequently

Frequent and clear communication is one major key to success when it comes to planning a group trip. This will make a tremendous difference in the overall feel of the trip as travelers can travel confidently with a full and clear understanding of what to anticipate and expect. Clear and frequent communication also helps us craft a trip that meets your objectives and offers exactly what you're looking for.

On the flip side, lack of clear and frequent communication often leads to confusion and chaos. Unfortunately, these are often the trips we've all heard horror stories about where everyone leaves exhausted and unhappy. Often, these trips are riddled with confusion, disappointment, and frustration leaving participants disillusioned and ready to head home. This is disheartening no matter the type of trip, as traveling is supposed to be a positive experience.



Group Travel Tip 4: Start with an Open Mind

When you begin planning your group trip with us, we always encourage you to start the process with an open mind. It's best to start with broadly defined priorities such as dates, budget and general location. As group experts, we enjoy crafting the perfect adventure that checks all the boxes. This means we may offer suggestions you hadn't previously considered. For example, if you're looking for an all-inclusive option, cruising may be an option as well.

As the group's primary point of contact, you obviously have the final say and make the decisions for your group. We just encourage you to consider other options and suggestions. We also invite you to ask questions and share concerns as this allows us to ease your fears, problem solve, and create solutions that will enhance your vacation experience overall

Group Travel Tip 5: Gather Information and Clarify Details

Planning a group trip means the converging of minds must occur on a variety of priorities and details. A helpful place to begin may be with a survey that gauges overall interest and generates buy in from potential participants. Depending on the occasion or group, there may be a few decision makers, or there could be many. Use a survey to ask questions about budget, priorities, interest, dates, and anything else that's important to your group overall. This is something we can build on our client's behalf depending on where they are in the planning process.

When a group comes to us, we begin the process by asking a lot of questions. We do this because what you want for your adventure is of utmost importance to us. While some of these questions seem obvious, we also ask questions that give us a better understanding of group dynamics and desires in addition to the nitty gritty logistics.

Beginning with clarity is crucial. Without clarity, it can be tempting to look at a significant swath of options and choose what looks like the "best deal" at first glance. However, this can be highly detrimental depending on what's important to your group. For example, if accessibility is a priority, but you select an older cruise ship where elevators break often, this can make the entire voyage more frustrating for wheelchair or ECV users.



Additionally, having clarity on specific details and desires can help us provide more detailed suggestions with support and logic behind our suggestions. As travel professionals, we hold a lot of knowledge that might not be listed on a website. This knowledge can be truly invaluable when it comes to making decisions based on details and priorities.

Creating clarity around the details of your group trip does not automatically mean that the exact trip is nailed down. Clarity is the beginning part of the process is needed to come to a final decision. Once you've created clarity and discussed several options or quotes with your travel advisor, it's a great idea to narrow your choices down even further prior to presenting options to the majority.

Group Travel Tip 6: Narrow the Options

Narrowing your options before presenting options to the majority greatly reduces the potential for conflict and confusion. Presenting fewer options often leads to greater clarity in selecting the preferred option as there may be a more substantial difference in the votes. We typically suggest offering participants two or three options max.

Group Travel Tip 7: Generate Buy In

There are many factors that contribute to a successful group trip or vacation. One major factor to consider is whether the group has bought into the idea. While there's often less wiggle room for this factor when it comes to corporate travel, it's highly beneficial to consider this when possible. A group that has bought into the trip translates to increased excitement and higher energy.

For companies and corporations, this increased excitement and energy may translate into big ideas, exciting collaboration opportunities, and a renewed sense of vision and purpose for the organization. For sports teams, friend trips, and family reunions generating buy in often translates to making a commitment, engaging more quickly and being able to move more quickly from the booking stage into the planning stage. Furthermore, engaged participants are more likely to enjoy themselves and add fun to the group dynamic.



Planning a group trip can be a large undertaking if you choose to do it on your own. However, if you hire me as your trusty travel advisor and follow these tips, we're certain your trip will be filled with joy, excitement, and fun. Got questions on the ins and outs of planning your next group adventure? Schedule a quick chat with me through my Calendly link—it's the easiest way to get personalized guidance and make your group trip stress-free!

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