

It's Time to Travel !

"Ten years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover." (Mark Twain)

Traveling is a life experience that everyone should have as it will provide you with lifetime memories, stimulate your senses, captivate your curiosity, test your patience, challenge your taste buds and provide you with an education not available any other way. Travel, whether inside the United States or in another country allows "living" opportunities to learn about new places, to discover different cultures and communicate with people whose habits and histories offer fresh perspectives. Leafing through a coffee table book about fine art or history simply doesn't compare to standing in front of the statue of David in Florence, Italy or looking into our magnificent Grand Canyon. A Chinese proverb said it best...*"Walking one thousand miles of world is better than reading ten thousand scrolls of books."*

If you are one of those persons that always first lists three or four reasons why not to do something, there is probably almost nothing anyone could say to you that would convince you to consider traveling. But, if you are one who has wondered what it would be like to experience a different culture, plan now to travel. We seniors should not wait. Never. Age has its privileges and a big one is having the time. Not all of us will have the same personal reasons for traveling but the most frequently expressed ones have common themes:

- Adventure
- Desire to learn
- Curiosity
- Experiencing new people, culture, places
- Fun!

We are fortunate to live in a world today where traveling is open to more of us to a far greater extent than ever before. It is now possible to travel virtually from anywhere on the planet to anywhere else within, at most, a twenty-four hour period. This means that we have opportunities which even our parents or grandparents could literally only have dreamed of and it is important that we avail ourselves of these opportunities whenever we can, for a number of very good reasons – the most important being adding valuable experiences and memories to our personal book of life. Traveling can be a fantastic way to refresh our bodies and our spirits, to experience the wonders of a wider world, and it often will enhance your appreciation of your own home, city and country. Yes, travel can provide your own "attitude adjustment". The more you travel the less you fear and travel is often fatal to prejudice and narrow-mindedness as traveling teaches you tolerance. You will become more comfortable with differences and new experiences, and you may even find yourself questioning your own preconceived ideas and impressions.

One of the trends in senior travel is group travel. This option often saves money, the details including transportation, lodging and sight admissions are prearranged for you, you will have the same experienced guide throughout the trip, there is safety in numbers and you will have the fellowship of others. If you travel with one of the Delta College sponsored international trips, you will attend pre-trip sessions which prepare you for the trip as you will be introduced to the geography, history, language, culture, religion, foods, and cities you will be visiting. You will definitely feel prepared for the trip. These escorted trips are led by knowledgeable guides and include all transportation and lodging, several meals and a prepared itinerary with admissions prepaid to sights. It takes away a lot of the stress of trip planning, you don't have to worry whether or not you are using a reputable, financially secure company, and it is perfect for inexperienced travelers or those traveling to an unfamiliar country. Delta College will be sponsoring a trip to Spain in May 2010 and most of the travelers will be 50+ in age. If you have ever wanted to visit the cities of Madrid, Seville, Gibraltar, Costa del Sol, Granada, Valencia and Barcelona, indulge in succulent Castillian cuisine, feel the rhythm of flamenco dancing, view personally the architecture of Gaudi, visit the impressive Gothic cathedrals, visit a Moorish town, tour a castle that boasts more than 2,500 extravagant rooms, shop in local markets or purchase Lladró porcelain, or just sip a *cerveza* at a sunny café, this trip is likely one you should consider. Included will also be a one-day excursion to Morocco!

Stop making excuses for why this is not the time to travel and start thinking of all the personal benefits. Before you go familiarize yourself with local customs, consult your library, browse the internet, contact tourist bureaus of the specific places you plan to visit, purchase travel guides, and certainly talk with others who have traveled to the same locations. If you will be traveling internationally (yes, Canada and Mexico are considered international travel), make sure your passport will be valid for six months from the end date of your trip and also check to determine if you will need a visa for the country you plan to visit. For a few countries, some immunizations may be necessary and if you have specific health concerns you are advised to consult with your physician prior to making travel decisions.

Pack your bags and go....Bon Voyage!

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