

# Bon Voyage!

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. Travel is a great opportunity to add memories to your personal book of life.

Today travel by those of us 50+ in age is relatively common as many of us are living the adage that “age matters only if you are cheese”. If however you are one who has not had travel opportunities, I suggest you begin by first exploring Michigan and then touring some of the many wonderful sights around the USA. Choose places that first meet your personal interests (nature, history, festivals, religion, entertainment, etc.) and then expand to places and sights you would not initially consider.

The internet is full of travel sights including descriptions and pictures and travel agencies will have lots of suggestions. Talk with your friends and do some research before you make decisions. In Michigan the most frequently visited sites include: Traverse City and Sleeping Bear Dunes, Mackinac Island, Henry Ford Museum/Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Frankenmuth, Tahquamenon Falls, Detroit Zoo and the Michigan State Capital in Lansing. In the USA, New York City is the most visited city followed by Washington D.C. , Las Vegas, Chicago, Boston, and San Francisco. Our Grand Canyon, the Great Smokey Mountain National Park, and Disney World are very popular destinations.

I was bitten by the international travel bug several years ago. Traveling educates us and different cultures, sights and people are most meaningful when you experience them personally. Recognizing this Delta College has sponsored international/intercultural travel opportunities for about 30 years. Together with an insured, certified travel agency, I have coordinated a dozen group international trips, mostly to European countries.

One of the trends in senior travel is definitely group travel. Unless you are determined to spend your time strictly alone or the adventure is primarily a romantic get-away, consider traveling with a group. This option saves money, the details including transportation, lodging and sight admissions are prearranged for you, there is safety in numbers, you will have the same experienced/bilingual guide throughout the trip, and the fellowship of others is priceless. If you travel on one of the Delta College sponsored international adventures, 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. It takes away a lot of the stress of trip planning and it is perfect for those traveling to an unfamiliar country.

And although the advantages of group travel are many, there may be some disadvantages that you should consider. When you travel with a group there may be one or two people who complain too much, or are not punctual, talk too much or too loud or just have a habit or behavior that grates you. The pace on a particular day may be too hectic or if you had been traveling independently you could choose to spend more time at a particular location. Food could be a problem if you have lots of food allergies, are on a restrictive diet or if you don't like a variety of foods. On the other hand, these disadvantages are usually very minor and you don't worry about the driving or car troubles, lodging, making advance registrations for sights, finding a parking place or reading signs in a foreign language.

Before you go familiarize yourself with local customs, consult your library, 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. Make sure your passport is current and determine whether or not you will also need a visa or an international driver's license if you plan to rent a car in a foreign country. For a few countries, additional immunizations may also be necessary and if you have specific health issues you are advised to consult with your physician prior to making travel decisions.

One of the Seven Wonders of the World is Machu Picchu in Peru. Next May Delta College will likely be sponsoring a group two week trip to Peru and most of the travelers will be 50+ in age. If you have ever wanted to visit the ancient Inca culture, journey down the Amazon River, experience several guided tours (Lima, Cuzco, Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley of the Incas) feel the rhythm of Peruvian music, shop in local markets, and view the Andes Mountains, this trip is one you should consider. If interested in learning trip details call (989) 686-9325. You can explore with us.

Every month the Delta College *50+...Just Like Gold Program* hosts a "Bits and Bites" session from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm (the format is a bit of information along with a bite to eat). Our Friday, October 21<sup>st</sup> session will be about TRAVEL. Make your reservation now to join us for this fun and informative meeting by calling the Delta College LifeLong Learning Office (989) 686-9444.

**Pack your bags and let's go...Bon Voyage!**

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