



Unhappy about sign-on-quick pitches for cruises

Q: We're long-time retirees and love to travel. We plan for a trip weeks or months ahead, and need the time to consider all the prices, destinations and other options. However, we're getting tired of those ads that offer travel deals if you grab them within 24 or 48 hours.

Many seniors, both retired and still working, don't want to be conned into booking a so-called bargain trip somewhere right now just because it offers all kinds of alleged discounts. Has the travel industry become one big used car lot, with deals and prices blaring out just to entice you to buy? A: If you watch TV regularly, especially those endless infomercials, you'll know advertising is becoming more and more pushy every day. Cruise ships, airlines, hotels and resorts must compete in the current marketplace, and they often use the same kind of intense pitches to get travelers to sign on.

If you can still stand watching TV commercials, you shouldn't let the gotta-buy-now travel ads rush you into a quick deal. When you've made specific plans, do your homework with online or hometown travel agencies to get the best available prices. If there's a hotel, airline or cruise ship involved, you should also call the company directly, and then compare all prices.

Anyhow, if by some chance you're already planning a specific trip that happens to be advertised on one of those hurry-up, book-within-24-hour deals, check it out. Maybe, just maybe, you'll get a better price, upgraded room or cabin, free drinks and chocolates on your pillows.