



1. The best deals are often last-minute offers. If not on a daily job or other schedule constraints, seek out these opportunities. Some may happen in days, others in hours. Keep your passport up to date, cash and/or travelers' checks handy and basic bag packed.

2. Sign up with last-minute travel websites to get the latest deals. Also, with a trustworthy local travel agency, get your name and contact info on its phone and email list. Maybe best of all, put your name and contact info on airline, cruise line and hotel chain direct contact lists for bargains that break daily. 3. Check with education sources, church, social club and other organizations to find upcoming group travel packages. On cruises, excursions or theme trips, groups often get savings that can be passed down to each participant. If you set yourself up as a group leader to plan and conduct the trip, and sign up others, your journey may be absolutely free.

4. Research all-inclusive package deals offered by cruise lines and resorts. You'll get a comfy cabin, all meals, swim, spa, entertainment, dancing, snacks, midnight buffet and many other goodies for one price.

5. If you're a retiree or otherwise are free to travel when you choose, check out off-season bargains. For instance, in winter the ski areas of Colorado are chock full of young people riding skis and snowboards through the snowy peaks. At night, they're living it up in hotels, restaurants and town pubs. They pay top dollar for all that fun.

Enjoy cool summer mountain air and hiking the beautiful Colorado trails for a gloriously inexpensive summer vacation without the snow and crowds. Conversely, for cheaper rates, try the Caribbean and Florida in summer months. So, they're hot and humid, but there are cool ocean breezes, sand and surf nearby. And fewer tourists and college kids to spoil your quiet solitude.

6. If you're ready to go on quick notice, make frequent phone calls and online inquiries 24-7 directly to travel agencies, hotels, cruise lines and airlines. For instance, if a resort hotel has many empty rooms or an airline has empty seats when you call, the staff is usually authorized to cut prices. Flights with empty seats must meet schedules and hotels abhor empty rooms, so a senior guest paying half-price is better than no sale.

7. Travel today has many problems, including rising prices, street dangers, terrorism and other negatives. If you're now in your 70s and beyond, they didn't call us the Greatest Generation because we were timid, overcome with fear and pulled back from challenges.

America's seniors have persevered in problems throughout our long lives. Now's the time to set a positive example of optimism and keep on traveling.