

TIMES ARE TOUGH – SO TAKE OFF!

The recession is causing many Americans to tighten purse strings when it comes to travel leaving the tourism industry in the red. Hotels are facing empty rooms, airlines are cutting flights, and even rental car companies, often seen as the cheap travel alternative, are losing business.

In order to make up for dismal December to January sales, tourism companies like Expedia, STA travel, Orbitz and others have been hard at work developing promotions to get people in the air again.

Jon Conlon, a consumer trend specialist at PromotionalCodes.com, a discount shopping website, says he can't believe some of the deals merchants are offering. He was shocked to post a promotion from Virgin Atlantic featuring one-way flights from New York to London for only \$156. But with so many Americans suffering from personal economic worries, is anyone taking advantage of these opportunities? According to data from PromotionalCodes.com, yes, they are.

Conlon says domestic destinations, particularly Vegas and Miami, have become especially popular in the last few months. "Right now the Wynn, a premier 5-diamond Vegas resort, has a promotion offering rooms for \$129 per night. It's a hard one for our users to pass up, especially considering the same suites would regularly cost at least \$300."

Popular travel information website LonelyPlanet.com has also been finding that, despite the recession, interest in travel continues to thrive. It seems these tough times are leading Americans to search even harder for an escape from the everyday. In fact, a LonelyPlanet official reported that on February 10th, 2008 the site received more visitors than ever before. Like PromotionalCodes.com users, Americans using LonelyPlanet.com were mostly looking for information on domestic trips.

STAtavel, which caters to students and young travelers, is one of many companies responding to Americans' desire to stay close(r) to home. One of STAtavel's promotions, "Travel Bailout, 5 days, 5 deals" offers \$100 round-trip rates to Denver, Miami, Los Angeles, New York and Chicago.

Like many companies, STAtavel highlights the fleeting nature of these offers. It's common for such deals to last only days or weeks, or in STA's case until the flights are sold out. The whole idea is to get Americans to take advantage of deals now, because they won't be around once the economy recovers.

A good way to keep up on travel deals is by visiting websites like PromotionalCodes.com or signing up to receive newsletters from airlines or websites such as Kayak.com or Travelzoo.com. With holidays like Spring Break and Memorial Day approaching, the travel industry is expecting a boost in sales. Experts recommend shopping early to gain deals on trips during these popular times.

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