

## DISCOVER THE MAGICAL WORLD OF TRAVEL WEBSITES

You've heard of the armchair traveler? Rare is the person who loves travel and can make it a full time occupation. Although there are such lucky individuals, most of us must be satisfied with the yearly vacation. However, you can be a savvy armchair traveler who waits patiently, using the time between now and vacation time to learn all about your chosen destination. When you finally book your ticket, you've assembled an in-depth wealth of knowledge that makes your trip much more satisfying and memorable.

Travel websites are treasure chests of cultural insight and practical information - the starting point for your journey. There are millions of travel websites with various perspectives. Some are geared to an audience of travelers who prefer convenient all-inclusive packages, while others focus on particular regions of the world. Still others cater to history buffs or foodies. One thing that can be said of travel websites in general is that there is indeed something for every taste and style of traveler. Your job is to search out those which specialize in the aspects of travel that excite you.

Remember, the informed traveler garners fuller memories, that keep for a lifetime. Make a point of looking into what you can learn about the culture, cuisine, history and language of your destination. There are other practical issues, such as local customs, points of etiquette and transportation that are also worth your investigation. As for sightseeing, look beyond the famous sights - find out about those lesser known but truly fabulous sights the locals frequent. Travel forums and message boards are good resources.

Most travel websites offer free newsletters that show up in your email on a regular basis. Some travel websites are destination-specific, so look for these as well. A typical newsletter keeps you abreast of the latest ticket bargains, travel tips, must-see sights and links to travel resources and freebies you'd probably have trouble digging up on your own. You'll find feature articles on a variety of topics, such as accounts of unusual adventures of fellow travelers, travel guide reviews and tips on packing to sail smoothly through customs. Travel newsletters provide loads of interesting material to enhance your trip experience.

So get comfy in your armchair, get online and begin your virtual trip. When the big day comes, you'll be ready to fully enjoy each day, with a knockout itinerary. Armchair travel is a delightful hobby for the real traveler, just waiting for departure!