

Title:

Getting Around The Usa--When Is The Bus Your Best Option?

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Summary:

Visitors to the US have many options when it comes to getting around. In the land of (relatively) cheap gas and expensive trains, renting a car is often the most appealing option. On the other hand, for journeys between cities that are further than a few hours drive, flying quickly becomes a viable option. Still there are other times when the best option is taking the bus. How should you determine when this is your best option? Read on.

Bus travel in the US

Whether or n...

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Article Body:

Visitors to the US have many options when it comes to getting around. In the land of (relatively) cheap gas and expensive trains, renting a car is often the most appealing option. On the other hand, for journeys between cities that are further than a few hours drive, flying quickly becomes a viable option. Still there are other times when the best option is taking the bus. How should you determine when this is your best option? Read on.

Bus travel in the US

Whether or not it is warranted, bus travel has a somewhat beleaguered reputation in the U.S. Many consider line run bus service to offer the most basic level of service. In truth there is a wide range of service offered, from luxury to budget, depending on the bus carrier. The bus industry in the United States is dominated by Greyhound, which is the only bus company with service nationwide. Several other companies such as Trailways and Coach USA are made up of independently owned bus companies that share marketing functions and branding. In addition there are several strong regional players in the bus industry, although they may share service with Greyhound on certain routes.

A newer development in the bus industry is the "Chinatown bus". This is a term

used to describe low priced bus companies that operate paired down service on selected routes and charge much less than traditional bus companies. Originally these carriers tended to operate in, and cater to, the Chinese immigrant community. Now the phenomenon appeals to a much wider group of customers. Another trend in the bus industry is luxury service that competes more directly with the airlines. These carriers offer first class amenities and luxury coaches. They tend to be most successful for destinations that are fewer than 6 hours apart.

So, how should you decide when the bus is your best option? Here are a few questions that might help you make your decision:

1. What is your budget?

If you are on a tight budget you won't be able to beat the bus for price. It is by far the least expensive way to get between destinations in the U.S. This is particularly true on heavily traveled routes in the Northeast where there is a lot of competition.

2. Will you need a car once you get to your destination?

In many U.S. cities (ie. New York, Boston, Washington DC) a car is not only unnecessary, but will be a burden to drive and to park once you arrive.

3. How far are you going?

If you are traveling less than a five or six hours it is probably faster to take the bus than to fly when you factor in waiting time at the airport. Moreover, the bus will likely drop you off in the downtown core so you do not have to find your way into the city once you arrive.

4. Where are you going?

It is worth noting that for many more remote destinations in the US, the bus is really the only public transportation option. If you do not drive, taking the bus may be your only choice.

5. How much time do you have?

If your trip is not rushed, you might enjoy the more leisurely pace of bus travel. If you are under time pressure, the bus is probably not the best choice as it is subject to traffic delays and usually takes a little longer than other modes of transportation.

Overall, the bus is a great option for visitors to the US who are looking for transportation between major US cities and more remote destinations alike. As gas prices rise and train service sees more cuts, it will undoubtedly be an even more popular way to get around going forward.