

12 Econ**\$**on**\$**buster Travel Tips

by Dana Susan Beasley

In these uncertain economic times, it is easy to press the panic button and cancel all travel plans.

But what is the final cost to family, to marriages, to health?

Would you rather go on a vacation now or spend thousands in counseling later when your or the family or the marriage falls apart?

Or what about the doctor bills that will accumulate when you are experiencing a complete breakdown from exhaustion?

But maybe there's an all or nothing approach to vacations we have in America: we have to have the five-star luxury resort, the incredibly expensive attractions, and the world-class dining extravaganza.

Do we need all that?

Here are 12 ideas to help you economize that



Original watercolor *China River: Real or Fantasy?* by Ann Neal.

vacation that you urgently need to take!

12) Scan the Internet for deals, discounts to attractions, and coupons for restaurants.

11) Join a discount travel club like Coastal Vacations, Elder Hostel, or Youth Hostel.

10) Stay close to home. Enjoy a city within a short drive. You will save money on gas and get to know your own backyard better. Look on Craigslist (<http://www.craigslist.org>) for housing



Original oil painting *Picnic at Estes Park* by Ann Neal.

swaps or vacation rentals. You never know what gem you might find!

9) Plan a different twist on a “staycation.”

When you get to your destination, only sightsee within walking distance. For the one or two must-sees that are farther away, take city transportation once or twice while vacationing. Staying within the local establishment will save you money because you will not need to rent a car or spend a lot of money on gas. Go for walks, eat at local restaurants, enjoy local events. Most little towns

have their own community newspaper. Go to a grocery store and pick one up. You will find the best local events, eateries, shops, and attractions listed in the paper. Put the emphasis on pampering yourself and relaxation, not go go go til you drop and then when you return home you need a vacation because you’re exhausted from your vacation!

8) Eat meals in the hotel, like breakfasts and lunches. Better yet, eat lunches out and dinners in! Share meals out with your spouse or friend. Buy a small amount of groceries like sandwich fixings, muffins, fruit, and snacks to keep you from spending a lot of money dining out. Bring a small cooler on your trip so you can have a few items handy that need refrigeration. If you are flying to your destination, by a cheap Styrofoam cooler at the local grocery store.

7) If you are going to a resort destination like the mountains, always start out with a full tank of gas. Of course, change your oil, check your brakes, inflate your tires before you go.

6) Go to a destination off-season. Cancun in the summer or Colorado’s metropolitan areas in winter..

5) Sign up for a free vacation. You know, one of those that require you to listen to a one-hour spiel. Only, that is, if you are strong enough to decline their sales pitch!



Original oil painting **Fore!** by Ann Neal.

4) Minimize your suitcases. Limit each kind of item to three. Three pairs of pants, three shirts, three skirts, etc. With the airlines charging extra fees for extra baggage, this is key to saving money. And if your accommodations have laundry facilities, even better yet!

3) Invest in a Recreational Vehicle. Even when gas prices are high, they still are the most economical way to travel. Plus, by traveling in an RV you will build a lifetime of memories!

2) Arrange to have meals made for you through a dinner service. This is great for camping, reunions, or vacation rentals. Some places can cost around \$2 or \$3 per person per meal. You can usually have six to 12 meals made for you or you can prepare it ahead of time in their professional kitchens. That means your kitchen won't be a mess when you leave! These frozen meals require

a minimum of cooking once thawed.

1) Pair up with another family and find a vacation rental. A large group of people can stay in a large house for less than a double occupancy at a top-rated hotel. In other words, if there are 10 people staying for a week and it costs \$150 per night, that is \$15 per person per night! You can't beat that! And you can save on dining out by taking advantage of the full kitchen that most Vacation Rental's provide!

And most have laundry rooms, too! Many Vacation Rentals have early booking sales in January and February, so start searching now! You will have a vacation you'll never forget and save a ton of money, too!

Now that you have these ideas, take them and run! You will be happy, healthy, and wise!

Dana Susan Beasley is the owner of a vacation rental, the Victorian Rose, which Vacation Suites Global expertly manages. This remodeled 1898 Victorian Painted Lady offers luxury, convenience, and affordability! It is situated in Old Colorado City, a historic district of Colorado Springs, Colo.

