

APARTMENT IDEAS

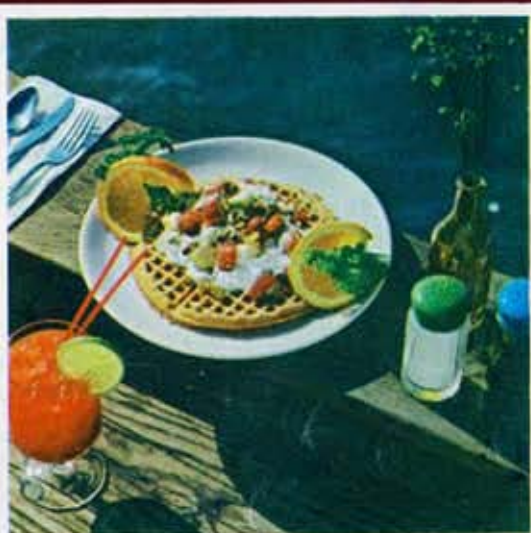
COPING WITH COSTLINESS

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20 Apt Ideas for Less Than \$20
Travel: Planning-Pricing Charts
Dumb-it-Yourself Projects

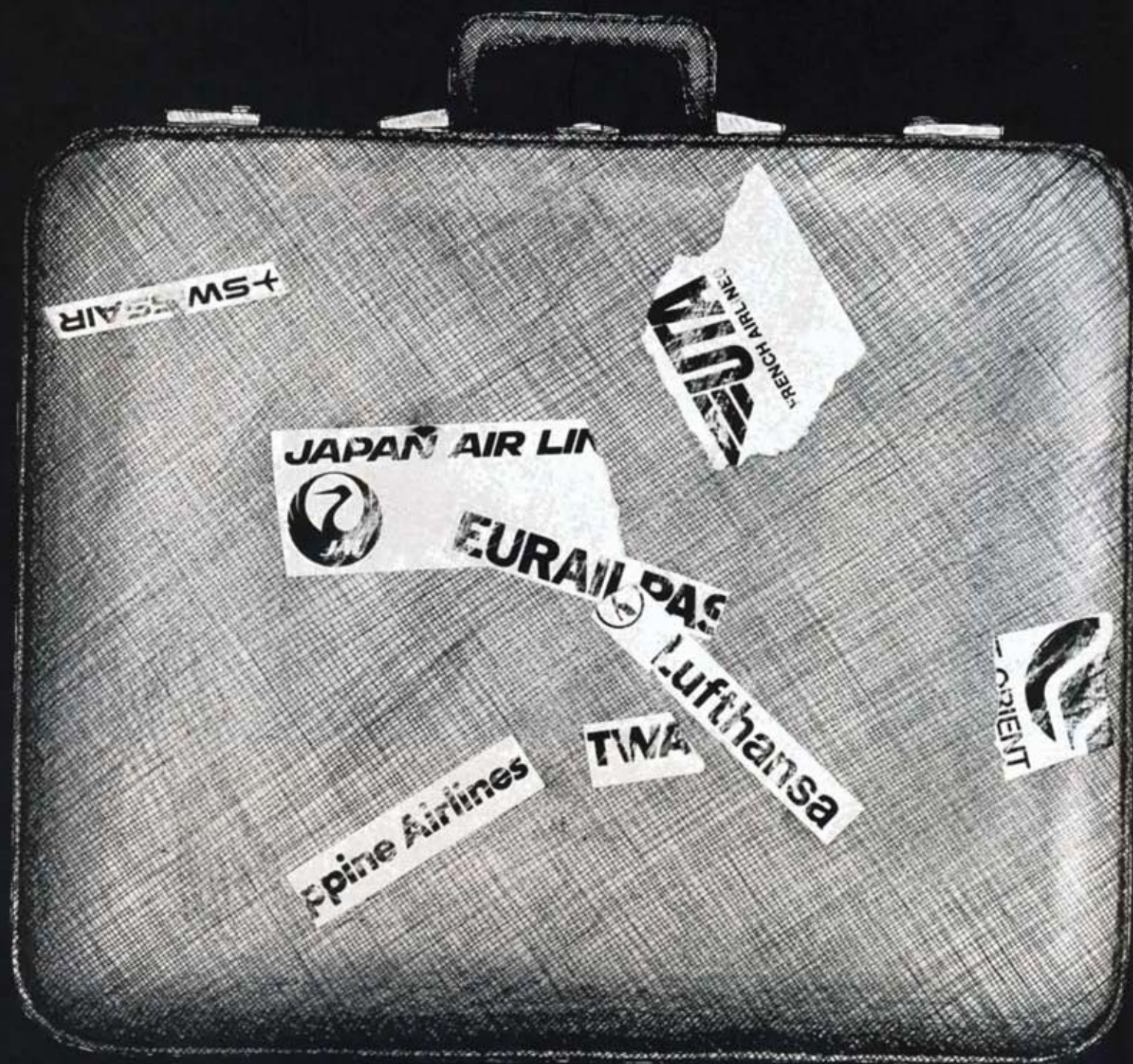
MUNCHING OUT

11 simple recipes from 11 superb restaurants in Los Angeles, Portland, Baltimore, Kansas City, Houston, Minneapolis, New Orleans, Atlanta, Chicago, New York, and Sausalito

The Basics of Wine
How to Shop for Fine Art



A COMPLETE PLANNING GUIDE FOR TRAVEL ABROAD



INCLUDING COPIOUS CHARTS TO HELP YOU COST YOUR COURSE

By RICHARD CAVALIER

It's true what they're saying about the new bargain air fares: If you can afford to vacation in the U.S., you can afford to go abroad. But, there's a rub. Air fares and competitive tour plans have proliferated faster than ads plugging the Jumbo Jets. How can you be really sure you're buying the best deal?

Here in one place, all straightened out, and as accurate as we could make it, is comparative information to guide you through the maze of prices and tour offerings that currently complicates trip planning. Our air fares chart on pages 60-61 covers fare construction from first class to charters. And once you've decided how to get there, our breakdown of lodgings on pages 58-59, shows ways to make further savings.

Helpful as they are, though, the charts and other information are not meant to constitute a handy-dandy, do-it-yourself substitute for a competent travel agent. Master it all, set a budget, and establish a tentative itinerary—then consult an expert for specifics and reservations. No magazine article, or even a book, can match a travel agent's facilities for keeping current on this fast-moving world.

Homework

All foreign travel starts from home—ideally, months ahead of departure. Make the basic decisions early enough to give common sense a chance to work for you. Just about everything else will fall into place once you've determined the time and money you care to spend. Here's how to make any amount of money work harder:

□ **Collect ideas.** Talk to travelers; read travel features; pick up tour folders, which airlines and travel agents have by the hundreds; haunt foreign government tourist offices in our key cities. But be selective. You get extra points for finding competitive folders.

□ **Establish a budget.** What do you want to spend? What can you afford to spend? Work for the lower figure as a guide. A good formula: Exact air fare plus \$20 daily,

plus \$10 per airport for exit fees and taxis and tips. That buys one person a first class hotel, fine meals, and maybe even a sight-seeing trip or two—without scrimping. Capitals cost more, but countryside costs less, and it averages. Meals are a normal living expense, not a true trip cost, but you must have cash in hand.

□ **Gauge distances.** A city a day is too fast; a single destination is too narrow a field for first timers—the world is too big for one-country-per-year touring.

□ **Select a travel agent.** Travel agents are independent businessmen and can serve as they choose. It's to your advantage to shop for one carefully. You can tell a lot from your initial contact with an agent: Has he actually been to the places you're heading for, or are his recommendations secondhand? No one has been everywhere, and so agents tend to specialize; but they're permitted to sell the world. Is he trying to understand you, your preferences, your budget, or is he pushing a tour without asking? If he chooses to mail you an itinerary, is it really related to the discussion? If not, bail out while you can, and try another agent. If an agent serves you well, you owe him an honest intent to buy. If you're shopping, say so.

□ **Think groups.** You're doubtless aware that off-season travel offers the basic saving, but the key to real bargains lies with the groups. These are not the herds of ugly Americans you might expect, but an agreement among a minimum of 15 people—possibly all strangers—to fly everywhere en route together. That agreement, plus 30 days' minimum advance booking, earns you a significant discount. Grouping is a small price to pay if it buys you the foreign trip you felt you couldn't afford.

Contact your travel agent for information on GIT ("Group Inclusive") or BIT ("Contract Bulk Inclusive") Tours. Travel agents buy bulk seats from the airlines and then sort them by destination. You may also contact airlines for information on the ITC ("Inclusive Tour Charter") tours which are airline-sponsored.

These special plans are cancelable by the operator if the group does not reach the stipulated number, but you can travel on the same plane to the same destinations on payment of the next higher individual air fare.

□ **Compare package tours.** Within any group structure are countless alternatives. IATA (International Air Transport Association) air fares are identical no matter which airline books you, so price differences reflect these items: quality of hotel, number and type of meals, guides and sight-seeing, and incidentals such as tips, taxes, and group transport—all of which add up. Read the fine print. What's not specifically offered is not included.

Choosing hotels

All foreign hotels have a concierge—a combination fixer and den mother. He books trains, sight-seeing, theater, and restaurants with elan—sometimes with commission, always with tip, which you know he's earned. As for the facilities, will you "live" there or merely sleep and bathe there? Will you entertain there?

Getting organized

Now you have a line on the variables; so sit down to an hour's work with your folders and checkbook.

□ **First:** reselect the two or three most likely destinations or tours; discard the rest for the moment.

□ **Second:** using our Air Fares Chart, plot each of the folders in its proper category according to the alphabet code (FIT, GIT, BIT, ITC). If you don't have a folder in a category which appeals to you, keep working now, fill that gap tomorrow.

□ **Third:** compare the arrangements and activities offered by each tour folder. Think value, not price alone.

□ **Fourth:** estimate the do-it-yourself price by adding the seasonal individual air fare (call an airline, if necessary) to our formula of \$20 daily plus \$10 per airport. That's for one person—are you paired up?

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Note: In 2010, most prices are approximately 10 times the 1970 averages, but the concept for comparison remains valid.

Today, young travelers buy packaged tours in order to (nearly) guarantee total price.

A COMPLETE PLANNING GUIDE FOR TRAVEL ABROAD

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□ *Fifth*: if the package tour is the better value, buy it. If you believe you can beat the tour price by a significant amount, you've just earned the savings.

□ *Sixth*: set a specific itinerary, using a headquartering approach—that is, if tomorrow's target town is less than five hours' round trip by train, bus, or car, treat it as a side trip. Three nights is not too long for a key city, even on an ambitious schedule.

Getting ready

Get smart fast by reading about your destinations; you'll get the most out of every hour. What's the weather? Begin a packing list a week or so in advance, adding and deleting effortlessly; when packing, check-off makes perfect. Wash-and-wear is great for split-second schedules and dry weather, but drip-dry tourists don't always get into the best places. Besides the shave or makeup kit, assemble an anti-disaster kit: medicine and eyeglass prescriptions, aspirin, antacid tablets, laxative, Kaopectate, mild face soap, extra toothbrush, facial tissue. Familiar goods are available all over the world, but not at 3 a.m.

□ *Documents*. Both carriers and travel agents can give you instructions and assistance with passports, visas or tourist cards, inoculations, and international drivers licenses—all based on your chosen destination. Ditto for baggage allowances.

□ *Foreign currency*. It can confuse. Carry a pocket converter guide and use it; convert in sensible amounts, since you pay a percentage on every transaction; when leaving the country, convert leftover currency into the next needed currency, not dollars, and save again. Spare coins buy postcards. Don't overlook probable airport exit taxes when fine-tuning the cash supply. Actual conversion rates vary not only from the official rate but also from day to day. Airport rates are fair enough but can occasionally be beat at the central bank; hotels in Europe sometimes extract a convenience fee, which is not justified.

□ *Travelers checks*. Believe the ads. However these certificates sometimes bring less cash than the same dollar amount in greenbacks—especially in South America.

□ *Customs*. On departure, register all foreign-made cameras, watches, jewelry, or furs with U.S. Customs to avoid arguments on your return—you can't win. Otherwise customs is only a nitpicking formality.

□ *Credit cards*. Almost as common in Europe as at home; but Diners Club is the only one in all Spanish speaking countries. American Express is strong in Europe.

On arrival

No matter what the ads say, if you fly overnight, you arrive tired in the morning. Check in; to satisfy curiosity, spend an hour or so looking around the town; about noon, take a nap. By late afternoon you're refreshed enough to enjoy dinner and the night life, yet relaxed enough to sleep on their schedule.

If you've done your homework, you'll know what to see and do at each stop. If not, take a standard tour, which is fine for inventory but bad for browsers. You can always go back later. All significant sights and events have been cleverly split into two or three separate routes by the commercial operators; so you can save time and money by sharing a hired car with driver/guide—and you can tailor that kind of trip to your own interests!

Foreign languages are nice if you speak them, but not essential. Everyone tries to help. When details are crucial, find someone who speaks English. Police are a help.

Everywhere, expect the unexpected—it's part of the game. Your only regret will be that you waited so long to go abroad.

LODGINGS

CATEGORY	PRICE RANGE (single)* (doubles, plus 25%) European plan	CHARACTERISTICS
Grand hotel	\$80 and up daily, with steady clientele, little fluctuation	The very best: home-away-from-home for those who never ask the price
Deluxe hotel	\$15-30 daily, depending on season and demand; resorts, double to triple	Private bath, abundant hot water, air conditioning if needed; well managed and maintained
Traditional	Usually cheaper than the chains off-season for lack of conventions	Turn-of-the-century elegance despite all the modern conveniences; service staffs who know how to serve discreetly—and enjoy it
American chain	In relatively undeveloped areas, the preferred hotel	Just like being at home—unfortunately. Other people's conventions are terribly jolly at 3 a.m.
National facilities:	Deluxe surroundings and atmosphere, but often cheaper than metropolitan first class hotels. Contact respective Government Tourist Offices.	No two are identical; all have charm to burn. Rarely within city limits
France—"Relais de Campagne"		Converted castles and chateaux furnished with art and antiques
Spain—"Paradores"		Converted castles and monasteries furnished with art and antiques
First class	Fluctuates with seasons	All the comforts, but not the trade name of the "deluxe" category
Type "A"—Tourist class	\$8-12 daily. BEST BUY always	Everything the American chain hotel has, except lavender furniture
Type "B"—Standard class	\$6-10 daily; perfect for cost-conscious, unfancy types	All the essentials; but a plain-Jane in need of a facial, sometimes
Second class (European or thrift class)	\$5-8 daily. Good safety valve in high season	Usually the equal of—sometimes superior to—the First Class hotel in everything but plumbing. Sink in the room; bath down the hall
Guesthouses and pensions	\$5 or less daily; meals available but not always the best. Adventure for the quick of spirit	This is how the natives live. Recommended only in relatively advanced countries which appreciate our creature comforts. A small hotel or large house
Youth hostels (for teens and early 20s)	\$2 or less daily; no reservations	Dormitory style and share everything except your toothbrush; but cheaper you can't get

*Rates for doubles are variable but never exceed 50% more than single rate in non-resort areas. Plus government tax up to 20%.

Tours are always priced for two-in-room; if you don't relish potluck in roommates, pay the single room supplement

Travel agents usually restrict their efforts to First Class "A" or higher, although they do offer package tours with "B" or "thrift" accommodations. Agents are paid by either a) commission on your room, or b) by markup on rooms you buy retail from them.

	FARE CONSTRUCTION	WHO QUALIFIES	RESTRICTIONS and CONDITIONS	
REGULAR FARES	Regular First Class (Open ticket) Valid year around	Anyone; this is the highest fare, with no restrictions.	None; ticket is valid for a full year and is renewable and extendable indefinitely; full stopover privileges within the standard mileage allotment for destination.	Madrid: \$794-NYC Rio: 754-MIAMI Tokyo: 1216-LA
	Regular Economy Class (Open ticket) Valid year around	Anyone who will trade a few amenities for a stack of dollars in savings.	None; however, economy fare is seasonal and each direction is payable at the rate prevailing at the time of travel; dates below.	Madrid: 554/464 Rio: 580 Tokyo: 772/684
	Off-Season Economy Class (Europe only)	Anyone who can complete a round trip within the overall designated calendar period.	Calendar; about October 1 to May 22 each year; few restrictions within those dates. May and September "shoulder" fares (surrounding high season) are variable.	Madrid: 464 Rio: None Tokyo: None
EXCURSION FARES		Any meticulous planner; specific durations.	Calendar; not valid in high season, about June 1 to mid-August yearly; travel dates must conform exactly to the minimum/maximum day count.	"Shoulder" and Off-Season fares quoted below:
	Europe: 14/28 days (min.-max.)		Exactly 13 or 27 nights, min.-max.; or interim dates; two stopovers in each direction; surcharge for weekend travel.	Madrid: 381/331
	Europe: 29/45 days (min.-max.)		Exactly 28 or 44 nights, min.-max.; or interim dates; one stopover only, either direction; no surcharge for weekend travel.	Madrid: 290/275
	South America: 30 days (max.)		Exactly 29 nights, max., or interim dates; unrestricted stopovers within mileage allotment for farthest destination, one stop per city.	Rio: 495
	Pacific: 14/21 days (min.-max.)		Exactly 13 or 20 nights, min.-max., or interim dates; unrestricted stopovers within mileage allotment for farthest destination, one stop per city.	Tokyo: 641/614
PACKAGE TOURS	FIT tours "Foreign Independent Tour"	Anyone; buy from airline or travel agent.	None other than those of the ticket on which it is based; arrange through either airline or travel agent.	No bargains; a la carte order and tab.
	GIT tours "Group Inclusive Tour"	Anyone willing to join a group of 15 or more and also book 30 days or more in advance. Tour operator forms groups. Cancelable by operator on 30th day. But rebookable at next higher airfare for same itinerary.	As ticketed; this is the scheduled airlines' own packaged tour, complete with air transport and a minimum of \$70 ground arrangements. Groups must fly together to all points and use stipulated arrangements or forfeit the \$70.	BEST BUY for singles, pairs, and families on a fixed schedule.
	Contract Bulk Inclusive Tours	Anyone willing to join a group of 20 (Westbound) or 40 (Eastbound). Book 90 days or more in advance. Cancelable by operator on 90th day.	Similar to GIT, with additional fare reduction given because of the larger group size. The travel agent sometimes forgets to mention this category—insist on information.	Not a bad deal if you don't mind a group.
	Group 80 Fares	Qualified Affinity groups; 40 to Spain and Portugal; 80 to other European destinations.	Reduction for bona-fide groups who qualify (see "charter" category below). No land arrangements required.	Best group deal if you have a membership.
	ITC tours "Inclusive Tour Charter"	Anyone willing to join a full plane load to the same point(s), using the same ground arrangements.	No IATA restrictions since this is usually a non-scheduled airline's own packaged tour of air transport and land arrangements. Non-skeds fly only a few times each season to each selected destination, but this is the cheapest vacation fare you can get on worldwide destinations.	BEST BUY for singles, pairs, and families who control their vacation dates.
	Charter (full plane) or Split-Charter (3 groups of 40 minimum each)	Only members of bonafide clubs with a) membership roster under 20,000; b) existence two years prior to trip; c) written bylaws; d) membership restrictions and dues. You must have joined six months prior to trip; family eligible. CANNOT BE FORMED FOR TRAVEL BENEFITS.	Rigid conditions; policed by IATA; if your group qualifies and will work to organize, this can be a bonanza. For real savings, 120-180 passengers are needed; however, sector fares are high at the destination, and unless you cover territory by train or bus, you could pay more than for excursion or GIT packages bought at home.	Horse-trading; drive a cents- per-mile bargain with airline; share contract costs equally.
	Non-IATA* carrier Icelandic Airlines	Anyone who can find a seat open.	World's only non-IATA* airline flying a scheduled route from Europe; stops in Reykjavik, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, and Luxembourg; turboprop, not pure jet; use trains or bus to continue or you might exceed excursion or GIT package costs.	Lowest fare for individuals, so always full; compare all costs before deciding.

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Although minute details of fares, qualifications, and restrictions are subject to continuing change, the major categories under which each occurs are not often modified. Plan confidently using these outlines; confirm specifics with your airline when you have picked a destination and fare or tour category.

*International Air Transport Association, world clearinghouse for scheduled international airlines; IATA sets service standards and fares, and all member airlines must charge identical fares for identical itineraries. Airfare from your home to New York City, Miami, or Los Angeles gateways, if required, is additional.