

ON THE ROAD AGAIN?

03 Mar



After months of being COVID confined, a lot of us are *so* ready to get the heck out of here – out of our houses, our towns, our states. We’re dreaming of the open road, the endless sky, and all the adventures that lie in between.

The good news is: Travel and tourism industries, businesses and communities everywhere are adapting – working to make things safer, sooner, for those who are ready to start getting out and seeing the world again. The reality is: It’s going to be awhile before we have all the freedoms we once enjoyed (and maybe took for granted!) on our sojourns. And not only that, but we may need to adjust to some new normals, even when this pandemic is a thing of the past. After all, we’ve learned more than ever the importance of preventative health measures, consideration for the needs and boundaries of our fellow humans, and support for businesses trying to survive as they do their best to ride out an economic crisis. Bottom line: As new travel opportunities begin to open up, we need more grace, respect and support than ever for those we encounter on the road (and in the sky!)

If you’re one of those people who may be ready to venture out a little further, here are some ways you can do so safely and thoughtfully, with maximum enjoyment and minimum impact on your health and the health of others. When planning your much-needed escape, you might consider these modifications to help support global prevention efforts while still satisfying that wonderful wanderlust of yours.

You & Who?

If you’re up for going solo, this is a great time to give it a try! But if you’re considering travel buddies, limit it to a partner, your family, or a small group that you’ve already been exposed to. And remember…pets are people too! Flying with a furry friend may be a bit more complicated at the moment, but the open road is a great place to enjoy a four-pawed companion in the passenger seat.

Get Ready to Roll

Personal transportation is considered the safest travel option right now, but comfort levels vary. If you’re looking into air travel, the CDC ([cdc.org](https://www.cdc.org)) has plenty to say about precautions you can take, including testing beforehand to ensure that you aren’t a carrier of the virus. With a road trip, however, you have more control over how much you interact with others. A little up-front planning can help you greatly reduce the “touch points” on your journey: Cut down on pit stops by bringing along a well-stocked cooler. When you *do* need to pull over, mask up and steer clear of the crowd. You might opt for mobile app payments (several gas-station chains now take them) or look into contactless credit cards (get the scoop from your bank!) Regardless, hand sanitizer will be your best friend, so pack plenty. And some travelers are even bringing their own toilet paper with a waste bag to avoid going indoors altogether. Just be mindful of those wonderful *Leave No Trace* principles ([lnt.org](https://www.lnt.org)) if you go that route.

Your Stay, Your Way

RVs and campers are great options for limiting exposure to others while traveling. Organizations like ARVC (The National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds) and KOA (Kampgrounds of America) have adopted specific best practices to help their affiliates reopen safely. If you’re eyeing a particular RV park or campground, do a little online research to ensure that they’re doing what they can to reduce health risks. Vacation rental companies like Air B&B and VRBO have some great options for housing small groups and families who want to stay away from the bigger crowds in condos and hotels. Avoid those rentals that offer one room or just part of a home that would be shared with another family. There are plenty of opportunities to rent a whole place, ensuring that you and your little tribe will be the only inhabitants. Most companies have amped up their cleaning policies and will likely be very up-front about what they’re doing to protect their renters. If not, be sure and inquire about their COVID prevention practices before committing.

Adventure Awareness

Whether you’re hitting the beach, the trail, or the city streets, try to learn as much as you can about the current situation there. Is it a popular destination right now, or more off-the-beaten-path? Will there be plenty to do away from crowds? Is grocery delivery available in the area? Be vigilant when planning outings that require renting gear or joining tours. Travel and tourism companies are working hard to implement safety measures and adapt the adventures they offer to ensure that more of us have the chance to do the things we love again. Before booking, do your research. Ask plenty of questions first to make sure it’s the wisest choice for you and your group right now. Remember, there are lots of opportunities to create your own outdoor fun if you feel the need to stay close to your vacation home. This is a great time to get creative!

Your Own Backyard

If you’ve done your travel homework and you’re still on the fence about going the distance in the near future, what about planning some day trips right where you are? Sure, it may not be the exotic adventure you took a few years ago (and will hopefully get to take again soon!) but at least it can satisfy that behind-the wheel, windows-down, radio-up urge you may get from time to time – especially after being cooped up for so long. Do a little local digging; see what’s in your own backyard. Who knows what you’ll discover where you least expect it?



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Why We Wait

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Dear One...

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The Good Stuff

Comments

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