

Christine Estes



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"Travel and change of place impart new vigor to the mind."

—Seneca

Dear Friend,

March 2008

Are you ready for a vacation? It sounds like the perfect way to spend some time away from our everyday lives, but sometimes planning a trip can feel like work.

Researching your destination, securing passports in advance and getting the lowest rates on travel accommodations do take time, but make your vacation much more pleasurable (and with fewer surprises!). Depending on your point of view, it can also be a lot of fun to explore new possibilities and find deals as your anticipation for the trip builds.

To help you, I have assembled some advice that should make arranging your traveling plans easier. In this month's flyer, you will find news on the latest travel trends and vacation hot spots as well as some beneficial travel advice. On the reverse side, I've listed the most popular foreign and domestic destinations, as well as the places that will give you the best value for your dollar. You will also find tips that will make your next vacation more affordable, wherever you go.

I hope that this guide will help put you on the path to the perfect voyage!

And while you are at home, catching all of the national news about the real estate market and wondering what it means to us, the February numbers are in. We have them posted on the website for you – just go to www.TheChristineEstesGroup.com. The short version? King County, the Eastside and Seattle Metro average selling prices are all up – year-over-year as well as February over January. Snohomish County is down in both views; Pierce County is down year-over-year, but recouped over 4% last month as compared to January. There is lots of inventory to choose from although the listings that are selling sold more quickly than in February 2007, again except for Snohomish. Yes, indeed, Spring is here and the buyers are coming out again. Good news for everyone and good evidence of our strong local economy.

Do check out the upcoming classes while you're on the site. Supercharging your Wealth comes up on Wednesday the 19th at 7pm, Uplifting our Attitude using Affirmations is on March 29th, a seminar on what the new higher loan limits can do for you is on April 3rd, and Sleeping better, Naturally will be on April 19th. Join us! Bring a friend (or send a friend). All are welcome.

Sincerely,

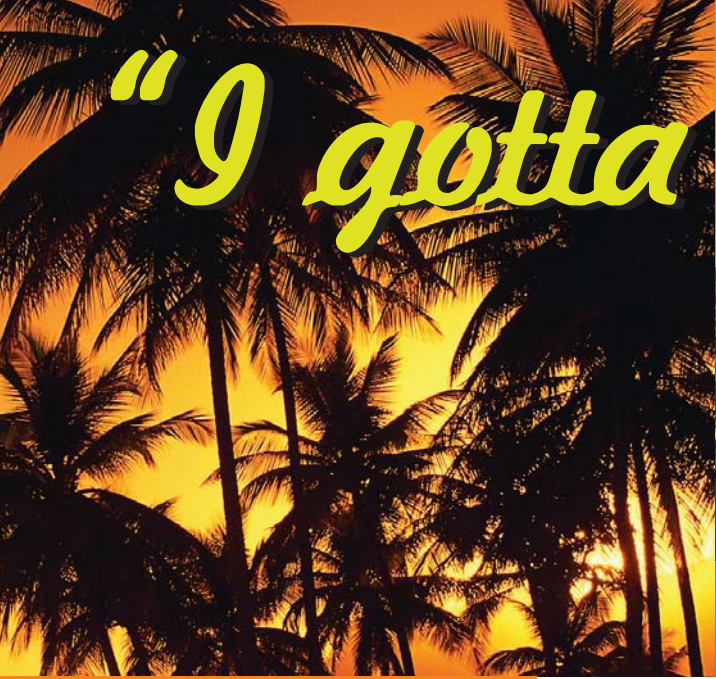
Whether practical or fun, we have resources to help you...if you know of someone who would appreciate the level of service I provide, please call me with their name and business number, and I'll be happy to follow up and take great care of them.

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"I gotta get away!"



Vacation destinations are becoming more adventurous than ever before. Great river vacations are available in England and Ireland.



Planning the perfect vacation requires a lot of preparation to ensure that once your trip begins, you can enjoy your destination without worrying about the details.

Spontaneity is a common desire when it comes to vacation, but if you aren't careful, you could end up spending much more money and missing out on local attractions and cultural nuances.



Destination Ahead

Selecting the right vacation destination is about personal preference. Return to nature by traveling to state and national parks in the United States or the jungles of Central and South America. Tourists seeking to discover the Old World will enjoy a trip to popular European countries like England, France and Italy. More adventurous travelers may want to book a safari to Tanzania, Africa, or perhaps plan an Australian walkabout.

Try Something New

Southeast Asia, China, Japan and India are among the trendy new choices for North American tourists. Experts attribute the cultural diversity and high value of the dollar for the boom in visits to Asia. A spin on a more common vacation spot can be found in Europe in the form of river cruises. Travelers are able to visit different inland countries in a more intimate fashion than traditional ocean liners.



Plot Out Your Course

Once you decide where you are going, it is time to make all the accommodations. Generally, airlines will accept reservations for up to a year from the present date. The growing popularity of travel websites makes comparing hotels overseas and booking a reservation a snap. Pick up a guidebook for the country you will be going to, which will include information about the area's notable landmarks, the best eateries and local customs. It's also important to start planning out your finances so you have time to save up for your big trip.

Passport, Please

Due to recent legislation that requires a U.S. passport when returning stateside from a trip to Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean, the demand for passports has resulted in major delays in the processing center. If you are planning any international travel and don't have a passport or your previous one has expired, apply at least four months in advance to ensure that you receive it in time. The average passport application now takes 10-12 weeks to process.



Show Fido the World

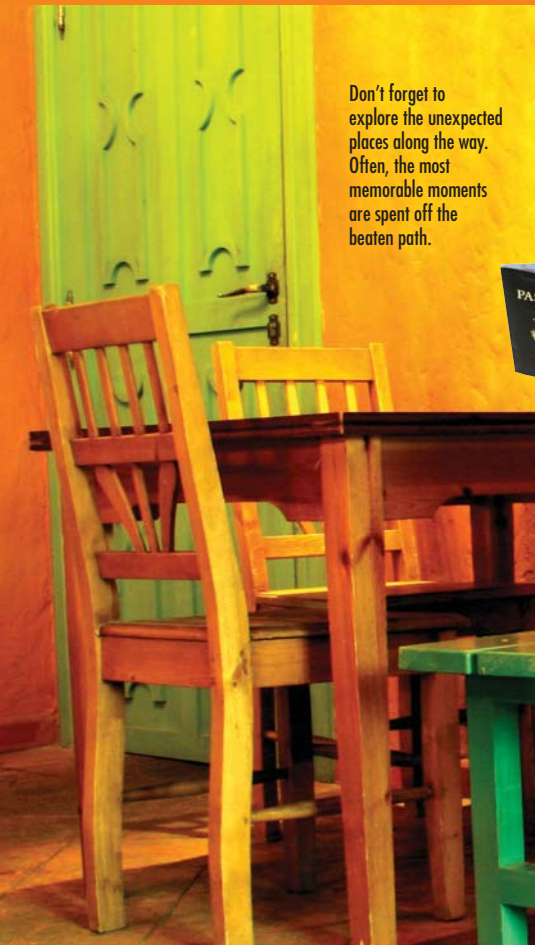
Including canines as traveling companions is becoming increasingly popular. Most airlines can accommodate dogs, but be prepared to pay extra. You will also need to get your pet the proper vaccinations and have the paperwork to prove it. Don't forget to bring identification tags and a recent photo in case Fido gets lost. Finally, make sure you introduce your pooch to his travel crate long before the trip so he becomes comfortable in his temporary home. You want him to consider his kennel a sanctuary, not a prison.



Bring my ID!



Don't forget to explore the unexpected places along the way. Often, the most memorable moments are spent off the beaten path.



The Top Vacation Spots



Hot Tips for Cool Savings

Travel during the off-season. The popular destinations will be the most crowded and expensive during the peak seasons like summer. Beat the crowd and save some money by traveling in winter or early spring. Don't be locked into thinking that you can find the climate you want only at certain times of the year. As winter comes upon us, why not think about traveling south and enjoy summer all over again. Researching climates worldwide is a great way of seeking that perfect getaway.

Enroll in customer advantage programs. Many people are familiar with frequent flyer programs, but there are also similar programs with most major hotel chains that will save you loads in the future. Your credit card company may also have a beneficial travel program.

Check for money-saving amenities. Unless they are on a cross-country road trip, most tourists will spend an average of three nights at the same lodging. Selecting one with features such as complimentary breakfast or Internet access will ring up the savings.

Do plenty of homework for airline tickets. Sometimes you will need to check out several different travel websites and airlines to find the best ticket prices. Because things change, bundled flight packages can save big bucks or they can cost a lot more, so do your research.

Resources Online

Popular travel sites will help you compare different prices and outline most of your options:

www.travelocity.com
www.orbitz.com
www.expedia.com
www.priceline.com
www.kayak.com
www.farechase.com

It's a good idea to do your research and look for savings elsewhere, particularly on sites that don't stand to profit from your decision:

www.aaa.com
budgettravel.about.com
www.tripadvisor.com

Most Popular Destinations

London, United Kingdom
Cancún, Mexico
Frankfurt, Germany
Sydney, Australia
Manila, Philippines

Most Popular U.S. Destinations

Las Vegas, Nevada
New York City, New York
Miami, Florida
San Francisco, California
Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii

Best Value Destinations

Buenos Aires, Argentina
Beijing, China
Prague, Czech Republic
Lisbon, Portugal
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Best Family Destinations

Orlando, Florida
Williamsburg, Virginia
Hershey, Pennsylvania
Southern California
Oahu, Hawaii