

# VIA ROAD TRIP

The Quarterly Newsletter from 



Travel last summer was, in a word, wild. While **Revenge Travel** sounds like the plot of a superhero movie, it's actually a term that means traveling as a way of making up for lost time during the pandemic and generally refers to the frustration and anger that people felt towards COVID for altering their vacation plans and disrupting their lives.

Revenge travel, combined with relaxed restrictions caused a surge in demand in 2022. High fuel prices and limited airline capacity drove up costs, with overall travel prices increasing 17% over pre-pandemic levels by June, according to *NerdWallet's Travel Price Index*.

What about this summer? Will a weakening demand lead to lower prices and thinner crowds? It's not looking likely, according to travel experts. "We aren't seeing any dip in demand," said Hayley Berg, lead economist at *Hopper*, a travel booking platform. "It seems incredible that the demand could be sustained, but we're not seeing any weakness right now. It seems that Americans' appetite for revenge travel remains unsated. And that could lead to another wild ride this summer."

Prices for flights, car rentals and hotels may have peaked last year, but they haven't come down much. Overall trip prices remained 15% higher in April 2023 compared with April 2022. It looks like prices could remain high through the summer. "We're seeing pricing increases from last year," said Jamie Lane, vice president of research at *AirDNA*, a vacation rental data platform. Demand for Airbnb and VRBO rentals remains high, he said, with average daily rates up 4% year over year for the summer. Car rental prices have abated from their absurd heights in 2022, but are still 43% higher than pre-pandemic levels, according to the latest U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data. And food away from home (i.e., restaurant meals) has seen some of the steadiest inflation, now costing 23% more than before the pandemic.

The pandemic may be waning, but it has significantly changed how we travel. Beyond adjusting budgets to accommodate travel price changes, travelers might have other money-related concerns looking into the summer. With government data showing pandemic savings are dwindling and consumers piling on record credit card debt, it seems like a matter of when, not if, travel begins to slow.

Will travelers tap the brakes on spending this summer, leading to thinner crowds and lower prices? Or will they continue to seek their revenge travel at all costs, leading to another summer of wild travel pricing? Whatever happens, vacationers might avoid booking at the last minute, especially for popular summer getaway destinations. And remember to pack some snacks --- restaurant food is expensive!

*Excerpted from: Trip Advisor May 2023*

## In This Issue

### AVOIDING SUMMER TRAVEL SCAMS

Tips and Tricks for Being a Saavy Traveler

### VIA Trailways' Customer Service and Safety Academy



At VIA Trailways, we are committed to providing safe and reliable transportation, the first time, and every time. We are working every day to make improvements that will provide the most friendly and professional customer service in the industry. The only commitment we place above customer service is safety. We comply with all vehicle and traffic laws and regulations with highly qualified and fully trained drivers. We make certain that our vehicles comply with all applicable safety requirements.

From time-to-time, we refresh our staff on the importance of customer service and safety. To do this, we schedule academies for our drivers, trainers, managers and dispatchers. This year, VIA will hold it's Customer Service and Training Academy in Las Vegas from August 8th through August 10th. We won't take any charter requests for these days and our offices will be closed.

It's our way of making sure that our customers' expectations are exceeded and our drivers are the safest on the road.

When you charter a VIA bus, you have our assurance that your satisfaction and safety are our top priorities.

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# SUMMER TRAVEL SCAMS

## Be a Vacation Saavy Traveler

Memorial Day weekend always marks the official start of the summer travel season. Every summer, cyberthieves are dusting off their playbooks and finding new ways to fleece unwitting travelers, according to research from the cybersecurity company, *McAfee*.

Last year, the average loss to summer travel scams was \$850 per person. To help make your vacation planning less stressful (and keep more money in your pocket), the *Better Business Bureau* is sharing advice to help you have an enjoyable vacation while avoiding being conned.

- ❖ **Plan ahead.** Typically, the earlier reservations are made, the better the deals and the lower the risk of the destination being booked solid. This also locks in rates and prevents higher prices later.
- ❖ **Avoid generic internet searches.** Entering phrases like "best deals" into a search engine can sometimes bring up websites that look official but are designed solely to rip people off.
- ❖ **Be alert for travel scams.** Watch out for phone calls or letters claiming a "free trip" or websites offering prices that appear too good to be true.
- ❖ **Do your homework.** Before paying for a hotel or any service, research the business and read customer reviews. Yelp is a great place to find out what other customers have shared about their experience.
- ❖ **Before making a final payment, get all the trip details in writing.** This should include the total cost, restrictions, cancellation penalties, and names of the airlines and hotels. And consider travel insurance. Travel insurance covers things like trip cancellations or medical emergencies.
- ❖ **Finally, pay with a credit card.** Paying with a credit card provides additional protection if something should go wrong with the travel reservation.

The *Better Business Bureau* also suggests not posting photos and videos of your trip while you're away. The BBB says this lets thieves know that no one is home. Instead, resist temptation and wait to post when you get back.

Don't let the fear of being scammed ruin your summer fun though! A little bit of caution and level-headedness should be all you need for happy travels.



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**Our offices will be closed for the following holidays:**  
JULY 4, 2023 - INDEPENDENCE DAY  
AUGUST 8 - 10, 2023 - CUSTOMER SERVICE AND SAFETY ACADEMY  
SEPTEMBER 4, 2023 - LABOR DAY

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## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

### WELCOME NEW STAFF

So far, 2023 has been a busy year for VIA Trailways. We've hired new staff in several of our departments: Sales, Operations and Fleet. Join us in welcoming our newest VIA Trailways team members:

### ARIZONA

Robert Flack/Driver

Wake Maberry/Driver

Ed Barr/Driver

Leon Richardson/Mechanic

Alethea Whitney/  
Bus Washer

Leander Shay/Bus Washer



### CALIFORNIA

Marshall Brown/Driver

Leonette Recinos/Driver

Stephanie Cardenas/  
Travel Coordinator

Desmond Yarbrough/Driver

Brian Cortez/Driver

Noel Chavez/Bus Washer

Oscar Cesena/Driver

Diana Gonzales/Bus  
Washer

Setacha Poindexter/Driver

Tamica Vinson/Driver

