

TRAVEL

by Leisure Care

For the Perfect Travel Experience

By Chris Peterson

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TRAVEL BY LEISURE CARE

FOR SENIORS, IT'S A TRIP!



“Ready to travel? Contact your community’s travel coordinator and let the adventure begin!”

Resort-style living — why would you ever want to leave home? Well, even in paradise, a person sometimes needs a change of scenery. Maybe you’d like to visit family in Tulsa, Toledo or Toulouse, or take a gander at Geneva, Galveston or Galway. Pack your bags because travel is now a whole lot easier. Leisure Care has its own full-service travel agency designed specifically for senior travel. Travel by Leisure Care (TLC) offers our residents stress-free travel anywhere their hearts desire. Powered by Twist Travel, a One Eighty Hospitality Company, TLC will book flights, hotels, cruises and tours for any Leisure Care resident at any Leisure Care community.

Get ready to join the jet set, because now is definitely the time to get out and explore the world. Through its partnerships, TLC offers the same kinds of package discounts and unique opportunities that you would find at the best boutique travel agencies. Skip the stress of shopping for travel options online or visiting the travel agent; TLC offers a customer-oriented, full-service experience with your specific needs in mind.

Coordinating flights, hotel rooms and rental cars can be a maddening endeavor. TLC makes it easy by putting Leisure Care’s specially trained staff on the job. How does it work? Pick a destination and then contact your community’s travel coordinator. Working with Debbie Horton, Leisure Care’s certified and dedicated travel agent, Leisure Care’s travel coordinators make sure that every detail is smoothed out weeks before the trip.

According to Debbie, “Other (non-Leisure Care) communities may have day trips set up by their activities people, but if they offer longer trips they are probably

arranging them through an outside travel agency. Basically we are an ‘in-house agency’.”

Just like any other full-service travel agency, TLC scours available flights, hotel rates and car rental agencies to secure Leisure Care residents the lowest fares and most sensible schedules. Unlike online travel sites or discount travel agencies, TLC understands the needs of Leisure Care residents and can easily work a traveler’s preferences into bookings. And TLC is flexible. Want to stay an extra night in Cabo or take a day trip to Bruges from Amsterdam? Not a problem. TLC will work with residents to customize their itineraries to suit their needs.

Maybe you’ve got the urge to travel, but you’re not sure where you want to go. Before you start spinning your desk globe, talk to your community’s travel coordinator. He or she can brief you on all the upcoming package opportunities that TLC coordinates, or help you plan a unique trip designed specifically for you.

Feeling social and adventurous? Join like-minded residents on an adventure off the beaten path. Travel can be a lot more than relaxing on an exotic beach. Tours can educate, enthrall and engage. Debbie and her team coordinate senior group tours with culture, adventure and excitement in mind, visiting locations as varied as Portugal, New Zealand and Panama City. No matter what the excursion, TLC tours are always unique and, because they’re part of Leisure Care’s spectrum of services, you know they’re going to be fun.

TLC recognizes that every trip requires special thought.

“One of the most memorable trips I planned was to the Panama Canal,” says Debbie. “It was a journey one of our residents always dreamed of doing with

her husband. He had since passed and she still wanted to fulfill their dream. We made it possible.

“Another great memory was our group excursion to San Francisco. We didn’t know the Blue Angels were going to be in town, and they did a flyover as we were cruising the Bay. One resident’s husband had been in a similar group of pilots back in the ‘40s and ‘50s. He had also since passed and she said it gave her goose bumps because she felt he was with her at that moment.”

Of course, if a tour doesn’t float your boat, maybe you need a bigger boat. Debbie will put you on a cruise that’s as relaxing or as adventurous as you make it. Ready to sip a tropical drink from your deck chair? Indulge. Want to visit village markets, take a cooking class, get a massage, tour art galleries or shoot hoops? The choice is yours.

“Cruises are easier for residents because they unpack only once, instead of in every city on a tour,” Debbie explains. “And they can get off the ship in port or choose to relax on board. Traveling is easier, with assistance available at baggage claim at the airport all the way to boarding the ship.”

These days, cruises are a lot more than white blazers and shuffleboard, offering activities and entertainment options as varied as the people who go on them. Debbie explains, “Travel by Leisure Care matches the traveler with the appropriate ship based on their age and what they wish to do.”

Visit the Hawaiian Islands, the California coast, the Caribbean or the wilds of Alaska. Cruises are a great way to get the adventure, the scenery and the culture of a foreign trip without the difficulty and hassle of planning your own itinerary. “Plus, there’s always something delicious to eat and endless entertainment. Most of the time, all of this is included in one price so

you don’t have to take a lot of cash with you,” adds Debbie.

And don’t worry about medical care. “There are always trained medical staff on board the ship in case of an emergency,” says Debbie.

TLC’s focus on senior travelers means an affordable trip that is also comfortable. TLC knows that issues like mobility or dietary concerns are more than a check box on a website. Travel by Leisure Care will help seniors find travel options that match their health needs, while catering to a wide variety of interests and activity levels. Working with TLC, travelers can coordinate services with their community for their trip. Details like the ride to and from the airport and watering the plants while you are away can be arranged by your travel coordinator.

“We arrange for wheelchair assistance and meet and greet if necessary,” says Debbie. “And because sometimes memory issues are a concern, we make sure everything is in writing so our travelers can refer to it before and while traveling. We will call you the day before a trip to go over any last-minute questions. We also try to touch base with your family to cover any concerns they may have.”

Travelers have a few steps they need to take before leaving on an international trip; having your flight, hotel, rental car and other arrangements booked is only part of the process. Travelers need to

make sure they can leave their country of origin, enter their destination country and return home without any customs hiccups. With recent changes to U.S. law, most American citizens now need a passport to travel from the United States to Mexico or Canada. TLC can help residents get a passport, renew an expired or expiring passport, and secure any necessary visas for travel abroad. Debbie has eight tips for senior travelers:

- 1) **Make sure your passport is up to date**
- 2) **Practice healthy eating and exercise prior to a long trip**
- 3) **Stay hydrated on long flights**
- 4) **Travel with your medical history and a list of medications**
- 5) **Purchase travel insurance**
- 6) **Pack light to make luggage easier to handle**
- 7) **Leave valuables at home**
- 8) **Leave an itinerary with someone at home in case of emergency**

The dream vacation is different for different people, but travel nightmares are the same for everyone. A cancelled flight or medical emergency can turn the carefully planned visit to heaven into a trip from hell. Booking your plans through an experienced travel agent will assure peace of mind for planning for the

worst. Often, domestic health insurance policies are vague on travel and don’t always offer full coverage internationally. Travel by Leisure Care will advise on the best trip and on the best travel health insurance. They will make sure the right people have the traveler’s emergency contact information, and TLC offers a 24-hour, toll-free, emergency help line for residents travelling to any part of the globe.



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through history. According to William Strauss and Neil Howe's book, "Generations," the grouping and naming of generations goes back to the 13th century, starting with the Arthurian Generation. Dating from 1433 to 1460, it gave the world Leonardo da Vinci and Christopher Columbus. This was then followed by the Humanist Generation, which ran from 1461 to 1482 and produced Michelangelo and Copernicus.

I'm sure even then generational differences existed. Teenage girls from the Arthurian Generation, who once busied themselves writing "Mrs. Da Vinci" in the sand with sticks surrounded by big hearts, probably repeatedly mocked their daughters with icy comments like, "I don't see what you find so dreamy about this Copernicus boy." Leonardo da Vinci devotees probably dismissed Michelangelo's ceiling paintings as the work of a misguided youth crazed on nutmeg.

Regardless, none of this answers why we blame other generations for our tendency to become fading echoes of our former selves.

Maybe the inevitable generation gap between eras isn't so much born from differences but from blind jealousies. We resent the younger generations for reminding us what we once were.

How else to explain our haughty dismissal of this generation's long-running "Survivor" TV show as mindless drivel, while, in the same breath, championing the brilliance of "Gilligan's Island"? ■

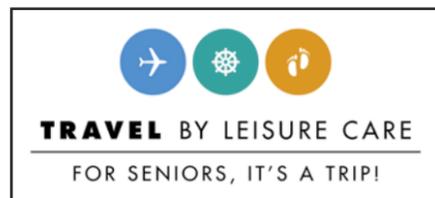


Jeff's humor articles have appeared in more than 30 publications including The Explorers Journal, Dining Out Miami and Outside Bozeman. When not writing, he spends his time sitting on his cabin deck dressed in tattered shorts and a thick Patagonia fleece jacket brooding about nothing in particular.
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Because TLC is a part of the Leisure Care package of services, everybody gets in on the act. Debbie recently arranged for Chef Darin Leonardson from Leisure Care's corporate office to give cooking demonstrations and private cooking lessons aboard a Holland America cruise to the Caribbean. As a featured chef, Darin had a chance to bring the Leisure Care experience to the high seas, cooking for residents and non-residents alike. Darin shared his insights into fast, fresh cooking and friendly, accessible instruction. Darin's spring rolls went over like gangbusters, but it was his humor that gave him top billing. Beginning his first demonstration with balloon animals, Darin interspersed his cooking with juggling coconuts and telling jokes. At the time of writing, Darin is slated to repeat his appearance in the first quarter of 2012.

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ning us into a 75-mile stretch of coast where the sun was brilliant and the high temperatures hovered just below freezing.

We walked and found a dead seal on the beach, her ribs exposed by decay. She was pinned under the bones of beach logs, and in a few weeks she would be indistinguishable from the driftwood that lined the sand. Time and change would take her as they were taking me. A fine funeral it would be, dissolving into this landscape, becoming gray and white, salt and sand. A generation of my own life had passed since I first stepped on to this beach. I could feel the weight of those years, but all around me it seemed as though nothing had changed.

Time is different on the peninsula. You can mark hours by your watch or months by the calendar, or you can let nature mark it for you. Follow the tide, for starters, as it deposits tiny pieces of polished glass and now, plastic, along with a line of sea foam, and then, hours later, takes them all away again. Stand at the base of a fallen giant, now the host for future generations of towering trees. The elk are still here, grazing in a low meadow, stopping to look up and then turning away when I cross into their territory. Moss greens the trailer homes, and the old sawmills rust into blade-sharp edges.

The years go by and I keep returning. I recognize the tree growing like the back of a chair from the seat of a spruce stump. The boardwalk in the swamp is slick with ice or maybe rain. The skunk cabbage is pungent and leafy. The moss hangs from the trees in shredded gauzy swaths. The eagles sit high in the snags and watch the beach as it is reshaped twice daily by the tide. I go back because it is the same every time: big, continually changing, continually the same. When I stand where the edge of the forest meets the Pacific and the sky, I fill my eyes with green, my lungs with the smell of the ocean. Everything is moving, everything is alive, and time does not matter.

This article first appeared in WorldHum.com. ■



Pam Mandel is a freelance travel writer and photographer. When she's not traveling, she calls Seattle, Washington, her home. Keep up with her adventures on the Web at www.nerdseyview.com.



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