In Transit

TRAVEL TIPS

Employ a Checklist For a Safer Ride

User recently revealed that more than 3,000 incidents of sexual assault were reported last year in-air vehicles in the United States. While that number represents a small fraction of its total riders, it’s still a scary possibility to customers who want to feel safe on the service. Consider any stops you can make until you receive the notification that the driver has arrived.

CONFIRM YOU ARE GETTING IN THE RIGHT CAR

First, check the car’s model, license plate and driver’s photo to the app. Rather than offering your name when you open the door, ask: “Who are you here for?”

TELL A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER WHERE YOU ARE GOING

Use Lyft and let someone else know where you are going. Tell them your name and the driver’s name, phone and license plate. Event if you are feeling threatened in any way, tell the driver you’ve shared this information.

SIT IN THE BACK SEAT ON THE PASSENGER SIDE

This seat will allow you to watch the driver, the road and access to an exit.

DON’T RIDE IMPAIRED

If you are from the Uber or Lyft app and receive location information and the car model and license plate to share with an emergency dispatcher.

SPEAK UP AGAINST UNSAFE DRIVING

Riders are advised not just to buckle up, but to speak up. “Some people feel hesitant to say anything if the driver is speeding or following other cars too closely,” said Brynn Growning, a lawyer who works with accident and auto insurance, “but if you don’t feel safe you need to take action.”

SEND FEEDBACK

If anything on the ride seemed amiss, like loud commens, requests for personal information or poor driving practices, let the company know, and, if appropriate, the police as well, said Dana Lockhart of the Seattle Police Department’s Victims Support Team. “You’ll help future riders avoid similar (or worse) experiences.”

TRIPPED UP

As the Tripped Up Columnist, I’ve fielded hundreds of emails about the ways in which readers have spent their time off, whether it be a wedding, birthday trip or a family vacation with five children, and how things frustratingly went wrong.

For the final column of the year, I took inspiration from several stories in my inbox to suggest four ways to travel smarter — and happen — in the decade to come.

Directly

The Minnesota reader Kathleen canceled a Booking.com hotel reservation, only to realize the reservation had actually been made on another site — and that wasn’t actually canceled. Jody, a California resident, used Garment.com to book two nights at a Brooklyn hostel, paying $715 for the room itself and a nonrefundable $325 fee, which she said was that “no, the hotel supplier and/or the website you booked on, return as part of the compensation for our/her or our services.”

Two other readers hit similar walls when they booked flights using online travel agencies. Can, while trying to correct his name on a China Airlines ticket (via Expedia), and Marchi, while fighting for a refund for a canceled Home Air ticket (via Priceline).

For several reasons, booking directly is usually smarter: for example, better rooms at hostels and the ability to choose seats in advance on flights.

Above all, though, booking hotels and flights directly means you are bound by only one set of terms and conditions — meaning no additional fees from a third-party site.

Organize Your Points, Miles And Credit Cards

Jodi, a reader in Arizona, asked how to get started in “the points game” — her terminology. I’ll refrain from using a Marie Kondo analogy here, but there’s no better time than New Year’s to organize some of the most powerful tools in your travel tool kit: your credit card and loyalty programs.

I never book flights or hotels without first researching the appropriate loyalty program. Points-earning travel programs simply having an account can yield perks, including free Wi-Fi at certain hotels and travel-honored (often in miles) on airlines. Miles are so vastly scattered — to other airlines, to hotels, to other people: that even one-off flights on one airline could reward.

Some people can’t dive with another log. I get that. That’s why I’m a fan of what to stock phrases and AwardWallet to track points.

Mitigate Bad Hotel Stays

Howard encountered bugs at a $56-a-night hotel in Israel. A crocodile caught fire at Carole’s $415 room in Miami Beach. Heck, last year I stayed at a much-coveted hotel on St. Ruis that disappeared on nearly every level, from hotel to stereotypical accessibility.

Scenarios like these are hard to resolve, but there are still ways to be proactive. Before booking, scan the hotel’s Instagram tag: real photos are more revealing than glossy marketing imagery. After something goes wrong, contact the manager, document the incident with photos and screen-grab written correspondence. Pressure the hotel on social media, tagging it handles. If you’re booked your way through a travel agent, ask them to parallel-reach others.

Finally, raise a glass at checkout in an effort to lower the must bill as much as possible.

Understand Basic Economy Plane Tickets

Kathy purchased Basic Economy seats on an American Airlines flight that was moved up by three hours — an itinerary change that derailed her vacation plans.

“It strikes me as fundamentally unfair. I can’t change my flight because I bought a cheaper fare, but the airline can just switch me to a different flight and I have no recourse,” the emailed.

Basic economy tickets, generally the least expensive options on any flight, are to economy tickets just as a Gap Factory sweater is to a sweater from the regular Gap. They look and feel the same, but you can’t defy the difference in price — and quality.

Most basic economy tickets are unchangeable, even for a fee. And because airlines (including American) reserve the right to change their departure times. Kathy landed squat in cayman emporium territory. I agree, though: fundamentally unfair.”

Four Ways to Travel Better Next Year

TRENDS

Hotels Manage Your Pace

At a time when nudge workflows have become a trendy hotel amenity, some properties are embracing something a lot more minimalist: pounding the pavement with your own two feet.

“Guided runs are just one of the many ways hotels and resorts are offering their wellness-minded guests the opportunity to maintain their daily routines while traveling,” said Anne Doh, president and chief executive of the Wellness Tourism Association. “A guided running tour is also an ideal way to explore a new destination in a way that is not harmful to the environment.”

Get the wallet, too: Guided sight-seeing runs are free at the following hotels.

THOMPSONSEATTLE

At this 155-room hotel in downtown Seattle, the general manager, Amanda Parsons, leads weekly runs at 6 a.m. The 45-minute runs wander through Pilis Pike Market and down to the Olympic Sculpture Park waterfront path.

ANOAL AMSTERDAM-PRINSENGRAACH

This hotel offers weekly Wednesday morning runs as part of its “Arrive A Vivare, Depart A Local” program.

SQUOXXO HOTELS

Guests at the new Equinox Hotel, Boston Hotels in Manhattan can try mapping the perfect route while scaling the Thomas Heatherwick-designed sculpture, with all the assistance on a 69-minute Vessel Run (April to October).

FOUR SEASONS HOTEL GROVE

At this Paris hotel, running staff members, including the spa director, lead a 5.5-mile sight-seeing route past key landmarks.

THE MANOR

This hotel in Portland, Ore., offers weekly runs in collaboration with the local fitness collective Wildwolf Flock.

The four- to six-mile route often weaves through the Willamette River.

THE WOLF

At this hotel, upper Saranac Lake in Upstate New York, guests can hike their muscles with the assistant general manager and climbers, Tracy Levenson. Because the auburn hotel has only 11 rooms, runs take place on demand and range from four to nine miles.

THE WESTERN NEW YORK AT TIMES SQUARE

Every Thursday at 6:30 a.m., just as “the city that never sleeps” awakens, Eric Aman, the Western Times Square’s opera- tion circulaire manager, leads a handful of guests on a 3.2-mile jog along the Hudson River Greenway.

“Very New York is a great city to see on foot for two reasons: density and diversity,” Mr. Aman said. “Walk or run 10 blocks in any direction and you’re likely to find yourself in a new neighborhood, each with its own unique story.”

SARAH FERRENS

The Vessel Run on Manhattan’s West Side.

CORRECTIONS

A story with article last Sunday about scaling the Emmons Island multinational as island. It is Andros Island, not Grand Bahamas.

The Feral Traveler article last Sunday, about inexpensive vacations in January, mentioned how the Richmond Christmas Tree Festival will be illuminated. The lights will be on until sometime in mid-January, not until Jan. 1.