

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Summer is Coming: Vacation Planning Starts Now

The days are getting longer, and spring break season is here! Soon we will be tending to our gardens and trading in boots for sandals. As flowers bloom, school will wrap up for another year and summer will arrive. If you're considering a family vacation this summer, now is the time to start planning.

Whether you are thinking about a long-distance vacation or a closer stay-cation, it is important to consider your budget. Have you already set aside money in your yearly spending plan? If not, look at your budget and see how much you can save between now and your expected vacation date. Once you've set the spending limit and your location, it's time to make plans. Here are a few tips to help stretch your dollars while making lifetime family memories.

- 1) Lodging – think about your family size and intended travel options. If you're willing to prepare meals on vacation, looking for a place with an equipped kitchen may be an option for saving money. If you plan to eat out every meal, however, a budget hotel may be your best option and free up some cash for adventure.
- 2) Look for free stuff! Once your destination is chosen, check out free resources in the area. Local travel and tourism and chamber sites are excellent resources to find out what events may be going on in the area. Look at parks, museums, lakes, etc. Even a lower cost activity like bowling in a different town may provide great fun for family members without the huge price tag.
- 3) Maximize savings options. Think about what resources you have available and stack them when planning if possible. For example, if you have flight points and hotel points, you may be able to save on those things and use your travel budget on meals or theme park tickets. Also, contact your local travel agent to see if there are things they can help you with that may be better priced than anywhere you find online.

If it's difficult for you to plan ahead for vacation, note that there are many great deals on last minute travel as well. If you find yourself with a free weekend and looking for an escape, be sure to check travel sites for bargains. The most important tip is that you plan to spend the money, even if you weren't able to plan the trip in advance. Avoid going into debt for travel if at all

possible. Your memories will be more positive if you're not spending months or years paying off the vacation.

No matter where you choose to spend your vacation, take time to enjoy life, family, and friends. Now, go make some memories!

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