

BBB Tip: Planning Your Next Family Vacation or Holiday Trip
By [International Association of Better Business Bureaus](#), November 30, 2019.

Whether you are planning a holiday trip, looking for a good deal for your next family vacation, or have just decided you need a getaway, Better Business Bureau (BBB) warns people to plan ahead to save money, avoid scams, and travel safely.

Scammers commonly target people looking for great deals online by offering tempting vacation packages at unrealistically low prices. That's why it is important to do your research first. BBB.org is a great resource for finding travel agencies, agents and websites that are reputable and dependable.

Here are some additional tips from BBB to help ensure a worry-free vacation:

Plan ahead. The early bird gets the worm. Allow yourself the time to research hotels, flights, and the area where you will be staying. Typically, the earlier you make reservations, the better the deals you will find and the lower the risk of your favorite destination being booked solid. Making reservations in advance also locks in rates and prevents you from paying higher prices later during prime spring break or holiday seasons.

Avoid broad internet searches. Try to avoid entering phrases like 'best deals' into whichever search engine you use. Broad search terms like that can sometimes lead you to 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 that you've "won a trip" or websites offering prices that are too good to be true. It's easy to extend questionable offers like these, but the vast majority of them leave hopeful travelers in limbo – and out money. Learn more about travel scams here.

Do your homework. Ask family and friends to recommend a travel agent or travel website and visit BBB.org for free Business Profiles. If you are using online services to find accommodations, be sure to research the business and read customer reviews about any rentals you are considering.

Get trip details in writing. Before making final payment, get all the details of the trip in writing. This should include the total cost, restrictions, cancellation penalties, and names of the airlines and hotels. Also, review and keep a copy of the airline's and hotel's cancellation and refund policies, as well as the cancellation policies of the travel agency or booking site you are using.

Consider travel insurance. Travel insurance covers things like trip cancellations or medical emergencies. There are different levels of coverage based on what type of plan you purchase. Ask a lot of questions, and always read the fine print to see what's covered and what's not.

Pay with a credit card. Paying with a credit card gives you additional protection if something should go wrong with the travel reservation.

No matter when or where you are traveling, there are things you should always do to protect yourself, your home, and your belongings:

Wait to post on social media. We all like to share our vacation adventures with friends and family, but wait until you get back from your trip. Giving too much detail about when you will be away, and your home will be empty, could attract thieves.

Check your home insurance. If your home will be unattended while you are away, make sure you know your responsibilities under your home insurance policy. Some policies do not cover damage if nobody checks on your home for a certain amount of time.

Share a copy of your itinerary with a family member or friend. Include the contact information of someone joining you on your trip.

Take a map. People rely heavily on smartphones and GPS. Have a hard copy backup in case of technical difficulties or if you are going through an area with poor cellphone reception.

Check the weather conditions where you will be traveling and pack appropriate supplies and clothing.

Avoid traveling alone. Use the buddy system and stick with your friends.

Use hotel safes to store extra cash and keep any valuables under lock and key.

