

## WHAT'S THE DEAL?

This week's best travel bargains around the globe.

## Land

• The Riviera **Palm Springs** in California is flashing back to the summer of '59 with a **\$59 rate for the second night**. Book one night in a guest room or suite starting at \$119 and receive the second night for \$59. The Celebrate 1959 deal also includes two welcome cocktails, two \$25 spa credits and a \$20 dining credit for two at Cantala, the property's midcentury-inspired restaurant. A \$35 resort fee and 16 percent tax are extra. Travel June-September. Info: 866-716-8147, [rivierapalmsprings.com](http://rivierapalmsprings.com).

• **Save 20 percent** at the Wild Dunes Resort on **South Carolina's Isle of Palms**. The Summer Kickoff Savings deal applies to the Boardwalk Inn, Village at Wild Dunes suites, vacation homes and condo rentals. Rates start at \$371 a night for a king or double queen room at the Boardwalk Inn or Village at Wild Dunes. Taxes included. Book by June 10; stay through Aug. 30. The property also has a sale on last-minute stays in June, with rates from \$99. Info: 855-222-2448, [destinationhotels.com/wild-dunes](http://destinationhotels.com/wild-dunes).

• More than 20 hotels and resorts in **15 states and on the Caribbean island of Curacao** are offering **savings of up to 50 percent**. The Summer Cyber Week sale applies to select Gemstone Collection and Benchmark Resorts & Hotels for bookings made by Monday. For example, a midweek August stay at Tivoli Lodge in Vail, Colo., now starts at \$164, including taxes — a savings of \$140. Applicable dates and restrictions vary by property. Info: [benchmarkcybersale.com](http://benchmarkcybersale.com) and [gemstonecybersale.com](http://gemstonecybersale.com).

## Sea

• Grand Circle Cruise Line is offering **free international airfare** on three October



JOE KLAMAR/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES

Visitors enjoy Vienna's Prater amusement park. A Grand Circle Cruise Line deal involves the city.

departures of its **Great Rivers of Europe** itinerary. The 16-day cruise starts at \$2,595 per person double and includes air to Amsterdam, with return from Vienna (or reverse); airport transfers; 14 nights aboard a private river ship; all meals and onboard beer, wine and soft drinks; 12 tours; gratuities for local guides and drivers; and taxes and port fees. From Washington Dulles, the savings are \$2,000 per couple. The ship visits the Netherlands, Germany and Austria. Book by June 19; depart Oct. 22, 27 or 28. Info: 800-221-2610, [gct.com](http://gct.com). Use promo code OCTOBER AIR.

• Book a select Origin of Species cruise with International Nature and Culture Adventures and receive **free round-trip air** from Quito or Guayaquil, Ecuador, to Santa Cruz in the **Galapagos Islands**, a value of about \$560. The deal applies to eight departures in June, July, August and October. Prices vary. For

example, the Oct. 4 and Oct. 18 trips start at \$7,995 per person double and include one night's lodging in Quito and on Santa Cruz, seven-night cruise aboard a 16-passenger yacht, naturalist guides, shore excursions, transfers and taxes. Info: 510-420-1550, [inca1.com/galapagos-origins-of-species](http://inca1.com/galapagos-origins-of-species).

## Air

• United has **discounted business-class fares** on flights to **Sydney** for two passengers traveling together on the same itinerary. Round-trip fare for two from Washington Dulles starts at \$9,142 for the airline's Polaris service, which offers lie-flat seats. Fare typically starts at \$7,611 per person. Restrictions include 14-day advance purchase and seven-day minimum stay. For lowest fares, fly Monday through Thursday. Travel through Sept. 4; book by June 18 at [united.com](http://united.com).

## Package

• Contiki, a tour operator for travelers 18 to 35, is celebrating National BFF Day on June 8 with **savings of up to 20 percent** on select tours, plus **discounted airfare to Europe** starting at \$549 round trip. For example, the 11-night **Simply Italy** tour departing Oct. 21 costs \$1,564 per person double, a savings of \$391. (Contiki will match travelers.) The flight from Washington Dulles to Rome starts at \$677; fare is typically \$1,222. Package also includes 11 nights' lodging in Rome, Sorrento, Florence, Venice, Milan and La Spezia; 14 meals; motorcoach transport; trip manager; and taxes. Book by June 11. Info: 866-591-7390, [contiki.com](http://contiki.com).

Carol Sottili, Andrea Sachs

Prices were verified at press time Thursday, but deals sell out and availability is not guaranteed. Some restrictions may apply.

## Going Greyhound doesn't mean accepting tardiness



The Navigator  
CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT

Jason Levitis emailed me recently from Greyhound bus No. 2559 from New York to D.C., which was supposed to arrive at 11 p.m. The problem? It was 12:25 a.m. and the motor coach was

cruising down Interstate 95. "This is a bit disappointing, but not surprising," says Levitis, an attorney from the District. "But what does surprise me is that Greyhound's tracking system says the bus arrived at Union Station at 11:32 p.m."

He attached an image to his email, time-stamped at 12:29 a.m. Sure enough, No. 2559 had already arrived, according to Greyhound's site.

His case raises a few interesting questions. Does a bus company's on-time record matter? Does anyone track it? And what happens if your bus is late?

Greyhound says its drivers use a system that allows them to record their arrival times when they reach a station.

"In this case, a driver on another bus accidentally recorded his arrival time under the wrong bus number, making it appear as if Mr. Levitis's bus had arrived when it had not yet made it to the station," says Crystal Booker, a Greyhound spokeswoman. "We base our performance numbers on when our buses actually arrive at our terminals. We take pride in the accuracy of our data, and we will continue to train drivers in this area to avoid future discrepancies."

Greyhound's on-time record may be irrelevant — at least legally. When it comes to customer service, motor carriers have little federal oversight. The Transportation Department doesn't issue monthly report cards on service complaints, as it does for airlines. Ticket refunds, checked luggage, schedules and reservations are lightly regulated. For example, the department requires that all checked baggage be made available to the passenger within a reasonable time, not to exceed 30 minutes, after arrival at the destination.

The only regulation that would apply to Levitis's situation is a rule that prohibits motor carriers such as Greyhound from scheduling a route between points that would necessitate the vehicle operating "at speeds greater than those prescribed by the jurisdictions in or through which the commercial motor vehicle is being operated." In other words, if it routinely takes more than five hours to drive from New York to Washington, then Greyhound isn't allowed to publish a schedule that shows a four-hour trip.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, which enforces these regulations, inherited a set of arcane customer service rules when Congress eliminated the Interstate Commerce Commission two decades ago. While these regulations from the 1940s and 1950s technically remain on the books, the agency's primary focus now is on safety.

The Transportation Department maintains a database of consumer complaints. A quick look at the complaints form for bus

passengers offers an overview of the service issues in which the government would get involved. For instance, it would register your complaint if the carrier didn't refund an unused ticket within 30 days, or if a scheduled bus departed from a terminal before a public announcement. However, the database isn't accessible to the public, so it's impossible for the average rider to know if a bus company has a problem keeping its schedule.

If the federal government doesn't keep on-time data for buses and doesn't require bus companies to keep their schedules, then why bother reporting on-time numbers at all? It also makes Greyhound's decision in 2015 to offer real-time GPS satellite tracking of its buses puzzling. BusTracker allows you to search for a bus by schedule number, departure city or arrival city. It automatically updates every one to four minutes, pulling data from three tracking systems installed on all of Greyhound's buses. But the system also warns that "On-time service is based on estimated departure and arrival times, which may be delayed by various factors including weather, traffic and road conditions."

Greyhound's "Terms and Conditions of Purchase & Carriage," the legal agreement between you and the company, explicitly says that it is not responsible for keeping its schedules, citing "delays caused by breakdowns, road conditions, weather or other conditions beyond carrier's reasonable control." But, it adds, Greyhound will make "reasonable attempts" to minimize the delays or make alternate arrangements to enable bus travel to your final destination.

A better approach to dealing with a scheduling problem with a motor carrier is to ask for compensation as a goodwill gesture. While Greyhound doesn't make any customer-service warranties, its parent company, FirstGroup, does, promising to "keep our customers at the heart of everything we do." So, while federal law or its customer contract may not require a voucher or partial refund for a delayed bus, you might be able to persuade a company such as Greyhound to offer compensation.

That's what Jacquie Cadorette does whenever her bus from New York to Philadelphia is delayed.

"When things don't work out on the schedule I want, I start by using the extra time I have to call the company," says Cadorette, a website editor who lives in New York. "If they're not apologetic about the issue, I'll do my best to reach out to someone higher up with my concerns."

Often, the operator will apologize and offer a partial or full refund. The company doesn't have to, but it does. After all, when it comes to ground transportation, there's still lots of competition from other bus services, ride sharing and Amtrak. If a motor carrier doesn't help a passenger like Cadorette, someone else will.

Bottom line, no one can hold the company accountable for its schedules except its own passengers.

Elliott is a consumer advocate, journalist and co-founder of the advocacy group Travelers United. Email him at [chris@elliott.org](mailto:chris@elliott.org).

## BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER

## Rich eating in a wealthy stretch of Florida

BY DERRIK J. LANG

From gilded mansions to polo matches, Florida's Palm Beach is one of the most outrageously opulent enclaves in the country. The grander-than-grand town on the ocean now proudly claims 30 homeowners on Forbes's annual ranking of the world's richest people, not to mention a sitting president. You can drop several Benjamins on lavish meals at plenty of places — Buccan, Cafe Boulud, everywhere at the Breakers. But there are a few options in town and in the far-flung surrounding county (one of Florida's wealthiest) that won't totally break the bank, all while still making you feel like you've stepped into an episode of "The Real Housewives."

### BREAKFAST



DERRIK LANG

Before hitting Palm Beach's posh Worth Avenue to window shop and millionaire watch, load up on a bountiful breakfast at the **Surfside Diner** ([surfsidediner.com](http://surfsidediner.com); 561-659-7495; 314 S. County Rd.). Don't be deceived by the name. It's not directly on the beach, nor is it a true diner — and that's a good thing. With a white tin-tile ceiling and traditional counter seating, this quaint spot a few blocks from the sand serves up behemoth cups of endless coffee (\$2.95) and an inventive menu that forgoes old-school classics such as waffles and hash browns. There's an array of hollandaise-laden Benedicts: among them, one topped with grilled tomato and spinach (\$11.95), and another featuring an ample slab of smoked salmon (\$13.95). On the weekends, come early because there will be a crowd. The best value on the menu is the chicken burrito wrap (\$8.95) dotted with black beans and stuffed with chunks of meat, Mexican cheese and fluffy scrambled eggs. You can walk down the street and use all that money you saved to splurge on a new swimsuit at Island Company or something shiny at Betteridge.

### LUNCH



DERRIK LANG

Despite its 47 miles of coastline, Palm Beach County doesn't boast an abundance of beachfront dining options. That helps make lunch at the alfresco Breeze Ocean Kitchen at the chic **Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa** ([eapalmbeach.com](http://eapalmbeach.com); 888-306-4894; 100 S. Ocean Blvd.) in Manalapan a must-do. You can't go wrong with a seat at either the Riviera-style white-and-yellow patio furniture on the terrace overlooking the Atlantic or at the bar with Jonathan Adler-designed ceramic sculptures floating on the wall in the background. The delightfully light poke bowl (\$26) is full of ahi tuna, cucumber, scallion, wakame, sprouts and avocado on a bed of sticky rice, topped with tempura crispies. For something more savory (and sloppy), the craft burger and beer special (\$21) comes with a double brisket beef burger, crispy island chips and a 16-ounce beer from a local brewery, such as the smooth Lagerhead Lager from Boynton Beach's Due South Brewing or the hoppy Fresh IPA from Jupiter's Civil Society Brewing. If you dare to combine booze with dessert, Breeze Ocean Kitchen offers a trio of beer floats. The blood orange (\$12) fantastically marries with a citrusy sorbet.

### DINNER



1,000 NORTH

If you still wanna be like Mike, travel to **1,000 North** ([1000north.com](http://1000north.com); 561-570-1000; 1000 N. Hwy. 1) in Jupiter. The NBA champion is among the venue's high-profile investors, although Jordan's name isn't mentioned except by patrons who have spotted him in the dimly lit dining room, where executive chef Lee Morris delivers slam-dunk modern American fare. Start with seafood. The bourbon and hay-roasted oysters (\$25) have an unadulterated smokiness, while the Thai shrimp with hearts of palm and watermelon radish (\$22) will refreshingly cool you down. For dinner, pick the petit filet mignon (\$45), served with one of four housemade butters. At dessert, go bananas. The craterous texture of the bananas foster bubble waffle sundae (\$12) will make you feel like you're taking a bite out of the moon. If you have time, stop at the U-shaped bar, for a great view of the Jupiter Lighthouse and quirky takes on classic cocktails, such as the reposado tequila-based Juan Collins (\$15). The view is even better in the upstairs private club, but membership is by invitation only and costs \$3,500, plus another \$3,500 in annual dues. Hey, at least you can eat like Mike.

Lang is a writer based in Los Angeles and Miami. His website is [derrikjlang.com](http://derrikjlang.com). Find him on Twitter and Instagram: @derrikjlang.

## TRAVEL

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## SIGN LANGUAGE



DARLA COURTNEY

Spotted in May by **Darla Courtney** of Charles Town, W.Va., on the Turquoise Trail Highway, just outside Albuquerque.

**Have you seen an amusing sign in your travels? Read on.** Photos may be color or black-and-white and should be no more than a year old. Send a high-resolution JPEG image to [travel@washpost.com](mailto:travel@washpost.com) with "Sign Language" in the subject line. Be sure to include your name, contact information and a proposed caption. Photos become property of The Washington Post, which may edit, publish, distribute or republish them in any form. No purchase necessary.