

Weekend trips are popular getaways

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Got the post-Labor Day blues? The sinking feeling that you will be stuck at home, not to travel until summer comes around again?

The tradition used to be that Canadians would cram their vacations in to the period between May 24 and the first weekend in September, then hibernate.

Changed, all changed. Today's travel junkies can't make do with only one major annual trip to some exotic destination, followed by 11 months of viewing their slides.

The cure for off-season depression is the weekend trip -- with the definition of "weekend" being left open.

The trend in travel today -- outside of the peak summer season, just ended -- is toward multiple getaways of two, three or even four nights.

This constitutes almost a revolution -- awaiting scholarly investigation by sociologists -- from the customs of only a generation or two ago, when weekends were considered to be a period solely for rest and recuperation from the labors and exertions of the working week.

TIMES-A-CHANGING

Here are some of the factors that have ushered in the era of the weekend mini-vacations:

—Work is less demanding, physically, than it was before the advent of computer-assisted manufacturing and the like. Therefore, many people have more energy to spend on weekend activities.

—Paradoxically, job responsibilities make it difficult for many people to take an entire week off work. Weekend get-aways are a feasible alternative.

—Public-sector workers such as policemen, firemen and urban-transit employees have high incomes (especially when overtime is included) and flexibility in work schedules. Travel agents regard people in such occupations as some of their best clients for frequent, relatively short trips.

—In a broader sense, real incomes are higher than in the past, and much higher in the financial industry because of the five-year-old stock-market boom. Travel has become a favored way of spending excess disposable income. Canadian unemployment is at the lowest level in five years.

—Perhaps most important of all, the travel industry has created a wide array of attractive short-term "packages" (travel, accommodation or both) for the weekend vacationer.

BAHAMAS BREAK

One of the most popular and most accessible off-shore destinations for a mini-vacation is the Bahamas. Toronto-based Thomson Vacations has pioneered the concept of three-night sojourns (beginning Thursdays) and four-night (from Sundays) for Canadians at resorts on one of the "family islands" of the Bahamas. This fall it will introduce sea cruises of similar duration among the Bahamian islands, originating and terminating in the capital city of Nassau.

The same tour organizer, as well as Carousel, will be offering get-aways of three or four nights to Las Vegas, Nevada, starting this month, at inclusive prices as low as \$359 per person. Las Vegas is primarily a gambling centre, also noted for lavish entertainment at its glitzy hotels.

On the Toronto-Vancouver route, for example, the return fare for such a weekend would be only \$379. But note that bookings must be made at

least 21 days before departure, the ticket must be within seven days of bookings and there is a \$100 penalty for cancellation WIDE VARIETY

Any well informed travel agent can steer clients to a lengthy list of weekend packages -- especially at US destinations such as New York and Washington -- bearing a relatively low price and including at least airfare and hotel accommodation, although often including such extras as some or all meals, welcome cocktails, use of tennis courts or other recreational facilities, a car or perhaps a car-rental discount.

If you prefer to travel on your own when you take a weekend break, be sure to inquire about discounts on accommodation. The more luxurious the hotel, the greater the weekend discount is likely to be -- as much as 65 per cent, for example, at Inter Continental Hotels' suites that are in heavy demand on week nights by expense-account clients.

It isn't that the hotels, airlines and car-renters become excessively generous between Friday and Monday mornings.

NOW OR NEVER

Rather, it's because those people who travel on business during the week naturally head for the comforts of home on the weekend, leaving airplanes, hotels and restaurants relatively empty and rental cars idle. Whatever return can be earned by serving and feeding the weekend traveller is better than nothing.

Researchers say that some of the biggest users of weekend travel bargains include corporate travellers extending their business trips to take advantage of recreational opportunities at the far-away city; single people over 30; retired couples filling their leisure time; and (in contrast) people who are extremely busy but nevertheless recognize the need for a relaxing break from the daily grind.

As with longer vacations, weekend travel arrangements can be upset -- by increasingly common flight delays, baggage losses and the like. But they offer an unusual opportunity to see interesting new places at relatively modest cost -- and to return to home and to work before the inevitable onset of boredom.

Canadian money accepted at par

Wyndham Hotels' three Nassau resorts are encouraging Canadian tourism by accepting Canadian dollars at par value with Bahamian or U.S. dollars for all food and beverage purchases and selected amenities through Dec. 19, 1987.

The three hotels -- Cable Beach Hotel and Casino, The Royal Bahamian Hotel and Villas and Wyndham Ambassador Beach Hotel -- are accepting Canadian dollars at par for food and beverage purchases at all their restaurants and lounges; greens fees, cart, equipment rental and merchandise at the 18-hole Cable Beach Hotel Golf Club; tennis, racquetball and squash court fees, equipment rental and merchandise at the Cable Beach Hotel Sports Centre; laundry and dry cleaning and local telephone calls. Each hotel also is offering a weekly Canadian happy hour, with beverages costing just 99 cents (U.S./Bahamas) each.

The program applies only to items charged to the guest's room, and payment must be in Canadian currency or Canadian traveler's checks. It does not apply to room rates, tax and gratuities, food and beverage purchases at the Cable



Meet me at the fair. Community fairs are popular events on Prince Edward Island. It is a time of color and pageantry when residents turn out to exhibit the products of their labors, visit with neighbors and enjoy the



festivities. Dozens of community celebrations are slated each summer from May to September, focusing on themes such as agriculture, fishing and Acadian heritage. For visitors it is an opportunity to make new friends

and share Island tradition and culture. When Islanders talk about 'down home good times', community fairs are at the top of the list! (P.E.I., Canada, Gord Johnston photo)

Beach Casino, watersports, long-distance telephone calls and lesson fees at the golf and tennis pro shops.

The program is available through the Canadian wholesale companies of Air Canada, Americanada, Caprice Holidays, C.P. Air/Treasure Tours, Golf Holidays, Golf Vacations, Holiday House, Key Tours, Pro-Vac, Sunquest Vacations and Thomson Vacations.

All three hotels are located on Nassau's beautiful Cable Beach and offer a wide range of vacation experiences. The 700-room Cable Beach Hotel and Casino is the total resort destination, the 170-room Royal Bahamian Hotel and Villas is a luxurious, upscale retreat, and the 400-room Wyndham Ambassador Beach Hotel is a popular hotel being transformed into a "brand new hotel" by a \$4.5 million renovation.

DR. W.B. FOLEY Optometrist

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Vancouver Wind Trio Nov. 1, 1987 1:30 and 3:30	Bob Schneider Jan. 17, 1988 1:30 and 3:30	Toy Town Troupers March 29, 1988 1:30 and 3:30
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