

Money-saving tips for savvy snowbirds

High gas prices and peak season pricing won't stop Canada's snowbirds from flocking to the south when cold weather hits – the lure of sunny skies and warm ocean breezes is just too great! According to savings expert Camilla Cornell, snowbirds should follow a few easy steps, however, to get the most value out of their journey south.

Cornell has teamed up with Uniroyal Tire on an eBook – Preparing for Winter 101 – that provides a wealth of helpful tips and is available for free to the public at www.uniroyal.ca. Here are some of the snowbird tips:

Before you go:

Some preventative vehicle maintenance is key to having a safe and economical road trip.

1. Prepare your vehicle.

Before you leave, take your vehicle for a thorough inspection. Keeping your engine properly maintained can save as much as four cents per litre on gasoline; and having a clean, versus a clogged, air filter can mean savings of up to 11 cents per litre.

2. Check your tires. A recent survey conducted by Uniroyal Tire found that most drivers have tires that are under inflated. This simple step can save up to three cents per litre. "Making sure tires are properly inflated is one of the easiest and most important maintenance procedures drivers can do," says Cornell. "Properly inflated tires not only contribute to greater fuel efficiency, but also last longer and perform better."

3. Pack a travel kit. Think of items you might need while on the road or in the case

of an emergency. Not only will this help keep you safe, but also prevent unnecessary stops at convenience stores. Some things to pack: beverages, light snacks, an extra bottle of motor oil, cell phone, ice scraper and brush, tow rope, cat litter (for a traction aid), blankets, a good flashlight, matches, a portable weather radio and a can of lock de-icer.

4. Safeguard your home. Ward off burglars and protect your home. Cancel the newspaper and set timers so lights seem as if you were home. Arrange to have your driveway



shovelled and leave a key with a trusted neighbour – ask them to check the house to ensure that mail doesn't accumulate. Finally, leave a number where you can be reached for emergencies.

On the road:

1. Chart your path. With online mapping sites like mapquest.ca, it's simple to plan your route to the sun. If you know what cities and towns you'll be passing through, make use of websites like gasbud-dy.com and hotels.ca to find the lower-priced fuel and accommodations en route.

2. Camp free in your RV. There are thousands of places where seniors can stay free or at minimal cost. According to Chuck Woodbury, editor of FreeCampgrounds.com, some Wal-Mart stores allow RVers to spend a night in their parking lots and other RVers hole up free in truck spots.

For more savings tips and to download the eBook from Cornell and Uniroyal Tire, visit www.uniroyal.ca.

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