



PULL-OUT GUIDE:
15 HISTORIC
AMERICAN
GETAWAYS

travelsmart

\$8.00

"May: the month of gladness." John Lydgate (c1370-1449)

May 15, 2007

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9 Protective Tips...

Cruise Ship Safety

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The sinking of the Greek flagged, 21-year-old *Sea Diamond* in the Aegean in April reminded us once again that cruise ships can run into problems. And so can passengers. Two people in their 20's recently fell off the balcony of the *Grand Princess* in the Gulf of Mexico but fortunately were rescued. Pirates (not of the Caribbean but of Kenya) attacked the *Seabourn Spirit* a while back and 12 passengers from Celebrity's *Millennium* died in an independently arranged shore excursion in Chile in a mini-bus accident. Even New York's stodgy Staten Island Ferry managed to have a serious crash several years ago in which 11 people were killed and many injured.

Cruise ships are usually very safe, great fun and a fine way to see many places while unpacking just once. Nevertheless, they are a small enclosed city and just as when visiting New York, Rome or Barcelona, you should be prepared and use common sense.

Note: We recommend that prior to booking a cruise, you check the ship's cleanliness rating. The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention regularly inspects and rates many international cruise ships, posting the updates at: www.cdc.gov/travel/cruiseships.htm. You'll find other useful information on the site.

Here are our 9 tips for safe cruising...

1. Gather together important items. The nearly 1,600 people who were forced to leave the Greek *Sea Diamond*, had little time to prepare as the ship took on water

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BackTalk

from our readers

NEW WAY TO HAIL A TAXI

G. Todd (Cleveland) and S. Powell (Seattle) both recommend reserving a cab in advance with **1-800-cab-ride.com**. You schedule a taxi online at www.1800cabride.com or call 800-222-7433. The company guarantees a cab within 3 hours, but they often come within minutes. Other points:

- You'll be quoted a flat fee that incl fare, tip, taxes, tolls.
- You must pay by credit card when reserving. (No cash.)
- You can cancel up to 24 hours in advance.
- Airport pickups are not sent out until you land and call the company.

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Into The Air Junior Birdman...

special report

Air Travel With Kids, Made Simple(r)

While air travel has become more grueling and less glamorous for "grown-ups," it is still a great adventure for kids. Take heed of these tips from our correspondent **Traci Suppa** and make the most of your next flight with your young charges. (Traci took her first flight at age seven and her son was airborne by five months.)



In 1987, Boston's Logan Airport, named after Lieutenant General Edward Lawrence Logan, opened its Kidport. One of the first airport facilities in the U.S. to entertain children, it was designed by the Children's Museum of Boston. The play areas had an interactive cockpit, Brio wooden train toys and views of the runways with signs explaining what was happening on the tarmac. Logan, a graduate of Boston Latin, Harvard College and Harvard Law School, had a distinguished military career and served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives and Senate. Some say he actually never flew in a plane!

BEFORE YOU GO

- **Involve kids in trip planning.** Take out an atlas or map and plot your route with highlighters. Learn together about your destination — it will build up their excitement. Read stories about famous people who lived where you're headed, or well-known happenings.
- **Book a non-stop flight.** If possible. And fly at off-peak times of the day

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Air Travel With Kids (cont'd from page 1)

(mid-morning, afternoon) and slow days of the week (midweek, Sunday morning) to increase the likelihood of being surrounded by empty seats. For long flights, ask your airline if kid-friendly meals are available, even if you need to purchase them onboard.

■ **Request the window seat.** On a clear day, there is nothing more entertaining for a child than to peer out during take-off and landing. And, going through clouds is much more fun than watching them from below!

■ **Stock up on new "surprises."** Bring new books, Game Boy cartridges and other small, quiet amusements (compact art sets, activity books, travel games, postcards to write). Unveil them at staggered intervals during the flight to keep kids entertained.

■ **Buy a carry-on.** Young passengers (three years and older) should be responsible for their own carry-on bag, even if it's a small backpack. Kids enjoy the grown-up look of suitcases on wheels, which are available in pint sizes.

■ **Prepare children for security inspections.** Give them simple explanations of what it will be like. Children as young as two understand that people in uniform are in charge. Telling them in advance that they will have to walk through the metal detector, alone, will prevent last-minute meltdowns. More information is available at www.tsa.dhs.gov/travelers/airtravel/children.

■ **Call your pediatrician.** Sick children should be cleared by a doctor before traveling. Even congestion from a common cold can be painful when cabin pressure changes. A decongestant prescription could be in order. Consider motion sickness remedies, as well. (Over-the-counter drugs like Dramamine come in chewable forms for children.)

■ **Check your car seat.** Many US states have strict laws regarding car seats for children, even those up to 80 pounds. You can bring yours from home and check it with the luggage. Or ask the car rental company if they are available at your destination. Unless it's FAA-approved, the child won't be able to sit in it on the plane.

Tip: Be sure car seats have the label: "This restraint is certified for use in motor vehicles and aircraft." For additional details: http://saferidenews.com/html/Airplane_Eng.htm.

■ **Go before you need to go.** It stands to reason, but make sure everyone uses the rest room before boarding!

DURING THE FLIGHT

■ **Watch for signs of fear.** Especially among younger flyers. They may wear a brave face, but be there to hold a shaky hand. Engaging conversation can keep their mind off their fears. Play a word game, 20 Questions or Hangman. Keep a deck of cards handy, as well.

■ **Never underestimate the power of a lollipop.** At any age, snacks every hour keep away crankiness brought on by hunger or boredom. To avoid sugar overload bring dried or fresh fruit and healthy snacks.

Note: Due to the current regulations pertaining to taking liquids and gels on

board, you must know exactly what items are permitted. Breast milk, baby formula and baby food are permitted in carry-ons (along with gel or liquid-filled teething). However, juice boxes and yogurt containers are generally larger than the 3-ounce limit for liquids. Ditto for jars of food like peanut butter. (But anything you buy in airport shops once you go through security is permitted on the flight.)

For Further Information

• **Traveling With Children.** Transportation Security Administration, www.tsa.dhs.gov/travelers/airtravel/children.

• **Travel With Your Kids.** Written by parents of children, this Web site offers lots of useful advice, www.travelwithyourkids.com.

SANITY SAVERS FOR PARENTS & GRANDPARENTS

Help Children Pass The Time

No more "are we there yet?" These creative, fun **CAR LAP PADS** come with an art pad, blackboard, crayons, chalk, colored pencils and more. Lightweight; rests on your child's lap. Ages 3-8. Two designs: Baseballs & Pink Apples. \$24.50 + \$5.95 s&h.



Keep Everyone On Their Toes

Each deck in this series of **FANDEX CARDS** is full of intriguing facts, stories and statistics. Beautifully illustrated, they fit in the palm of your hand. Perfect for backpack, glove compartment, tote, dinner-table conversation and the ideal summer-time gift for kids of all ages. Each deck has 50 cards hinged together by a plastic bolt. Individual decks @\$8 + \$3.95 s&h: Africa, Explorers, 50 States, NYC, Presidents, Washington (DC)



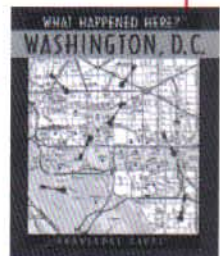
Keep The Kids Busy

The **ROADTRIP TRIVIA** (right) is filled with knowledge games and puzzles for kids who love words and learning. \$11 + \$3.95 s&h.



Find Out What Happened Where

Each card in the **KNOWLEDGE CARD DECK** shows a building, site or street on one side and tells what happened there on the other. Great fun for road trips, airline flights, cocktail hour. Learn where Robert Louis Stevenson lived. What happened at 1 West 72nd St in NYC. Easily fits into your pocket; 48 card set. Available for: Boston, Chicago, New York, San Francisco, Washington (DC), France, England, London, Ireland, Canada. Retail: \$11; our price: \$9.50 + \$1.95 s&h.



Keep Kids Busy & Quiet

This colorful spiral-bound **BIG BOOK OF CAR GAMES** is full of activities, punch-out projects, songs and more, including a game that's a great favorite with parents and grandparents, "The King of Silence!" \$12 + \$4.95 s&h.



To order these & other diversions:
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