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Quintessential Summer: 8 Outdoor Getaways

By Deirdre Van Dyk

Travel news, deals and updates for the week of June 8, 2009

AIRLINES & AIRPORTS

Pay to Pee. Budget European carrier [Ryanair](#) promises to follow through, within two years, on its threat to charge travelers to use onboard toilets. That luxury will cost you 1 pound (\$1.60). The airline will also eliminate airport check-in desks, instead charging passengers 5 pounds (\$8) to self-check in online. Ryanair CEO Michael O'Leary considered asking passengers also to load their own luggage, but security officials say that's impractical, logistically speaking.

Look, Ma, No Fees! Online booking agents [Orbitz.com](#) and [CheapTickets.com](#) say it will make permanent its recent no-fee policy on airline bookings. Now all flights can be booked fee-free, unless your travel involves a multicarrier itinerary or a flight that originates outside the U.S., Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean.

Birthday Bonus. [OpenSkies](#), the luxe airline that flies from New York's JFK to Paris and Amsterdam, is celebrating its first birthday by giving away a business class ticket per day for the next year. Each month, through May 2010, OpenSkies will pick 30 winners from a different birth month. (Confusingly, in June, people who were born in October are eligible to win.) To enter the lottery, [register here](#) by June 19. Or, take advantage of a sure thing: OpenSkies has a sale on Biz class seats through June 30, with \$550 one-way fares to Paris and \$475 one-ways to Amsterdam.

Fall Preview. [JetBlue](#) is offering tickets to its three new Caribbean destinations — Saint Lucia, Barbados and Kingston, Jamaica — for \$99 from JFK. Before you start packing, bear in mind the cheap fares don't kick in until October, but you'll have to book by June 17 for all travel through Nov. 14.

HOTELS & PACKAGES

Nothing lowers the blood-pressure quite like a mountain- or lakeside getaway. Here are eight choice deals, which include luxury spa treatments, old-world charm, Wild West adventures or upscale camping.

Berkshires Bounty. The white clapboard [Gateways Inn](#) in the Berkshires town of Lenox, Mass., was built as a summer home in 1912 and designed by Harley Procter of Procter & Gamble fame to resemble a bar of Ivory soap. Today, it's a lovely place to base a weekend getaway to the Berkshires — come here to hike around the waters of the Stockbridge Bowl, listen to the Boston Symphony at [Tanglewood](#) or tour [The Mount](#), the home of Edith Wharton. The Gateways's innkeeper, Fabrizio Chiarello, keeps a collection of more than 200 single-malt whiskeys in the hotel's restaurant and bar, and his wife, Rosemary, who runs the restaurant, is an award-winning baker. Other foodie gems: sushi restaurant [Fin](#) (27 Housatonic Street; 413-637-9171), which serves only sustainable seafood, and across the street, Scoop, which dishes out ice cream made with milk from local dairy cows. Rates at the Gateways start at \$160 per night, including breakfast. *51 Walker Street, Lenox, MA; 413-637-2532.*

Who Needs Snow... Colorado's Vail Resorts isn't just a skiing destination. To convince you, the resort has devised all-inclusive family friendly three- and six-night vacations jam-packed with Western activities. The [Epic Summer package](#) takes you panning for gold, whitewater rafting, horseback riding on Beaver Creek Mountain, and on gondolas rides to summits and historical walking tours through the old Victorian mining town of Breckenridge. There's even a Wild West cowboy campfire dinner, complete with wagon rides and storytelling. The six-night package costs \$1,195 for adults, or \$895 for children ages 12 and under. The three-night package costs \$695 for adults, or \$545 for children ages 12 and under. Both packages include meals and all ground transportation. *888-538-3742*

...When There's a Spa? If you prefer a mellower visit, [Vail Mountain Lodge & Spa](#) is offering a Wellness Week special June 21 to 26. The five-night program, which, as its name suggests, is designed to renew your sense of well-being, includes daily hikes, yoga, meditation, nutritional tips and three complimentary spa treatments, as well as personal consultations with the spa director. Rates start at \$1,500 per person including all meals. *352 East Meadow Drive, Vail, CO; 888-794-0410*

Adirondacks Retreat. The 94-room [Whiteface Lodge Resort & Spa](#) in Lake Placid, N.Y., has full-on sports facilities, offering everything from platform tennis and bowling to canoeing and golf. The resort's golf package gets you and your partner 18 holes, starting at \$388 per night, including breakfast. If lounging is more your thing, there's a Spa Escape package with two maple butter massages starting at \$472 per night, including breakfast. The hotel's Kamp Kanu will even entertain the kids for you — it's free for kids ages 3 to 10. *7 Whiteface Inn Lane, Lake Placid, NY; 800-903-4045*

Camping Starter Kit. If you want to commune with nature, say, on a wooded island off the coast of Washington State, but really aren't sure how to get started, try [Lakedale Resort's](#) pre-packaged camping trip. You'll get a

7-foot-by-9-foot dome tent that sleeps four, plus two sleeping bags and pillows, a double air mattress, a cooler, two aluminum mess kits, flashlights and folding chairs, plus a \$10 voucher to the General Store. Rates start at \$299 for two people for two nights at one of the Resort's lakeside campsites. You even get to keep all the equipment; all you have to do is set it up. *San Juan Island, WA; 800-617-2267*

Not Quite Roughing It. In California's Giant Sequoia National Monument, there's a getaway-from-it-all camp resort — you'll have to hike a mile just to get to your canvas cabin (but it's an easy mile). Once you get there, however, the [Sequoia High Sierra Camp](#) will pamper you with proper beds, down pillows, rugs and reading lights in your own canvas bungalow. You won't have to carry in your own food — three meals are served daily in the camp's open-air lodge. The resort opens June 19, with rates starting at \$250 per night. *866-654-2877*

Old-School Luxury. The famed [Grand Hotel](#) on Michigan's Mackinac Island is a delicious taste of the turn of the century, where guests must still dress for dinner in the dining room. (If the scene looks familiar, you may remember it from the 1980 Jane Seymour–Christopher Reeve film *Somewhere in Time*, filmed at the hotel.) There are no cars allowed on [the island](#), so you'll have to get around by foot, horse-drawn taxi or bicycle (available for rent at the hotel or on the island starting at \$4 per hour; or bring your own on the ferry over). Right now the 122-year-old hotel — voted one of the world's best in 2009 by *Travel & Leisure* — has an early summer special of \$249 including breakfast *1 Grand Ave, Mackinac Island, MI; 800-334-7263*

Aye, Captain. [Lake Powell](#), a 186-mile-long reservoir in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, spans the border of Utah and Arizona and offers fishing, beaches and dramatic views of the red rocks. The major activity here, of course, is boating. The Great Lake Powell Water Adventure gets you two nights' lodging for two (either at a hotel or an RV/campground), breakfast and full-day use of a 19-foot power boat to explore canyons and alcoves. Rates start at \$515 for two nights, through October 31. If you'd prefer to leave the skippering to someone else, try the Rainbow Bridge Centennial Excursion, which includes lodging for two, breakfast and two tickets for the half-day Rainbow Bridge boat tour for \$460 for two nights. *888-896-3829*

Tweet Deal. Marriott's gotten into the whole social network thing. Follow [@MarriottIntl](#) on Twitter, or check the hotel's website, to get the [Deal of the Day](#) every weekday at 7 a.m. EST through June 12. Deals can include discounts on room rates, free nights or free breakfasts at the hotel chain's Caribbean, Hawaii and California resorts. A sample from last week: two nights of a six-night stay free at Frenchman's Reef & Morning Star Marriott Beach Resort on St. Thomas. You get 24 hours to jump on that day's deal.

TECHNOLOGY

Palm-Sized Lonely Planet. Now you can get Lonely Planet guidebooks on your iPhone, with apps for 20 cities, such as London, Barcelona, Tokyo and Miami. GPS mapping allows you to see all the nearby bars, restaurants and cultural landmarks in your vicinity. To get you hooked, Lonely Planet is offering the San Francisco app for free until the end of June; after that, it retails for \$15.99. [Click here](#) to download.

Flight Info on the Fly. [Southwest Airlines](#) has upgraded its [mobile site](#), which now lets you book or cancel flights, access your frequent flyer account, view schedules and check flight status all from your smartphone.

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