

The busiest time of the year for air travel is over. For the next couple of months, airfares are low....but on the way back up. Get your ticket now before May or expect to pay the highest price per seat until late Sept and the beginning of Oct when prices hit bottom. If you have a favorite travel agent that helps you with "new discoveries", big discounts and makes all those reservations for you....get to their office NOW! Are you interested in the Olympics coming up this year in the UK? Get on the computer and make those hotel reservations now (many hotels already booked up for July & Aug) or call the 800 number for your favorite hotel chain. You know the prices for the London area will be up just a little more than the normal summer-season. Don't even think about going to this capitol without getting an underground map and pass. The London Pass covers many hotels, theatres and all of the "tubes"....at a discount. The Queen will be on the throne starting her 60th year, so there will be many folks walking down to the palace at Buckingham to see the Changing of the Guard every day at 1130 (it's a 30-45min event), but an easy walk down from the Hyde Park tube. There is also a new Ronald Reagan monument alongside President Eisenhower's in Grosvenor's Square, directly across from the US Embassy...there's a lot to see in London.

And for you aviation-enthusiasts, don't miss the RAF museums in the northern London suburbs (easy to get to via underground), or if you want to spend all day, the RAF museum in Duxford, a little longer trip via train to Cambridge from High Cross station and then bus to Duxford.

New rules are in effective this year for the airlines. They must notify you of delays of 30 minutes or more; their websites must tell you of ALL costs; baggage, meals, reservations, etc. If you get "bumped", you get twice the value of your ticket if they don't get you out in 2 hrs or less...more than 2hr and you get 4 times your ticket value...almost makes you wish you'd get bumped! If they make an announcement over the PA when you're seated on the plane... asking for volunteers to give up your seat....hit the attendant button at your seat NOW if your schedule allows you to get another flight at a later time.

Beside your notes from this column over the past 20 yrs and your favorite travel agent that you go to on occasion, members of AAA can also use their travel experts at your local office for help with destinations and also reservations.

Have an interest in Cuba? This year it will be just a bit easier to visit there and crowds are expected to take advantage of that....almost entirely in/out of Havana. You definitely need to use a travel agent for this country. Plan, pack up, and get going...enjoy.

Submitted by AGCM Moon Mullen USN RET