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Alternatives for Business Travelers

By David Leonhardt

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by: **David Leonhardt**

"I'm coming home. I've been away too long. Been away so long. I'm coming home" - Ian Thomas, in Coming Home

I still recall my road warrior days. It seemed like every other week, I was hopping on a plane for Orlando or Vancouver or Palm Springs or Washington or Chicago or Toronto.

It might not be Rome, Paris, and Monte Carlo, but Washington, Toronto and Orlando are pretty classy places. I went to crucial meetings. I was an important person. I was a frequent flyer.

However, after a while, all the towns begin to look the same. One airport hotel looks amazingly like another. Surely the taxi driver in Washington and the taxi in Orlando were twins separated at birth. I was yearning to just stay put. I had had enough of hotels and restaurants

Traveling sounds glamorous until you have to do it over and over and over. Especially when you have a family, you want to spend some time at home between the episodes of jet lag. Comfort becomes a much bigger deal, and you want every place to feel like home.

You just can't do that in a hotel. Not in a Marriott. Not in a Sheraton. Not in a Hilton.

I wish I knew then about two other options.

Private Vacation Homes (or rental villas)

Private vacation homes, known also as holiday homes or villas are essentially houses that rent on a weekly basis. They are not much help for fly-in meetings. For those, only an airport hotel will do.

Alternatives for Business Travelers

But if you plan to be in town for the better part of the week, there is nothing like kicking back in your own private home - a rental home, of course.

"Hotel rooms are cramped; a villa is spacious with room to walk about. Hotel rooms have a TV and desk in the bedroom; a villa has surround sound TV and stereo with comfortable couches and chairs in various parts of the home. A hotel has a public pool; a villa has a private pool," says Florida villas rental agent Stewart Granville. "It's private. It's comfortable. It's like a home away from home."

Mr. Granville notes that a vacation home rental also serves as an office away from home, with one room dedicated to the office. "In a villa, you don't have to sit on your bed when you type those memos. And what a great way to entertain business contacts."

Mr. Granville specializes in villas in America's vacation heartland: Orlando, Florida. Business travelers often bring their family along to enjoy Walt Disney World, Universal Studios and other famous theme parks. The family plays while the business traveler works. When the meetings are over, they all head

for Disney together, perhaps for another week. With family in tow, a private rental home makes much more sense than a crowded hotel room.

Bed and Breakfasts

Bed and Breakfasts are also an option. Although they do not offer the same privacy and space as villas, they are warmer and more homey than a hotel. And like a hotel, they rent by the night, not by the week.

Is a bed and breakfast for you? If a relaxing atmosphere is more important to you than room service, a bed and breakfast is for you, yes. They are comfortable and relaxing, so the business traveler can walk confidently into his meeting free from stress and worries.

Bed and Breakfasts are growing more popular for weekend getaways in the country, but most major urban centers have bed and breakfasts right in the heart of the city...and these are ideal for road-weary business travelers.

So forget about room service and the mint on the pillow. For a stay of several days, the business traveler can rent a spacious, private vacation villa. And for just a night or two, it's a warm and comfortable bed and breakfast.

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For Florida vacation villa rentals:

For Orlando vacation home rentals:

A Travelers Guide To Currency Exchange

By Stephen Kreutzer

Exchanging currency is something frequent travelers must become familiar with. There are many different currencies around the world. Finding out how to exchange currency and where to do it can help travelers get the most out of their money.

The following outlines the major places that will exchange money for travelers. Also indicated are any problems or concerns about exchanging currency using the methods.

1. **Airports.** Airports will exchange currency for travelers at desks they have set up for this purpose. They usually offer exchange rates that are the worst available. They charge high fees which can sometimes be as high as 20% of the exchange amount. This type of exchange is most convenient for the time pressured traveler. It is conveniently located at the airport and it is easy to do a transaction.
2. **Banks.** Local banks are happy to exchange currency. They often offer the best rates and do not charge fees that are too high. Banks tend to use exchange rates based on the actual traded values. Banks, however, are limited in hours of operation and may be unable to exchange certain currency or large amounts.
3. **Credit and Debit cards.** This is the quickest and easiest way to exchange currency. Most major credit cards work world wide without hassle. The exchange rates are competitive which keeps them low. Travelers should alert their credit card company that they are using it outside of their home country so it does not get deactivated as security precaution.
4. **ATM machines.** They are easy to use, but also pose a risk of high fees associated with their use. Travelers wishing to use ATM's outside of their home country should discuss fees first with their bank.

Travelers may find many different places to exchange currency. The four listed here are the most commonly used options. Each has an up and down side and the one a traveler chooses depends on their own needs and concerns.

Stephen Kreutzer is a freelance publisher based in Cupertino, California. He publishes articles and reports in various ezines and provides resources on currency exchange at

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