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**Travel Bargain Or Travel Scam? How To Know The Difference**

**By Jolana Klobouk**

Congratulations!!! You have been selected to win an exciting luxury vacation to.....

Where have you heard that one before? Although there are many genuine travel offers, there are also many travel scams that defraud innocent travelers out of millions of dollars each month. Travel is a big ticket item and most people would like to save some money or even travel for free. Unfortunately, it opens the door to some unscrupulous individuals and companies who try to take advantage of this.

Travel packages turn out to be very different from what was originally offered or what the "winner" expected. Sometimes, the company just takes the money and runs! So if you get a phone call or email offering a free or extremely low-priced vacation , keep these tips in mind:

**The Most Common Travel Scams**

– Emails, phone calls, or snail mail advising that you have been selected to "win" a free vacation, free airfare, or a hotel stay, especially when you haven't entered anything.

– Ads for great travel deals or discounts with the condition that you agree to a time share presentation. You will be subjected to a high pressure sales pitch that is really not worth your time – unless of course you really are interested in buying a timeshare!

– Travel clubs that charge a fee for their great travel discounts and offers. There are of course many legitimate travel clubs but there are just as many that are not. Do your research well to make sure it is worth it.

– Contests which do not post or provide rules or requirements or even any details about the company running it. A legitimate contest will provide rules to participants and if it does not, it is probably just a ploy to get information on you.

**How to Spot the Red Flags**

– Does the price seem too good to be true? If so, it probably is.

## Travel Bargain Or Travel Scam? How To Know The Difference

- Are you pressured to make a decision on the spot?
- Did you get the call after business hours. Legitimate businesses normally operate between regular business hours.– Did they require you to pay before you receive any details about the trip, or ask you to pay for more information.– Are you told you can't leave for two months? This should be cause for concern because the deadline for disputing a credit card charge is 60 days. – Is the supplier simply identified as "a major airline," or a "popular hotel" without getting into specifics?
- If you have won a free vacation, you should not be asked to pay hundreds of dollars in order to "claim" your prize.

### How to protect yourself from Travel Scams

- Determine the complete cost of the trip in dollars, including all service charges, taxes, processing fees, etc.
- Pay by credit card, if you don't get what you paid for, you may be able to dispute the charges with your credit card company. – Don't be pressured into buying anything, legitimate businesses don't pressure you to make a purchase.
- Get a receipt in writing. If you make reservations online, print out the itinerary and receipt.
- Find out the exact names of the hotels, airports, airlines, and restaurants that your package includes; if they tell you a "major hotel chain" or "major airline" ask for specifics
- Always ask for a copy of the cancellation and refund policies.– If you are told that you've won a free vacation, ask if you have to pay any money in order to get it.
- Be aware of what "subject to availability" means may not get the accommodations you want when you want them.
- Be aware that if you have been "specially selected to receive our Super Duper Travel Deal offer" doesn't mean you'll get it free, it means you'll be offered an opportunity to pay for a travel deal!

And last but not least, be skeptical. Read or listen to carefully what is being said, not what you want to hear. We would all like to win that all expenses paid dream vacation to Hawaii, but like everything else, you get what you pay for if you don't pay attention first.

Jolana Klobouk is a former travel agent who has traveled extensively for work and vacations with her family. She is currently the editor of

<http://www.best-family-beach-vacations.com>

and

<http://www.FlyFromCanada.com>

Visit them for more great travel information.

## **Don't Be A Travel Scam Victim**

**By Terrell James**

You had the idea to travel to somewhere exotic. You finally made a decision, you want an adventure. You want to explore a beautiful country. You may also want to explore the jungle. You might also bring a friend or a loved one. Then an email comes along in your account that says you won a free vacation. Before you go, it is essential for you to be aware of predators. No, I am not talking about animals. These predators are human, and they set up schemes to trick you into a scam. He will try to gain your trust, then steal and run away with your money. He usually will sound like someone who is polite and seems to be an honesty person. Unfortunately though, these types of predators come in all shapes, sizes, and are from different countries.

You should always be very cautious about traveling if someone tries to "pitch" something to you about a trip. The predator may try to sell you a "cheap discount bargain" for your trip, or claim to you excitingly you won a wonderful trip to somewhere half-way around the world. Here are some things you should know:

When you are planning a vacation you should have and receive full details of the total price, specific information of the package, and any penalties in writing before paying. You should never pay or give your credit card number unless you are confident about the company. Scam artists will almost never give full information in writing until after you paid them. A lot of times even after you do pay, you will not receive any more details. If you do receive anymore information, chances are there will be conditions and situations which will make your trip more expensive. If you think you are interested in the offer, you should ask **WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED**. A lot of travel scams will add on fees and service charges after you pay for it.

Travel scams are designed to trick victims and come in different forms. You should be very skeptical of phone, email, and mail offers that state you have won or been selected as the lucky winner. Deals offered by email are almost always a scam, and this is especially true more so for a contest you yourself have not even signed up or applied for. A lot of times you did not really win anything. You will be instead asked to pay a lot of fees to receive your "reward". If you really won anything, it shouldn't cost you anything to get your prize. It is like that old saying, "If it sounds too good to be true, it most likely is."

The author of this article Terrell, is the webmaster and owner of the new website

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which is about his backpacking experience in Cloud Forest in Costa

Rica.



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