



For Immediate Release  
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## **AS AMERICANS SEEK AFFORDABLE TRAVEL, TOUR OPERATORS OFFER 20% SAVINGS COMPARED TO 2008**

- Savings range from 10% - 35%+ over last year
- 30% of Americans seek destinations with more value
- 15% say they will travel abroad
- Savings up to \$500 per person over last year

Tour operators have lowered prices an average 20% compared to 2008 on many vacations, in response to the soft economy and stronger U.S. dollar in many destinations, according to the U.S. Tour Operators Association. A recent member survey revealed a range of savings, from 10% to more than 50% for the same vacation when compared to last year.

“In countries as diverse as Greece, Egypt, South Africa, Australia, and Italy, the U.S. dollar has gained in strength, while domestic destinations like Hawaii are offering good deals in response to soft tourism year,” says Bob Whitley, USTOA president.

A recent consumer survey commissioned by USTOA found that three out of four Americans say they will travel this year, but most are staying closer to home in response to the recession. Affordability ranked number one consideration in planning a vacation, with almost 30% of those surveyed saying they would seek destinations that offer more value. And, while more than 45% of Americans said they were not going abroad this year, almost 15% were lured by a stronger dollar.

### Examples of Savings

“There are compelling reasons to travel further afield this year, especially if you’re looking for attractive deals,” says Bob Whitley, USTOA President. He cites **Hawaii** as an example. “Through August 31, travelers can save 40% over 2008 on a 4 day/3 night package, and kids 17 and younger stay free. For \$442 a person, you can get roundtrip air fare from Los Angeles. and hotel accommodations,,” says Whitley.

Another example is a 10-day land-cruise package in **Greece**. Available through August 31 the same package cost \$1,500 per person in 2008, but sells for \$995 this year, with free accommodation upgrades. “That’s an almost 35%--or over \$500--savings over 2008,” notes Whitley.

Other examples of 2009 vs. 2008 savings include:

### **Australia & South Africa for families – save 20%**

In South Africa, through November, a 10-day land-only tour of Cape Town, the Garden Route and Kruger National Park for families, is \$6,355 per person versus \$7,855 per person in 2008 – a savings of \$1500. A savings of nearly 20% over last year, the tour includes most meals, sightseeing and activities. International air fare is additional.

Through December 8, a 16 day custom-planned itinerary to Sydney, Melbourne, and the Great Barrier Reef costs \$1,430 this year – or \$500 less than in 2008. The savings of 25% includes round-trip airfare from Los Angeles or San Francisco and all transfers in Australia.

### **Europe & UK savings–10% over 2008**

- A 7 day/6 night vacation package to **Budapest and Prague** that sold for \$1355 per person in 2008 costs \$1199 per person this year--a savings of \$150 per person, or more than 10%, over last year. Included are accommodations, daily breakfast, a tour in each city, flight from Budapest to Prague, and airport transfer by private car through November.
- If booked by July 10, an 11 day escorted tour of **England, Scotland and Ireland** that cost \$2,849 per person last year sells for \$2599 this year, a \$250 savings. Costing almost 10% less than in 2008, the tour includes round-trip airfare from New York and Boston, accommodations, breakfasts and some dinners, plus sightseeing. Departure dates are valid through 2010.
- Through October 22, an air-inclusive 7-day, custom planned itinerary to **Rome and Venice** with round trip air fare from New York, which cost \$1229 per person in 2008, starts at \$1099 this year—a savings of \$130 over 2008.

### **Tours and Packages Save Money**

Of consumers surveyed by USTOA, 60% believe that tours and vacation packages offer more value for the dollar. “In fact, buying pre-planned arrangements can save an average 20% over doing it yourself, on top of this year’s dollar savings,” according to Whitley.

### **More Information**

All prices are per person, based on double occupancy. Prices may vary by departure date, and booking deadlines may apply. Restrictions and additional security fees, departure and local taxes and fees may also apply in some cases.

USTOA members have met the travel industry’s highest standards, including participation in the USTOA Travelers Assistance Program, which, among other things requires each member company to set aside \$1 million security to protect consumers’ payments in case the company goes out of business. For more information, and a list of USTOA members serving various destinations, visit the USTOA website: [www.ustoa.com](http://www.ustoa.com) or [www.ustoa.travel](http://www.ustoa.travel). Or see your travel agent.

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