



TOP 10 REASONS TO BOOK A TOUR

Affordability

By buying in bulk and negotiating special rates for hotel accommodations, ground transportation, sightseeing tours, meals and other services, tour operators achieve substantial economies. This savings is passed on to the consumer. Many tours and packages also include select meals, hotel tips and sightseeing, which add up to additional savings for travelers.

Peace of Mind

Knowing that a vacation was planned by trusted industry professionals brings peace of mind while traveling domestically or aboard. In the event that an unforeseen problem does arise, a tour escort, local host or representative of the tour operator is available to assist travelers.

Pre-paying for a trip, also allows travelers to budget for the vacation with greater certainty, since all costs and inclusions are known upfront.

Unparalleled Access

As part of a tour group, travelers generally avoid the wait, and go right in. Because tour operators negotiate with local sightseeing companies, they can often provide accessibility to otherwise hard-to-visit attractions, such as the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, or major sports and entertainment events.

“E Factor”

Today’s traveler wants to go beyond the tourist hotspots and experience the colorful history, unique culture, and distinct tastes of a destination. USTOA tour operator members offer a variety of programs that focus on special interests including art, cuisine, and adventure. Such programs also provide travelers with non-traditional experiences such as enjoying a home-cooked Scottish meal at a local family’s farmhouse, learning how to cook authentic Vietnamese dishes in Hoi An, or volunteering at a game reserve in Africa, singular experiences that would be hard to arrange on one’s own.

Variety

With thousands of itineraries to choose from, travelers are sure to find a tour operator and vacation that suits their individual needs. Whether a first-time traveler or someone more seasoned looking to explore a more “off-the-beaten path” destination, consumers will find travel packages are available in many different touring styles, from action-packed to more leisurely paced.

Guaranteed Accommodations

Tour operators purchase blocks of choice rooms well in advance. This guarantees accommodations in many popular vacation areas where rooms might otherwise be sold-out.

Convenience

Tours and packages provide the basic framework for trips, offering the convenience of "one-stop shopping." This can range from pre-paid hotel vouchers and a car rental for an independent self-drive vacation, to a pre-arranged day-by-day itinerary, including accommodations, meals, sightseeing and baggage handling.

Insider Knowledge

USTOA tour operators work with destination experts on the ground to help create educated and fulfilling travel experiences. Each tour is headed by a knowledgeable local guide, who brings a unique perspective to the trip, whether it is bringing the group to a hidden gem or sharing anecdotes and information not always found in a guide book.

Freedom

Tours don't always mean staying with the group. Tour itineraries can be created with more flexibility that allows ample time to explore particular points of interest on one's own. With the help of a local tour guide, guests gain suggestions on what to see and do, and tips on how to maximize the time spent away from the group.

Protection

Travelers who book with tour operator members of the United States Tour Operators Association (USTOA) are protected by the organization's Travelers Assistance Program, which among other requirements, stipulates that in the case of a USTOA member bankruptcy or insolvency, tour payments are protected up to an aggregate of \$1 million.

Travel agents know to check the tour operators' literature for the USTOA Active Member logo and \$1 Million Consumer Protection Plan symbol. In addition to protecting consumer's vacation dollars, these operators must meet strict requirements of ethics and integrity in their tour offerings and advertising.

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