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Per person double occupancy,
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Image: Xx

Member Choice Vacations® offers immersive experience

Southern Stars: Unveiling Australia & New Zealand

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND mesh better than cookies and milk. Together, they create a delicious vacation that few combinations worldwide can match.

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Australia & New Zealand Uncovered will run from October 7-28, 2024. The cost is \$12,099 per person double occupancy and includes airfare. Members who book and deposit by February 29 can save as much as \$200 per person.



Image: Xx

These jewels of the South Pacific – affectionately dubbed "Oz" and "Aotearoa" – offer an otherworldly allure that is guaranteed to satisfy your wanderlust. They're priceless gems rarely seen but always reward. Absorb the atmosphere and relish radiating lands awaiting your arrival.

This extensive trip to the other side of the world will put you in the best spots to witness locations that only can be fully appreciated by your own eyes. Photos might bring back memories, but personal experiences last a lifetime.

Venture off the usual tourist path to discover the real Australia and New Zealand. Imagine what might be beneath the surface once you take your trip beyond seeing sights. Dive deeper to engage with the environment and culture – actively and meaningfully.

Close your eyes and imagine your journey.

REAL ID Extended to May 7, 2025

The Department of Homeland Security extended the REAL ID deadline to May 7, 2025. The REAL ID Act established minimum security standards for state-issued driver's licenses and identification cards and prohibits Federal agencies from accepting for official purposes licenses and identification cards from states that do not meet these standards. Beginning May 7, 2025, every state and territory resident will need to present a REAL ID compliant license/ID, or another acceptable form of ID for boarding commercial aircraft, accessing Federal facilities and entering nuclear plants. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) considers a current passport or military ID acceptable identification for boarding an aircraft. For more information on New York's REAL ID-compliant license, visit dmv.ny.gov.

Get Peace of Mind with Automatic Renewal

AAA Auto Pay is the convenient way to pay your membership dues! There are no checks to write, no stamps to buy, no late payments and no risk of having your membership lapse. Choose AAA Auto Pay and your membership dues will be automatically charged to your credit card, debit card, or checking account each year. When you enroll using your credit or debit card, your account will be charged seven business days prior to the membership expiration date. Enroll by using your checking account and your account will be charged one day in advance of the expiration date. To learn more or enroll in AAA's Auto Pay Program, call 1-800-441-5008 or visit your local AAA branch office. To sign up online, log in to your membership account at AAA.com and select "Enroll" in the Bill.

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The Fuel Rewards® Program is all about one thing: providing real, immediate savings on something you use all the time — fuel. AAA Members get automatic Gold Status and save 30¢/gal on their first fill-up at Shell when they join the Fuel Rewards® program by 12/31/23 and make their first transaction within 30/days of joining. After that, save 5¢/gal every day on each individual fill-up of up to 20 gallons from participating Shell stations.

Find Lower Gas Prices with Auto Club app



Eager to find the lowest gas prices in your location? AAA's Auto Club app can help you save time and money by comparing prices of the nearest gas stations. The Auto Club app also goes beyond finding the lowest fuel prices. Members can use it to request roadside assistance, book travel reservations for flight, car rental, hotel, or cruise, and much more. To get the app, text APP10 to 86792 and you will receive a link to download it.



Upkeep helps drivers avoid breakdowns

Components often overlooked can cause big problems

AAA has rescued drivers for more than a century, and there are no signs of stopping. It aids stranded members approximately 30 million times annually for a myriad of reasons. There is no telling what could lie ahead, but there are three most common reasons: dead battery, flat tires and overheating.

Remarkably, improved vehicle maintenance could avoid a quarter of these experiences, making it prudent to take care of your vehicle.

Battery issues are the leading cause for roadside breakdowns, particularly during the winter. Batteries lose as much as 35% of their efficiency when temperatures dip below freezing and as much as 60% when temperatures drop below zero.

Cleaning corrosion from the posts and cable connections, as well as washing all surfaces with battery-terminal cleaner or a solution of baking soda and water can keep your battery strong. Retightening all connections also lessens the odds your battery will lose juice.

Automotive batteries typically last between three and five years – less in hotter climate conditions. Don't forget to turn off your vehicle's lights once you've reached your destination. Keeping them on an extended period of time can reduce your battery's lifespan.



THERE TO HELP – Millions of members call AAA each year for roadside assistance. *Image: garry images. Adobe Stock.*

Safeguard against a dead battery by having it tested annually once you've had it three years.

AAA Battery Service offers quick, accurate and convenient mobile-battery testing and replacement. State-of-the-art diagnostic equipment will confirm whether your battery will hold a charge or if the problem lies deeper in the electrical system. The service is included with your AAA membership. You

can purchase a new battery and have it installed onsite if one is needed.

Tire care also is essential. Motorists should have them checked frequently during winter months. Pressure begins to drop as temperatures fall. Typically, the rate at which pressure lessens is 1 PSI for every 10 degrees. Proper tire pressure levels can be found in your car's owner's manual or on a sticker located on the driver's side doorjamb.

AAA recommends replacing a tire when 4/32 inches of tread remains. This can be tested by placing a quarter upside down in the tread groove. The tire should be replaced if Washington's head is visible.

Coolant leaks become more common when temperatures plunge. Metal engine parts contract in cold weather and hose clamps loosen. Your vehicle's coolant never loses its antifreeze capability, but the additives that lubricate the water pump and protect internal-engine components from rust, scale and corrosion can become depleted.

It's wise to have your vehicle's cooling system flushed and filled when recommended by the manufacturer. Newer coolant formulations can last as long as five years or 150,000 miles.

Check the coolant level in the overflow reservoir by opening the radiator cap. It should be filled to the "Full Hot" indicator line with a 50/50 mixture of antifreeze and water if it is low.

TAKE CHARGE

Count on AAA to turn battery problems into solutions. AAA Battery Service is available from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. seven-days a week. To verify AAA Battery Service availability in your area, call our toll-free number: 1-800-222-4357.

Road deicers cause billions of dollars in damage

Majority of Americans at risk for costly, dangerous rust problems

Pay now. Or pay later. That might be the best way to describe the winter-driving season.

Slick roadways are the primary cause of thousands of car crashes annually. Road crews work before, during and after snowstorms to plow and deice roads. Salts and other chemicals are used to melt snow and ice and allow drivers to safely reach their destinations.

It's an invaluable process but it doesn't come without a price. Millions of Americans are confronted with expensive vehicle repairs from rust damage caused by chemicals used to the clear roadways.

A AAA survey found that drivers paid more than \$15 billion in rust repairs caused by deicing methods over a five-year period. AAA warns drivers to take actions to prevent dangerous rust-related damage to brake lines, fuel tanks, exhaust systems and other critical components.

AAA urges drivers, who experience any of the following vehicle malfunctions, to immediately move it from the road to a safe location and have it towed to a trusted repair facility.

- In-dash warning lights for brakes and other critical systems.
- A "spongy" or soft feeling when applying pressure to the brake pedal.
- An unusually loud exhaust sound or the smell of fumes in or around



CLEARING THE WAY – Rock salt is used to clear millions of miles of road throughout the U.S. It's an effective measure, but it could cause rust damage to vehicles. *Image: robsonphoto. Adobe Stock.*

the vehicle.

- The prominent smell of gasoline or diesel fuel when the vehicle is parked or running.

Many state and local transportation departments have shifted from using rock salt to liquid deicers to combat hazardous road conditions. The alternatives have proved to be more effective than traditional salt because they can be

applied before a snowstorm, have a lower freezing point and quickly melt ice and snow.

These same characteristics, however, can be even more damaging to vehicles since the chemicals remain in liquid form longer and are more likely to coat components and seep into cracks and crevices where corrosion can accelerate.

AAA recommends drivers take the

following preventative steps to reduce vehicle damage:

- Limit driving immediately before, during and after winter storms when salt and deicing solutions are being applied and are at their highest concentrations.
- Frequently wash your vehicle, paying attention to the undercarriage. This will loosen, dissolve and neutralize road salts.
- Use quality car-wash solution, not a household dish detergent that will strip wax from the vehicle.
- Repair body damage and touch up paint scratches and chips that expose bare metal that could lead to rust.
- Thoroughly wash and clean the vehicle before the start of winter and apply a coat of wax to protect the finish.
- And give the vehicle and undercarriage a methodical cleaning in the spring. Deposits left over from the winter can continue to cause corrosion year-round if they aren't properly removed.

The winter-driving season is a conundrum for all motorists. Unkempt roads are more likely to lead to crashes and treated ones could lead to other forms of damage at later dates.

Responsible driving and proper car care can eliminate headaches and keep motorists from paying now – or later.



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From Where I Sit

Take advantage of Valentine's Day savings
Put your AAA membership to work to find the perfect gift

By Terri Petrick
President, AAA East Central

It's February, and love is in the air! Valentine's Day, the holiday of love, is quickly approaching and you don't want to be caught off guard when buying your sweetie a gift.

So, if you're in the planning process, consider how your AAA membership can offer you exclusive savings on gifts and experiences this Valentine's Day. After all, what's not to love about saving money?



Terri Petrick

Whether you're planning dinner, a movie, a date night or a weekend getaway, your AAA membership can really come in handy this month.

Let's go over some options.

If you want to try your hand at cooking a special

meal, AAA offers a pantry's worth of exclusive savings on home-meal-kit delivery services. Hello Fresh offers 55% off your first order, and Home Chef offers 60% off your first three boxes. Or, if you're thinking of something clean and organic, Green Chef offers AAA members 65% off of their first box delivery, plus free shipping.

If you prefer to dress up and head out to celebrate at a local restaurant, AAA offers discounts at Landry's Restaurants, including Joe's Crab Shack, Hard Rock Café and more. Discounts are also available at McCormick & Schmick's and Rainforest Café.

If your idea of a special dinner is at a more casual location, consider the Brick House Tavern + Tap. With a relaxed atmosphere, seemingly endless assortment of local, craft and import beers, and an inventive menu of American tavern fare, Brick House Tavern + Tap offers guests a



Image: uv_group. Adobe Stock.

Membership has its Privileges



Scan to search AAA's
Discounts & Rewards program.

truly next generation "gastro pub" experience.

After dinner, how about a show? Get exclusive AAA discounts on movie tickets by buying them in advance with AAA Tickets. Through this service, members can save on admission to thousands of theaters across the United States. Also, tickets are available for Broadway shows, sporting events, concerts and more.

Or, if you're looking for something to watch while at home, AAA members now have access to exclusive savings with

DIRECTV. Did you know that you can get up to a \$400 Visa Reward card when you activate new DIRECTV service?

While there's no better way to someone's heart than dinner and a show, AAA discounts open the door to other means of appreciation. Members can get up to 20% off flowers and gifts from 1-800-Flowers.com. Or if a sweet treat is more your style, save 20% on online orders of Cheryl's Cookies' award-winning treats and 25% off on Harry & David's premium fruit, gifts and more.

If you want to really stand out this Valentine's Day, consider booking a getaway. Nothing is quite as fun as being surprised with the gift of travel! Of course, AAA Travel is known for its connections with vendors, hotels and travel services across the world. Whether you're considering a weekend getaway to a local town or even a weekend cruise, call your local AAA Travel Advisor and start planning now.

However you chose to celebrate this Valentine's Day, don't make any purchases without first checking AAA.com/Discounts to find your options for savings.

Free Junior Associates
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for Teens

If your teen has reached driving age, don't let them go it alone. AAA members can extend their AAA coverage for dependents age 16 to 18, with a free Junior Associate membership. They'll carry their very own AAA card, and are entitled to AAA benefits and services including 24/7 roadside assistance, exclusive savings at AAA Discounts & Rewards, AAA Mobile solutions and more. Members can add Junior Associates by calling or visiting their local AAA office or, by clicking on AAA.com/JuniorAssociate. (All Associate Members must reside at the Primary Member's address, and proof of age may be required).

Note: Free Junior Associates are not available with the Monthly Dues Option.

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412-858-4640

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412-367-7600

Pittsburgh-Pleasant Hills Area
9 Clairton Blvd. (Rt. 51)
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Pittsburgh-South Hills Area
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February AAA Member Savings That You'll Love



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Save 25% on Valentine's Chocolate-Dipped Berries

Shop from our juicy chocolate dipped strawberries are always the right gift. Save 25% this Valentine's Day! We select only the largest, most flavorful berries for our incredible line of dipped fruit and desserts. Always fresh and always ready to share with those you love. **Visit AAA.com/SharisBerries and enter Promo Code 25AAA and Membership# in Member ID box at checkout.**



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Costs can spiral if preoccupied behind wheel

Deep look into some lesser-known costs of distracted driving

By Robin Jones

By now, most of us are aware of the dangers of distracted driving. Drivers using their cell phones to perform tasks like texting or surfing the internet are two to eight times as likely to be involved in a crash, according to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.

Even so, we regularly witness this risky behavior on our roads, and, if we're honest, some of us are guilty of it ourselves. A recent Traffic Safety Culture Index, a survey conducted by the AAA foundation, found that 97% of people consider texting or emailing behind the wheel as a serious or very serious threat to traffic safety, yet 41% admitted to viewing a text or email while driving in the past 30 days.

The resulting statistics are sobering: 3,166 people died in collisions involving distracted drivers in 2017, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

But aside from fatalities or injuries, drivers should consider the potential serious financial and insurance consequences of distracted driving. For example, if you cause a crash that



STAY FOCUSED – Texting and driving is a bad combination behind the wheel of a vehicle. *Image: SM3photos. Adobe Stock.*

injures people or damages property, your insurer will cover damages up to the liability limits in your auto or umbrella policy. However, it's common nowadays for injured parties to seek compensation above and beyond those limits – and you'd have to pay

for those out of pocket. If the case goes before a jury, you could face punitive damages. In many states, insurance companies are prohibited by law from paying those damages.

Most states have outlawed texting behind the wheel, and several

(including California) ban any use of handheld devices. Fines range from \$20 to about \$300, but that won't be the only penalty: A growing number of states impose points on drivers who violate laws regulating texting and the use of handheld devices. Having points on your license can cause your insurance premiums to rise. If you accumulate too many points, your license can be suspended.

To avoid such penalties, don't put yourself in that situation in the first place. Always put your phone out of reach and out of sight whenever you're driving. Enable your phone's "Do Not Disturb While Driving" setting, which silences text alerts and sends a preset message to anyone who texts you while you're in the car. Lastly, take advantage of any in-car systems that allow you to set navigation, play music and make calls via voice commands.

If you're a passenger in a vehicle where the driver starts to use the phone, speak up or offer to make the phone call or type the address into the navigation app so the driver can keep his or her eyes on the road where they belong.

More than half of drivers threats on highways

AAA survey finds speeding is a bad habit that is hard to break

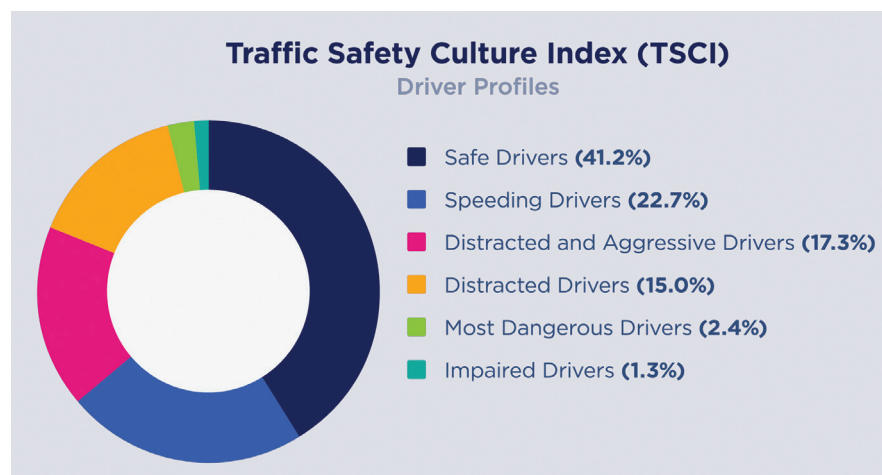
A report by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety identifies six types of drivers by analyzing risky driving behaviors.

Speeding, distracted driving and aggressive driving were the most common dangerous behaviors. The annual Traffic Safety Culture Index (TSCI) survey developed these six driver profiles by examining patterns of self-reported risky driving behaviors among a large group of drivers. Only four in 10 surveyed fell into the category of "safe drivers."

"Despite acknowledging the dangers, some drivers continue to engage in potentially deadly behaviors, particularly speeding," said Dr. David Yang, AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety President and Executive Director. "Understanding the different types of risky driving behaviors and the characteristics of drivers who engage in them is crucial for developing targeted interventions to achieve safe mobility."

As daily driving patterns and traffic rebound from pandemic lows, traffic fatalities remain alarmingly high. Evidence points to fewer traffic stops, while fatal crashes, involving risky behaviors like impaired driving and speeding remain an epidemic on our roadways.

"This study highlights a near-term and important opportunity to concentrate on enforcement that makes an immediate safety impact," said Jake Nelson, AAA's director of traffic safety



Graphic: AAA.

advocacy. "Many risky drivers in this study were classified into profiles that involved speeding behavior. Focusing on speeding drivers will deter other risky driving behaviors like impaired driving and red-light running. This traffic safety measure will have the greatest impact on safety."

The new TSCI report reads that fewer drivers perceive speeding as dangerous, and speeding behaviors have the lowest perceived social disapproval of all examined unsafe behaviors.

It's worth noting that a motorist's need for speeding consistently fails to deliver shorter travel times. It would take driving 100 miles at 80 mph rather than 75 to shave five minutes off a trip.

The six profiles identified by the most recent TSCI are:

Safe Drivers (41.2%) – Few in this group reported engaging in any risky driving-related behaviors, and more women (57%) composed the Safe Drivers group.

Speeding Drivers (22.7%) – These drivers reported driving 15 mph above the speed limit on freeways and/or 10 mph above on residential streets but did not engage in most other dangerous behaviors.

Distracted and Aggressive Drivers (17.3%) – Reported distracted-driving behaviors (texting while driving), speeding and aggressive behaviors like red-light running and switching lanes

quickly.

Distracted Drivers (15.0%) – These drivers reported distracted-driving behaviors like reading text messages and texting while driving.

Most Dangerous Drivers (2.4%) – While these drivers consisted of only a small percentage of the drivers, they pose a serious risk to themselves and other road users as they reported engaging in all risky driving-related behaviors.

Impaired Drivers (1.3%) – Most live in nonmetropolitan areas. Interestingly, drivers with a four-year college degree were less likely to report driving while impaired. At the same time, the most "overrepresented" group consisted of those with some college or an associate degree.

The survey asked drivers about their perceived level of danger for various driving behaviors. The majority of drivers perceived unsafe-driving behaviors as very or extremely dangerous, and yet, as in past years, many admitted to doing these behaviors at least once in the previous 30 days.

With a steadfast commitment to examining traffic safety, the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety has conducted its annual TSCI survey for more than a decade. As traffic safety concerns have escalated, insights from the most recent TSCI shed light on public perceptions, attitudes and engagement in unsafe-driving behaviors, offering valuable guidance for developing effective countermeasures.

Beaches, culture put Thailand atop bucket lists

Splendor, architecture and intrigue bless East Asian nation

Bucket list trips share many commonalities, but a more popular one might be distance. The farther the destination, the more likely it is to be on your list.

Europe, Australia, an African safari, China, Japan and Egypt quickly come to mind as once-in-a-lifetime visits. But they're just a snapshot. Here's an interesting one: Thailand.

Located in East Asia and boasting the appearance of a gerrymandered congressional district, Thailand rolls natural beauty into urban and historic hotspots. Beaches flourish, and cities rise. Culture reverberates, and adventure accentuates this multidimensional country.

Its history spans centuries and its culture is as exotic as it is friendly. Thailand embraces tourists with its white-sand beaches and bustling cities. Lush resorts populate its myriad shores to make your visit as relaxing as it is memorable.

It might not be easy to step away from Thailand's beautiful beaches that snuggle with the Andaman Sea or the Gulf of Thailand. Light breezes carry the scent of salt water, putting a stamp on its tropical climate. Long-tail boats sail on calm, blue waters through gorgeous terrain. Perhaps a beach chair, umbrella and cocktail might seem to be all you need, but there is so much more.

City-dwellers will find sanctuary in Bangkok, Thailand's capital city. It has more than 8.2 million residents



ONE NIGHT IN BANGKOK – Temples light up in the foreground of a setting sun in Thailand's capital city. Image: *sahachat. Adobe Stock.*

and nearly as much to see and experience. See ancient temples, including Wat Arun. It's 270-feet high, is covered from top to bottom with mosaics and is named for Hindu god Aruna, God of Dawn. It's glorious to behold at dawn or sunset.

Wat Pho – Temple of the Reclining Buddha – is a temple complex that houses the most Buddhas in Thailand.

Opulent statues, ornate pagodas and striking stonework spread throughout and tell the story of the local culture.

The Golden Palace once served as the residence of Thai kings, their royal courts and multiple branches of government. Witness fine art at the Bangkok Art & Culture Center. And don't forget to satisfy your appetite. More than 300,000 street vendors serve stir fries,

fried rice, curries, grilled meat and fish skewers.

Escape the commotion of Bangkok with a stop in Chiang Mai. Absorb the beauty of mountainous landscapes and historic temples, such as Wat Phra Singh and Wat Chedi Luang. Visit the Chiang Mai Night Bazaar and leave time to visit the Elephant Nature Park.

Thailand's culture continues to permeate through the city of Ayutthaya. A UNESCO World Heritage-listed city, it's populated with monasteries, temples, statues and archaeological ruins. Visit Bang Pa-In Palace, Wat Lokaya, Wat Phra Si Sanphet and Wat Chaiwatthanaram.

Had enough culture? Thailand is teeming with national parks, including Mu Ko Similan, Khao Sok and Khao Lak-Lam Ru. Scuba divers flock to spend hours admiring coral reefs and marine life. Limestone cliffs, awe-inspiring waterfalls and a lush evergreen forest will take your breath away. And a myriad of ecosystems and diverse flora and fauna will keep naturalists animated for hours.

Phang Nga is a Thai province on the coast of the Andaman Sea. Tourists descend upon it to visit Mu Ko Surin National Park, one of the best diving sites in Thailand. Explore by hiking or snorkeling and visit Ao Phang-Nga National Park to explore its stunning caves, emerald-green waters and the picturesque James Bond Island.

Avoid muscle soreness while traveling

Ergonomic travel tips could help alleviate the pain

Your back is aching. Your legs are numb. It's a recurring problem after hours traveling by plane or motor vehicle. Getting to our destination keeps us focused and able to go that extra mile.

It doesn't have to be so difficult. There is a way to plan for a pain-free travel experience by making small changes that can have a positive impact in how you feel once you reach your destination. The American Chiropractic Association (ACA) has suggestions.

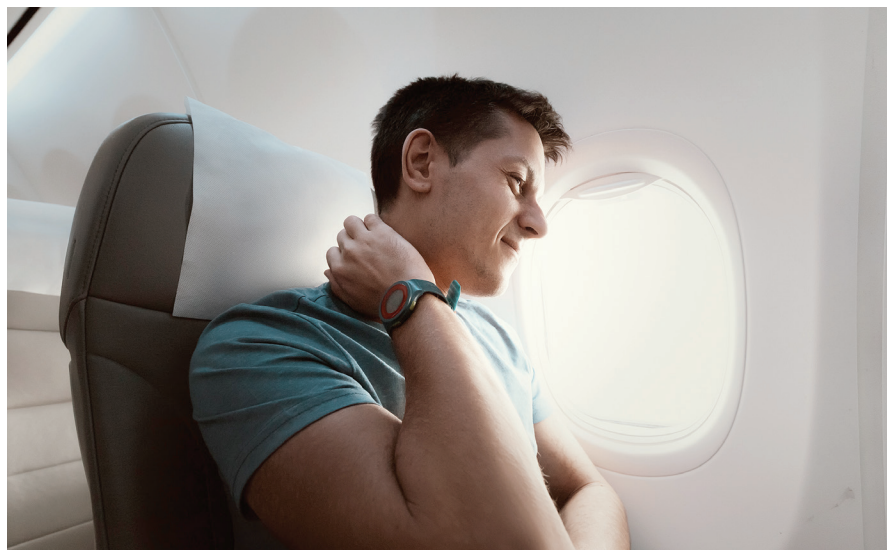
"Prolonged sitting causes a build-up of pressure in the blood vessels in your lower legs, which causes soreness," said Scott Bautch, D.C., president of the ACA Council on Occupational Health. "Simple moves, such as stretching or contracting and relaxing your muscles, can increase blood flow.

"Treat travel like an athletic event. Warm up before getting into a car or on the plane and cool down once you reach your destination. For example, taking a short, brisk walk to stretch your hamstring and calf muscles before and after a long trip can help prevent problems."

Consider these additional tips for healthier travels:

Travel by car

Sit as close to the steering wheel as



PAINFUL TRIP – Flying on an airplane can lead to cramping of the muscles. It's wise to learn ways to avoid this from happening. Image: *EdNurg. Adobe Stock.*

comfortably possible. Do a series of muscle stretches when driving that include counting to 10 while opening your toes. Count to five while tightening your calf muscles. Follow with your thigh muscles, then gluteal muscles. Roll your shoulders forward and back, and always make sure to put safety first by keeping your hands

on the steering wheel and eyes on the road.

Keep from gripping the steering wheel. Alternate tightening and loosening your grip to improve hand circulation and decrease muscle fatigue in the arms, wrists and hands.

It also helps to take breaks to move and stretch your body to refresh **your-**

self. Never underestimate the potential consequences of fatigue.

Travel by airplane

Stand up straight and feel the normal "S" curve of your spine. Using rolled-up pillows or blankets to maintain that curve when you sit in your seat will prevent back pain.

When purchasing new luggage, look for sturdy, light pieces with wheels and a handle. Check all bags heavier than 5-10% of your body weight. Overhead lifting of any significant amount of weight should be avoided to reduce the risk of pain in the lower back or neck. If you use a backpack, make sure it has two padded- and adjustable-shoulder straps. Slinging a backpack over one shoulder does not allow weight to be distributed evenly, which could cause muscle strain.

Do not force objects with an awkward motion by using your legs, feet or arms when pushing belongings under the seat in front of you. This could cause muscle strain or spasms in the upper thighs and lower-back muscles.

Vary your positions while seated to improve circulation and avoid leg cramps. On longer trips, walk for a few minutes every hour to minimize the risk of cramps.

Extend your family on AmaWaterways cruise

Smaller ships' cozy settings spark invaluable friendships on river

River cruising's amiable environment ranks high among the primary reasons to choose sailing intimate waterways. Cruises often begin with handshakes and conclude with hugs.

Ships' limited capacities make it nearly impossible not to meld friendships. The setting sparks cordial greetings and interesting conversations. Journeys create extended families that result in memories destined to last a lifetime.

Laugh, tease and toast. Share stories or make new ones. Backgrounds differ but add color to discussions. Commonalities initiate unforgettable times.

Embarkation opens a sea of unlimited opportunities to meet others. AmaWaterways' vessels – including *AmaSerena* – build bridges to an unknown future that is destined to result in everlasting relationships.

It doesn't take long to familiarize with the surroundings. The lounge is a melting pot. Guests meet for happy hour. Bartenders pour cocktails, the cruise manager makes a speech and a pianist plays relaxing music that enhances the ambiance.

Soon enough, guests begin chatting with fellow cruisers. Subjects vary, depending on interests, but rarely is anyone at a loss for words. Topics range from sports, families or hometowns – and that barely scratches the surface. Not even politics can ruin a conversation.

Tourism bonds people, and river



MEETING PLACE – The intimacy of AmaWaterways ships sparks an environment meant to create lasting friendships. *Image: AmaWaterways.*

cruising unifies individuals in a way few travel options can. Ages vary from baby boomers to millennials. Couples celebrating golden anniversaries converse with newlyweds. It's a generation gap that closes quickly and opens doorways to new beginnings.

Cruisers relish dining for more than satisfying their appetites. They share tables and anecdotes with fresh faces. Wine glasses rarely are empty. Self-deprecating

tales spark laughter and strengthen connections. In no time, photos are taken and shared on social media.

Each night concludes in the lounge. Entertainment varies but never bores and AmaWaterways thrives in keeping the party alive. Dancing is nearly a nightly ritual on *AmaSerena*. Karaoke allows guests to unleash their vocal cords. A DJ and cover band ignite the dance floor. Others flock to the bar or tables for a nightcap. Last call

Tourism bonds people, and river cruising unifies individuals in a way few travel options can. Ages vary from baby boomers to millennials. Couples celebrating golden anniversaries converse with newlyweds. It's a generation gap that closes quickly and opens doorways to new beginnings.

finalizes a fantastic day and has travelers eagerly awaiting the next one.

Excursions expound comradery. Touring towns and medieval castles uncovers common interests. Extra time likely means shopping, having lunch or finding a local establishment. An afternoon libation leaves an indelible mark. Good luck ordering a vodka and soda in a German brewery.

Whoever said river cruising is dull never has been on one. It couldn't be more false. Sailing cozy waterways highlights cultures and brings people together.

Vessels are transporters to an alternate universe. They allow cruisers to escape their daily grinds, find tranquility and make a few new friends along the way.

By week's end, the "Cheers" theme song perfectly sums up the trip because ...

Sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name.

Admit it. You sang that previous sentence.

AmaWaterways expanding offerings in '25

Travelers have options to take 14-night trips throughout Europe

River cruising's popularity has grown immensely during the past decade. More travelers are finding the intimate ships, wading through calm waters through many of the world's finest locations, create a peaceful environment.

AmaWaterways is one of the leading river cruise lines worldwide and it's making itself more delectable to travelers interested in an extended stay. It recently announced a new combination of cruises in Europe that will debut in 2025.

The "Grand" series of 14-night itineraries include *Grand Seine & Bordeaux*, *Grand Seine & Rhone* and *Grand Rhine & Dutch Canals*. By combining two popular seven-night sailings into one convenient itinerary, these journeys invite travelers to immerse themselves in a European adventure that offers more time to explore diverse landscapes, historic cities and charming villages.

"As the demand for more extensive travel experiences continues to rise, we are thrilled to unveil three new 14-night itineraries set to debut in 2025," said Kristin Karst, co-founder and executive vice president of AmaWaterways. "The new *Grand* series offer combination cruising complete with complimentary transfers between ships and the choice of up to 40 included excursions, making it even more convenient for our guests to fully immerse themselves in the history, culture and culinary delights of France, Germany and the Netherlands."

Highlights of the *Grand* itineraries include:

Grand Seine & Bordeaux – The 14-night cruise takes travelers through four legendary



RIVER DANCE – Spend two weeks on the rivers of Europe aboard a luxurious AmaWaterways ship. The cruise line recently unveiled a series of 14-day journeys. *Image: AmaWaterways.*

waterways in France, including the Seine, Garonne and Dordogne rivers, as well as the Gironde Estuary. Serving as a combination cruise of two of AmaWaterways' well-loved itineraries – *Paris & Normandy* aboard *AmaLyra* and *Taste of Bordeaux* aboard *AmaDolce* – this 14-night cruise with train transfer between Paris and Bordeaux is ideal for history enthusiasts and wine connoisseurs alike, offering the chance to savor the region's finest vintages, visit historic castles and immerse in the colorful countryside's rich culture.

- 15 departures from March through October 2025

Grand Seine & Rhone – The 14-night trip explores the treasures of the Seine and Rhône rivers in France, combining the best of AmaWaterways' *Paris & Normandy* aboard *AmaLyra* and *Essence of Burgundy & Provence* aboard *AmaCello*. Guests will enjoy visiting world-famous monasteries, admiring Normandy's stunning coastline, exploring French châteaux's and immersing themselves into France's enchanting blend of history, nature and gastronomy.

Convenient train connections are included to ensure seamless transfer from Paris to Dijon.

- 11 Departures Sailing from March through November 2025

Grand Rhine & Dutch Canals – Sailing from Amsterdam to Basel aboard *AmaStella*, the 14-night journey is a delightful combination of AmaWaterways' popular *Best of Holland & Belgium*, *Enchanting Rhine* and *Captivating Rhine* itineraries. This enchanting voyage is perfect for those seeking to immerse themselves in the fairytale castles and storybook villages along the Rhine, as well as explore the wonders of Holland and Belgium.

- 9 Departures Sailing from July through December 2025

Other curated 14-night voyages include the *Grand Danube* sailing between Vilshofen, Germany and Giurgiu, Romania and *Magnificent Europe* sailing between Amsterdam, Netherlands and Budapest, Hungary.

Each journey can be combined with pre- or post-cruise land packages and promise an immersion into the rich history, culture and culinary delights of Europe, all while indulging in the exceptional comfort, service and culinary excellence for which AmaWaterways is renowned. Guests enjoy a choice of guided excursions, hiking and biking tours and exclusive events allowing them to fully engage in each city's traditions, complemented by generous leisure time for relaxation.

Visit your local AAA branch office to speak with a travel advisor to learn more about AmaWaterways river cruises.



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President's Cruise – Baltic Capitals Voyage

August 11-22, 2024 • 11 Nights • Azamara Onward
\$4,499 per person double occupancy Balcony stateroom

ITINERARY

Sunday, August 11	Copenhagen, Denmark
Monday, August 12	Gdansk, Poland
Tuesday, August 13	Gdansk, Poland
Wednesday, August 14	Klaipeda, Lithuania
Thursday, August 15	Riga, Latvia
Friday, August 16	At Sea
Saturday, August 17	Tallinn, Estonia
Sunday, August 18	Kotka, Finland
Monday, August 19	Helsinki, Finland
Tuesday, August 20	Mariehamn, Finland
Wednesday, August 21	Stockholm, Sweden
Thursday, August 22	Return Home

2 NIGHT PRE-CRUISE OPTION TO INCLUDE:

Price: \$859 per person double occupancy

- 2-night hotel accommodations
 - Arrival transfers (depending on air schedule)
- Transfers hotel to ship
 - Sightseeing in Copenhagen
 - 2 breakfasts and 1 lunch



Join AAA East Central President, Terri Petrick, on a cruise to the Baltic Capitals.

PRICE INCLUDES:

- 11-night cruise accommodations in a Verandah Stateroom
 - Most onboard meals and entertainment
 - Government taxes and fees
 - Select standard spirits, international beers and wines
 - Shipboard gratuities
 - Bottled water, soft drinks, specialty coffees and teas
 - Self-service laundry
 - Concierge services for personal guidance and reservations
- Complimentary AzAmazing Evening Event
 - Azamara's White Night (Everyone wears white this evening)
 - Special AAA President's Cruise perks
 - Upgrade to Premium Beverage package
 - Unlimited Wifi for 1 device per stateroom
 - \$300 Shore Excursion Credit per stateroom
 - 1 night of Specialty Dining



Full itinerary & more information at [AAA.com/PresidentsCruise](https://www.aaa.com/PresidentsCruise)



Rates are per person (double occupancy), are subject to availability at time of booking and include accommodations/entertainment, most onboard meals, member perks and government taxes/fees of up to \$184.83. Ask about available add-on airfare. Ship's registry: Malta.

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Rocky Mountaineer
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Grand Canyon & Sedona Adventure

April 28–May 6, 2024

\$3,999 per person double occupancy

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Sedona – 3 nights, resort lodging
- “Old West” evening – features activities, private reception and Cowboy cookout w/ entertainment or Sedona dine around
- Verde Canyon Rail Excursion
- Williams, Arizona – Grand Canyon Railway Hotel, Western town on Route 66
- Grand Canyon Railway – First-class travel from Williams, Arizona
- Grand Canyon National Park
 - 2 - nights lodging within National Park
 - Motorcoach tour of Southern Rim vantage points
 - Free time within the National Park
- Phoenix area– 2-nights, resort lodging
- Desert Botanical Garden
- Heard Museum
- Old Town Scottsdale



Northern California Railways & National Parks

May 6–15, 2024

\$6,269 per person double occupancy

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- San Francisco – 3-night stay; guided sightseeing
- 4 National Parks – Presidio, Yosemite, Sequoia, Kings Canyon and Muir Woods National Monument
- 4 Rail Excursions – Napa Valley Wine Train, Amtrak California Zephyr, Yosemite Sugar Pine Railroad, Roaring Camp Steam Train Ride
- Sausalito
- Napa Valley – Winery visit
- Lake Tahoe
- Boyden Cavern
- Monterey Peninsula
 - Carmel by the Sea
 - 17-Mile Drive
 - Cannery Row
- Santa Cruz
- Silicon Valley – Apple Visitor’s Center



Lake Tahoe & More

xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

\$X,XXX per person double occupancy

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- xxxxxxxxx



American Majesty

xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

\$X,XXX per person double occupancy

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- xxxxxxxxx



Full itinerary & more information at
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Before-discount rate is per person/double occupancy, subject to availability at time of booking and includes roundtrip flights from Pittsburgh, hotels, luggage handling (1 bag/person), sightseeing/admissions per itinerary and local guide. Additional airline baggage fees may apply. Note: Discounts only apply to air inclusive rates.

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Travel in a smaller but very comfortable Mercedes Sprinter (or similar) for more flexibility and access to places a bus can't go. See sights, hike trails and drive scenic roads large groups can't. Small group travel allows you more enrichment opportunities as you journey off the beaten path. Enhance your appreciation of natural wonders, make new discoveries and personal connections on these intimate, active adventures.

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- Day 8 – Seward/Alyeska (Girdwood)
- Day 9 – Alyeska (Girdwood) Anchorage/Denali
- Day 10 – Denali
- Day 11 – Denali/Talkeetna
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- DAY 2 – Fairbanks
- Day 3 – Fairbanks/Denali
- Day 4 – Denali
- Day 5 – Talkeetna
- Day 6 – Talkeetna/Anchorage
- Day 7 – Anchorage/Seward
- Day 8 – Hubbard Glacier cruising
- Day 9 – Juneau
- Day 10 – Skagway
- Day 11 – Icy Strait Point
- Day 12 – Ketchikan
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- DAY 3 – Juneau
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- DAY 9 – Seward/Anchorage
- DAY 10 – Anchorage/Talkeetna
- DAY 11 – Talkeetna/Denali
- DAY 12 – Denali
- DAY 13 – Denali/Fairbanks
- DAY 14 – Fairbanks

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- DAY 2 – Inside Passage cruising
- Day 3 – Juneau
- Day 4 – Icy Strait Point
- Day 5 – Sitka
- Day 6 – Skagway
- Day 7 – Hubbard Glacier cruising
- Day 8 – Seward/Anchorage
- Day 9 – Anchorage/Talkeetna
- Day 10 – Talkeetna/Denali
- Day 11 – Denali
- Day 12 – Denali/Fairbanks
- Day 13 – Fairbanks
- Day 14 – Fairbanks



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more information at
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DEPARTURES

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Texas – Solar Eclipse

April 4-9, 2024 • \$6,269 per person double occupancy
Explore sites in Waco, Dallas and Fort Worth and attend a VIP Solar Eclipse Viewing Party

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Homestead Heritage Traditional Craft Village
 - Texas Ranger Hall of Fame
 - Waco – River cruise, Magnolia Market, Dr. Pepper Museum, Waco Mammoth National Monument
 - Dallas – Historic tour, Sixth Floor Museum, Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden
- Fort Worth –Texas Cowboy Hall of Fame, Stockyards National Historic Site
 - UTA Planetarium at University of Texas
 - VIP Solar Eclipse Watch Party

PRICE INCLUDES:

- Roundtrip air to and from Dallas/Fort Worth from participating cities
 - Roundtrip airport and hotel transfers
 - 5-night hotel accommodations
 - Luggage handling, one bag per person
- 8 meals (restaurants subject to change)
 - Attractions and admissions as stated in the itinerary
 - Gratuities for included meals

Before-discount rate is per person/double occupancy, subject to availability at time of booking and includes roundtrip flights from Buffalo, hotels, luggage handling (1 bag/person), sightseeing/admissions per itinerary and local guide. Additional airline baggage fees may apply.



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Panama Canal Cruise

on the *Celebrity Summit*®
September 19–October 4, 2024 • from \$3,259 per person double occupancy



AMAZING MEMBER PERKS!

- Per stateroom, double occupancy (balcony or higher category)
- 15-night cruise accommodations
 - All Included Package for two adults per stateroom
 - Classic Beverage Package, Basic Wi-Fi package, Gratuities to shipboard personnel

Sailing through the engineering masterpiece that connects the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean is a bucket-list event on its own, but along the way you'll also visit other exciting tropical destinations steeped in culture, history, and natural beauty. Explore the colorful colonial architecture of Cartagena and the thriving jungles of Costa Rica. Venture deep into the Panamanian rain forest, meet the locals, and learn the inner workings of the fascinating Panama Canal's locks. Take an Eco Cruise on Lake Gatun and explore island habitats created during the Canal's building.



15-NIGHT ITINERARY

Day 1	Los Angeles, CA – Embarkation	Day 9	At Sea
Day 2	At Sea	Day 10	Panama Canal Cruising
Day 3	At Sea	Day 11	Cartagena, Colombia
Day 4	Puerto Vallarta, Mexico	Day 12	At Sea
Day 5	At Sea	Day 13	At Sea
Day 6	Huatulco, Mexico	Day 14	George Town, Grand Cayman
Day 7	At Sea	Day 15	At Sea
Day 8	Puntarenas, Costa Rica	Day 16	Disembark – Ft. Lauderdale

Rates are per person (double occupancy), are subject to availability at time of booking and include 15-night accommodations/entertainment, most onboard meals, member perks and government taxes/fees of \$416.00 per person. Ask about available add-on airfare. Ship's registry: Malta.



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Explore the dramatic landscapes of Iceland on this guided adventure

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- Vík
 - Skógar Museum
 - Skógafoss
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 - Vatnajökull National Park
 - Seljalandsfoss
 - Choice on tour: Blue Lagoon or Perlan Center

PRICE INCLUDES:

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 - Roundtrip airport/hotel transfers
 - Chartered transportation
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- Luggage handling, one bag per person
 - 15 meals (restaurants subject to change)
 - Sightseeing and admissions as stated in itinerary
 - Local English-speaking Tour Guide

Before-discount rate is per person/double occupancy, subject to availability at time of booking and includes roundtrip flights from Buffalo, hotels, luggage handling (1 bag/person), sightseeing/admissions per itinerary and local guide. Additional airline baggage fees may apply.



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TBD?

Tips From a AAA Travel Advisor: Erin Zmuda

South Africa an eye-opening experience

Breathtaking natural wonders, wildlife and more await



AAA Travel Advisor:

Erin Zmuda

Who doesn't want to see penguins live in their natural habitat at Boulder Beach? Experience the sunrise on a morning-game drive, complete with your own personal tracker? Take a cable car up Table Mountain to take in the breathtaking views of South Africa's Cape Peninsula – the city, harbor, and boats below? I have been a Travel Advisor with AAA for 29 years – most of my adult life – and I love to make my clients' dreams come true. This time, it was my turn, and I still have not woken up from the dream!

African Travel greeted us upon arrival and its guide provided VIP service – accompanying us through customs and immigration, with a van transfer to the hotel and check-in. Our hotel – Table Bay – in Cape Town was conveniently located by the Boardwalk at the Victoria Albert Waterfront.

After a much-needed sleep, Day 1 was all about the culture! We met the owner of the Thunaris Organic garden. She started her business with the goal of teaching the locals to grow their own



EYE CANDY – Cape Town is one of the more beautiful cities in Africa. Mountains rise in the foreground of blue waters. Image: Erin Zmuda. AAA.

food and to improve their health and eating habits. Then, we visited the Ekhasi Ekasi non-profit art and education center. They teach the local women crafts to try to create positivity in the community. The highlight was a visit to a local kindergarten, where we attended a graduation ceremony. The school was built out of trash and recycled materials.

Boulder Beach was a remarkable wildlife encounter with the hundreds of African Penguins who reside there. The beach is a sheltered inlet between granite boulders. Boardwalks make the

area wheelchair friendly, but also provide protection for the penguins.

Next, we drove along Chapman's Peak Drive, a toll road on the Atlantic Coast between Hout Bay and Noordhoek in the peninsula renown as one of the most spectacular marine drives in the world. Cape Point is where two oceans meet – the cold waters of the Atlantic Ocean on the west and the warmer Indian Ocean waters on the east. The views were spectacular. I rode the funicular up but decided to do the 10-minute walk down to enjoy the views.

And it kept getting better. Our Winelands tour took us to quaint towns, complete with wine-tasting at family-led Haute Cabriere. We enjoyed lunch at the five-star Delaire Graff Estate restaurant, where we tried local delicacies with a view of the Winelands as our backdrop.

On our Safari, we flew to Skukuza, and stayed at the Sabi Sabi Bush Lodge inside Kruger National Park. As the oldest lodge in the collection, every room is a suite with a blend of relaxed luxury mixed with local tradition, inspired by the owners' love of Africa. Upon arrival, we were briefed about our next two days at the Lodge.

Our stay was all-inclusive with three meals and drinks. We did two game drives by jeep each day – one at 6 a.m. (with an early 5:30 a.m. wakeup call), and 4:30 p.m. (the afternoon time is seasonal), for 2.5-3 hours. Each jeep had a tracker who knows from tradition how to interpret the animal footprints and patterns, and a ranger who sat up front to explain the animals. Over the two days, our tracker did not disappoint. We saw the BIG 5: leopard, lion, elephant, American buffalo and rhino.

Some tips I learned from my experience include discussing the recommended medications and vaccinations with your doctor. It is a personal choice. Bring neutral not bright clothes, and layers; and keep your arms in the jeep, but your camera ready. You do not want to miss any photo opportunities!

I-95 road trip that reaches great heights

2,000-mile highway home to big cities, eclectic destinations

It's common to hear the words "cross country," particularly when it comes to road trips. Miles and miles of highways crisscross our country. They meander through some of our finest natural wonders and most unique locations. Tiny towns, blessed with immense personalities, grab your attention. Mountains, canyons and rock formations leave you in awe.

It isn't a coincidence that travelers often choose cross-country trips. But what about a vertical excursion? Of course, Pacific Coast Highway quickly comes to mind, but it's not your only option.

Interstate 95 is a highway that stretches more than 1,900 miles from the Canadian border in Maine to Miami. It passes through 16 states, as well as the District of Columbia. It takes travelers through a host of metropolitan regions and hugs much of the East Coast shoreline.

There isn't a bad time to witness all I-95 has to offer. See the trees bloom in the spring and their leaves turn brown in the fall. Enjoy miles of beaches. Vibrant scenery lines the roadway like streetlights. Cities and communities are populated by colonial architecture and there are sure to be plenty of eateries, serving mouthwatering, eclectic dishes.

Your only issue might be deciding which places to visit. Many options make research and scheduling priorities before beginning your trip.



PARK PLACE – Maine's Acadia National is a must-stop destination while taking a trip on Interstate 95. Image: Skyler. Adobe Stock.

Planning to visit the obvious destinations is easy. Maine's Acadia National Park, Boston, New York City, Miami, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. should be givens. It's finding the hidden gems that will make your trip unforgettable.

It could be a bed-and-breakfast town in Connecticut or Rhode Island. Perhaps a museum in Virginia, an estate in Georgia or historic landmarks populated throughout your journey. There's no telling what could turn up.

St. Augustine, Florida is the oldest city in the U.S., founded in 1565. It's home to the Fountain of Youth, as well as Castillo de San Marcos – a masonry fort that dates to the 17th century. It's withstood attacks from Napoleon in the early 1800s and would be an ideal stop for history buffs.

Few places in the U.S. showcase magnificent Victorian-style architecture like Savannah, Georgia. Its Historic District and Bonaventure Cemetery are comprised of cobblestone streets and intricately

detailed homes. Visit Fort Jackson, which has daily cannon firings. And foodies should take advantage of the traditional and innovative tastes of Southern cooking that only can found in a number of mom-and-pop restaurants.

The spirit of the 18th century is alive and well in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Several sites date to the Revolutionary and Civil wars. The Rising Sun Tavern is a pub that once was a house built by George Washington's brother, Charles.

Battleship, New Jersey is where you can find one of the largest and most decorated battleships that can be toured and you can learn more about New Jersey's role in World War II, Korean War and Vietnam. Hardcore war aficionados even can arrange to stay a night in one of the bunks.

The Breakers is an elaborate mansion that can be found in Newport, Rhode Island. Commissioned by Cornelius Vanderbilt, it has 70 rooms, massive chandeliers and an abundance of gilt.

Stop by the Eleanor Cabot Bradley Estate in Canton, Massachusetts. Mystic, Connecticut's seaport recreates a 19th-century village with more than 60 restored buildings and more than 500 historic ships. And South Carolina's Congaree National Park offers 26,000 acres of parkland.

There's no telling what you might discover on I-95, but it's likely to be a treasure.

Mysteries of Greenland make it enticing

Planet's largest island sparkles near the top of the world

The world's coldest places rarely seem like attractive locations to vacation. Intriguing? Well that's another story.

Greenland ranks among the most intriguing. The world's largest island doesn't boast all-inclusive resorts and don't expect to absorb much of a sun-tan. You will experience an eye-opening trip few travelers make.

The island is covered by more than 80% ice, snow and glaciers. Nothing is green about it. You might want to call it "Iceland," but that name already has been taken.

Greenland is a mystery waiting to be solved. Its rugged terrain and majestic scenery define its characteristics, making it one of the more fascinating places on the planet.

It passes through the Arctic Circle while nearly sitting on top of the world. Humans have inhabited it for more than 4,500 years and today it's home to fewer than 60,000 citizens.

The Midnight Sun shines bright in Greenland, with the sun never setting from May 25 to July 25. And Winter Solstice welcomes more than 20 hours of darkness.

Viking Erik the Red named it in the 10th century, believing that using the word "green" would attract Nordics to emigrate to the island. Perhaps the first marketing scam – ever?

Greenland becomes more intriguing with each fact. Its unvarnished beauty



SUN-SATION – A sailboat sits in the foreground of an iceberg during the Midnight Sun season. *Image: Marc Pelissier. Adobe Stock.*

makes it enticing for naturalists and travelers who can't resist a challenge.

A series of expeditions comprise a schedule of things-to-do while visiting Greenland. Capital city Nuuk is the starting point. Built on a peninsula, it's as close to a metropolitan area you will find.

Boat or plane is the best way to explore the island. Its waterways make it easier to travel, considering there are no

roads outside city limits.

Northeast Greenland National Park is the largest in the world, covering more than 375,000-square miles. It's a refuge for polar bears, walruses, caribou, seals and other arctic wildlife. It also is uninhabited. Visitors must acquire a permit from the Ministry of Nature & Environment to reserve a spot on an expedition cruise that features mountains, glaciers, fjords and icebergs.

Ilulissat Icefjord is an initial place travelers should visit. The area features thousands of icebergs. They vary in size, providing a natural beauty few places can match. The area also features the Sermeq Kujalleq – the fastest glacier in the world.

Kayakers shouldn't skip Blue River. The clear waterway shares the appearance of a vein dissecting a frozen desert of ice. It's found on the Petermann Glacier, which feeds the river with its melting snow, changing its shape annually.

Hikers can take advantage of Greenland's unspoiled nature. Its rocky surface provides clear pathways and Arctic greenery during the summer months. Discover plants, flowers, dramatic rocks, icebergs and glaciers and hardly any people.

For those who don't prefer hiking, a cruise is another exciting way to explore the island. Cruises offer varying itineraries and allow up-close views of marine animals like whales and seals, as well as stunning sights of Greenland's sprawling landscape.

The Northern Lights appear from early autumn through April. They irradiate a sky that is nearly free of light pollution, making it one of the best places in the world to witness this phenomenon.

There's irony in Greenland's thick ice, considering it's a diamond in the rough.

Mercedes keeping things up to date

Over-the-air updates blessing to automaker's drivers

Mercedes-Benz isn't standing pat when it comes to updating information. It's rolling out an extensive package of new entertainment and navigation features over the air to more than 700,000 vehicles.

New features began rolling out on select models with the second generation of MBUX in September. Customers are informed of the MBUX Entertainment Update (2.4) via Update Wizard on their MBUX display or on the Mercedes me connect app.

"Our in-house-developed Mercedes-Benz software enables great in-car entertainment, immersive Dolby Atmos audio, video streaming and enhanced-navigation experiences," said Magnus Ostberg, chief software developer at Mercedes-Benz AG. "Equipped with our pioneering MBUX infotainment system, our vehicles meet the rapidly changing desires of our customers worldwide through regular over-the-air feature updates."

Dolby Atmos added more space, clarity and depth to music. Listeners will enjoy music that matches the artist's original vision, whether it's hearing the layers of instruments move around you, catching the subtle breath a singer takes between lyrics or feeling melodies wash over you.

In-car entertainment also becomes more enjoyable with the addition of the YouTube Web app on select model-year



AIRING IT OUT – Over-the-air updates bring new navigation offerings to Mercedes-Benz drivers. *Image: NewsPress USA.*

2024 vehicles.

Mercedes-Benz introduced NewsFlash with Hey Mercedes in eight countries and five languages in 2022 and it soon will be available in the U.S. The updated version allows customers to listen to newscasts on general news, business, finance, sports, culture and other topics. Customers can configure their favorite channels in the Mercedes me app before using the MBUX Voice Assistant via the command "Hey Mercedes, play

the news."

In-cabin sound for the front-passenger display is another new feature. The audio from the dynamic content viewed on the front-passenger display no longer requires headphones and can be played on the in-cabin sound system. Customers also can select their own Personal Decorative Image via the Mercedes me connect app.

Cars with the first generation of MBUX will benefit from additional

navigational content from Place Details, provided by Google. This feature – which is available for second-generation MBUX – adds detailed information about more than 200 million businesses and other locations worldwide, including business hours, photos, ratings and reviews. As this update is performed on the server, it is automatically available to customers.

Available U.S. features:

- Dolby Atmos supported by Apple Music: S-Class, EQE and EQS models equipped with Burmester® Sound System and activated Entertainment Package Plus.
- YouTube Web App: 2024 S-Class, EQE, EQS models equipped with activated Entertainment Package Plus.
- NewsFlash: Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, UK (U.S.-coming soon).
- In-cabin sound for front passenger display: EQE and EQS models equipped with MBUX Hyperscreen.
- Personal Decorative Image: EQE and EQS models equipped with MBUX Hyperscreen and active Mercedes me connect app.
- Place Details, provided by Google: NTG6 vehicles equipped with Mercedes-Benz Navigation. (Feature already active on NTG7 vehicles equipped with Mercedes-Benz Navigation).



Australia & New Zealand Uncovered

continued from page 1



Great Barrier Reef



Abel Tasman National Park

Australia & New Zealand Uncovered



Scan QR code to learn details about the trip or visit AAA.com/xx.

When:	October 7-28, 2024
Cost:	\$12,099 (airfare included)
Member	\$200 (Premier), \$175 (Plus), \$150 (Classic)
Airport:	Buffalo

*Person double occupancy.

You're in Wellington, New Zealand – the hip capital known for its wind-swept coast. You're greeted with a traditional powhiri welcome. Delve into the rich Māori history and enjoy local flavors through a unique Hangi lunch cooked beneath the earth. The Māori culture has been deeply rooted into these lands for more than 1,000 years, offering a living connection to ancient traditions and wisdom.

Cross the Cook Strait to South Island. Scenic wonders like Abel Tasman National Park quickly will snatch your attention. Crystal-clear waters hug golden beaches to create a treasure trove of experiences. Enjoy the

local arts and culinary scene in Nelson before venturing to the Pancake Rocks of Punakaiki. These limestone formations are shaped by the relentless tides of time and weather. Aging rarely has been more graceful.

Adventures deepen in Australia. Enjoy a behind-the-scenes tour of the iconic Sydney Opera House. Take a sunset-dinner cruise through Sydney Harbour and pinch yourself just to make sure you aren't dreaming.

The stars of the Southern Hemisphere sparkle in Uluru. Parlay a gourmet meal and stargazing under a sky free of light pollution in the Sounds of Silence experience. The Aboriginal

connection to the cosmos is profound. Constellations tell ancient stories about creation and connection. See celestial features like the Southern Cross, the Seven Sisters and even the Milky Way. The clarity is incredible, making it a truly stellar experience.

A glass-bottomed catamaran will take you to the Great Barrier Reef from Cairns. Choose to snorkel, walk the island or talk with a marine biologist. The Great Barrier Reef is one of the Seven Wonders of the World and a marine paradise that hosts more than 1,000 fish species. Its vast, vibrant lagoons are visible from space – a testament to its immense beauty

and ecological significance. Meanwhile, conclude your experience with an ecocultural adventure to learn about Aboriginal traditions and natural remedies in a lush wetland setting.

The riches of Australia and New Zealand know no boundaries. They're destinations that move beyond postcard images and forge unbreakable personal bonds.

Go beyond the standard itinerary to experience the wonder of the lands Down Under. Embrace the journey with Member Choice Vacations®. Contact a AAA East Central Travel Advisor to learn more about the Australia & New Zealand Uncovered tour.

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