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VACATION BRAINSTORMING

"I doubt if there is anything in the world uglier than a midwestern city"
- Frank Lloyd Wright

Just in case you live in a midwestern city, you might want to get away during one of our four seasons of inclement weather. But where?

Here are just a few suggestions that I think are worthy of consideration:

Traveling Within The United States

Savannah/Hilton Head - Savannah is a beautiful two-night choice, followed by four or five nights in your own condo at the *Sea Pines Plantation* in Hilton Head. I think you'd enjoy a country inn downtown, like the *Balastone*, built in 1835. Have dinner at *Elizabeth on 37th* and be sure to order the wild mushroom pie along with shrimp Savannah. On the way back from Hilton Head, try to stop in Beaufort, a particularly southern town of great charm. Please take the kids.

Boston - One of America's best winter destinations. Great museums, bookstores, and theater, with coffee shops filled with BU and Harvard students just for atmosphere. Stay at the *Ritz Carlton* or the *Bostonian* near Faneuil Hall Marketplace. Dinner doesn't get any better than pan-roasted lobster in herbs at *Jasper's*. JFK loved the *Locke Ober* and often ordered sole bonne femme. Far less expensive is *Legal Seafood*, where you pay for your dinner as soon as you order it and where dishes are delivered to your table within 30 seconds of completion.

Tucson - I warn you - visiting Tucson could be expensive. You may want to move there. It has the fifth highest economic growth rate in the U.S., beautiful mountain ranges, lovely tourist facilities, and a staggering 318 days a year of sunshine. When you go, stay at the *Westin La Paloma*, which sits right at the foot of the Santa Catalina mountains on 618 acres. Do try the creative southwestern cuisine at the *Cafe Terra Cotta*. Ask for the garlic custard and the roast chili pepper stuffed with chicken and corn. While out this way, you may want to visit Coronado National Forest and Biosphere 2, the controversial ecological experiment launched in 1991. You may recall that some of the scientific credibility of the experiment was called into question when it was determined that several Biosphere residents were sending out for pizza.

Bar Harbor/Camden/Boothbay Harbor, Maine - If charming fishing villages, fresh seafood, and clean, fresh air is what you're seeking, head to Maine. Rent a four-wheel drive vehicle and set off along the coast, being sure to include Acadia National Park on your list of places to visit. You won't be alone. This part of the world has been discovered and nearby Freeport has, sadly, become the discount outlet center of New England. Still the small villages live up to expectations. Try to stay at the *Wharf Inn* at Boothbay Harbor or the *Lord Camden Inn*. Try eating at the *Lobster Pound* in Lincolnville and order the Lobster ragout like the locals

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do. In Boothbay, you must dine at the *Brown Brothers*, an old salt shed overlooking the harbor. Fresh seafood is, of course, the specialty.

Traveling Outside The United States

The 12-Day European Treasures Tour - A memorable way to see the best of Europe in a relatively short period of time. This deluxe program offers travel aboard the *famed Orient Express* between Venice, Paris and London. It includes a lagoon-view room at the *Danieli* in Venice, dinner in a private villa, three nights at the *Crillion* in Paris, and three nights at London's distinguished *Ritz* hotel. Tour members will receive an exclusive tour of Palace of Westminster that is personally escorted by a Minister of the Realm.

Gems of The Orient - An unusual 16-day tour that combines the best of China and Japan with Hong Kong. Some of the extras that make this tour special include an exclusive tour inside Tokyo's Imperial Palace, a private geisha performance, a catered lunch atop China's Great Wall, and a close-up view of Xian's terra-cotta warriors.

Golf and Spa at Gleneagles - A magical Scottish setting, a world-renowned golf course and highly-rated hotel, and now, a serious Spa experience. This is **Gleneagles**, an opportunity to experience a little bit of heaven for golfers and non-golfing spouses. The new spa offers holistic classes in life enhancement, and body and skin maintenance along with specialized treatment rooms.

The QE2 and Golf in Scotland - One of our favorite packages, combining a mid-summer crossing on the Queen, with a choice of accommodations, followed by hassle-free golf arrangements that include the opportunity to play the legendary *St. Andrews* as well as *Turnberry* and *Gleneagles*.

Cap Julaca Resort. Anguilla - One of my favorite choices in the Caribbean, this member of the Leeward islands chain, is the ultimate in chic beach getaways. Now the resort has added a 32 foot power boat that whisks guests off to uninhabited Prickly Pear island for a lobster barbecue. There are also snorkeling excursions and "drop-offs" at private, totally secluded beaches. This is a wonderful honeymoon destination. And don't be surprised if you see some of the Hollywood crowd at the next table in *Cap Julaca's* dining room.

The Wakaya Club Resort - This very quiet, small resort just off Fiji's main island, doesn't advertise. It doesn't have to. For those who want "absolutely the best" this place comes as close to perfection as possible. That's why Bill Gates, Michelle Pfeifer, and TV's Tim Allen try to book one of the resorts eight bure-style bungalows that rest on the palm fringed beach.

Make no mistake about it, this is the peaceful side of Paradise. Wild horses run through the virgin rainforest, deer skitter across the nine-hole golf course, resort guests snorkel through spectacular coral reef and a truly sparkling blue lagoon.

Run out to O'Hare and corner one of the international pilots, the ones that have the kind of seniority that lets them wander the world, and ask them where

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they go for that “once in a lifetime vacation”. Don’t be surprised if they whisper “*Wakaya Club*” and then ask you not to mention it to anyone.

Highlights Of The Galapagos And Ecuador - A wonderful introduction to two of South America’s most ecologically interesting regions, Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands. This 11-day program is designed for families, departing July 28th and returning on August 7th. It includes three nights in Quito and a seven-night cruise of the islands aboard the large, cruise-style ship, the *Isabela II*. Highlights of the voyage, on this special sailing designed expressly for children accompanied by their parents, include panga-craft landings among Penguins, fur-seals, iguanas and flamingos. On-board naturalists offer lectures. This is an unusual opportunity for children to get involved in scientific discovery at a very early age. The cost for adults is \$3,830. Children 12 and under are charged \$2,290. Airfare is approximately \$800 per person. Highly recommended.

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