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Seven great tax-rebate trips

Take advantage of the extra cash and spend it on a summer getaway



San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau

Torrey Pines State Reserve is located within San Diego city limits and yet remains one of the wildest stretches of land on our Southern California coast. Get round-trip tickets from Denver to San Diego on Southwest from \$159 in early June.

By **Liz Webber**
BudgetTravel

updated 3:42 p.m. ET, Tues., April. 29, 2008

In May, the Internal Revenue Service begins mailing out tax rebates of up to \$600 per person to help Americans weather the current economic slump. We can't think of a better way to take advantage of the extra cash—and grease the U.S. economy—than to spend it on a summer getaway. We've priced out seven possible tax-rebate trips, some for couples and others for families of four.

The itineraries are based on the assumption that couples will receive \$1,200, plus \$300 for each qualifying child (so \$1,800 for a family of four). But we've factored in plenty of wriggle room for those who don't end up getting the maximum amount—and there are cheaper hotels and restaurants you can choose, if you don't want to blow the whole rebate.

Read the fine print on the rebate at irs.ustreas.gov and estimate how much you'll receive with the IRS's [Economic Stimulus Payment Calculator](#).

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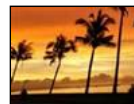
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For two

New York City to D.C., 3 nights

Getting there: The new low-fare bus company [BoltBus](#) offers one-way fares between the Big Apple and D.C. for as low as \$1.50, including fees—if you get lucky and book weeks in advance. But even average one-way fares are reasonable: \$7.50-\$20.50, with last minute prices topping out at \$22.50.

Where to stay: Three nights at the [Hotel George](#), a hip boutique hotel on Capitol Hill, comes to \$787, for a King Deluxe Room with a plasma TV and leopard-print bathrobes. A weekday wine hour in the lobby, a complimentary daily shoeshine, and in-room spa services (for an additional fee) are added perks.

Something extra: With the money you save on transportation, you'll have plenty left over to splurge on a romantic dinner. [Citronelle](#), a James Beard Award winner, is one of D.C.'s ritziest restaurants. The "Dinner à la Carte" three-course prix fixe menu starts at \$95 per person; choose from main courses like veal with steak and sweetbreads or lamb in a white bean and jalapeño sauce.

Freebie: Watch the cute pandas play on the Asia Trail at the [National Zoo](#), which charges no admission. Tip: Take the [Metro](#)'s Red Line to the Cleveland Park stop; it's actually closer to the National Zoo entrance than the Woodley Park-Zoo stop, and getting out there will save you an uphill walk.

Total: \$983 (\$491.50 per person)

4x\$1.50 (2 round-trip tickets) + \$787 (hotel) + 2x\$95 (dinner) = \$983

• [Sleep Tomorrow: Late-Night D.C.](#)

Milwaukee to Chicago, 3 nights

Getting there: Like BoltBus, [Megabus](#) offers low-fare bus service: One-way fares between Milwaukee and Chicago start at \$1.50 but will most likely fall between \$3.50 and \$5.50 (last minute fares run as high as \$12.50). Megabus has routes all across the Midwest and a few in the Northeast and the West—the Milwaukee-Chicago leg is among the cheapest.

Where to stay: Treat yourself to the [Palmer House Hilton](#), which earned a [Historic Hotels of America](#) designation for preserving its landmark beaux arts architecture and two-story, gold-tinged lobby. Pause on your way in to admire the ceiling's opulent scenes from Greek mythology. The hotel, which has more than 1,600 rooms, is right by Millennium Park and the theater district and costs \$758 for a three-night stay.

Something extra: The Chicago Architecture Foundation's two-hour [Modern Skyscrapers walking tour](#)—one of 85 led by experts—includes interior and exterior views of the Richard J. Daley Center and 1 South Dearborn tower (\$15). Make a post-tour stop at [Prairie Avenue Bookshop](#), an independent store specializing in books on architecture

and design, where you can read while perched on Le Corbusier and Stanley Tigerman furniture.

Freebie: The Chicago Gospel Music Festival, held in May, is one of many free events held in downtown's [Millennium Park](#), whose grounds include art installations and a garden. Download a self-guided audio tour [here](#).

Total: \$794 (\$397 per person)

4x\$1.50 (2 round-trip tickets) + \$758 (hotel) + 2x\$15 (architecture tour) = \$794

• [Eat Like a Local: Chicago](#)

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Denver to San Diego, 3 nights

Getting there: Round-trip tickets from Denver to San Diego on [Southwest](#) are \$159 (including taxes and fees) in early June. Fares go up later in the month and stay high throughout the summer, but it's possible to find some special Web-only rates for as low as \$219 in July and August.

Where to stay: The [Sofia Hotel](#) is a good bet for mod, earth-toned accommodations in the swinging Gaslamp Quarter. Three nights will set you back \$557 midweek (\$647 Thursday-Sunday). If you prefer to stay on the waterfront—and within walking distance of SeaWorld—try the 10-acre [Dana Hotel](#) on Mission Bay for \$638 midweek (\$750 Thursday-Sunday).

Something extra: The lowest price for a four-day economy-size car rental on Kayak is \$75 (Advantage Rent-a-Car). Use your wheels to explore San Diego's [many beaches](#), all of which are free to the public. Watch seals and surfers on the beaches of La Jolla or take a dip at Coronado Municipal Beach. It's right by the iconic [Hotel del Coronado](#), which has hosted European royalty and U.S. presidents and formed the backdrop of Billy Wilder's "Some Like It Hot".

Freebie: The [Museum of Contemporary Art](#) has two locations—one on a cliff in La Jolla with breathtaking ocean views, and another in downtown San Diego. Both offer free admission on Thursdays, 5 p.m.-7 p.m., with free tours at 6 p.m. (Members and those ages 25 and under get in free anytime.)

Total: \$950 (\$475 per person)

2x\$159 (airfare) + \$557 (midweek hotel) + \$75 (car rental) = \$950

• [25 Reasons We Love San Diego](#)

Boston to Bar Harbor, 4 nights

Getting there: The five-hour, 280-mile drive from Boston to Bar Harbor, Maine, will cost about \$67 in gas for the round trip in a late model midsize car, according to AAA's [Fuel Cost Calculator](#).

Deal of the Day

Malaysian magic

Spend a week split between Singapore and Sarawak, from \$1,899.



Where to stay: The

Love in Bloom

package at Bar Harbor's

Mira Monte Inn covers

all the romantic-getaway

basics. You'll get four

nights' accommodations, wine and cheese nightly, fresh flowers in your room, breakfast daily, and three or four activities of your choice.

Options include tickets to the Acadia Repertory Theatre, one-day bike rentals, and dinner for two at a local restaurant. The package starts at

\$702 (including taxes) for May 25-June 21 and at \$877 for June 22-

October 25. You can browse similar deals throughout the U.S. on

[BnB Finder.com](#)

Something extra: In surrounding [Acadia National Park](#), you'll find opportunities for hikes, picnics, scenic drives, and horse-drawn-carriage rides. A seven-day entry pass costs \$10 per car May 1-June 22, and \$20 June 23-early October.

Freebie: The [Bar Harbor Brewing Company](#), a microbrewery run by a husband-and-wife team, has daily tastings of its stouts and ales from mid-May to October.

Total: \$779 (\$389.50 per person)
\$67 (gas) + \$702 (hotel) + \$10 (Acadia park pass) = \$779

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