



- NEWS
- POLITICS
- OPINIONS
- LOCAL
- SPORTS
- ARTS & LIVING
- CITY GUIDE
- JOB
- CARS
- REAL ESTATE
- RENTALS
- SHOPPING

SEARCH: go [washingtonpost.com](#) Web: Results by [Google™](#) | Search Archives

washingtonpost.com > Discussions

Travel Talk

Discussion with the Washington Post Travel Staff

The most airline charges, Playa del Carmen, Paris and more.

The Flight Crew

Washington Post Travel Section
Monday, September 15, 2008; 2:00 PM

Got a travel-related question, comment, suspicion, warning, gripe, sad tale or happy ending? The Post Travel Section **Flight Crew** is at your service.

On the itinerary this week: riding with the [gauchos](#) in Uruguay and Argentina, going green by re-using hotel [towels](#), and touring historic [homes](#) in Lincoln, Mass.



Gaicho Pablo Castro readies a horse for a guest at El Ombú de Areco. "The original gauchos were just wanderers," Castro says. "They didn't have a home." Castro also doubles as a kitchen hand, serving up sirloins, ribs and chorizos. (By Remy Scalza For The Washington Post)

[Buy Photo](#)

All other travel topics are open as well. If you have insights, ideas or information to add to the discussion, just press the call button above your seat and we'll get to you as soon as we can. Different members of the Crew will rotate through the captain's chair every week, but the one constant is you, our valued passengers.

We know you have a choice in online travel forums, and speaking for the entire Flight Crew, we want to thank you for flying with us.

A transcript follows.

You may also browse an [archive](#) of previous live travel discussions. For daily dispatches, check out [Travel Log](#), the Travel section's new blog.

Andrea Sachs: Greetings travelers.

We are back after a nice weekend on Block Island, R.I. (for me) and Maryland (for Christina). Please, tell us where you have been and where you are going.

Also, I would love to know what everyone thinks about the airlines pecking, pecking, pecking at our wallets: What airline change would make you stand up and shout, "No more! Leave our wallets alone! I will not pay extra for toilet paper, use of trays, bleach bag, etc." Not that I am trying to start a revolution or anything.

Today's Discussions

Wednesday's Sessions

- **Ask Tom:** Tom Sietsema, 11
- **Pearlstein:** Bailout Legislation, 11
- **Pets:** Dog Training/Behavior, 11
- **Politics:** Michael D. Shear, 11
- **The Root:** On Sally Hemings, 12
- **Book Festival:** Neil Gaiman, 12
- **Gossip:** Reliable Source, 12
- **Campaign 2008:** Latest Polling, 12
- **Free Range:** Food Section, 1
- **White House Watch:** Froomkin, 1
- **Books:** Michael Dirda, 2
- **The Nationals:** Chico Harlan, 2:30
- **Book Festival:** Cokie Roberts, 3

Viewpoint Paid Discussion

- **Careers:** In Criminal Justice, 3

Weekly Schedule
Recent Discussion Transcripts

TOOLBOX

[Resize](#) [Print](#) [E-mail](#)
[Yahoo! Buzz](#) [Save/Share +](#)

COMMENT

No comments have been posted about this item.

Comments are closed for this item.

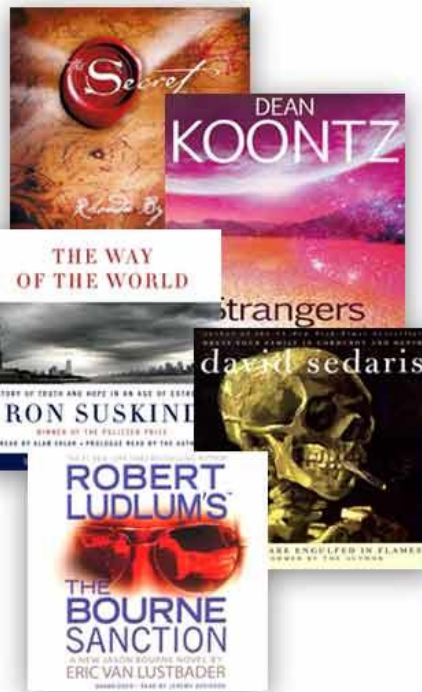
[Discussion Policy](#)

WHO'S BLOGGING powered by [sphere](#)

[» Links to this discussion](#)

Advertisement

Download a FREE audiobook today!



audible.com [Learn More](#)

viewpoint [paid discussions](#)

Discussion Archive

- June 25th, 2008: **Law School Is Not Just For Lawyers**
Guest: Barry A. Currier, Dean, Concord Law School of Kaplan University
- May 22, 2008: **BizBooks conversation with trendspotter Richard Laermer**
Guest: Richard Laermer
- April 4, 2008: **BizBooks conversation with author and entrepreneur Ryan Allis**
Guest: Ryan Allis
- February 27, 2008: **BizBooks conversation with**

year (or even next Monday), but June is a bit early in the season. Just go with the flow when it comes to weather. For flights, that fare is high. I flew Spirit nonstop for less than \$200 a few weeks ago and see airfare for \$165 on AirTran. For attractions, here a few suggestions: Butterfly World, Flamingo Gardens, Hugh Taylor Birch State Park (beaches, surfing, lagoons, etc.), culture and history along Riverwalk, International Swimming Hall of Fame, the Historic Himmarshee Village and the Venice of America cruise.

Camp Hill, Pa.: A few words of advice, please: This spring my husband and I booked a United flight through Travelocity from Dulles to St. Thomas, USVI. Got to the airport with almost two hours to spare, checked in and then, at the gate, were bumped from the flight (with 12 others). The gate personnel couldn't have been ruder or less helpful: One staffer told us it was our fault for arriving late (not true), another said it was our fault for not paying full fare (who does?), yet another said it was because we hadn't booked through the airline (though the next bumpee in line had, to no avail). Calling Travelocity was no help. Eventually, United grumpily cut us a check and booked us on a flight for the next day, but we lost a full day of vacation and our hotel room in the islands.

OK, so, we're moving on ... and planning a trip to Italy next month (US Air, PHL-Venice), booked using some Amex points -- so, by default, again through Travelocity. How can we diminish the odds of this happening again, when I thought we did everything right the last time and still got treated so shabbily? Thanks for taking questions, and any advice is much appreciated.

Christina Talcott: Hoo boy, I was going to say, "Book through the airline," but I guess it's too late this time. Booking through the airline might not prevent you from being bumped, but it'll prevent you from possibly getting the runaround by the airline AND the booking site. Of course, Travelocity and its kin can sometimes be the best way to buy, so here are a few suggestions for your next trip: Check in online before you leave for the airport to get your seat assignments and to make sure the flight's still on time; have handy the phone numbers for Travelocity and US Air, and have your cell phone AND CHARGER in your carry-on luggage; compile (or copy down once you're at the airport) a list of all scheduled flights to Italy from Philadelphia so the gate agent can quickly find you the next available flight if need be. Anyone else have anti-bumping tips?

Southwest Airlines Question: I have booked a flight in mid October. Since I booked this in August, the flight has gone down by \$30. Will they refund me money if I ask? Thanks for your help.

Carol Sottili: Not sure whether Southwest has an official policy. Call them at 214-792-4223. It behaves differently than most airlines. For example, it doesn't charge a penalty fee when you can't use your air ticket - you just have to apply the cost toward another ticket within one year. So my guess is that they'll either refund or give you a \$30 voucher toward a future trip.

D.C. - Local Resorts: Hi Crew - A few friends and I would like to purchase a gift certificate to a local resort as a wedding present. Amount of the certificate will, I suppose, depend on what resort we pick. None of us know very much about local resorts - and I'm sure you've written about them before. Any links you might be able to post to help direct us? Any suggestions right off the bat? We're looking for anything within, at the most, a 4-hour drive from D.C. in any direction Thanks!

Andrea Sachs: Some of the region's top resorts include the Homestead, Inn at Little Washington, Greenbrier, Lansdowne and Bedford Springs. If you want more flexibility, you can buy the newlyweds a gift certificate for an online B&B booking site, such as www.bedandbreakfast.com or www.bnbfinder.com. Then, they can choose their place and location.

Bethesda Mom: I have an airfare question for Carol: my son's high school Model UN club has been invited to participate in a conference in Qatar. Airfare will be subsidized somewhat, and we are trying to keep the costs to not much more than the \$1,200/person