

HAPPY LABOR DAY

Tips for Labor Day getaways and more

Labor Day marks the unofficial end of summer. Even though summer officially ends a few weeks after Labor Day, a new school year begins for most students by Labor Day, and the lazy, hazy days spent on the beach give way to a new school year.

It's no wonder that so many people want to capture the last of the summer magic before it's gone for another year; Labor Day getaways help people hold on to summer just a little longer. Explore these tips to make Labor Day trips a bit more safe and convenient.

LEAVE EXTRA TIME

Roadways are bound to be busy with other Labor Day weekend travelers, particularly for those headed to seaside locales or campgrounds. One way to avoid some of the traffic is to depart from home in the wee hours of the morning or late at night.

Leave plenty of time to get to your destination so you won't be tempted to speed or drive erratically. Utilize GPS and mobile phone mapping apps to identify routes that can help you avoid traffic.

BE CAUTIOUS OF THE WEATHER

Extreme temperatures can be a concern even this late in the season. The American Red Cross urges travelers to remain hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids while en route to destinations or while engaging in Labor Day fun. Avoid strenuous exercise during the hottest part of the day. Strong storms can blow through in an instant, so keep track of weather alerts and find shelter if a thunderstorm approaches while on the beach or in other areas where lightning strikes occur more readily.

PLAN AHEAD

Labor Day vacationers number in the millions. Hotels and motels will be in demand, driving up rates, and airfare prices could soar. Book early to secure the best prices available and to guarantee you have accommodations.

CONSIDER A BUNDLED VACATION

Package deals at destinations can save you a considerable amount of money. Fly.com allows users to search the site for destination-appropriate packages that can combine airfare with hotel and car rentals to save money.

LOOK FOR LIFEGUARDS

If the plan is to swim in a lake, river or the ocean, select areas that have lifeguards available. Always swim sober and with a buddy. Even strong swimmers can be caught off guard by

the power of water, which can include rip currents or rushing rapids.

WATCH ALCOHOL INTAKE

Never drink alcohol while operating a vehicle en route to and from Labor Day festivities. Have a designated driver available if need be. Also, vacationers must recognize that alcohol can contribute to dehydration. Choose non-alcoholic and decaffeinated beverages to stay hydrated in warm weather.

CONSIDER SMALLER AIRPORTS

It may seem more convenient to utilize larger airport hubs for travel, but driving a little further to smaller, regional airports can help you save money on fares. Plus, these airports may be less crowded, helping to calm stress and make the overall trip a little easier.

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