



Spring travel trends and tips for a great airport and vacation experience

INDIANAPOLIS—As thousands of Hoosiers put winter snow and ice storms behind them and prepare to spend a few days in warmer, sunnier locations, Indianapolis International Airport (IND) is ready to serve spring break travelers.

The busiest period at Indianapolis International will come at the end of March, when families with children in K-12 school districts (including IPS, Lawrence, Perry, Wayne, Warren, Franklin, Speedway, Boone, Hancock, Greenfield, Martinsville, Mooresville, Brownsburg, and Danville) take their annual spring vacations.

Many college students will travel over the next two weeks, when those attending Indiana University, University of Indianapolis, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), Purdue University, and Butler University take their spring breaks from classes.

The busiest spring break travel days at IND will be:

- March 11-13
- March 24-27
- March 31-April 3
- April 7-10

SPRING VACATION TRENDS & TOP DESTINATIONS

This year, travel experts predict many college students will opt for domestic U.S. travel, alternative volunteer trips, and all-inclusive packages, largely due to lingering impacts from the 2009 recession.

Based on bookings between March 1 and April 24, 2011, the *Orbitz Insider Index* reports that Orlando bests Las Vegas as this year's number one Spring Break destination. In fact, Florida dominates four of the top ten spots, which are:

1. Orlando
2. Las Vegas
3. Cancun
4. Phoenix
5. Fort Lauderdale
6. Fort Myers
7. Tampa
8. New York
9. Los Angeles
10. Denver

At 29 percent, beach vacations are still the most popular, followed by cruises (25 percent) and major metropolitan cities (24 percent). Of passengers surveyed, Orbitz reports a whopping 88 percent of travelers plan to avoid "traditional" Spring Break destinations in favor of more relaxed, family-friendly destinations.

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SPRING PRICING & FARES

Bloomberg reports that in the first quarter of 2011, jet fuel prices climbed 25 percent and are at their highest levels since 2008. The increase is likely to result in fewer flights and less seat capacity throughout 2011. Both American Airlines and Delta Air Lines had planned to increase their capacity this year until they were hit with large reductions in revenue caused by winter snow and ice storms combined with rising fuel prices.

Expect higher ticket prices for your spring vacation in 2011. According to Bing Travel, the average ticket price will be \$489, up more than 10 percent from 2010's average of \$443. Fares to the most popular warm weather locations and Colorado ski destinations may be up even more.

How can you get the best fares?

- Most travel experts say the best day of the week for booking travel is Tuesday because airlines announce sales on Monday.
- Be flexible and avoid traveling during peak periods. Consider traveling from Monday to Monday or Tuesday to Tuesday rather than Saturday to Saturday.
- If you are your own travel agent, be sure to do a broad search to ensure you get the best rates. It's especially important to check fares on airline Web sites and not just online travel agencies like Expedia, Travelocity, and others. In a move to cut costs and increase revenues, some airlines are beginning to pull their fare and flight data from online travel agencies in favor of using their own Web sites to sell tickets.
- Consider off-season travel, which is when hotels have excess inventory and consumers can find the best deals, such as one free night during a five-day stay.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Those who will travel abroad this year may want to visit the U.S. Department of State's travel.state.gov and studentsabroad.state.gov Web sites. These online resources offer valuable international travel information about what to do in case of emergency or in a crisis situation, such as if you are the victim of a crime or are arrested.

The state department also offers a [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#), a free registration service so the federal officials can provide emergency assistance to U.S. citizens traveling abroad. Its Office of American Citizens Services & Crisis Management administers the Consular Information Program, which provides country-specific information about conditions that may affect safety and security as well as travel alerts and warnings.

All U.S. citizens who travel by air from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, Bermuda, and other locations should remember they must have a passport to re-enter the United States, even if the country visited does not require a passport for entry.

Other resources include:

- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) International Travel
- Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Crossing U.S. Borders

TRAVEL SUGGESTIONS

For the best travel experience this spring, passengers should these tips in mind.

- Severe weather events often take place during the spring. Know your airline's policies for changes and cancellations. Consider travel insurance to cover cost of travel expenses like unused hotel rooms or prepaid deposits in the event that the flight is cancelled or delayed.
- Many flights to Florida from Indianapolis connect through Atlanta, which is the nation's largest airport. If Atlanta is experiencing a high volume of delays or cancellations, flights to Florida may be delayed.
- Congested airspace on the East Coast can also lead to delays. Those with direct or connecting flights near LaGuardia, JFK, Newark, Boston, Philadelphia, and other airports, for example, are vulnerable to delays.
- The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Web site has great information about how to get through security checkpoints as quickly and easily as possible.
 - Planning to take a jumbo tube of sunscreen to the beach? Smaller is better when it comes to lotions, gels, aerosols, and liquids in carry-on bags. Remember these items must adhere to the 3-1-1 rule. Visit www.tsa.gov to learn about packing cosmetics, shampoos, and more.
 - Organize carry-on bags in layers, with your plastic bag of liquids, gels, and aerosols on top so it can be easily removed for screening.
 - Have boarding pass and government-issued photo identification in hand before entering checkpoint screening lanes.
 - Wear easy-on, easy-off footwear. Avoid clothing with metal studs, buttons, or snaps and belt buckles or accessories with large metal pieces.
 - When in doubt, leave it out! Passengers who are unsure whether an item is permitted through the checkpoint should place the item in their checked bag or leave it at home.
 - Those traveling with pets, infants and small children, medical devices, and those with special needs are encouraged to contact their airline and to view information posted on www.tsa.gov before coming to the airport.

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AIRPORT PARKING & CHECK-IN

On peak Spring Break travel days, including Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sundays between now and mid-April, passengers are advised to allow ample time for checking bags, clearing security, and reaching the gate area to board flights.

The early morning hours are the busiest at Indianapolis International, especially for flights scheduled to depart between 6 and 8 a.m.

Airport parking is quick, convenient, and plentiful!

- The Express Valet stand and parking attendants are located on Level 3 of the airport's parking garage. Cost for valet parking is \$20 per day.
- Self-parking in the garage is available \$18 per day.

Parking in surface lots is most economical. Drivers can self-park for the duration of their trip in the Economy Lot for \$9 per day or the Long-Term Lot for \$12 per day.

Departing passengers can be dropped off at the Departures Level curb. Drivers coming to the airport to pick-up inbound passengers can park and wait for free in the Cell Phone Lot until passengers call them upon arrival.

Check the status of your flight online before you leave home. Go to indianapolisairport.com, where real-time flight data is refreshed every 60 seconds or visit your airline's Web site.

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