

TRAVEL TALK BY CHASE BINDER

TRAVEL IN A TIME OF TERRORISM

Back in December, in the wake of the Paris attacks, I highlighted several programs that can help should you or your loved ones find yourselves in close proximity to a terrorist situation abroad. Here we are again, just a few months later, and the Brussels attacks have Bud and I once again thinking carefully about future travel plans. As much as we have traveled, it's sad and frustrating for us—but probably more so for other baby boomers who have been waiting decades for retirement so they can travel.

Should we all stay home? On the one hand, Bud and I say no way! We may have been to 94 countries around the world, but we are *not* done exploring. On the other, the thought of traveling and being caught in a terrorist attack is scary. Very scary. What to do?

Rearrange Your Bucket List: We all have Bucket Lists—places we want to see, adventures we want to have, cultures we want to explore before it's too late. Take a look at your list and see if you can't move some destinations up a few notches and defer others until the travel climate recovers. Terrorists seem to be concentrating on "soft targets" in major European capitals...places where crowds of people gather to shop, drink & dance, and use public transporta-



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tion to go about their daily lives. So if London, Paris, Rome, Amsterdam and the like are high on your list and Central and South American countries are further down, consider switching them out.

This can be a great strategy for several reasons. First, there's the cost—truly elegant hotel rooms in Panama City or one of the many resorts towns along the coast of Chile can be had for around \$150, including breakfast and taxes. A 4-course meal at high-end restaurant can run well under \$75 for two, including a bottle of wine. In London or Paris, prices would be double and triple that. Then there's traveling along the north-south axis, which is much less taxing in terms of jet lag. You don't switch time zones, so have little or no "recovery time."

And if you're a history buff or love dramatic landscapes and

interesting cultures, Central and South America have tons to offer—Buenos Aires is full of music and dance and lovely architecture. Chile has iconic seaside towns like Valparaiso and Vina del Mar, not to mention Patagonia. Peru has Machu Piccu...and don't forget the Amazon and the Galapagos. Costa Rica is friendly, peaceful and chock-full of rainforests, volcanos, monkeys and fabulous birds. Panama has the canal, cosmopolitan cities, jungle-draped mountains and more. And who doesn't want to see Cuba?

Think Outside the Box: If you just can't resist Rome or have your heart set on France, the UK, or just the idea of being in Europe, why not travel outside the main corridors? Forego Heathrow and Charles de Gaulle airports. Fly into lesser-known cities like Manchester (UK) or Nice. Fly into Milan instead of Berlin. Explore local B & B's, castles and museums. Sample real farm-to-table eateries. Instead of using trains and metros, rent a car and drive (oh, how we love road trips!) or even hire a driver with the money you're saving by staying outside of the city. This way of traveling is a type of FIT (Foreign Independent Travel) and can keep you far away from many of Europe's soft targets. If you're reluctant to arrange it yourself, the staff at NH's own Penny Pitou Travel in Laconia

(pennypitoutravel.com, 800 552-4661) are superb at soup-to-nuts itineraries and arrangements.

You can look for inspiration on websites of your favorite airline. Instead of searching for flights to a given city, browse through their destination maps. Most often these are found under the "Where We Fly" tabs. Once you find an alluring city, look for schedules and itineraries that have nonstop flights from Boston, or route you through Iceland, Dublin or another more obscure destination. Airline options are easy to find using the filters on sites like cheapoair.com, kayak.com and many more.

Don't forget Europe has wonderful destinations that tend to be less of a target these days—Ireland, Scotland, Norway, Sweden and Finland. They won't save you money but might bring you peace of mind.

Hello North America! If all of this still sets your nerves a-jingling, but you can't give up the idea of real travel, what about Canada? Canadian cities have the feel of a truly foreign destination—and guess what, Canada is indeed another country! I dare you to go Montreal or Quebec and not feel transported! Vancouver, Victoria, and Toronto all offer diverse cultural experiences, but also a sense of security and comfort. Begin at destinationcanada.com.

Happy Travels!

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