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Your key to savvy consumer spending

## CONSUMER LIFE

### Traveling for the holidays?

*How to handle airport delays*

**E**cstatic about going home for the Christmas holiday, Brooklyn, New York, native and radio producer Michelle Anton and her teenage daughter boarded a flight from Los Angeles to Newark, New Jersey, with loads of gifts. They joined the 52 million passengers who took to the skies in December 2000, according to the Air Transport Association of America Inc., a trade organization for U.S. airlines, in Washington, D.C.

Unfortunately, lingering thoughts about the recent terrorist attack on New York has her feeling uneasy about this year's trip. "Rushing around, buying last-minute gifts, and anticipating emergencies, I don't want to [have to] think about busy airports. I understand they're safe, but I still won't fly."



RAY ALMA

September 11, 2001, changed the way Americans think about air travel. Anxiety and outright fear have captured our emotions and toyed with our sensibilities. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) imposed a new set of security requirements at the nation's airports. Gone is curbside check-ins at some airports, or the act of escorting loved ones to the departure gate. New measures are in place to match tickets and baggage to passengers, not to mention increased hand checks of carry-on luggage. The most significant security measure will be planes protected by FAA Federal Air Marshals, specially trained for deployment on antihijacking missions, who will be flying on select flights anonymously.

If you're like Anton, many of you have already canceled holiday travel plans or have chosen an alternate mode of transportation. But Air Transport Association spokesperson Steve

Russell believes most Americans will regain confidence in air travel and fly during the holidays. Cathy Keefe, of the Travel Industry Association of America, echoed those sentiments. "I believe the need for people to be with their families during the holidays will help increase travel and may alleviate some of the fear of flying," says Keefe.

These tips will help Anton and you combat stress, anxiety, and safety concerns associated with air travel:

- **Book early** for a cheaper airfare and more flights from which to choose.
- **Double check** with your travel agent or air carrier the day before your departure. A bad snowstorm in one part of the country can cripple air transportation, causing delays or cancellations.
- **Arrive early** at the airport—at least two hours before departure for domestic flights and three hours before departure for international flights. Added security checks, heavy traffic, and long ticket lines could mean missed flights. If you don't check in on time, you could get bumped.
- **Printed tickets** are better than e-tickets, especially if you're changing flights, because they speed up the process and you'll clear security faster. If you book online, you will only get an e-ticket. Call the airline or demand a paper ticket when you arrive at the airport. Many airlines charge a \$10 fee for a printed ticket, but the added expense is worth it.
- **Limit carry-on luggage** that security officials must check or that you have to keep an eye on. Remember, anything that looks like a weapon, no matter how innocent, will be confiscated.
- **Ship gifts** before you travel. Doing so lessens security checks, and you'll travel lighter.
- **Toll-free numbers** of your carrier and a cell phone are a must. In the event a flight is canceled, it's quicker to call the airline for a new flight.





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• **Avoid booking the last flight of the day.** If your flight is canceled, you'll be stranded until the following morning.

• **Identifying alternative airports to your destination** may offer more variety in travel options. Try Long Island Islip MacArthur airport in New York instead of Kennedy Airport, Chicago Midway

airport instead of O'Hare International airport, or land in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, instead of Miami.

• **Know travel restrictions** associated with your ticket. If bumped, full-fare passengers have a good chance of negotiating a better deal. If you purchased a bargain-fare ticket, chances

are it has restrictions that could limit your options in the event of delays or cancellations.

• **Baggage claim tickets** should always be kept in a safe place. They will be checked by airport security when you leave the airport.

—Michael Bennett

## BUYING POWER

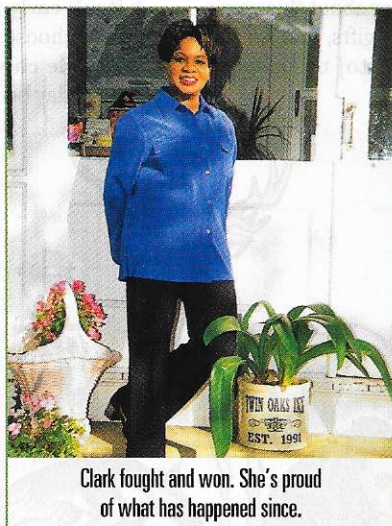
### The inn crowd

*Don't sleep on black-owned B&Bs*

A cold day spent relaxing in a bedroom tastefully decorated with antiques and Afrocentric art, drinking a soothing cup of hot chocolate, may remind you of the comforts of home.

That's what Doris Clark imagined after she bought the old Captain Morgan Inn, a private residence in the town of Vineyard Haven, on Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts, in 1991. Patricia Napier, a white neighbor, however, sent her a note suggesting she "look for a guest house in Oak Bluffs...where most of the African Americans of the island reside and visit." Napier then filed a suit in land court against Clark's permit to operate an inn. When the judge ruled in Clark's favor, Napier appealed to the Massachusetts Appellate Court, which also ruled in Clark's favor. Napier then appealed the decision to the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts. The Supreme Judicial Court upheld the decisions of the two lower courts. Clark renamed the property Twin Oaks Inn, and formed the African American Association of Innkeepers International (AAAI).

There are roughly 30 black-owned inns in the United States. Twenty-six are members of the AAAI, a number that could easily be lost among the 6,000 to 7,000 inns affiliated with the Professional Association of Innkeepers International (PAII). In fact, before the AAAI's inception in 1997, the PAII had no specific information about black-owned B&Bs to offer consumers. Today, the organization works closely with the AAAI.



Clark fought and won. She's proud of what has happened since.

"You can have the best inn, but if no one knows where you are, they're not going to come see you. When I started, my business [clientele] was 99 9/10% white. Today, my business [clientele] is 70% black," Clark states.

"Our mission is to provide a standard of excellence in the industry, to let people of color know that there are inns of color, and to let other black innkeepers or aspiring owners know that there is an organization out there that can provide support and a professional networking tool for them," states Monica Edwards, treasurer of the AAAI and owner of Morehead Manor in Durham, North Carolina, with her husband, Daniel, who is the association's president.

Citing the challenges that African American innkeepers face, including

getting loans, buying homes in certain areas, and marketing to a niche consumer, Clark believes the association makes some of these tasks easier.

Edwards estimates that at least 10% of her patrons—many bed-and-breakfast first timers—are a direct product of her participation in the association.

"Joining the organization has been beneficial for us," Edwards remarks. "We've had lots of guests say they've found us through the AAAI Website."

Currently, with an average occupancy of 45% to 50% a month, Morehead Manor is operating in the black after only four years.

Kenny and Helene Barnett joined the association shortly after purchasing their B&B, Lagniappe Guest House in New Orleans, for \$47,000. They've spent \$100,000 more on renovations. "Business has been good," says Kenny, who attributes some of the increase—from 30% to 85% average occupancy over the past seven years—to referrals from other members and the association's brochure.

For the annual membership fee of \$150, innkeepers are offered cooperative advertising, cooking tips, insight into industry trends, Internet marketing tips, and vendor showcases. The association also provides mentors for aspiring innkeepers. Contact the African American Association of Innkeepers International at 877-422-5777 or at [www.africanamericaninns.com](http://www.africanamericaninns.com) for more information.

—Lee Anna Jackson