



August 2026 Newsletter

From My Desk

There is something exciting about saying, “I would love to go there someday.”

But turning *someday* into an actual trip can feel like an entirely different thing.

Where do I start? How much will it cost? What if I don’t have anyone to travel with? What if I get somewhere and don’t know what to do? What if something goes wrong?

Sometimes the hardest part of travel isn’t packing the suitcase—it’s getting past all the reasons we’ve convinced ourselves not to pack it in the first place.



I’ve been thinking about that a lot lately.

Travel should stretch us a little. It should introduce us to places, people, food, history, and experiences outside of what we see every day. But it shouldn’t leave us so overwhelmed by the planning that we never make it out the front door.

That’s one of the reasons I created Hidden Spaces Travel Agency. I love the details. I love finding the places that make a destination special. And I love helping take something that feels complicated and turning it into something you can actually look forward to.

So, if there is a *someday* trip sitting quietly in the back of your mind, perhaps it’s time to start asking what it would take to turn it into *someday soon*.

You don’t have to have all the answers before you begin.

Sometimes you just need to take the first step.

Travel Smart. Dream Big. Wander Well.

—Sonya

Hidden Spaces Travel Agency



North Georgia Awaits

NOVEMBER 1-5

DAHLONEGA & HELEN, GEORGIA

Travel Smart. Dream Big. Wander Well.

BOOKING DECISION DEADLINE: AUGUST 31

MINIMUM 15 TRAVELERS REQUIRED

\$2,400 PER PERSON | DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

TRIP INCLUDES

- Roundtrip Airfare and Hotel
- Excursions Included
- Gratuities
- Ground Transportation & Guide
- Welcome Dinner
- Farewell Lunch



North Georgia — It's Decision Time

If you've been thinking about joining us in North Georgia this November, now is the time to decide! A minimum of 15 travelers is required for this hosted getaway to operate, and our **booking decision deadline is August 31.**

Come experience Dahlonega and Helen with us—without having to worry about planning all the details yourself.

[\[EXPLORE THE NORTH GEORGIA GETAWAY\]](#)

Taking the Uncertainty Out of Travel

A New Monthly Series

Travel should be exciting, but questions about cost, planning, safety, unexpected problems, and simply knowing where to begin can sometimes keep us from going at all. Over the next several months, we'll tackle some of those concerns and look at practical ways thoughtful planning—and working with a travel advisor—can take some of the uncertainty out of travel.

This Month: How Do People Afford to Travel Like That?

One of the reasons I became a travel advisor was because I genuinely wanted to know the answer to that question. I saw people taking amazing vacations year after year and wondered, *How are they doing this?*

What I've learned is that there isn't one secret. But there **are** ways to make travel more manageable, both financially and mentally.

1. Don't shop by price alone.

The lowest advertised price isn't necessarily the least expensive trip. Before comparing prices, compare what's included: airfare, accommodations, transfers, transportation, meals, excursions, admission fees, gratuities, and other expenses. A higher initial price may actually offer greater value once everything is added together.

2. Plan the entire trip—not just the flight and hotel.

Think about what you'll actually need once you arrive. I work with multiple travel suppliers and can often coordinate accommodations, transportation, excursions, and other components rather than having you piece together a vacation through multiple unrelated vendors. Fewer moving pieces can mean fewer surprises—and a lot less for you to manage.

3. Give yourself time to pay for it.

Planning ahead doesn't necessarily mean paying for the entire vacation today. Depending on the supplier, many trips can be secured with a deposit, with the remaining balance paid over time and final payment due before departure. Supplier policies vary, but planning early can turn one overwhelming expense into something much more manageable.

4. Leave home with the trip paid for.

There is tremendous peace of mind in beginning a vacation knowing the major expenses are already behind you. Instead of returning home to months of vacation bills, you can budget your spending money ahead of time and actually enjoy the trip you've worked hard to take.

5. Look for value in what's included.

Sometimes paying a little more upfront can save money later. A hotel that includes breakfast eliminates one meal expense every day. Likewise, an ocean cruise may advertise a lower fare than a river cruise, but depending on the cruise line, a river cruise may include excursions, beverages, Wi-Fi, dining, and other amenities that cost extra elsewhere. Compare the **total experience**, not simply the starting price.

6. Budget for experiencing the destination.

Don't spend thousands of dollars getting somewhere only to discover you haven't budgeted enough to enjoy being there. If trying the local cuisine, taking a special excursion, or visiting a particular attraction



matters to you, let's account for it while we're planning. Your travel budget should include the experiences—not merely transportation and a place to sleep.

7. Reserve the things you don't want to miss.

Planning ahead can also protect your time. Popular museums, attractions, tours, trains, and special experiences can sell out. Identify the “anchors” of your trip—the things you would truly be disappointed to miss—and reserve them ahead of time. Then leave some breathing room around them to wander, explore, and discover those unexpected Hidden Spaces that often become our favorite memories.

8. Protect the trip—not just the pieces.

When booking independently, you may be offered separate insurance for your airfare, hotel, and other reservations. Those individual policies can add up financially and, if something goes wrong, may leave you dealing with multiple companies and claims. I can provide options for one travel insurance policy based on the overall trip cost, including plans with travel medical benefits. Coverage varies by policy, but protecting the trip as a whole can potentially save both money and hassle.

9. Let loyalty work for you.

Frequent travelers learn to take advantage of loyalty programs. Cruise lines, airlines, and hotels may reward repeat travelers with discounts, credits, dining benefits, upgrades, or other perks depending on the company and loyalty level. Being strategic about where you build loyalty can add value to future vacations.

10. Know when the answer is “not yet.”

Good travel planning isn't about spending money you can't comfortably afford. Sometimes we need to change the dates, destination, length of the trip, accommodations—or simply give ourselves more time to save. My job isn't to convince you to spend more. It's to help you understand your options and find the best experience for your budget.

The Bottom Line

The cheapest trip isn't necessarily the least expensive trip.

Planning ahead gives us time to understand the true cost, compare suppliers and inclusions, make payments when available, protect the experiences that matter, and create a vacation that fits both your budget and the way you want to travel.

You don't have to manage a collection of flights, hotels, transfers, excursions, insurance policies, payment dates, and confirmations by yourself. That's part of what I do.

Because good planning isn't just about saving money.

It's about saving money, saving sanity, and giving you the freedom to enjoy the experience once you get there.

Coming Next Month

How Much Is Too Much? — Planning Without Overplanning

We'll talk about choosing the “anchors” of your trip, creating a logical route, allowing realistic travel and downtime, knowing when to take something *off* the itinerary, and leaving room for those unplanned Hidden Spaces that often become the memories we treasure most.

Ready to Start Planning?

Every unforgettable journey begins with a conversation.

Whether you're dreaming of a relaxing weekend escape, a custom European itinerary, an unforgettable cruise, or simply aren't sure where to begin, I'd love to help.

Together, we'll talk about your travel style, your interests, your budget, and the experiences that matter most to you. My goal isn't simply to book a trip—it's to help you create memories you'll treasure for years to come.

Let's start with a complimentary 15-minute travel consultation and begin turning your travel dreams into reality.

Let's Start Planning

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