

*Alfresco* **Adventures**

## Trip Planning Guidebook

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January 2004**



## Table of Contents

	<i>Table of Contents</i> .....	<i>iii</i>
	<i>Preface</i> .....	<i>v</i>
	<i>Purpose of this Guidebook</i> .....	<i>vi</i>
	<i>Trip Definitions</i> .....	<i>vi</i>
	<i>Guidebook Layout</i> .....	<i>vi</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>Planning a Trip</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1	Begin with the End in Mind.....	1
1.2	Make a decision and start researching .....	2
2.1	Extended-Trips .....	4
	Designing an Extended-Trip.....	4
	Extended-Trip Proposal .....	5
	What you will need to present in your trip proposal:.....	5
	Extended-Trip Financial Plan .....	5
	Selling Your Extended-Trip.....	6
	Managing & Leading an Extended-Trip .....	9
	Pre-Trip Party .....	10
	Pre Trip Checklist (2 weeks prior to departure).....	10
	Day of Departure .....	10
	During the Trip .....	11
	Day of Departure .....	11
	Post Trip Wrap-Up & Party .....	12
2.2	Weekend-Trip .....	13
	Designing a Weekend-Trip.....	13
	Weekend Trip Proposal .....	14
	What you will need to present in your trip proposal:.....	14
	Good to Go .....	15
	Weekend-Trip Financial Plan .....	15
	Selling Your Weekend-Trip.....	15
	Managing & Leading a Weekend-Trip .....	18
	Pre-Trip Information Packet .....	19
	Pre Trip Checklist (2 weeks prior to departure).....	20
	Day of Arrival.....	20
	During the Trip .....	20
	Day of Departure .....	20
	Post Trip Wrap-Up.....	21
<b>3</b>	<b>Transportation</b> .....	<b>22</b>
3.1	Air Transportation.....	22
	Direct Flight or Non-Stop .....	22
	Example Flight Schedules returning from Destination:.....	23
	The price is right .....	23
	At the Airport.....	23
	Customs and Immigration.....	24
	Baggage Claim.....	24
	Airport Checklist.....	25
3.2	Ground Transportation.....	26
	Motorcoaches.....	26
	When should you choose a motorcoach for your trip .....	26
	How to choose a Motorcoach Company .....	26

	Multi-Day trips .....	27
	On the Road .....	27
3.3	Trains .....	28
3.4	Boats & Ferries .....	28
3.5	Automobile (carpooling).....	28
	When will everyone be arriving.....	28
	Who's traveling together .....	28
<b>4</b>	<b>Accommodations.....</b>	<b>29</b>
	What type of Accommodations are best for your trip .....	29
	Extended-Trip Accommodation choices.....	29
	Weekend-Trip Accommodation choices.....	29
4.1	Choosing a Condominium .....	30
	Extended-Trip Condos .....	30
	Weekend-Trip Condos .....	32
4.2	Choosing a Hotel .....	33
	Extended-Trip Hotel .....	33
	Weekend-Trip Hotel (Includes Motel and Inns) .....	34
	Hotel Reminder List.....	35
	Before arrival, have you: .....	35
	Upon arrival, have you: .....	35
	Each Day of trip, have you: .....	35
	On the Day before departure, have you: .....	35
	On the Day of departure, have you: .....	35
4.3	Choosing a Campground .....	36
	<b>Completing the Trip .....</b>	<b>37</b>
	<b><i>Appendix .....</i></b>	<b><i>I</i></b>

## **Preface**

Alfresco Adventures provides this guidebook to its customers to help to in the planning, execution, and completion of their adventure trip. This guidebook will cover many aspects of trip planning and provide a new or seasoned trip planner/leader with as much information as possible to plan and lead a successful trip for their club, organization, family, or friends utilizing Alfresco Adventures trip services.

## **Purpose of this Guidebook**

The purpose of this Guidebook is to assist Alfresco Adventures customers who are planning to lead a trip to a chosen local or remote destination. This guidebook will provide the trip planner/leader with a resource of necessary information that will guide them through the process from the planning phase through the completion of their trip.

## **Trip Definitions**

A trip is a single day or number of days where people are lead by a Trip Leader(s) to a destination and back. For purposes of differentiation this guidebook will use the names **Extended-Trip** for trips of 4 days or more, **Weekend-Trip** for trips, which usually take place spanning a weekend and are less than 4 days in duration.

## **Guidebook Layout**

This Guidebook is separated into multiple sections starting with the **Planning a Trip** and ending with **Completing a Trip**. There are chapters for Extended-Trip specific information as well as for Weekend Trips. There is a chapter on **Transportation**, which contains information on selecting and planning transportation by Airplane, Motorcoach, Boat, Ferry, and Carpool. There is also a chapter on **Accommodations**, which contains information on selection and planning accommodations in Condominiums, Hotels, Inns and Campgrounds. You should start at the beginning of this guidebook and choose the appropriate section for the trip you are planning. Then read the transportation and accommodations chapters and end with the chapter on completing a trip. At this point you should have all the information you'll need for planning, executing, and completing a trip.

# 1 *Planning a Trip*

Planning and leading a trip can be a fun and exciting experience. Completing a successful trip is very rewarding and provides the trip leader(s) a sense of accomplishment and pleasure that makes the work through all phases of the trip worthwhile. In any undertaking in life careful planning is the key to success and these next few pages will help you with planning an outline for a successful trip.

## 1.1 *Begin with the End in Mind*

The first phase of planning a trip is to think about what type of trip you want to plan. Will it be a week or longer **Extended-Trip** a **Weekend-Trip**? Think about the trip from beginning to end and picture all aspects of the trip while considering the questions below.

- **Where is the destination of the trip?**  
USA, Europe, Canada etc.
- **What type of transportation will be needed?**  
Air, Motorcoach, Train, Boat, Ferry, Automobile
- **What type of lodging, if any?**  
Condominium, Hotel, Motel, Inn, Campground
- **How many people should be planned for?**  
25 is a normal sized group trip but trips can range from 10 – 100 people  
*Consider recruiting an additional leader for trips greater than 40 people*
- **What time of the year would be best for this trip?**  
Winter, Spring, Summer, or Fall  
*Obviously ski trips are best in winter months unless you're planning a trip to the Southern Hemisphere. Consider peak vacation times when planning ski and non-ski trips. You certainly don't want to plan a cruise or kayaking adventure in the Caribbean during hurricane season no matter how inexpensive it may be.*
- **What month would be best for this type of trip?**  
Ski trips in New England are best held January - March, although trips to the US Rockies could be very successful December - April. Depending on what destination you choose in Europe the best winter snow months vary by country. Some areas of the Alps are prone to avalanches in mid to late March. Warm weather trips could be held any time during the year depending on the destination.
- **What days would be best for this type of trip?**  
Taking advantage of long holiday weekends can turn a weekend trip into a nice mini-vacation. However consider the risks of holiday weekends as well as school vacation times. When planning an Extended-Trip you'll need to consider not only local holidays and school vacations but also the holidays and school vacations of your trip's destination.

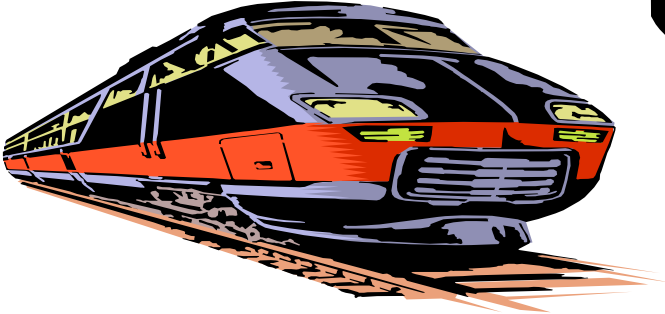
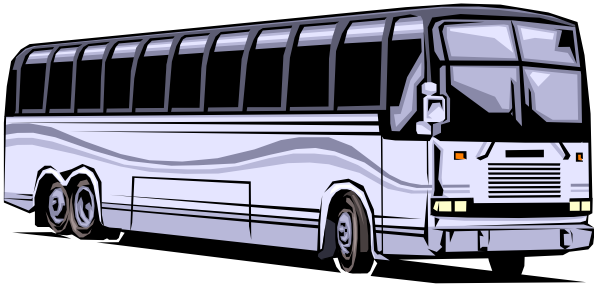
*Prices at the resort can usually be a good indicator of holiday prime vacation times as prices increase during these times.*

## **1.2 *Make a decision and start researching***

The key to planning a successful trip is research and early planning. Once you've made a decision on the length of the trip and considered destination, transportation & accommodation options, it's time to start doing some serious research. Talk to Alfresco Adventures trip leaders who've run similar trips in the past. You can obtain information on past trips as well as trip leader names from Alfresco Adventures by calling **1-888-763-0219** or sending an email to [trips@alfrescoadventures.com](mailto:trips@alfrescoadventures.com), someone from group sales will reply and provide you with suggestions and plenty of valuable information. The Internet is a great tool for research but it can be overwhelming. Alfresco Adventures staff can be your best resource for planning a trip especially an Extended-Trip. Attend ski shows, camping shows, or travel events pertaining to the type of trip you're planning. Talk to Resort representatives and pick up brochures and business cards. The Boston Ski and Sports Exposition held in November is a great place to obtain information on planning an Extended-Trip as well as a weekend getaway.



Trips



## 2.1 *Extended-Trips*

Extended-Trips are by far the most challenging and in almost all cases the most expensive. This section will cover design, planning as well as timelines and provide you with tips and ideas on how to successfully plan and execute an Extended-Trip. Alfresco Adventures trip planning staff will assist you with your research and provide you with suggestions during every step of your trip design and planning.

### **Designing an Extended-Trip**

There are many things to consider when designing an Extended-Trip that will encourage people to get out their credit cards or checkbook and place a reservation deposit on a trip.

- **Research your Destination**

Once you've chosen a destination spend time researching it, write to the Resort and obtain pamphlets, brochures, and other useful information. Write to the City, Town, State or Province Tourist Bureau and obtain information about the area. Use the Internet to search for name and addresses of Tourist Bureaus or Departments of Travel and Tourism. As mentioned earlier in the "Planning a Trip" section. Take the time to attend Travel Shows or Ski Shows and obtain information. Determine the best time of year to travel to the destination for the activities you are planning. Remember you're planning a trip of many days so you need to insure trip participants will have plenty to do if they choose as well as a comfortable place to relax at their accommodations if they choose to take a break from it all.

- **Research your Accommodation Options**

Accommodations are the second most important choice other than your destination. Since you'll be staying for many days you need to choose accommodations that will appeal to the types of people you will be trying to sell your trip to. More information is provided in the **Accommodations Chapter** which will cover the pro's and con's of different accommodation options. Realize that your accommodation needs for an Extended-Trip may be very different from a Weekend-Trip. Location is very important for Extended-Trips. Research can be overwhelming, as there are usually many options in resort areas. The key is to decide first what type and then the proximity to the resort, town, or village. Also consider the restaurants in the area or on the property if you are thinking of providing a meal plan as part of the trip package. At this point, sort through the accommodations that best fit your needs in amenities and price. Prioritize your selections then email or call the property management and ask about their group rates. Group prices usually are not included in the regular price listings and this can make a difference in your final selection. Have the resort send you their brochure and pricing information for the dates you are planning the trip.

- **Research your Transportation options**

Transportation to and from your destination on an Extended-Trip usually involves airline and some form of ground based travel. When researching your options take into

consideration the day as well as time of day you want to travel. Booking a flight for 32 people at 5AM may dissuade some people when they realize they'll be required to be at the airport 2 hours earlier. You need to consider transportation options to and from the airport once you reach your destination. For large groups, motorcoaches are the best option. Saturday or Sunday departures for a 7-day trip are most common. You can research airline flight schedules on the Internet from the Airline's Web Site or other air travel sites such as Expedia.com or Travelocity.com. More information on transportation can be found in the **Transportation Chapter**.

- **Pulling it all together**

Now that you've done your research on Destination, Accommodations, Transportation it's time to start pulling it all together and putting some of the finishing touches on your trip design. A lot of this work will be done using Alfresco Adventures trip planning staff, as they will be, in most cases, building a trip package for you based on your design choices.

### **Extended-Trip Proposal**

The Extended-Trip Proposal is the information that you will provide to Alfresco Adventures when booking your trip.

#### **What you will need to present in your trip proposal:**

- Destination
- Proposed dates of trip (minimum of two dates must be provided)
- Number of persons planned (32 is normal for a Extended-Trip)
- Type of accommodations: Condominium, Hotel, Inn
- Travel arrangements required: Airplane, Motorcoach, Train etc.
- Meals: Number of meals and types if included in the trip
- Additional activities: Skiing, sightseeing, touring etc.
- Complimentary package provided for the trip leader.

*Complimentary packages are usually given upon meeting a minimum number of trip participants purchasing a complete trip package. Most Travel Agencies or Resorts provide a free or complimentary package per 20 or more people.*

### **Extended-Trip Financial Plan**

Along with obtaining the base cost of the trip from Alfresco Adventures there are many other costs that need to be planned into the finances of your trip. You'll need to consider cost of materials such as envelopes, mailing labels, paper etc. Postage can be a significant cost if you will do a lot of mailings. Try to use email as much as possible. Alfresco Adventures Trip Leader Services provide you with group email; an online dossier; as well as online itinerary to assist you with staying in contact with your group and providing them with valuable and timely information. You'll need to budget for pre and post trip parties if you decide to include them, as well as a trip souvenir if you plan to include one. Alfresco Adventures can assist you with suggestions and in most cases provide you with a resource for creating a personalized trip souvenir for your trip. Below is a list of things you should include in your personal trip budget before finalizing your completed trip costs.

### **Additional Trip Costs:**

- ◆ Trip Souvenirs
- ◆ Meals
- ◆ Parties - Pre Trip, During Trip, Post Trip
- ◆ Phone
- ◆ Photos
- ◆ Copies
- ◆ Miscellaneous - Envelopes, Paper, Labels etc.
- ◆ Buffer

### **Selling Your Extended-Trip**

Selling your trip involves a great deal of creativity and salesmanship. In this phase you may want to design a poster board to advertise your trip at your club or organizations monthly meetings. You should create trip flyers to distribute to people at these meetings as well. You may also choose to write an advertisement for your trip for inclusion in club/organizations monthly newsletter. The following sections provide information on these promotional/sales materials and their contents.

- **Advertisement Poster Board**

When selling a trip to a club or organization membership a poster board is a very good way to advertise your trip at the membership meetings or your trip promotion party. A good size for a poster board is a 3' X 4' cardboard sheet, which can be either tri-folded or left flat. You can purchase one of these pre-cut poster boards at most office supply stores such as Staples or Office Max. A large banner across the top, which includes the trip name and dates, should be visible from a distance. The poster should contain pictures of your trip destination and accommodations if possible as well as some interesting facts about your trip. Be creative and cut out pictures from the brochures you've obtained from the resorts, travel agencies or tourist bureaus. The goal is to provide an attractive display that will make people come and see what the trip is all about.

- **Flyers**

The trip flyer is the best advertisement for your trip. It can be placed on the tables at your club's meetings or handed out by you. You need to insure that the important information on your trip is on this flyer. The flyer should have a picture to attract attention. Be creative and design a flyer that makes people want to pick it up and read it.

#### **Some items your trip flyer should include are:**

- ◆ Name and dates of the trip
- ◆ Transportation information
- ◆ Accommodation information
- ◆ Pricing
- ◆ Interesting facts about the destination
- ◆ Web Page links of resort
- ◆ Contact information, Trip Leaders names, phone number & email

**An example of an Extended-Trip flyer**

Come Ski Where the Olympians Ski  
March 8 - 15, 2003



park city™

Alpine Heart of 2002



Park City Mountain Resort is the heart of Park City, known for its world-renowned skiing and legendary dry powder. The World's choice for 2002. Open since 1963, Park City Mountain Resort hosted the snowboarding and giant slalom events during the 2002 Olympics



Deer Valley Resort, site of the 2002 Olympic slalom, mogul and aerial events, is located in Park City, just a few minutes from historic Main Street. Great service, award-winning restaurants, wonderful shopping and a beautiful atmosphere ensure a superb experience.



Located just four miles from Park City's historic Main Street, The Canyons 3,500 acres of diverse terrain await visitors with open arms. In just three years, this world-class ski resort has grown to become one of the five largest in the country. And with eight mountains of trails, there's guaranteed to be something for everyone.

Trip includes Round Trip “Non Stop” flight from Boston to Salt Lake City just a 35-minute drive from Park City Resort. 7 nights stay at Park Station Hotel/Condominiums deluxe accommodations in the heart of Park City and only 1 block from the Town Lift and Main Street. Park Station offers 1, 2 & 3 bedroom units with fireplaces & fully equipped kitchens and hot tubs, saunas and pool access. A 5 Day Silver Passport lift ticket good for any of the 3 listed ski areas on any day a total of 49 lifts & 327 Trails to choose from. There will be a welcoming reception at Texas Red's in Park City, a group dinner at one of Park City's fine restaurants, and a great trip souvenir, all for a fantastic price of **only \$x,xxxx per person.**

For more information, Contact: **“Trip Leaders”**, “phone number”, “email address”

View the Park City Web Sites at [www.parkcityinfo.com](http://www.parkcityinfo.com) or [www.parkcitymountain.com](http://www.parkcitymountain.com)

- **Newsletter Advertisement**

The newsletter advertisement can be a challenge, as you will have limited space to advertise your trip. You'll need to provide many of the things from your trip flyer but will be limited in the number and size of pictures in this ad. You might want to simply tailor your flyer to a 1/2 page and reduce the font sizes and see how much you can fit in. Also try to include only the highlights of the trip. The following newsletter write up is from the Park City flyer example on the previous page minus pictures and some sentences.

**Park City Utah**  
**March 8 - 15, 2003**  
**Come Ski Where the Olympians Ski ed**




Park City Mountain Resort is the heart of the Park City, known for its world-renowned skiing and legendary dry powder. The world's choice for 2002. Open since 1963, Park City Mountain Resort hosted the snowboarding and giant slalom events during the 2002 Olympics

Deer Valley Resort, site of the 2002 Olympic slalom, mogul and aerial events, is located in Park City, just a few minutes from historic Main Street. Great service, award-winning restaurants, wonderful shopping and a beautiful atmosphere ensure a superb experience.



**DEER VALLEY  
RESORT**



Located just four miles from Park City's historic Main Street, The Canyons 3,500 acres of diverse terrain await visitors with open arms. In just three years, this world-class ski resort has grown to become one of the five largest in the country. And with eight mountains of trails, there's guaranteed to be something for everyone.

Trip includes Round Trip "Non Stop" flight from Boston to Salt Lake City just a 35 minute drive from Park City Resort. 7 nights stay at Park Station Hotel/Condominiums, deluxe accommodations in the heart of Park City and only 1 block from the Town Lift and Main Street. Park Station offers 1, 2 & 3 bedroom units with fireplaces & fully equipped kitchens and hot tubs, saunas and pool access. A 5 Day Silver Passport lift ticket good for any of the 3 listed ski areas on any day. A total of 49 lifts & 327 Trails to choose from. There will also be a welcoming dinner at Texas Red's in Park City and a group dinner at one of Park City's fine restaurants as well as a great trip favor for **only \$x,xxx per person.**

Contact: "Trip Leader", "Phone", Email "email address"  
 View the Web Sites at [www.ParkCityInfo.com](http://www.ParkCityInfo.com) or [www.ParkCityMountain.com](http://www.ParkCityMountain.com)  
 Send payments, made out to Seacoast Ski Club, to "Trip Leader", "Address"

- **Presentation at your club/organizations monthly meetings**

You may need to comprise a brief promotional speech to be presented at monthly meetings. You do not need to cover everything contained in your trip flyer but you should present as much of the important features about your trip as possible. Try to keep your speech upbeat and comical. Try to keep the audience interested in what you are saying. Try to make your presentation a little different each month. Use of props such as hats or costumes can be fun.

## **Managing & Leading an Extended-Trip**

Managing an Extended-Trip is not difficult although there is planning involved in order to maintain trip finances properly manage the trip. Once you've created all the promotional materials and are ready to sell your trip you also need to have a trip management process in place. Alfresco Adventures provides you with many resources and tools for managing your trips finances and payments as listed below. Contact Alfresco Adventures for a more information on utilizing these services.

### **1. Trip Registration Form**

*The Alfresco Adventures on-line Trip Registration Form includes Name, Address, Home & Work Phone Number, Email Address & Roommate(s) preference for every trip participant.*

### **2. Deposit/Payments Register**

*Alfresco Adventures provides a complete deposit and payment register for each person who joins a trip. This register is viewable to the trip leader on-line via the Trip Leader Services page.*

### **3. Trip Participants List.**

*This list is available on-line from your trip specific web portal can be downloaded as a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet, which you can tailor to your trips individual needs. This list contains the persons Name, Address, Home & Work Phone Number and E-mail Address. This list can be utilized to create a mailing list for labels or luggage tags.*

### **• Devise a Payment Plan**

Extended-Trips are a significant expenditure and most people who sign up for your trip will want to make multiple payments. It is wise to devise a payment plan that insures everyone will be paid in full at least 90 days prior to your trip departure date. Be aware of what your trip contract states and try to obtain the trip participants final payments one-month prior to that date. If your trip is 9 months away making the monthly payments 1/6 of the total is a good rule of thumb to follow. If the cost doesn't divide evenly make the last payment the lesser payment. Alfresco Adventures will provide your trip participants with the option of making repetitive payments based on schedule decided upon by you.

### **• Keeping the Ball Rolling**

You have completed your trip design and plan and have booked your trip through Alfresco Adventures and are now managing your trip using Alfresco Adventures Trip Leader Services. All of your sales materials have been printed and distributed and your trip is taking in money and people are joining your trip. Things are going smoothly and you still have months to go before your trip date. As people sign up, welcome them and keep in touch with them occasionally using group or individual email from your trip's web portal. Remind your trip participants about Passports, Visas, or Birth Certificates, if needed, and

insure that your trip list has the correct name, as it appears on these forms of identification.

- **Order your Trip Souvenirs**

Everyone loves a souvenir from his or her trip and having a great trip souvenir is a big plus for any trip. You'll need to decide months in advance in some cases what this trip souvenir should be and budget the cost into the original price of the trip. If you are thinking of some sort of embroidered apparel with your club or organizations' logo you should plan for this months in advance. Alfresco Adventures can assist you in locating a local companies who will do quality work for you or we can offer the trip favor as part of your trip package price.

### **Pre-Trip Party**

Within a month of your trip you should plan a Pre-Trip party to get all the people participating in the trip together for a get acquainted social. You'll need to brief everyone on the logistics of the trip and any other details as well as answer any questions. This party is also a great opportunity to distribute airline tickets and luggage tags. If you have trip favors, this is a good time to give them out so that you don't have to carry them all in your luggage. You should also compile a booklet with lots of helpful information about the trip. This booklet should include a trip itinerary, flight arrival and departure information, resort information, and any helpful tips such as a packing list. It's always a nice touch to obtain trail maps of ski areas you'll be skiing at and include them in the booklet. Ask Alfresco Adventures trip planning staff for ideas and information on putting together a booklet for your trip

### **Pre Trip Checklist (2 weeks prior to departure)**

The following list is will help you in making sure you have everything you need prior to your departure date.

- ◆ Contact Alfresco Adventures and insure all arrangements have been made
- ◆ Insure everyone has received their airline tickets if applicable
- ◆ Insure everyone has received their luggage tags if applicable
- ◆ Send out a reminder on Passports, Visas or Birth Certificates, if required

### **Day of Departure**

The big day has arrived and you're now on you're way to enjoying the benefits of all the hard work you've put in leading up to this day. However the job of Trip Leader is far from over as you still have plenty of work to do during the trip. If you'll be departing for your destination by air you should be at the Airport Check-in area before the first person in your group arrives. The rule of thumb is to be at the Airline check-in 2 hours prior to your flight for a non-US destination. Therefore you should be there 2 1/2 hours earlier to insure there is no person in your group waiting for you to arrive. You, as the Trip Leader, should be there to greet the members of the group as they arrive and guide them to the correct location if necessary.



Once everyone has checked in and is onboard the aircraft, you can relax for a while anyway. It's always good to walk about the cabin, when allowed, and talk to your group members and answer any questions. If you'll be going through Customs and Immigration upon arrival, let people know where to regroup after passing through.

If you'll be taking ground transportation to the Resort, check in with the transportation provider upon arrival and let everyone know the procedure and where to meet. If you'll be taking a bus to the resort, brief everyone on the accommodations and procedure upon arrival. In some cases you'll have an escort who will handle the most of the check-in and hand out the room keys. If this is not the case it's all up to you.

### **During the Trip**

You've arrived at your destination checked into your accommodations and everyone is excited and anxious. If you've planned a welcoming party this will give everyone a chance to get together again after settling in. You'll probably hear if there are any problems with the accommodations and you should rectify them as soon as possible. If you haven't planned a welcoming party suggest a meeting place for dinner or cocktails 2 hours after arrival. If you have the phone numbers of each room, call and let people know the location.

Throughout the course of the trip be available to your group and take lots of pictures! If you plan on getting away for some peace and quiet and a break from the group then put someone else or your co-leader in charge. Share the responsibility and the work. Have a plan beforehand and decide who will do what on any given day. Keep track of any funny things that occurred over the course of the trip and use them in your trip report or to tell everyone on the trip home.

Remind people of the departure schedule at least a day prior to departure and it may be a good idea to have a night before gathering to brief everyone on the schedules and remind them of any departure specific information. If you'll be taking a motorcoach to the airport call the transportation company or trip escort and verify the motorcoach arrival time then let everyone know the night before what time to arrive at the bus. If a trip participant needs to transport their own luggage ask them to arrive at least 1/2-hour before the bus departure.

### **Day of Departure**

The day of departure is always a bit melancholy as your group is probably wishing the trip was not over and are a bit sad to leave. Nevertheless the trip is winding down and you're headed for home. If you'll be on a motorcoach to the airport, tell a few funny stories about the trip and ask people to talk about their adventures. Most people love to tell about their good time over the week. You may even want to pick out a few little awards or token gifts to give to the very helpful people on the trip. Hand out paper and pencils and ask people to write something about the trip. This could also be done on the airplane but the motorcoach is a more captive audience. Upon arrival at the airport the routine is similar to the day of departure especially if you need to go through Customs and Immigration. The key is to try and keep people together and have a meeting spot preferably near the Airline Terminal Gate.

Once you arrive at your home airport gather at the luggage pickup area and stay there until the last person in your group has obtained their luggage and is headed for home. Now you can take a big sigh of relief and reminisce about the great time you had.

### **Post Trip Wrap-Up & Party**

Soon after the trip is over start thinking of when a good date would be for a post trip party. You should wait a few weeks so that everyone can have time to develop their film and will have pictures to show and share at the party. You could ask everyone for a convenient date on the trip or just schedule it for a date that is convenient for most. Weeknights are good choice if everyone lives in the local area; a weekend day is a better choice, if people do not. Remember to tell people to bring pictures to share, as this can be a lot of fun. Keep the party simple and have snacks or pizza so people will have a chance to enjoy talking and not be too busy eating. A pub or someplace where you can gather in a group at a central location is also a good idea.

## **2.2 Weekend-Trip**

A trip of 1-4 days is considered to be a Weekend-Trip. Weekend-Trips usually take place over a weekend but this is not always the case. Weekend-Trips are almost always local trip which do not involve air travel. The transportation options for these trips are usually motorcoach or car pool. Accommodations are usually 1 to 3 nights. Weekend-Trips are less costly and are much easier to organize than an Extended-Trip. This section will cover the requirements and timelines as well as give you tips and ideas on how to successfully plan and execute a Weekend-Trip.

### **Designing a Weekend-Trip**

Designing a Weekend-Trip in some ways is similar to designing an Extended-Trip especially if there is group transportation involved and if you'll be using a Travel Agent. However since the trip is only a few days in length the complexities are minimal. The next few sections will guide you through designing a multiple day trip, which if planned and executed correctly, will be a successful trip for the participants as well as financially, for the club.

- **Research your Destination**

Since your destination for a Weekend-Trip will most likely be within a few hour drive for most trip participants you should take a scouting trip to the destination yourself and check out the area. Most local ski resorts these days have some type of springtime activities going on so there will most likely be someone around to talk to. In the same light summertime resorts with the exception of campgrounds, are in most cases, 3 or 4 season resorts as well. It's always a good idea to call the group sales manager at the resorts you're interested in and set up a meeting. In some cases, if you tell a resort manager or group sales person that you plan to bring a group of 30 or more people to their resort you may be offered a free or reduced night stay off season to visit the resort. Spend some time researching good places to have a group dinner or a night out on the town during your scouting trip as well. A great way to obtain information on a resort is to attend Ski, Travel or Camping shows. The Boston Ski and Sports Exposition which is held in November or the Boston Camping and Travel Show held in February are great places to pick up information on resorts and talk to the representatives. Consider the dates of your trip to insure that your trip doesn't coincide with some major event, holiday or school vacation, unless this is your plan. Remember some States have different holidays and/or school vacations. Consider this if planning a trip to Canada as well. Use the Internet to do some of your research as well as write or call the State Department of Travel and Tourism to obtain information about the destination. You can usually pick up a travel guidebook at rest areas in any given state.

- **Research your Accommodations**

It is very important to select the right type of accommodations for a Weekend-Trip. The most important thing to consider is if the Hotel, Motel, Inn etc. can accommodate a large group. Also will they give you a reduced rate based on a group of a certain size? Many Hotels' will have a group rate but an Inn may not. Research the rooming arrangements in order to keep the group in close proximity. Most people who travel in-groups don't want to

end up with their lodging dispersed all over the property. This is especially important with condominiums and campground choices. Ask about refund policies and contractual obligations. Ask for a brochure of the property and a price list for the dates you are planning. Review the **Accommodations Chapter** in this guidebook for more information on selecting the best accommodations for your trip.

- **Research your Travel options**

Although you typically won't have to deal with air travel on a Weekend-Trip you will have to decide on how to get your group to the destination. If you choose a group transportation option such as motorcoach, train or boat you'll need to do some research on the pricing and schedules of these carriers and make some decisions on what company will be the best choice for your trip. Review the **Transportation Chapter** for more information on selecting a group carrier. If you decide to carpool, you will need to do some research for directions and maps. A good resource for direction information is AAA and Internet sites such as MapQuest.com.

- **Research a Travel Agent or Group Travel Company**

Although it is not always necessary acquire Travel Agency for a Weekend-Trip Alfresco Adventures can do a lot of the work for you in putting together a group travel package thus making your trip planning much simpler. Many resorts also have packages, which will include lodging, meals and activities designed for groups. Ask about complimentary "free" packages when talking with an Agency or Resort. There is typically one complimentary package for every 20 people but this may vary.

- **Putting it all together**

Now that you've done your research on Destination, Accommodations, and Transportation, you should have a few choices and options to make some final decisions. It's time now to start putting it all together and complete the design of your Weekend-Trip. You will need to present your trip at the Seacoast Ski Club summer or winter calendar meeting. The information you will need to present at this meeting is listed in the following section; **Summer & Winter Calendar Planning Meetings.**

### **Weekend Trip Proposal**

The Weekend-Trip Proposal is the information that you will provide to Alfresco Adventures when booking your trip.

#### **What you will need to present in your trip proposal:**

- Destination
- Proposed dates of trip (minimum of two dates must be provided)
- Number of persons planned for full trip (20 - 32 is the typical range for a Weekend-Trip)
- Type of accommodations Hotel, Inn, Condo etc.
- Travel Arrangements: Motorcoach, Train, Carpool etc.
- Meals: and types and number if included
- Additional activities included i.e. Skiing, sightseeing etc.

- Complimentary package provided for the trip leader.  
*Complimentary packages are usually given upon meeting a minimum number of persons purchasing a complete trip package. Most Travel Agencies or Resorts provide a free package per 20 or more people.*

### **Good to Go**

Once your trip has been booked and a deposit has been paid, it's time to finalize your **Weekend-Trip Financial Plan** and begin the process of **Selling Your Weekend-Trip**.

### **Weekend-Trip Financial Plan**

Along with determining the final cost of the trips accommodations, transportation and activities, there are many other costs, which need to be added into the budget for your trip. You'll need to consider cost of materials such as envelopes, mailing labels, paper. Postage can be a significant cost if you do a lot of mailings. Try to use email as much as possible. You'll need to budget money for a trip souvenir if you plan to include one. You'll probably receive only one free complimentary package, or in some cases none at all, thus you'll may need to include the cost of the trip leader(s) compensation into the cost of the trip. It is also a good idea to add in a little bit of a buffer to insure that the trip will not suffer a loss if a person cancels or a odd number of people sign up and you have booked are 2 person rooms. Below is a list of things you should include in your budget and completing your trip financial report.

#### **Additional Trip Costs:**

- ◆ Trip Favors
- ◆ Meals
- ◆ Phone
- ◆ Photos
- ◆ Copies
- ◆ Miscellaneous - Envelopes, Paper, Labels etc.

### **Selling Your Weekend-Trip**

The most time consuming phase of organizing and leading a trip is the selling phase. This phase involves a great deal of creativity and salesmanship. In this phase, you may choose to design a poster board to set up at your club/organizations monthly membership meetings. You will most likely want to create a trip advertisement flyer to distribute at the meetings. You will probably need to write an advertisement for your trip for tour clubs monthly newsletter or web site. The following bullets provide information on these sales materials and their contents.

- **Flyers**

The trip flyer is the best advertisement for your trip as it can be placed on tables at your club's meeting or handed out to. You'll need to insure that all the important information on your trip is in this trip flyer. The flyer should have a picture of some sort to attract attention. Be creative and design a flyer that makes people want to pick it up and read it.

**Some items the flyer should include are:**

- ◆ Name and dates of the trip
- ◆ Transportation information
- ◆ Accommodation information
- ◆ Pricing
- ◆ Interesting facts about the destination
- ◆ Web Page links of resort
- ◆ Contact information, Trip Leaders names, phone number & email

**An example Weekend-Trip flyer is included on the following page.**

# Quebec City Winter Carnival

Jan 30th - Feb 2nd, 2003

<http://www.carnaval.qc.ca>



Le Carnaval de Québec is a unique and exciting event that has enlivened the world's snow capital for 48 years. Le Carnaval is a celebration of winter magic featuring numerous fun-filled activities. The premiere site for activities, Place Desjardins, is situated on the historical Plains of Abraham. It will be transformed into an immense winter wonderland, playing host to all kinds of performances and expositions. Some of the activities include: an international snow sculpture exhibit, a centre for performing arts, an igloo village, a snow tubing and rafting park, dogsled rides, horse-drawn sleigh rides, ice sculptures, music, fireworks, and lots more!

## Le Chateau Frontenac



Voted the number one resort in eastern North America by readers of Ski Magazine, Le Chateau Frontenac is a magnificent castle-like structure with copper turrets and stone towers. It overlooks the St. Lawrence River and is situated atop Cap Diamant Cliffs, in the heart of the old, walled-in Quebec City.

  
<http://www.mont-sainte-anne.com>

Take advantage of exceptional conditions and skiing at its best, while taking in breathtaking scenery!

- 56 ski and snowboard trails
- 428 acres of beautiful and varied skiing terrain, for all categories of skiers and snowboarders
- 224 km of x-country ski trails with warming huts along the trails

### The trip includes:

- Motor Coach Transportation with on-board Movies
- 3 Nights First Class Accommodations at Le Chateau Frontenac
- Wine and Cheese Reception
- 1 Day Lift Ticket at Mt. St. Anne
- 1 Group Gourmet Buffet Dinner at the L'Astral

(540 feet up in the air, this revolving restaurant serves up 13 miles of stunning 360-degree views!)

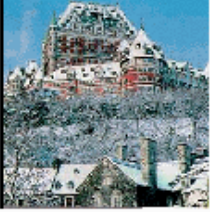
### L'Astral Revolving Restaurant




Price is \$xxx.xx per person double occupancy. To sign up for this incredible winter trip, call "Trip Leader", "Phone number", "Email "Email Address"

## Newsletter Advertisement

The newsletter advertisement can be a challenge as you will be limited to space for your advertisement. You should provide many of the things from your trip flyer but limit the number and size of pictures in this ad. You might want to simply tailor your flyer to a 1/4 page and reduce the font sizes and see how much you can fit in. Also try to include only the highlights of the trip. The following newsletter write up is from the Quebec City flyer example on the previous page minus pictures and some sentences.



**Quebec City Winter Carnival Jan 30 – Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
<http://www.carnaval.qc.ca/>



The largest winter carnival in the world, the Carnaval de Quebec, has gained international fame over the years through its renowned key figure, Bonhomme. He is the living incarnation of the snowmen that have enchanted Quebec children for generations. The Quebec Winter Carnival offers a multitude of sporting, artistic and cultural activities, allowing grown-ups and children alike to re-discover the marvels of winter, or to experience them for the first time. The Quebec Carnival is a quality-filled, diversified event that allows you to take in breathtaking, snowy scenery in the heart of the city that captures the beauty of the winter season best.

This trip includes luxury motor coach transportation from Portsmouth NH, 3 nights lodging at the world renowned five-star Le Chateau Frontenac (pictured above), 1 day of skiing at Mont Sainte Anne, and a group dinner at the L'Astral rotating dining room overlooking Quebec City. Optional trips to Winter Park fun park, cross country skiing at Mont Sainte Anne, or a Quebec City tour are available. Or enjoy exploring the events taking place at the Carnival, including snow sculptures, ice sculptures, music, dog sled races, etc.

**Cost Per Person: \$xxx dbl. occupancy.** Call “**Trip Leader**” email “**email address**”  
Send checks made out to the Seacoast Ski Club to “**Trip Leader**” , “**Address**”

- **Presentation at monthly meetings**

You may need to comprise a brief promotional speech to be presented at monthly meetings. You do not need to cover everything contained in your trip flyer but you should present as much of the important features about your trip as possible. Try to keep your speech upbeat and comical. Try to keep the audience interested in what you are saying. Try to make your presentation a little different each month. Use of props such as hats or costumes can be fun.

### **Managing & Leading a Weekend-Trip**

Managing a Weekend-Trip is not difficult although there is planning involved in order to maintain trip finances properly manage the trip. Once you've created all the promotional materials and are ready to sell your trip you also need to have a trip management process in place. Alfresco Adventures provides you with many resources and tools for managing your trips finances and payments as listed below. Contact Alfresco Adventures for a more information on utilizing these services.



**1. Trip Registration Form**

*The Alfresco Adventures on-line Trip Registration Form includes Name, Address, Home & Work Phone Number, Email Address & Roommate(s) preference for every trip participant.*

**2. Deposit/Payments Register**

*Alfresco Adventures provides a complete deposit and payment register for each person who joins a trip. This register is viewable to the trip leader on-line via the Trip Leader Services page.*

**3. Trip Participants List.**

*This list is available on-line from your trip specific web portal can be downloaded as a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet, which you can tailor to your trips individual needs. This list contains the persons Name, Address, Home & Work Phone Number and E-mail Address. This list can be utilized to create a mailing list for labels or luggage tags.*

- **Devise a Payment Plan**

Weekend-Trips are not as significant an expenditure as an Extended-Trip and in most cases there will only be one or two trip payments other than the initial deposit. If there will be multiple payments it is wise to devise a payment plan that will insure everyone will be paid in full 60 days prior to your trip departure date. Be aware of what your Travel Agency or Resort contract states and base the final payments income prior to that date.

- **Keeping the Ball Rolling**

You have booked your trip with your Travel Agency or Resort and have all your sales materials printed and distributed. Money is coming in and people are being joining your trip. Things are going smoothly and you still have months to go before your trip date. Keep track of payment schedules to your Travel Agency or Resort and insure that you meet all the payment dates stated in the contract. As people sign up remind them about Passports, Visas or Birth Certificates, if needed, and insure that your trip list has the correct name, as it appears on these forms of identification.

- **Order your Trip Souvenirs**

Everyone loves a souvenir from his or her trip and having a great trip souvenir is a big plus for any trip. You'll need to decide months in advance in some cases what this trip souvenir should be and budget the cost into the original price of the trip. If you are thinking of some sort of embroidered apparel with your club or organizations' logo you should plan for this months in advance. Alfresco Adventures can assist you in locating a local companies who will do quality work for you or we can offer the trip favor as part of your trip package price.

**Pre-Trip Information Packet**

Within 2 weeks of your trip you should send out a pre-trip information packet. Tell everyone you'll have the information packets available at your club/organizations monthly meeting just prior to your trip. You can certainly use email to distribute the information as well as US mail for the trip participants without email addresses. The packet should include the itinerary of the

trip and a rooming list. You should also provide and directions to the destination if carpooling or directions to a departure location if using group transportation. If you are using group transportation such as a motorcoach you should also provide luggage tags. It's very easy to create printed labels for luggage tags from your Trip Participants List. Ask your Alfresco Adventures trip planner for information on creating mailing labels form your trip participants' list as well as ideas on putting together your trip information packet.

### **Pre Trip Checklist (2 weeks prior to departure)**

The following list is will help you in making sure you have everything you need prior to your departure date.

- ◆ Contact Travel Agent or Resort and insure all arrangements have been made
- ◆ Insure everyone has received their information packet
- ◆ Insure everyone has received their luggage tags if applicable
- ◆ Send out a reminder on Passports, Visas or Birth Certificates if required

### **Day of Arrival**

The day of arrival to your destination has arrived and everyone is excited about his or her mini vacation. All the work up to this point seems to be worthwhile and you're happy to see that everything has finally come together. However you still have work to do! Over the next couple of days you'll need to be available at times to keep track of everything. If there are lift tickets to be obtained and distributed you'll need to do that. If there is a group dinner or welcoming party you'll need to insure that everyone knows where it will be. Take some time to talk to everyone over the course of the trip and get to know a little about him or her. If you want to insure people will come on other trips you lead you need to make them feel welcome and comfortable. Introduce people to each other, especially the new members. If you're using group transportation use the time on the motorcoach, boat or train to walk about and introduce yourself and answer any questions. It's always good to know a little about the route you're traveling and let people know about interesting sights along the way. If your group is carpooling take the time to greet people upon their arrival and try to be the first person to arrive. If your accommodations are at a Hotel or Inn you will need to obtain a rooming list from the front desk. If you're arriving via motorcoach you may need to assist with luggage unloading.

### **During the Trip**

Be available and insure people know your room number. Try to anticipate any problems in advance. If skiing or other activities are planned be there to coordinate everything.

### **Day of Departure**

It's always a good idea to remind people of the checkout time and remind them to pay for any additional costs that incurred to their room if staying at a Hotel or Inn. You certainly don't want to get stuck with a bill to pay for someone's room service, service bar or phone call. If you arrived by motorcoach you'll need to remind everyone of the departure time and in room luggage pickup if applicable. Take the time to say good-bye to everyone and be the last person to leave if you can.

### **Post Trip Wrap-Up**

After the trip completes its time to finalize any outstanding finances such as receipts for expenses during the trip, postage, photos etc. Soon after the trip is over start thinking of when a good date would be for a post trip party if you decide to have one. You should wait a few weeks so that everyone can have time to develop their film and will have pictures to show and share at the party. You could ask everyone for a convenient date on the trip or just schedule it for a date that is convenient for most. Weeknights are good choice if everyone lives in the local area; a weekend day is a better choice, if people do not. Remember to tell people to bring pictures to share, as this can be a lot of fun. Keep the party simple and have snacks or pizza so people will have a chance to enjoy talking and not be too busy eating. A pub or someplace where you can gather in a group at a central location is also a good idea.

### 3 *Transportation*



**Planes, Trains and Automobiles** along with Motorcoaches, Boats, and Ferries are all options when planning your transportation needs of a trip. On an Extended-Trip you'll probably use airline transportation along with a motorcoach and, in some cases, carpooling. This section will cover air and ground transportation and touch briefly on water transportation via Ferries.

#### 3.1 *Air Transportation*



Air transportation is the most complicated travel option and it is usually best to let your chosen travel agency take care of this portion of your trip. However you can participate in the airline and flight selection process by doing a little advanced research on web sites such as Expedia.com, Travelocity.com or the airline's web site.

Things to consider when choosing air transportation.

##### **Direct Flight or Non-Stop**

Direct flights are by far the best choice for groups especially on ski trips. Changing planes to connecting flights is never a fun experience and delays arrival time. The delay could be in hours in comparison to a direct flight. Unfortunately, depending on your destination, you may not have an option.

- **Departure Time**

Try to choose a departure time that will not be extremely inconvenient for your group. Leaving for the Airport at 3AM would probably not be taken well by the majority of your group. Given current airport security, especially with international, flights time waiting in-lines at the airport will be long. With airlines now recommending that you be at the baggage check-in 2 hours before the flight, choosing convenient departure time for your group can be a challenge. If you must choose a departure flight prior to 7AM you may want to look into overnight accommodations close to the airport and make this an option. On flights to Europe you'll find that a flight where you depart in the evening and arrive the next morning is a very welcome choice. It's not easy sleeping on an aircraft for many people. Earplugs and eyeshades can make sleeping on an airplane easier. There are over the counter sleep aids that many people use on international flights.

- **Arrival Time**

Arrival time at your destination is also very important. Arrival in the wee hours of the morning or late at night is also not a good choice. On long flights, such as flights to Europe, your best choice for arrival is in the early morning especially if you'll be taking ground transportation from the airport to your destination. On the other hand if you're flying west it's best to choose a flight in the morning and arrive in the early evening. However consider connecting flights and ground transportation so that you don't arrive at your destination late in the evening.

*Note: Direct Flights to Zurich Switzerland were with SwissAir and direct flights to Vancouver BC were with Air Canada. US Airlines and other overseas airlines did not offer direct flights to these locations. Example Flight Schedules to Destination:*

**Flight from Boston to Zurich Switzerland ( direct flight )**

**6:30 PM** Depart Boston (BOS)  
**10:35 AM +1day** Arrive Zurich (ZRH) Elapsed time 7 hours 20 min.

**Flight from Boston to Zurich Switzerland (connecting flight in London)**

**6:05 PM** Depart Boston (BOS)  
**10:00 AM +1day** Arrive Zurich (ZRH) Elapsed time 9 hours 55min.

**Flight from Boston to Vancouver British Columbia (direct flight)**

**10:30 AM** Depart Boston (BOS)  
**12:17 PM** Arrive Vancouver (YYZ) Elapsed time 4 hours 47min.

**Flight from Boston to Vancouver British Columbia (connecting flight in Denver CO)**

**8:05 AM** Depart Boston (BOS)  
**1:13 PM** Arrive Vancouver (YVR) Elapsed time 8 hours 8min

**Example Flight Schedules returning from Destination:**

**Flight from Zurich Switzerland to Boston (direct flight)**

**10:25 AM** Depart Zurich (ZRH)  
**1:00 PM** Arrive Boston (BOS) Elapsed time 8 hours 35 min.

**Flight from Zurich Switzerland to Boston (connecting flight in London)**

**1:20 PM** Depart Geneva (GVA)  
**6:25 PM** Arrive Boston (BOS) Elapsed time 11 hours 5min.

**Flight from Vancouver British Columbia to Boston (direct flight)**

**10:30 AM** Depart Boston (BOS)  
**12:17 PM** Arrive Vancouver (YYZ) Elapsed time 4 hours 47min.

**Flight from Vancouver British Columbia to Boston (connecting flight in Denver CO)**

**2:00 PM** Depart Vancouver (YVR)  
**11:57 PM** Arrive Boston (BOS) Elapsed time 6 hours 57min

**The price is right**

Selecting an airline solely on price is seldom a good idea. Some airlines are more receptive to groups with pricing others are not. Ask your Alfresco Adventures trip planner for advice here. You need to weight the differences when planning the total trip price and make a decision, which you feel, is best for all.

**At the Airport**

Once you have made the decision on the airline you should do a little research on the airport from your departure location and destination and any stops in between. It's a good idea to spend a little time at the airports web page and gather information about the layout and location of the airline that you have chosen. The main things to consider are the check-in area and baggage claim areas. These locations can be horrendous when trying to herd a group through. Include airport maps or information brochures from the airlines on the terminal and

gate locations in your trip packet. Go over the check-in procedure with your group and let them know where you plan to meet upon arrival.

### **Customs and Immigration**

These are two big delay areas on international flights. If you have people on your trip that will be bringing souvenirs back from a foreign country and need to declare them you must make sure they do it ASAP to insure the whole group isn't delayed because of them. Let them know in advance where these locations are and, if necessary, lead them to it. The immigration line can't be avoided and it's a wise idea to remind your group that they will need their passports, visa's or birth certificates as well as some other form of identification readily available.

### **Baggage Claim**

Every airport and airline does baggage claims a little differently. Know in advance where the baggage claim area and guide your group to it, or at the very least, insure they know how to get to it. Most airlines have an airport layout booklet in the magazine pouch at each seat; take a look at it before landing. Returning home isn't usually as big a deal as most people know their local airport pretty well. Ski trips are more of problem at the baggage claim area, as skis are not usually loaded onto the luggage carousel. Ask the airline attendants how they deal with skis and if they are brought out separately from the other luggage as well as where and when they will be brought out. Boston's Logan Airport is notorious for bringing out the skis last and all the skiers are still waiting after everyone else has gone home. Recruit a couple of people to help with getting your groups skis together so that your group can pick them up after obtaining their luggage. Teamwork within your group is key at the baggage claim. If you have luggage tags it makes things go much smoother as well.

## **Airport Checklist**

### **Before your group arrives at the Airport have you:**

- Checked with the airlines about any group check-in procedures?
- Checked with the airlines about seating your group together?
- Told the airlines about any special seating or meal requests?
- Determined from which gate your flight will depart?
- Determined if the flight is on schedule?
- Decided on a meeting location after check-in?
- Located the bathrooms as well as restaurants, snack bars and shops?

### **As people from your group arrive, have you:**

- Asked people if they have their Passport, Visa or Birth Certificate?
- Ask people if they have their Airline Ticket?
- Briefed them on any last minute instructions or changes?
- Inform them of the departure gate and give directions?
- Warn them to protect their baggage and don't leave it?
- Inform them of location of meeting location after check-in?
- Inform them of location of bathrooms, restaurants, snack bars and shops?
- Insure everyone has arrived by checking off your group list?

### **Aboard the airplane, have you:**

- Introduced yourself to the flight attendants and told them about your group?
- Walked about the cabin to find where everyone is located?
- Remind people of anything they'll need to know prior to arrival?

### **Upon arrival at your destination, have you:**

- Determined where the baggage claim area is located?
- Found a porter if necessary to help with baggage?
- Insured everyone has claimed his or her luggage?
- If using ground transportation, insured all luggage has been loaded on motorcoach?
- If using ground transportation, taken a headcount of all passengers on motorcoach?
- If using ground transportation, briefed everyone on any procedures upon arrival?

## 3.2 *Ground Transportation*

Ground transportation involves the use of motorcoaches, vans and carpools. The next few sections will give information on these transportation options and help you to decide which option would be best for your trip.



### **Motorcoaches**

A motorcoach is probably the best choice for getting a large group of 20 or more people from the airport to your resort destination. Your Travel Agent on an Extended-Trip should make all the arrangements for motorcoach transportation. Some additional information on motorcoach transportation to and from the airport is provided in the Air Transportation section of this guidebook as well as in the chapters on Extended-Trips and Weekend-Trips. This section will focus on the trips where you will be choosing a motorcoach company for your trip, along with some particulars on motorcoach transportation.

### **When should you choose a motorcoach for your trip**

There are many times when choosing mass transportation for your group is a good idea. If you are planning to lead a group of 30 people or more, you should consider a motorcoach, whether it is a Weekend-Trip or a Day-Trip. Some motorcoach companies have mini-coaches that seat 20. You certainly would want to have motorcoach transportation on an Extended-Trip for the reasons mentioned prior.

The following list provides reasons why a motorcoach is a good choice.

- **Your trip destination is more than a 3-hour drive.**  
Most people do not like to drive more than 3 hours by car for a group trip. Using a Motorcoach for long distance trips will in many cases increase the number of participants for a minor additional trip cost.
- **Your trip spans two nights or more and it is also a winter trip.**  
On a Weekend-Trip to a remote destination in winter a sudden snowstorm could prohibit some people from going on a trip. Very few people enjoy driving in a snowstorm for a long distance and a motorcoach will get your entire group to the destination at the same time and you won't be worrying that someone is stuck along the roadside somewhere.
- **Your trip participants would be driving at night and arriving at a very late hour.**  
This also takes in the above two reasons but is more important if you'll be departing at the end of your trip in the evening as well. A motorcoach can add additional hours of enjoyment for trip participants. With a motorcoach your group can depart later in the day and socialize on the way up and back, 'Leave the Driving to Bus'.

### **How to choose a Motorcoach Company**

Most motorcoach companies in your local area will have competitive prices. Alfresco Adventures can provide you with suggestions on choosing a motorcoach company and make the reservations for you. For a remote location, you can call the resort and ask what companies they see on a regular basis and if they have any recommendations. Use the Yellow Pages for a motorcoach company in your area, and of course, search the Internet. Once you have picked a few call them and ask for pricing.



Below is a list of questions you should ask the motorcoach company.

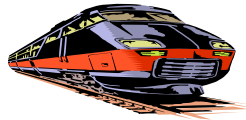
- **What are the seating capacities of the motorcoaches?**  
*Always insure there are at least 10% more seats than people. If a bus seats 60 you should limit the number of people on the bus to 54.*
- **What are the pricing options?**
- **Is there a free comp based on number of passengers or is it a flat rate?**
- **What are the amenities on the coach? (VCR, Rest Room, AC, PA System)**  
*Almost all large luxury coaches have the above but smaller coaches may not*
- **What is their insurance coverage for accidents or damages?**  
*Insure that if any damage to the bus occurs that the Seacoast Ski Club is not liable*
- **Is there any costs for travel to and from a departure location**  
*This is more of a concern if you decide to go with a non-local company*
- **If an overnight trip, is the driver's lodging included in the price?**

### **Multi-Day trips**

If you have chosen motorcoach transportation for a multiple day trip there are some important things you need to keep track of. Since you'll be loading and unloading luggage on a multi-day trip you'll need to have luggage tags for everyone in your group. If you've booked your trip through a travel agent they should provide them. However you should take the time to print out name and address labels from your trip participant's list and label the tags before distributing them to everyone. A good idea is to distribute the luggage tags with the trip packet you distribute a week or two prior to the trip. Creating labels is a relatively simple process since you should've already created a mailing list anyway. Ask your Alfresco Adventures trip consultant if you need help in creating a mailing list or labels from your trip participants' list. You should also have an alphabetized list of passenger names, which you'll check, off when a person's luggage is loaded onto the motorcoach before departure. Remind people to always have passports, visas or birth certificates in their possession and readily available if traveling to Canada or anywhere outside the US.

### **On the Road**

Let people know in advance the departure location and provide directions. Set a time and ask people to be there at least 1/2 hour early if there is baggage to be loaded onto the motorcoach. You now have a captive audience so it's time to try out some of those jokes you've been waiting to tell. Take some time to brief everyone on the schedule and any logistics after arrival as well as time of departure. Choose some videos to watch on the motorcoach, as people will probably get tired of your jokes really fast. If the trip is more than 4 hours to the destination you may have time to show 2 videos. You may want to double the amount of videos you'll need and give people a few choices. Be sure to consider children onboard or conservative adults when selecting videos. Also if the trip is more than 4 hours you may want to schedule in a break stop for lunch during the day or for dinner if your are arriving in the evening. You could also include snacks and beverages into the cost of the trip and thus limit the stops. Even so a break is often welcome, as the restroom on the motorcoach is usually a last resort for most people. If you do stop for a break give people a deadline to be back on the bus. 45 minutes is usually more than adequate time if you stop at a fast food restaurant.



### 3.3 *Trains*

Trains are like motorcoaches on rails and most of the above section on motorcoach travel applies here. You surely don't have much of a choice with selecting a train or departure time. However train travel can be a great option for your trip. If you are using a train on an Extended-Trip your travel agent will most likely take care of the arrangements. As far as Weekend-Trips the same applies for luggage as mentioned in the Motorcoach, Multi-Day Trips, section.



### 3.4 *Boats & Ferries*

Boats and Ferries are like Trains on the water and most of the above section on motorcoach travel still applies. You may have somewhat of a choice with selecting a boat charter but certainly but not for a Ferry as departure times are based on schedules. However boat travel can be a great and fun option for your trip. If you are using a boat or Ferry for a Extended-Trip your Travel Agent will most likely take care of the arrangements. As far as Weekend-Trips the same applies for luggage as mentioned in the Multi-Day Motorcoach section. A great trip would be a motorcoach trip by Ferry to Nova Scotia where bicycles would be used to tour the island.



### 3.5 *Automobile (carpooling)*

There isn't too much to say about taking one's own transportation to the trip destination other than it is nice to give people the option of carpooling.

Some things to consider when participants travel in their own vehicles are.

#### **When will everyone be arriving**

You should know when people would be arriving at the destination especially if you are planning some sort of welcoming party. Ask people in advance to let you know when they may be arriving or at least let everyone know when the gathering will be and have them tell you if they will be there. It's not a good idea to plan a 6PM Wine and Cheese social and have most people arrive after 9PM. Also if your trip is a day trip you don't want to be waiting around to hand out lift tickets. Set a reasonable time and stick to it. Let people know if they arrive late where they need to go to check-in.

#### **Who's traveling together**

When people do decide to carpool or caravan together ask them to let you know and make a list. It's good to encourage carpooling and to suggest a meeting location such as a Park & Ride or someone's home with ample parking for everyone. If it is a winter trip, this choice could depend on whether you can park on the streets at a residence.

## 4 *Accommodations*

Choosing accommodations for your trip is probably the most difficult task due to the many options you'll have at a resort destination. Choosing accommodations for a group can be complicated and arduous and should be done by a process of elimination, based on your research. Your accommodation choices for an Extended-Trip should take into consideration the time you'll be on the property and should all have ample amenities for a long stay. Weekend-Trip accommodations are not as big a concern as Extended-Trips but you should choose wisely for these trips as well. The next few sections will cover the different accommodation options and the pros and cons, as they relate to Extended-Trips as well as Weekend-Trips.

### **What type of Accommodations are best for your trip**

This section will give you a starting point for choosing accommodation options for your trip based on a few basics needs.

#### **Extended-Trip Accommodation choices**

- **Condominiums** are certainly a great choice for Extended-Trips as they offer people a large space with kitchen facilities multiple bathrooms and usually laundry facilities. They also allow people to gather in larger groups in the evening and planning for group dinners.
- **Hotels** can also be a great choice if the rooms are spacious and your group's rooms are located in close proximity to each other. If the hotel has a meal plan and you can obtain group-seating reservations, this works out great for gathering people together for breakfast and later for dinner. Most European hotels offer a meal plan as part of their package. The disadvantage of a hotel is that sometimes people in the group don't see each other for days and the group can become disjointed. If you choose a Hotel on an Extended-Trip and there isn't a meal plan be sure to schedule group meeting places and times during the week.
- **Inns** are usually not considered an option for an Extended-Trip unless the inn can accommodate 30 or more people. Also, the room arrangements at inns, in most cases, are set up for couples and do not have many rooms with two double beds in them. If you select an inn and can work out the sleeping arrangements, then the coziness of an inn might be a good choice.
- **Campgrounds** could be a viable option for summertime Extended-Trips or for a winter trip to a warm climate location. There are many tropical locations, which offer accommodations in grass huts for island hopping kayaking trips, which would make for a good choice. A multi-day adventure-hiking trip could involve camping or a combination of hotel/motel and campground accommodations.

#### **Weekend-Trip Accommodation choices**

- **Condominiums** are certainly a great choice for Weekend-Trips as they offer people a large space with kitchen facilities multiple bathrooms and usually laundry facilities. They also allow people to gather in larger groups in the evening and planning group dinners.

- **Hotels or Motels** are a great choices for a Weekend-Trip If the Hotel has a meal plan and you can obtain group seating reservations this works out great for gathering people together for breakfast and later for dinner. The disadvantage of a hotel/motel is that sometimes people in the group don't see each other for days and the group can become disjointed. If you choose a hotel/motel and a meal plan isn't available, try to provide group-meeting places for dining during the trip. Be sure to make reservations in advance!
- **Inns** are a good choice for Weekend-Trips. Consider the room arrangements at the inn, in most cases, they are set up for couples and do not have many rooms with two double beds. If you choose an inn, and can you work out the sleeping arrangements, then the coziness of an inn would be a very good choice.
- **Campgrounds** are good option for summertime Weekend-Trips in the spring, summer and fall but certainly not in the winter. Campgrounds can be a great low cost option for a wonderful warm weather weekend getaway.

#### **4.1 *Choosing a Condominium***

Picking a condominium can be a challenge when trying to select the best rooming arrangements for your group. You'll need to ask the property Management Company for a floor plan or at least the layout of the bedrooms. Most condos have a master bedroom with a king or queen sized bed and full bath. Depending on whether you have a 2 bedroom or 3-bedroom unit there will probably be twin beds or bunk beds in one of the other bedrooms. Unlike a hotel room the bedrooms are usually small with the exception of the master bedroom. You'll need to keep the sleeping arrangements in mind when creating a rooming list. Ask the property management company or your travel agent about the flexibility of changing condo's and if they charge by the person or by the unit. The following sections touch base on choosing a condo for a Extended-Trip as well as a Weekend-Trip.

##### **Extended-Trip Condos**

When choosing a condo for an Extended-Trip you need to add some additional criteria to you're decision making process. Residing in a condo for week or more with people who may or may not know each other prior can cause some problems if there is not adequate space for some privacy as well as ample bathroom, kitchen and sleeping areas. You'll need laundry facilities in house as well as a dishwasher, coffee maker, toaster, microwave, sufficient cooking supplies, and tableware. Amenities such as fireplaces and in-house Jacuzzis are nice but not always worth the extra cost. Determine if there is daily cleaning service or alternate day. You certainly want to insure someone comes in at least once or twice to clean the place during your stay. Location of the condo units is also crucial. Since people will want to head out occasionally and walk about the area, choose condos within a short walk to a village or town. A grocery store located nearby is also a big plus. On ski trips, slope side ski-in/ski-out condos are usually thought to be a great choice but consider all of the logistics when you select slope side condo accommodations. Slope side accommodations may leave the group stranded in the evenings or with a long walk to town, unless shuttle service is available. Another concern is adjacency of the condos. You don't want to have your group spread all over the campus. Condos should be as adjacent as possible and a very short walk if not. Following is a lists of questions you should ask the Travel Agent or Property Management Company at the Resort to determine which condos are right for you. Ask if there is a Web Site for the property and if so look for condo layouts, floor plans, features and amenities as well as

proximity to the Village or Town. A little research on your part using the Internet may save you some correspondence time and long distance phone calls.

Questions to ask when selecting a condominium

- **Inside the Condo:**

- ◆ What are the room arrangements? (Bed size, closet space, bureaus, attached bath etc.)
- ◆ What is the floor plan? (Number of levels, rooms on each level)
- ◆ What are the bathroom arrangements? (# Full baths, #1/2 baths)
- ◆ Is there a washer and dryer and can they be used?
- ◆ What is the kitchen arrangement and amenities? (Full or efficiency)  
*Ask about coffee maker, toaster, microwave, table settings etc.*
- ◆ Will there be daily cleaning service? (if not at least 1 mid-week cleaning)
- ◆ Is there a loft or semi-private area? (Good for some time away to relax)
- ◆ Is there a large storage area for luggage, skis etc.?
- ◆ What are the other amenities? (Fireplace, Jacuzzi, Deck etc.)

- **Outside the Condo:**

- ◆ Is the condo located close to the Village or Town?  
*If not, is there shuttle service to and from the Village on a regular basis?*
- ◆ If arriving by Motorcoach, is there an adequate loading and unloading area?
- ◆ Is a shopping center for groceries and supplies nearby?  
*If not, is there shuttle service to and from the stores on a regular basis?*
- ◆ Are the units adjacent to each other? (if not are they should be a short walk)
- ◆ Is there a Pool, Hot Tub, Fitness Area etc. located on premise?  
*Ask if these are open in the winter if it's a ski trip*
- ◆ Are there restaurants nearby as well as evening entertainment?
- ◆ Is there a free shuttle to the Resort or Ski Area?

## **Weekend-Trip Condos**

When choosing a condo for a Weekend-Trip your criteria's are fewer than for a Extended-Trip in order to select the best accommodations for your group. Sharing a condo for a weekend is not as big a deal as sharing a condo space for a week. You'll still require ample bathroom, kitchen and sleeping areas although the need for laundry facilities is not much of a concern. If you will not be planning group in-condo meals your kitchen needs will be less although most condos have a dishwasher, coffee maker, toaster, stove and microwave. Amenities such as fireplaces and in-house Jacuzzis are nice but seldom worth the extra cost for a Weekend-Trip. Daily cleaning service is usually not an issue. Location of the condo and its proximity to a village or town is not as much of a concern. For a weekend ski trip slope-side ski-in/ski-out condos are a great choice. Adjacency of the condos is still preferable, as you certainly don't want to have your group spread all over the campus. Condos units should be as close as possible and a very short walk if not. Following is a lists of questions you should ask the Travel Agent or Property Management Company at the Resort to determine which condos are right for you. Ask if there is a Web Site for the property and if so look for condo layouts, floor plans, features and amenities as well as proximity to the village or town. A little research on your part using the Internet may save you some correspondence time and long distance phone calls.

Questions to ask when selecting a condominium

- **Inside the Condo:**

- ◆ What are the room arrangements? (Bed size, closet space, bureaus, attached bath etc.)
- ◆ What is the floor plan? (Number of levels, rooms on each level)
- ◆ What are the bathroom arrangements? (# Full baths, #1/2 baths)
- ◆ What is the kitchen arrangement and amenities? (Full or efficiency)
- ◆ Will there be daily cleaning service? (If not at least 1 mid-week cleaning)
- ◆ Is there a large storage area for luggage, skis etc.?
- ◆ What are the other amenities? (Fireplace, Jacuzzi, Deck etc.)

- **Outside the Condo:**

- ◆ Are the units adjacent to each other? (if not are they should be a short walk)
- ◆ Is there a Pool, Hot Tub, Fitness Area etc. located on premise?  
*Ask if these are open in the winter if it's a ski trip*
- ◆ Are there restaurants nearby or any entertainment?
- ◆ Is there a free shuttle to the Resort or Ski Area if a winter trip?

## 4.2 *Choosing a Hotel*

Choosing a Hotel for your Extended-Trip or Weekend-Trip is a bit less effort than choosing a condo. Larger hotels, which are a good choice for group accommodations, have elaborate web sites so you can get a very clear picture of what they offer and what the rooms are like. If you are not computer savvy you can always call and have a brochure sent to you. Price can be a big factor when selecting a hotel as well as location. A meal plan is always a great idea for a Extended-Trip but not as much for a Weekend-Trip. Talk to your travel agent and ask for recommendations on hotels and then do research on those properties as well.

### **Extended-Trip Hotel**

For an Extended-Trip you may actually plan to stay at more than one hotel over the course of your trip. However, the choices you make are still the same as far as group accommodations are concerned. Your choice for a hotel should primarily be based on the hotel's ability to accommodate groups. Function rooms or group dining areas are crucial if you are planning to include a meal plan. Also, the ability of the bellmen to handle a large group arriving at the same time is important. If the hotel has an indoor pool, fitness center, hot tubs, sauna etc. this will make for a nice place to escape the confines of a hotel room when the group is back after a day of skiing or touring. When choosing a hotel for an Extended-Trip think of whether you would be comfortable being there for a week and if there are enough activities available to keep you active without leaving the premises. Hotels, although not always located in villages and town centers do usually have shuttle transportation so you don't always need to be in the middle of the resort area. Since you'll either be dining out or dining at the hotel, proximity to a grocery shopping center is not as important as it is for condo accommodations.

Questions to ask when selecting a hotel

- **Inside the Hotel**
  - ◆ Does the hotel cater to large groups?
  - ◆ Is there a group price rate?
  - ◆ What is their refund and cancellation policy?
  - ◆ Is there a complimentary free room based on number of people?
  - ◆ What are the room arrangement choices? (King, Queen, Full, Single "1 or 2 beds")
  - ◆ What are the amenities on premise? (pool, hot tub, fitness center etc.)
  - ◆ Is there a meal plan offering and can they accommodate your group dining together?  
*If not is there a restaurant or restaurants very nearby that can?*
  - ◆ Do they have ability to handle a large group arriving at once?  
*If so ask if there is a loading/unloading area for a motorcoach if needed*
  - ◆ Do they offer shuttle of the group to and from the airport?
  
- **Outside the Hotel**
  - ◆ Is the hotel located within walking distance to town or village?
  - ◆ Is the hotel located in a safe area for walking around outside?
  - ◆ Is there free shuttle service to the resort, town or village?

## **Weekend-Trip Hotel (Includes Motel and Inns)**

For a Weekend-Trip the choices you make are less extensive than for an Extended-Trip. Motels and Inns can be good choices for a Weekend-Trips. Usually you will not require as many on premise amenities. Your choice for a hotel, motel or inn for your group should primarily be based on their ability to accommodate groups. On premise restaurants or group dining areas are only crucial if you are planning to include a meal plan. Most weekend trips do not need to include a meal plan. However you could include or provide for an optional group dinner at a local restaurant. When arriving by motorcoach the ability of the hotel's bellmen to handle a large group arriving at the same time is very important. Although in the case of a motel or inn the group members will more than likely handle their own luggage. If the property has an indoor pool, fitness center, hot tubs, sauna etc. this will make for a nice place to escape the confines of a room when the group is back after a day of skiing or touring. Hotels and some motels and inns, not located in villages and town centers, usually have some sort of shuttle transportation options so you don't need to limit your selection to accommodations within the central resort area. Since you'll either be dining out or dining at the hotel or inn proximity to a shopping center is not as crucial as it is for condo accommodations on a Weekend-Trip. The following is a list of questions to ask the hotel, motel or inn before choosing their accommodations for your Weekend-Trip.

Questions to ask when selecting a hotel, motel or inn

- **Inside the Hotel, Motel or Inn**
  - ◆ Do they cater to large groups?
  - ◆ Is there a group price rate?
  - ◆ What is their refund and cancellation policy?
  - ◆ Is there a complimentary free room based on number of people?
  - ◆ What are the room arrangement choices? (King, Queen, Full, Single "1 or 2 beds")
  - ◆ What are the amenities on premise? (Pool, Hot Tub, Fitness Center etc.)
  - ◆ Is there a meal plan offering and can they accommodate your group dining together?  
*If not is there a restaurant or restaurants very nearby that can?*
  - ◆ Do they have ability to handle a large group arriving at once?  
*If so ask if there is a loading/unloading area for a motorcoach if needed*
  
- **Outside the Hotel, Motel or Inn**
  - ◆ Is the property located within walking distance to town or village?
  - ◆ Is the property located in a safe area for walking around outside?
  - ◆ Is there free shuttle service to the resort, town or village?

**The next page contains is a checklist for you to use when staying at a hotel**



## Hotel Reminder List

### **Before arrival, have you:**

- Called the hotel to let them know of your planned arrival time? *This is important if arriving by motorcoach*
- Briefed the group on any arrival procedures?
- Explained about any luggage handling and groups responsibilities?
- Discussed the tipping arrangement at the hotel?
- Discussed any meal plan particulars or group dinning times and location?
- Explained about use of phone, mini-bar and pay per view TV costs on room bill?
- Warn people to have valuables put in hotel safe? (some hotels have in-room safes)
- Briefed people on any evening group plans or morning departure plans?
- Remind people about setting up a wake up call or tell them you'll be doing it?

### **Upon arrival, have you:**

- Informed Front Desk of your group's arrival and check in with bell captain?
- Obtained the rooming list from the front desk?
- Checked the rooming list for accuracy against your master list?
- Arranged luggage pick-up and departure times with bell captain?
- Pointed out the hotel bulletin board to group if you plan to post any trip information there?
- Told everyone your room number if they have any problems?
- Set up a wake up call for your group if necessary?
- Confirmed reservations at restaurant if applicable?
- Made transportation arrangement for the next days activities if applicable?
- Confirmed welcoming reception if applicable?

### **Each Day of trip, have you:**

- Reminded group to set up next morning's wake-up call?
- Confirmed reservations at restaurants if applicable?
- Made transportation arrangement for the next days activities if applicable?

### **On the Day before departure, have you:**

- Set up next mornings wake-up call for yourself as well as group if necessary?
- Confirmed luggage pick-up and departure times with bell captain?
- Reminded group to pay up any additional charges they applied to their room?
- Reminded everyone not to pack their Passports, Visas or Birth Certificates and keep them on them?
- Reminded everyone of the departure time and in room luggage pick-up time and procedure?

### **On the Day of departure, have you:**

- Set up next mornings wake-up call?
- Check with Front Desk for final bill if applicable?
- Checked off luggage upon loading if using a motorcoach?
- Reminded group about room key return, having their Passports and of valuables left in safes etc.

### 4.3 *Choosing a Campground*

Since the likeliness of choosing a campground for an Extended-Trip is almost nil, with the exception of a warm weather trip, this section will focus on choosing a campground for a Weekend-Trip. Also since it is very unlikely that you'll be planning motorcoach transportation to a campground this will not be mentioned. Campgrounds can make great inexpensive warm weather weekend accommodation options, especially for families and outdoor enthusiasts. Hiking, biking, or kayaking trips would be great trips for choosing campground accommodations. The key to selection of a great campground for a large group is the campground's ability to handle groups. Many campgrounds offer group areas although these areas do not always have the facilities, such as water and electric, on each site in this area. When researching for a campground, which will handle a large group, look for information in their brochures or on their Web Site indicating their ability to accommodate groups. A great place to obtain campground information and talk to the Campground owners or representatives is at the local Camping and Travel expositions. Pick-up a free campground guide from the state tourist bureau. There are also many campground guides available at bookstores or sold at Camper and Trailer Sales companies. The following is a list of questions to ask the campground before choosing their accommodations for your Weekend-Trip.

Questions to ask when selecting a campground

- **Inside the Campground**
  - ◆ Do they cater to large groups?
  - ◆ Is there a group price rate?
  - ◆ What is their refund and cancellation policy?
  - ◆ Is there a complimentary free campsite based on number of people?
  - ◆ How many Adults are allowed per campsite
  - ◆ How many tents or campers are allowed per site?
  - ◆ What types of hookups are available? (water, electric, sewerage)
  - ◆ What are the amenities on premise? (Pool, Recreation Hall, Lake, Pond, Beach etc)
  - ◆ If on a Lake, Pond or Ocean, are there boat or kayak rentals available?
  
- **Outside the Campgrounds**
  - ◆ Is the property located in a safe area for walking around outside the campground?
  - ◆ Is there free shuttle service to the resort, town or village?
  - ◆ Are things to do and places to see nearby?

## ***Completing the Trip***

Upon completion of an Extended-Trip you should have already had, or at least scheduled your Post-Trip Party. For all trips you'll need to wrap up a few of the administrative duties. The following lists of things need to be done to finalize the completion of your trip.

1. Reconcile any outstanding trip payments and submit any receipts for any reimbursements due.
2. Provide the Alfresco Adventures with any photos you'd like to have added to your trips online photo album.
3. Provide your trip participants with a summary report of your trip and include any stories about the trip as well as what went well and what did not. People love to have a re-cap of their travel experience. Ask for people to include their own stories.
4. Send out a trip survey asking how people felt about the trip and how it could've been improved. Ask for their likes and dislikes before, during and after the trip. Alfresco Adventures can provide you with an online survey for your trip and send you the results. Ask your Alfresco Adventures trip consultant for more information.



# Appendix