

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

FLYING THIS THANKSGIVING? EXPECT RECORD CROWDS



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Traffic filled the John F. Kennedy Expressway at the start of the Thanksgiving holiday weekend in Chicago last year.

By David Koenig

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Record throngs of travelers are expected to jam into airports over the Thanksgiving break and airlines are adding hundreds of flights a day in response.

The Transportation Security Administration said last week that it expects to screen more than 26.8 million passengers and airline crew members between Nov. 22 and Dec. 2. That would be a 4 percent increase over last year.

The busiest days figure to be the Wednesday before Thanksgiving Day — about 2.7 million people — and the Sunday after the holiday, when TSA expects to screen more than 2.8 million people.

The lightest day is expected to be the holiday itself. US airlines are adding about 850 flights and 108,000 seats per day compared with the same period last year, according to their trade group, Airlines for America. There were nearly 25,000 flights a day over the

Thanksgiving stretch last year.

Here are some tips for dealing with the crowds:

■ Get to the airport early. TSA says it will use overtime and move screeners around to make sure checkpoints are adequately staffed, and that mostly worked over the summer.

■ Check TSA's website to make sure you're not carrying prohibited items. "You wouldn't believe some of the things that we see at our checkpoints each and every day, and the No. 1 thing we hear from passengers is, 'I forgot it was there,'" said Patricia Cogswell, TSA's acting deputy administrator.

■ Sign up for a trusted-traveler programs like Precheck. It might not always save you that much time — Precheck lines can get long, too — but at least you won't have to take off shoes, belts, and light jackets, and you can leave that tablet or laptop in your bag.

■ Be patient, and get used to it. Travel demand is booming, so "passengers will continue to experience holiday-level travel volumes throughout the year, but this is our busiest time of the year," said Kevin Burke, CEO of Airports Council International-North America, an

airport trade group.

■ Next Thanksgiving could be much worse because many travelers aren't prepared for new rules covering identification documents.

Beginning next October, the government plans to require that identification to board a plane comply with so-called Real ID standards. However, the US Travel Association estimates that 99 million Americans don't have an ID that meets the requirements, meaning people could be turned away at airport security checkpoints.

Congress required more secure IDs in a law way back in 2005, but the deadline for enforcing it has been pushed back many times in the face of opposition by privacy advocates and slow adoption by many states.

Older driver licenses might not comply with the law. You are OK if yours has a gold star logo.

The government and travel groups have been conducting a public-relations campaign to make people aware that they might need a new driver's license to fly. The groups must make sure the campaign works, "because if it doesn't, we're going to have a mess on our hands," Burke said.

HERE

FREE MUSEUM ACCESS FOR THE MILITARY

Acton's Discovery Museum celebrates the 10th anniversary of its Military Appreciation Program, which provides free museum admission for active-duty US military members and their families. The program, funded in part by Raytheon, has admitted more than 25,000 eligible visitors in the past decade. It offers free admission for up to four people from September through mid-May, and up to six people between Armed Forces Day and Labor Day. The museum also provides free school trips to fourth- and fifth-grade classes from Hanscom Air Force Base. The museum's hands-on exhibits blend science, nature, and play — even in the outdoor nature playscape and 550-square-foot treehouse. 978-264-4200, www.discoveryacton.org.

NEW HEATED ROOFTOP HANGOUT

Stay toasty and enjoy skyline views while visiting The Envoy Hotel's rooftop bar. The Lookout Rooftop has a new heated enclosure open throughout the winter season, its popular igloo-shaped pods, and a new layout that promotes city and harbor views. Hang out in the heated enclosure, which holds up to 160 guests, or book one of the five LED-illuminated igloos for up to 10 people and stay warm with the provided cable-knit blankets. The Seaport District rooftop venue also adds a small-bites menu this year, created by two-time "Chopped" champion and Outdoor Kitchen executive chef Tatiana Rosana, which features everything from duck confit poutine



to cinnamon sugar churros. 617-530-1538, www.outlookkitchenand-bar.com/#lookout.

THERE

BE SAFE WHILE TRAVELING

When you visit a new destination it's hard to know what areas are safe, whether you're heading out for a run, walking to your hotel, or searching for a restaurant. TripIt from Concur's Neighborhood Safety Scores rate neighborhoods around the world on a scale of 1-100, representing low to high risk, in numerous categories. Consult the app's individual ratings for physical harm (from threat of mugging to gang prevalence), women's safety, political freedoms (including any signs of political unrest), theft, health and medical (including environmental pollution to access to medical care), and the new category LGBTQ safety (includes the likelihood of harm to or discrimination against LGBTQ people). The handy app also features new Daytime and Nighttime

safety ratings, a helpful tool since neighborhood scores may vary during different times of day. www.tripit.com.

SEATTLE'S 'BEYOND BOLLYWOOD' EXHIBIT

Learn about the contributions of Indian immigrants and Indian Americans in the United States through a new exhibition at Seattle's Museum of History & Industry. "Beyond Bollywood: Indian Americans Shape the Nation" was created by the Smithsonian Institution, with a local focus incorporated

by MOHAI, and runs through Jan. 26. It highlights the many key roles Indian Americans and Indian immigrants have had, as builders of some of our country's earliest railroads and farms to civil rights pioneers and digital technology entrepreneurs. This exhibit zeroes in on the diverse Indian American community in the Pacific Northwest, exploring the contributions people have made to local industries, the arts and crafts of the area's Indian Americans, and the strong political mark many Indian American women have made in local and national politics. Don't miss Sari Stories Dec. 15, 1-3 p.m., when you'll hear tales about the stories woven into the fabric of saris and see a sari-draping demonstration. Admission: free 14 and under to \$21.95 15 and older. 206-324-1126, www.mohai.org.

EVERYWHERE

A LOVESEAT FOR YOUR ADVENTURES

It's nice to snuggle in comfort — or hang out with a friend — whether you're watching a baseball game, camping, or sitting at the beach, for instance. Kelty's new Low Loveseat has a durable steel frame, lightly padded seats, insulated beverage holders, and adjustable armrests. The seat measures 44 inches wide, offering plenty of space for two adults (or up to four kiddos and canines), and proves remarkably comfortable. It weighs 15.6 pounds and holds up to 500 pounds. The lower, slightly reclined angle of the seat means you can chill without blocking people at a con-

cert or game. An easy-to-use padded roll tote makes packing up and securing the chair a cinch, and a handy attached strap means it's easy to sling over a shoulder and carry. \$99.95. www.kelty.com/low-loveseat.



THESE BAGS HELP SAVE THE EARTH

Patagonia makes its new collection of Black Hole bags from millions of recycled plastic bottles. The body fabric and webbing of each bag

comes from 100 percent recycled materials — a lightweight but durable polyester ripstop with a water-resistant laminate. For travel, consider the Black Hole 32L Pack, a 32-liter daypack with a cavernous main compartment — for snacks, extra layers, souvenirs, and more — with a small mesh zippered organizer pocket for your passport, keys, and travel documents. The bag has a heavily padded tablet and 15-inch laptop sleeve that fully opens for passing through security — or use it on the trail for holding a hydration bladder. It also has numerous grab handles, two external water bottle holders made of stretchy fabric, a sternum strap (but no waist belt), and 22 daisy chains for lashing gear. \$149. www.patagonia.com.

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