

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

ASK AWAY

Q I am looking for an action-adventure getaway this winter in the Caribbean, Central America, or the Florida Keys for a family of five with young adult children who dive, sail, etc. We have been to the BVIs, St. Croix, Jamaica, the Bahamas, and the Yucatan Peninsula and are looking for something similar but different. Thoughts?

Lisa Hollis, Beverly

A Sounds to us like Costa Rica would be a good fit for your active bunch. With its volcanoes, rain forests, waterfalls, rivers, and ocean beaches, this Central America playground offers an unbeatable array of outdoor adventures. The Pacific Coast, in particular, offers some good dive sites, and if your kids want to try a new sport, there's surfing — Costa Rica is the world's third most popular surfing destination. White-water rafting and kayaking are other options. Plus, Costa Rica is the granddaddy of canopy tours, so there's always a zip line nearby (below, Monteverde Cloud Forest). What's special about Costa Rica is its amazing biodiversity; for example, the wildlife at Manuel Antonio National Park includes scarlet macaws, sloths, and monkeys galore. Add volcanoes and hot springs, and you've got a stunning backdrop for adventure. For details, visit www.visitcostarica.com.

DIANE BAIR AND PAMELA WRIGHT

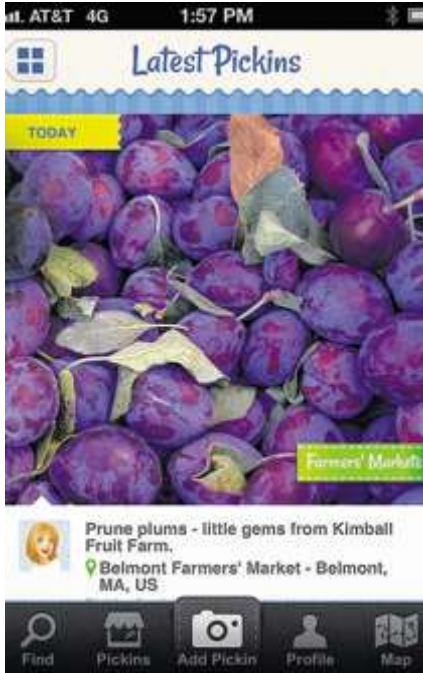


THE TIP

THE TIP: FIND WHAT'S FRESH IN AN AREA WITH THE LOCAL PICKINS WEBSITE AND APP

Attention all foodies: Discover the best food purveyors, farmers' markets, culinary classes, events, and more when you travel with Local Pickins, a website and iPhone app that helps you locate all things fresh, local, and edible. This nationwide guide offers listings for food trucks, farm stands, bakeries, butchers, fish markets, grass-fed meats, artisan cheese shops, oysters, pick-your-own apple outings, and many other categories. You may also participate in the "pickin'" experience by posting a photo of your own food discovery on the app, and sharing it over social media. Free. <http://localpickins.com>

NECEE REGIS



SELINA KOK FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

SUNDAY MORNING

TAKE IN REMBRANDT BEFORE THE CROWDS

Savvy travelers to Amsterdam know that being one of the first in line at the majestic Rijksmuseum, the Dutch national treasure trove of art and culture, means a few quiet moments with the country's most beloved work of art: Rembrandt's "The Night Watch." The magic starts on the way to the 19th-century museum, when one can cross streets devoid of the usual tangle of cars, bicycles, and trams, and follow 400-year-old canals running with uncharacteristically smooth water. On a Sunday morning the Rijksmuseum, which reopened in April after a decade of renovations, is all but deserted. Visitors enter into the museum's spacious atrium, where they can plot their way through eight centuries of art spread over 80 rooms. "Night Watch" hangs at the end of a long cathedral-like hall adorned with stained glass and ornate wall decorations. Head straight there, because a sparse audience in front of the world-famous military portrait, renowned for its use of light, shadow, and motion, and for its size (about 12-by-14 feet), won't be the case for long.

DIANE DANIEL

HERE

SAY 'I DO' OFF SEASON AT A CLASSIC CAPE HOTEL

Enjoy a winter wedding at a seaside hotel where the beauty of the Cape Cod shore, rather than summer crowds, serves as a stunning backdrop. The newly renovated Sea Crest Beach Hotel overlooking Old Silver Beach in North Falmouth has unveiled its new Winter Wedding Package that includes complimentary wedding night accommodations for the bride and groom and two additional guests (three rooms total), discounted accommodations for other guests, assistance from a professional wedding coordinator, reduced venue rental, a dance floor, and more. Package good through April 2014, and November 2014 through April 2015. 508-356-2169, www.seacrestbeachhotel.com

TEA PARTY SHIP MODEL ON DISPLAY

Exactly 240 years ago this month, the Sons of Liberty boarded three ships in Boston Harbor and dumped their cargo overboard, an act of defiance soon dubbed the Boston Tea Party. Visit the New Bedford Whaling Museum to see a new model of one of the infamous tea party ships, the Dartmouth. The model, built in Maine by Richard Glanville, a professional marine model artist, adds to the museum's collection of more than 175 ship models. The Dartmouth was the first ship built in New Bedford in 1767 and transported whale oil to England until it was lost on a 1774 voyage. 508-997-0046, www.whalingmuseum.org

THERE

LONDON PASS ADDS TWO TOP ATTRACTIONS

Pick up a London Pass for your next trip to Britain and you can enjoy two attractions now accessible to passholders: the Imperial War Museum and the Museum of London. Gain free entry to the museums and any special exhibits running until early 2015, including ones on World War II spies, Sherlock Holmes, and 16th- and 17th-century jewels and gemstones. Also gain entry to more than 60 of the city's other top attractions, from the Tower of London and Westminster Abbey to a Thames riverboat cruise, and get discounts at many city restaurants and shops. Tip: Use the website's interactive map to plan your travels. Adults \$77-\$150, ages 5-15 \$49-\$106 for one- to six-day pass (available for one, two,

three, or six days). 011-44-1664-485-020, www.londonpass.com

ORLANDO RESORT OFFERS DEALS AND NOSTALGIC DECOR

Universal's latest hotel harks back to 1950s and '60s beach resorts, with its bold colors, neon, and retro feel. When it opens March 31, Universal's Cabana Bay Beach Resort will have a 10-lane bowling alley, a pool with a waterslide, and 900 family suites that sleep up to six and come with a microwave, mini-refrigerator, and sink. An additional 900 guest rooms and a pool with a sand beach open later in the year. Rates: \$104 per night for a seven-night stay or \$134 per night for a three-night stay, good March 31-June 14 if booked by Jan. 31. Includes early admission to see The Wizarding World of Harry Potter. 888-273-1311, www.universolorlando.com



DOLOMITES BIKE TRIP FUSES TOP RIDES AND BEST CUISINE

Earn every heavenly calorie on Italiaoutdoors' challenging yet rewarding cycling tour through Italy's Dolomites (below left), called The Agony and The Ecstasy, July 20-26. Push yourself to the limit as you tackle some of the toughest climbs in northeastern Italy, including the Giro d'Italia, Monte Grappa, and Edelweiss. Then relax and savor some of the region's cuisine, from homemade gnocchi and dumplings, fresh cheese from mountain villages, and smoked prosciutto to local wine. Rate: \$3,895 per person double occupancy for six nights' accommodations, ground transportation, guides, and most meals. 978-270-5774, www.italiaoutdoorsfoodandwine.com

EVERYWHERE

STYLISH BAGS FOR AIRPORT SECURITY

Yes, a simple Ziploc bag will do the trick when you're bringing toiletries through airport security. However, Flanabags' TSA-compliant AirQuart bag not only looks cooler — it comes in 11 colors and designs, from blue paisley or black to zebra — but it also has a built-in wrist strap for easier handling when your hands are full, and a gusseted bottom for easier packing. Buy the AirQuart (\$19.95) on its own or as part of Flanabags' Travel Trio (\$44.95), which includes an AirQuart bag, a clear vinyl makeup bag, and a padded 4-by-6-inch zippered pouch to protect your cellphone or other fragile items. 508-361-5370, www.flanabags.com



GIVE TWO HANDS FOR THE LATEST TABLET HOLDER

Felix's new tablet stand, the TwoHands II, weighs just 2.5 ounces, tucks into your bag, and quickly attaches to your device. Pinch one end of the aluminum and plastic clip so the arms spread open, then attach the two "hands" onto any tablet or e-reader that measures 10.5 inches or less diagonally, and 3/8 inch or less in thickness. The simple but clever stand can hold your device in landscape or portrait orientation, and can be adjusted by sliding the clip up or down to dial in the perfect viewing angle. Hopkinton-based Felix also makes a smartphone stand, the SmallHands, that easily clamps onto your smaller, thinner devices. \$24.99 (TwoHands II) and \$14.99 (SmallHands). 617-800-9754, www.felixbrand.com

KARI BODNARCHUK