

Here's What To Expect From The 2022 Summer Travel Season

Christopher Elliott Senior Contributor 

I'm a consumer advocate. I write about customer service.

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What awaits travelers this summer? The road ahead is fraught with peril, experts say. GETTY

High prices. Bad service. Frequent delays. Another COVID outbreak. Anything could happen when you travel this summer.

At least that's what travel pros are saying about the 2022 summer travel season. I interviewed more than 200 travel experts to get their predictions for the next three months. It brought into clear focus a troubling image of a hyper-busy travel season fraught with high fares and substandard service. Remedies are few and far between.

It's going to be busy. The [U.S. Travel Association](#) expects Americans to spend \$95 billion on travel, down only 5% from 2019. About 6 in 10

Americans are taking at least one summer trip. Of those planning vacations, despite higher gas prices, 35% expect to travel more this summer than last.

So what should you expect this summer travel season?

- The travel world has changed during the pandemic. It's less predictable, and service levels will be lower. Plus, Covid is still here, and cases are rising in some cities.
- You'll pay more and you'll get less, experts say.
- Travel pros say you have to guard against scams and depleted or nonexistent inventory problems this summer.

There are a few ways to protect yourself from what is to come. I'll get to those in a moment.

How has travel changed? And what does it mean for this summer?

Experts say the world of travel is turned upside down.

Yes, it's going to be bad. "Lower your expectations," says Diane Gottsman, an etiquette expert who runs [The Protocol School of Texas](#). "We know what is coming, and we know what to expect." That's right: record-high prices, record low service levels. You've been warned.

Covid is still here. That's obvious, but travelers don't realize how *here* it really is. As of now, you still have to get tested to return to the U.S. by air. In a recent survey conducted by [Seven Corners](#), only 13% of those planning to travel internationally said their biggest concern is getting stuck in another country if they test positive for Covid. "Masking may still be required or become mandatory if the destination or cruise ship experiences an uptick or outbreak of Covid-19," warns Danielle Peterson, a travel advisor with [Cruise Planners](#).

You're traveling in a different world — and not in a good way.

The pandemic changed everything. Add economic uncertainty and a few

wars to the equation, and you have to rethink your travel. "Given the volatility in the world right now, travelers need to be prepared to leave wherever they are quickly," says Dan Richards, CEO of [Global Rescue](#), a travel risk management service provider. Where are the hotspots? This summer, he's worried about Eastern Europe, South America and North Africa. But that could change at a moment's notice.

What will the travel experience be like in the summer of 2022?

On this point, experts are unanimous. You'll pay more and you'll get less. But how much less?

It's a sold-out summer. And that makes planning more important than ever, says Julie Ann Hargett, owner of [H. Luxury Travel](#). "Planning ahead is key to optimizing your budget," she says. "Pre-covid this was never really an issue. Sure, you may have paid a little more, but nothing like the sold-out situations we are hearing now. I have suppliers who are not even taking requests until September, that is how backed up they are. Do not expect a last-minute deal; they do not exist right now."

Expect delays. That's Bill Miller's take on the summer of 2022. "Be prepared for a disruption," says Miller, the chief sales and marketing officer for medical transport and travel security program [Medjet](#). "My family and I have taken quite a few flights over the last month, and there have been mild to severe levels of disruption. We've all seen consistent delays on almost all airlines."

Staffing shortages could affect your vacation. Many travel companies eliminated staff during the pandemic. They may not have rehired enough employees to meet demand. "I hope that the airlines have planned for this," says Laura Einsetler, a [commercial airline pilot](#). "But I am honestly concerned about it being a mess this summer travel season."

The supply chain disruption will ding more than your travel. The worldwide supply chain challenges will translate into higher prices and decreased selection. "This includes everything from sunscreen to the cost of food," says Narendra Khatri, principal at [Insubuy](#), a travel insurance

company. "Add an extra buffer to your travel budget to account for increased costs on meals, souvenirs, phone charging cables, and all the things people tend to forget to pack when they leave for a trip. And don't expect the same variety and prices as when you traveled pre-pandemic."

What kind of strategies should you use to improve the summer travel experience?

Travel pros say you have to be on your guard against higher prices, depleted inventory and scams — now more than ever.

It'll cost more than you think. Experts say your 2022 summer vacation could cost between 25% and 50% more than last summer's vacation. "At the end of planning your trip, ensure that you have enough travel money left over per day to be flexible and enjoy a more stress-free experience," Carol Mueller, [Berkshire Hathaway Travel Protection's](#) vice president for strategic marketing and engagement.

You can't start too early. You know the advice about getting to the airport two hours early for a domestic flight and three hours for an international flight? Experts say you'll want to start even earlier this summer. "If you live close to the airport, consider checking your bag the night before you fly," says Daniel Green, chief technology officer at travel insurance startup [Faye](#). "Some airports are allowing this. Look into this so you have one less thing to worry about the day of travel."

There are more scams and swindles out there. Robert Siciliano, a security expert with [ProtectNowLLC.com](#), has seen more types of swindles and increased violence against travelers. But the worst is the ATM skimming device. "Skimmer scammers affix a facade over the card slot on an ATM or on a point-of-sale at checkout," he says. "Pay attention to your statements and set up push notifications via text and email."

Be prepared for anything. "Travelers should continue to pack their patience, be flexible and prepared for anything this summer," says Jessica O'Riley, a spokeswoman for [Travel Iowa](#). "While travelers seem to be ready and raring to go, many hospitality locations may still be

understaffed or closed." Pro tip: Consider building a couple of days before and after your trip to account for delays.

By the way, it's not too late to get travel insurance. "Even if you paid for a trip weeks or months ago, you still have an opportunity to protect the nonrefundable portions of the trip and secure medical expense coverage with a travel insurance plan," says Stan Sandberg, the co-founder of travel insurance site [TravelInsurance.com](https://www.TravelInsurance.com). "As long as you haven't already left on your trip or experienced an event that otherwise would cause you to cancel, cancellation coverage would still be available to purchase."

I'll have more solutions for the crazy summer of 2022 in [the second part of my series on summer travel](#).

Until then, be careful out there.



Christopher Elliott