

## Read the Fine Print! Tell the Agent Exactly What You Want

When taking a trip, there are generally three facts that matter most: when you're going, where you're going, and what it costs. Everything else comes under the ***fine print*** and we tend to ignore it, even the ***agree*** at the bottom of that big long paragraph that we so easily skip over.

There's even contractual fine print you're agreeing to when you purchase an airline ticket, hotel room or cruise. There is no ***agree*** button, but your check or credit card will serve the same function.

But there are some things you should be aware of when making a travel purchase, either directly from the supplier, like your airline, or your travel agent.

Pay particular attention to those **cancellation penalties**.

**Airline tickets**...once purchased, if you cancel except for one or two airlines (like Southwest), **no cash refund**.

**Hotels**...it used to be you made a reservation and then paid when checking out. Still happens, but at ***some*** hotels you may be offered ***fundable*** or ***non-refundable***, the latter at slightly reduced price. And some hotels take payment when you book and then give a date by which you cancel to receive a refund. The key here, be clear about the plan you want (more restrictions for lowest rate).

**Cruises**...It used to be standard...you paid a deposit...\$50 to \$400, with \$200 typical, and then a final payment of the balance 90-120 days before sailing. Although this is fairly common, some lines offer lower rates that are subject to only a partial – or no – refund. Check with your cruise company **before** putting money down/paying. Customers are often so excited at the rates at booking time that they fail to pay attention to these details. Last minute booking surprises tend to make that cruise just a little less enjoyable.

Discuss with your airline, hotel, cruise-line or travel agent ***exactly what you want*** and let them tell ***you exactly*** what the price will be. Then you can make any adjustment necessary to suit you without that future surprise. Planning ahead takes only a couple minutes longer to avoid that surprise. This additional planning (and follow-thru) can make the difference between a ***good*** and an ***outstanding*** vacation.

Enjoy that vacation...you deserve it!