

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTER



KIICHIRO SATO/AP

Outside Orbitz in Chicago.

I booked my JetBlue tickets on Orbitz. Now they're gone.

By Christopher Elliott
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Q. Last August, I was supposed to fly round-trip with my two children from Boston to San Jose, Calif., on JetBlue Airways. I had booked the flights through Orbitz. I was using a ticket credit from a JetBlue flight canceled at the start of the pandemic.

When I got to the airport with my family, JetBlue had no record for these flights, even though we had confirmation numbers for the tickets.

I tried to call Orbitz. The calls disconnected twice, and we had to call back and start the conversation with someone new. Eventually, a representative told me there was nothing they could do for us at the time, and we had to wait for a call back within 24 hours. I again called Orbitz, and I discovered that the credits had never been applied. They were still sitting in my account.

I had to buy tickets for the following day from Boston to San Francisco. I also had to book a hotel to stay in that night.

An Orbitz representative asked me to send in the receipts for the flights and hotel I had to book in order to obtain a refund. Orbitz never followed up with me. After the trip, we reached back out to them, and they requested ticket numbers and receipts. I provided all the information to them, yet to this day, we have gotten no response despite our many efforts. Can you help me?

BENJAMIN ECKSTEIN, *Natick*
A. This was a somewhat complicated case. But let me see if I can simplify it. You had a JetBlue flight at the start of the pandemic. JetBlue canceled the flight, and you received a credit from JetBlue through Orbitz, your online travel agency. Then you tried to use the credit for a flight in August. You booked that flight through Orbitz. It issued a confirmation number, which led you to believe you had the tickets. But you didn't.

JetBlue said you didn't have a ticket when you showed up at the airport. You had to book new flights on JetBlue and a hotel. You also paid for tickets to San Francisco on United Airlines. Orbitz asked you to submit your expenses, and when you did, it failed to respond to your refund request. And that's what led you to me.

Usually, when an online agency sends you a confirmation number for your airline tickets, you can rest assured that you have an airline ticket. I'm not sure why Orbitz didn't apply the JetBlue vouchers to your new tickets.

But I am sure of this: Orbitz should have fixed your problem quickly when it realized what happened. And by "fix," I mean book you and your kids a new ticket and pay for a hotel room if necessary. Instead, it just kept you on hold for hours.

You could have contacted a customer executive at Orbitz to get this resolved. I list the names, numbers, and e-mail addresses of the appropriate Orbitz manager on my consumer advocacy site, Elliott.org.

I contacted Orbitz on your behalf. It refunded the fare and hotel stay, as promised.

Christopher Elliott is the chief advocacy officer of Elliott Advocacy, a nonprofit organization that helps consumers resolve their problems. Elliott's latest book is "How to Be the World's Smartest Traveler" (National Geographic). Contact him at elliott.org/help or chris@elliott.org.

THE VIP LOUNGE

Linda Powell

on wearing the hotel robe, reading the free paper, and finally exhaling

In the Broadway-bound musical, "A Beautiful Noise: The Neil Diamond Story," at the Emerson Colonial Theatre for a six-week run (through July 31), the "Sweet Caroline" singer-songwriter's life is examined through a series of therapy sessions. Playing the therapist is actress Linda Powell, who has appeared in three Broadway shows and numerous movies and TV series — including the current Hulu drama "Dopesick." Powell said that she is excited for audiences to see "A Beautiful Noise" and believes they will be surprised to learn how many songs Diamond wrote — not just for himself but for other artists. "There were a lot of songs that Neil Diamond wrote that I didn't know he wrote," she said. "I think audiences will find that — and his life story — really interesting." While Powell has performed in two shows at the American Repertory Theater, she said she spent most of her time in Cambridge during those runs and is looking forward to exploring Boston while in town. "Boston is a beautiful city and I'm just excited to walk around and see everything," she said. "I get to walk through the Common every day to go to work." The Fort Benning, Ga., native's father (former US Secretary of State and national security adviser Colin Powell) was in the military, so she lived in several states before settling down in New York City, where she lives today. We caught up with Powell to talk about all things travel.

Favorite vacation destination?

I go to Provincetown for at least a month every summer and spend time with extended family and lovely summer neighbors. We all get together and exhale. It's the best place to go to completely drop all pretenses. My favorite activity there is whale watching — followed closely by people watching.

Favorite food or drink while vacationing?

Oysters and prosecco.

Where would you like to travel to but haven't?

There is a boutique hotel in Morocco called Jnane Tamsna that I started following on Instagram for reasons that I can't remember, but now I'm obsessed with it. It's on my bucket list — that and the Grand Canyon, which I've been saying for years. I've wanted to go to the Grand Canyon ever since I saw the movie "Grand Canyon." There's a great scene at the end where they all pull up and gaze at it and the music swells.



Linda Powell on the water in Provincetown.

One item you can't leave home without when traveling?

I always bring along a little carved fish that I got as a wedding favor. He's meant to bring good luck. My work often has me in a hotel room or an apartment that's not home. Something about seeing him on a table when I walk in makes me smile.

Aisle or window?

Window. Always window. It's so amazing to be up in the air — why wouldn't you want to look at the sky? There's nothing more gorgeous than clouds.

Favorite childhood travel memory?

Road trips to the grandparents squeezed in the backseat with my brother and sister. We'd sing along

to show tunes and fight over the snacks and who was crossing the line into whose space. Eventually, we'd fall asleep. And then I'd love waking up when it was dark and quiet and the radio was turned down really low. I'd pop my head on the back of the front seat and keep my dad company while he drove.

Guilty pleasure when traveling?

I'm a sucker for room service breakfast at a nice hotel. I wear the robe and read the free paper. It's probably the only time I eat marmalade.

Best travel tip?

Pack a little cortisone cream.

JULIET PENNINGTON

HERE

WONDERFUL WANDERING

Travelers looking for the next-newthing may want to check out The Wanderer Cottages, debuting this month in Kennebunk, Maine. Launched by the founders of Batson River Brewing & Distilling, the stylish collection of 17 petite, surf lodge-inspired cottages is located less than a mile or two from Kennebunk's town and beaches. Amenities include breakfast bags, lounge pool, complimentary cruiser bikes, and on-staff activity specialist for local recommendations. The Wanderer offers two styles of cottages, studios and one-bedrooms, outfitted with queen beds, Frette linens, Cuddledown bedding, locally-made Maine Woodworks furniture, bathrooms with Grown Alchemist products, wet bar for preparing coffee or cocktails, and outdoor living spaces. Book by June 30 for the Grand Opening Offer: 20-percent off a three-night midweek stay with \$50 gift card to Batson River Brewing & Distilling. Otherwise, rates from \$299/night. 207-849-7400, wanderercottages.com

CAPE AND ISLANDS BUCKET LIST BOOK

Think you've already experienced all the Cape and Islands have to offer? Freelance food and travel writer Kim Foley MacKinnon's new book, "100 Things to Do on Cape Cod and the Islands Before You Die," asks you to think again. Divided into five easy-to-peruse sections (Food and Drink; Music and Entertainment; Sports and Recreation; Culture and History; Shopping and Culture), the newest offering from Reedy Press reports on a wide variety of places and activities — new offerings and old favorites — interspersed with convenient tips designed to enhance your vacation experiences. \$17. www.reedy.com/shop/100-things-to-do-on-cape-cod-and-the-islands-before-you-die

THERE

YOU SAY HOTEL, I SAY BOATEL

The hamlet of Southold, on the North Fork of Long Island, is now home to The Shoals, a hybrid "boatel" overlooking the Peconic Bay and Shelter Island that features 20 hotel dockside suites and 20 boat slips, making it accessible by both land and sea. De-



signed by architect Thomas Juul-Hansen, the cedar-shingle exterior boasts clean lines reminiscent of New England modernism, with two stories of guest suites offering views of the bay and marina. The apartment-style accommodations, fashioned for an extended stay, are each outfitted with a bespoke kitchenette with breakfast nook; open-concept living area; private terrace or balcony; and bathroom with glass enclosed walk-in shower and Malin + Goetz bath products. Memorable dockside moments include yoga classes, picnics, fires, sunset drinks, and stargazing. A bonus for oyster-lovers: The Little Ram Oyster

Company, a local, female-owned business, operates a robust oyster program on the property. Seasonal rates for suites from \$499; Boat Slips from \$100/night (vessels up to 24 feet); \$5 per foot/night (vessels 25 feet to 40 feet). 631-765-5121, www.theshoals-northfork.com

BOUTIQUE AERIE DEBUTS IN BALEARICS

The Tramuntana mountains serve as a backdrop to the newly opened Pure Salt Port de Sóller, the most recent addition to the Pure Salt Luxury Hotels on Mallorca in the Balearic Islands, Spain. Located in the coastal town of

Sóller, known as the Valley of the Orange Trees, the boutique hotel features 90 rooms, each with private terraces offering sweeping views of the secluded bay or mountains. Amenities include cliffside swimming pool; restaurant serving local Mediterranean specialties on the terrace or in the lounge (breakfast, lunch, and dinner); and gym and wellness spa with sauna, Turkish bath and hammam. Beauty treatments and massages are available in two treatment cabins. Accepting reservations for adults and ages 14-plus. Check website for exclusive promotions for early booking and seniors. Rates from \$165. www.puresaltluxuryhotels.com/en/port-de-soller

EVERYWHERE

STREAMLINED CITY GUIDE ONLINE

Love city-based vacations but find that planning a visit can be a little daunting? The refreshed website launch by City Experiences may be helpful for those looking for curated one-of-a-kind, guided travel experiences across major global destinations. The new website's streamlined guest booking system offers a wide array of water- and land-based experiences in top cities around the world including Barcelona, Boston, Chicago, London, New York City, Paris, Rome, San Francisco, and more. Seamlessly collecting multiple brands under one umbrella, City Experiences' portfolio of companies also offers shore excursions, partner-offered experiences, and multi-port packages. www.cityexperiences.com

FOLDABLE CARBON TREKKING POLES

Calling all trekkies! TSL Outdoors' Connect Carbon 5 Cross St P&P Trekking Poles, made in the French Alps, provide adaptable support for the different stages of your trek. Features include lightweight and rigid carbon shaft to absorb shock; options for a cross grip (comfortable on steep terrain) or a light grip; long EVA foam handle for walking downhill; durable tungsten tips; and innovative magnetic wrist straps that lock into the pole and detach with the push of a button. Adjustable in length from 43.3 inches to 51.2 inches. Folds down to 16.5 inches for easy transport in backpack or carry-on. \$169.95. www.backcountry.com/tsl-outdoors-connect-carbon-5-cross-st-pp-trekking-poles#

NECEE REGIS