

# The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



## DIVE INTO TRIPS FEET FIRST

*Pack the right kind of socks to match the demands of your travels*

By Christopher Elliott  
THE WASHINGTON POST

I've been traveling the western part of the United States for the better part of the past two years. And if I've learned just one lesson, it's this: Pack the right travel socks.

It sounds trivial, but it's not.

"Many travelers fail to recognize the importance of choosing the right socks," says Jane Andersen, a Chapel Hill, N.C., podiatrist and president of the North Carolina Foot & Ankle Society. "The wrong socks can lead to blisters, sweaty feet, and even more serious problems like blood clots."

Travel is walking-intensive, as you know if you check your Fitbit or smartphone when you're away. Touring your average European city, even on a bus, can easily take you past 10,000 steps. A day at an American theme park can add 20,000 steps to your pedometer. A good day of hiking in Sedona, Ariz., where I spent two months this summer, will have you pushing 30,000 steps.

For a professional such as Jennifer Davis, who runs Blue Ridge Hiking in Asheville, N.C., choosing the right socks is essential.

Her favorites are made by Farm to Feet (\$12 and up), a Mount Airy, N.C., company that specializes in merino wool socks. "I'm a big fan of these socks because of the thoughtful cushioning, breathability, and wicking features," she says. But they're also versatile; you can wear them to a business meeting as well as hiking, she says.

For travelers, there are several kinds of socks worth considering. They include compression socks or compression stockings, which are designed to help prevent blood clots; hiking socks, which are designed to keep your feet warm during the winter and prevent blisters; and everyday socks, usually made of cotton or a synthetic

blend, for hanging out.

Let's start with compression socks. If you're sitting on a bus, train, or plane for more than a few hours, you need at least one pair of these. Compression socks squeeze your leg to improve blood flow.

It sounds uncomfortable — and unfashionable — but the newest compression socks are neither. For example, Dr. Motion's compression socks (\$7 and up) protect your health while making a fashion statement. You can buy designs featuring footballs, doughnuts, bulldogs, or stripes.

If you need a more formal look, try Comrad Socks (\$18 and up), which come in solid, ombre, and striped varieties. These socks promise "the best of both worlds," pairing the comfort and style of a dress sock with the moisture-wicking, antimicrobial support of an athletic sock and the health benefits of a compression sock.

Hiking socks are important even if you aren't planning to spend a lot of time outdoors. Vacationers of all stripes invariably find themselves walking more than they expected. The wrong sock can mean chafing, blisters, and missed opportunities.

"Socks used for hiking or trekking should be made out of wool or synthetic material because cotton socks retain moisture," says Johnnie Yates, a travel medicine physician at Kaiser Permanente Moanalua Medical Center in Hawaii. "Quick-drying socks are better at preventing fungal infections such as athlete's foot and decreasing the chance of getting blisters."

I'm attached to my Wigwam Rebel Fusion Crew II Socks (\$16), merino wool socks fused with a moisture-wicking Olefin liner. It sounds technical, but in practice, these socks perform well under the most demanding conditions. Take, for example, the time I tried to jump across Oak Creek on my way to Cathedral Rock, one of Sedona's best-known hiking destinations, and fell into

the fast-moving current up to my shoulders. Within minutes of getting out, my socks had dried.

I like the idea behind Fits socks (\$18 and up), which are also made of merino wool. Comfortable and moisture-wicking, Fits also promise to make contact with every part of your foot. That eliminates the possibility of chafing caused by ridges or extra fabric within the shoe. It turns out a lot of hikers are sensitive to seams.

The last sock category may be the most subjective. It's the walk-around, everyday sock that travels well.

Two come to mind. The first is Shashi (\$16 and up), a mesh-grip, no-show sock with a blended, moisture-wicking fabric. "Although the sock was originally created to move from a yoga studio to the street, they're seen in airports through security, on long plane trips, and in the hotel room and home," says Shashi founder Natalie Sudit.

I'm also impressed by the Bombas (\$12 and up) line of socks. Like all of the others in this story, they hold up well under the rigors of travel without sacrificing comfort. But their maker also has a charitable mission, which appeals to this consumer advocate. For each pair of socks Bombas sells, it donates a pair to the homeless.

Another appeal of Bombas is its "Laundry Back Guarantee." If one of your socks disappears into the notorious Bermuda Triangle of laundry within a year of purchase, Bombas will replace the pair, no questions asked. That reminds me of a travel sock rule of mine, which is a fitting way to finish this column.

When you're on the road, socks disappear at roughly twice the rate as at home. Once you've checked out of a hotel or vacation rental, there's no going back to look for the missing sock.

So pack an extra pair of your favorite compression sock, hiking sock, or walk-around sock. Because you never know what you'll be walking into.

## HERE

### CRAFTS AND CULINARY HOLIDAY FEST

Embrace the holiday spirit in the Berkshires this fall at Greylock WORKS' 2nd annual Fall FESTIVE (at right). This one-day holiday market (Nov. 17, 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m.) is set in an expansive and light-filled renovated weave shed, located within a former textile mill in North Adams. In addition to a wide range of handcrafted gifts — including ceramics, jewelry, woodworks, glassworks, clothing, and more — the 30,000-square-foot mill will feature a selection of delicious fresh foods, and gift-worthy culinary items such as honey, shrubs, ciders, cheeses, maple products, hot sauce, and other tempting treats. Throughout the day, acoustic music adds to the convivial atmosphere. \$5 entry; free for kids under 12. [www.greylockworks.com/festive-2](http://www.greylockworks.com/festive-2)

### COOKBOOKS ON MENU IN RHODE ISLAND

Visitors to Providence may want to check out the new Cookbook Culinary Series offered at the French-influenced restaurant, Chez Pascal. Proving that cookbooks are more than just recipes with pretty pictures, Chef Matt Gennuso will be highlighting a favorite each month from his collection of more than 400 books. Every Tuesday through Thursday, the eatery will offer a special three-course menu inspired by the recipes of selected books for \$38 per person. The courses will have the option to be paired with a craft cocktail, wine, or beer. (Regular menu items are also available.) Res-



NINA COCHRAN

ervations recommended. 401-421-4422. [chez-pascal.com](http://chez-pascal.com)

## THERE

### FILM FANATICS PACKAGE IN ITALY

Those obsessed with Italian cinema will want to take advantage of the newest deal offered by two Bettoja properties — Hotel Mediterraneo and Hotel Massimo D'Azeglio — located in the heart of Rome. Through December, both hotels are offering a Dormire Sul Set (Sleeping on Set) package in partnership with Cinecittà, the famous backlot studio beloved by Federico Fellini. In addition to two nights in a superior double room (including buffet breakfast), the package offers private transfer to and guided tour of the massive 100-acre Cinecittà studio (located about 30 minutes from the hotels) along with lunch box for two. Built in 1937, the studio — with more than 20 stages — has been the filming location for countless movies, such as both "Ben-Hur" films, "Cleopatra" and nearly all of Felli-

ni's productions, including "La Dolce Vita" and "8½." Three permanent outdoor sets — Ancient Rome, the Temple of Jerusalem, and Florence in the 1400s — are open for guided tours. There is also an indoor exhibition that chronicles the history of moviemaking in Italy. Rates from \$298. [www.bettoja-hotels.it/en](http://www.bettoja-hotels.it/en)

### FAMILY-FRIENDLY SKI RESORT REHAB

Ready for ski season? Opening in late November, the Grand Summit Hotel in Park City, Utah, recently underwent a \$15 million renovation in advance of

joining Vail Resorts' RockResorts portfolio, a collection of premium properties with distinctive dining and spas in iconic mountain locations. Renovations include a complete makeover to all 212 suites, lobby, conference and meeting spaces, café, and spa. Also new this year: families staying at the ski-in/ski-out property can take the Red Pine Gondola up to High Meadow Park at Canyons Village, where its Family Fun Zone is a learning area designed exclusively for children, and beginner skiers and snowboarders. A new high-speed four-passenger lift at High Meadows will increase uphill capacity by 50 percent and shorten overall ride time by 70 percent. Additional snowmaking throughout the area ensures ideal snow surface conditions for learning. Grand Summit Hotel rates from \$194. 435-615-8040, [rockresorts.com](http://rockresorts.com)

### ISLAND HOPPING IN CROATIA

As Croatian tourism grows ever-more popular, Katarina Line has announced an expansion of its land tour packages for 2019. With a focus on wine, gastronomy, culture, and soft adventures like hiking and biking, the new trips are designed to make it easier for guests to connect with the company's many small ship cruises that sail the Croatian coastline. For example, the nine-day Croatian Rhapsody tour from Zagreb to Dubrovnik woos food and wine lovers by introducing guests

to local specialties and traditional dishes, and offering vintage wine tastings at local vineyards. Includes visits to historic towns, parks, English-speaking guides, all transfer and entrance fees, stays at three- and four-star hotels, four dinners, and more. (From \$1,465 per person.) Want a shorter trip? Coast Express is a three-night program whose highlights include a visit to Plitvice Lakes National Park (at bottom), a UNESCO World Heritage site that consists of 16 terraced lakes connected by a series of spectacular waterfalls. (From \$660 per person.) [www.katarina-line.com](http://www.katarina-line.com)

## EVERYWHERE

### MESSENGER BAG KEEPS VALUABLES SECURE

Worried about losing your valuables when traveling? Secura Destinations have debuted an Anti-Theft Cross-Body bag that is stylish, versatile and — best of all — designed with smart security features. For example, the adjustable shoulder strap hides an interior stainless steel cable to prevent slash and grabs; and the zippered main compartment features two slash-resistant pockets, and one RFID-protected pocket to insulate your credit cards, passports, and any IDs with chips from electronic pickpocketing. Other features include back pocket with hook-and-loop closure, locking zippers, water-resistant woven-twill exterior, and heavy-duty nylon bottom construction. Fits most tablets. \$49.99. [lewisnclark.com/secura-destinations-anti-theft-cross-body](http://lewisnclark.com/secura-destinations-anti-theft-cross-body)

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