

# Travel industry woos seniors

BY FELICITY MUNN  
Canadian Press

**A** REMINDER FOR seniors: Always ask about discounts when making travel arrangements.

So-called "mature" people are a hot market for the travel industry these days, and airlines, bus lines, railways and hotels are offering them reduced rates.

British Airways is the latest company to go after older travellers, plugging what it calls the most comprehensive program offered by any carrier to the 60-plus age group.

But many other airlines offer discount fares for seniors. In the United States, all the majors — including Eastern, United, Pan Am and Delta — have introduced such programs.

Of the three largest Canadian carriers, Air Canada and Canadian Airlines International have seniors discounts, but Wardair has never offered them because, it says, its fares are low to begin with.

People 65 and up who fly Canadian Airlines on domestic routes receive a discount of at least 20 per cent and sometimes as much as 50 per cent, depending on the destination and time of year.

Much the same discounts apply at Air Canada, except that they are available on all the airline's flights within North America. Air Canada also has a special fare for Florida-bound passengers 60 or more; they get 60 per cent off the regular economy fare, reducing a return Montreal-Miami ticket to \$277.

But like all discount fares, sen-

iors' fares have restrictions — they usually must be booked several weeks ahead, they may only be good for travel on certain days of the week, they may be unavailable on some routes at certain times of the year, and so on.

And, at times, seat sales or advance-purchase fares may be cheaper than seniors' fares. So ask about all the options.

The new British Airways program, which begins April 1, offers travellers 60 and up a Privileged Traveller Card entitling them to various benefits, including a 10 per cent discount on most fares to Britain from Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal.

Cardholders won't have to pay cancellation penalties, and they can also save on some of the airline's package trips and on some packages offered by other tour operators. All the benefits also apply to a travelling companion of 50 or older.

The British Airways card carries an annual \$15 fee, but the first year's payment will be waived for those who apply before May 31. Application forms, which must be accompanied by proof of age, can be obtained from travel agents or from British Airways.

Seniors who don't like flying can find discounts on trains and buses.

Anyone 60 and older can get a one-third discount in coach class aboard any Via Rail train on any day of the year.

The Greyhound bus company gives a 10 per cent reduction to passengers 65 and up. So does Gray Coach Lines in Ontario, except that the minimum age is 60. Seniors 60 or more can travel alone on Voyageur buses in

Ontario and Quebec at a one-third discount, or get two seats for the price of one if they are travelling in pairs.

As for hotels, ask before booking. Some offer straight savings of between 10 and 25 per cent to seniors, while others operate seniors' clubs which guests must join, usually for a small annual fee, in order to receive discounts.

Discounts are available at many of the larger hotel chains, including Holiday Inn (10 per cent off for the 60-plus crowd), Ramada (15 to 25 per cent for ages 60 and up) and Sheraton (25 per cent, depending on availability, for those 65 or over). At Best Western International hotels, which are individually owned and operated, policy is set by each hotel but the majority offer discounts of up to 15 per cent.

In the travel industry, by the way, the definition of a senior varies. In some cases, discounts are available to those 55 or up, so begin asking once you hit that mark. Statistics Canada says the number of people aged 65 or over in Canada hit 2.7 million in 1986, up from 1.5 million 20 years earlier.

While the average income of seniors has risen substantially since the early 1970s, it still remains below that of the rest of the population. At the same time, research shows there is a growing number of seniors who are healthier, can afford to retire earlier and have more disposable income than ever before.

They have the money, time and inclination to travel, and the industry is anxious to tap that market — to the benefit of all mature travellers.

# This Royal society is for the birds

New York Times Service

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is sponsoring more than 1,000 events this year throughout Britain to celebrate its 100th anniversary, and to make the public more aware of birds and their habitats.

Society members first organized in 1889 to protest London's great bird trade, and the increasingly popular use of plumage to decorate women's hats.

Today, the society is Europe's

largest voluntary conservation society and boasts more than half a million members. It also owns, leases and manages 180,000 acres of Britain's most beautiful parklands. The centenary events include exhibitions, walks, lectures, films, children's projects, conferences and concerts, all of which, in some way, feature birds.

From March 21 through May 9, the Young Ornithologists Club, the society's junior chapter, will sponsor a flight line, a system to record

sightings of birds in migration.

Many of the 114 reserves around the country will also be open on designated days during which park wardens and society members will give free guided tours of nesting grounds and other bird habitats.

For more information on the organization's activities and events, contact the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL, England; telephone (767) 80551.

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Hotel Bellamar - shared bath (includes breakfast and dinner daily) Mar. 18	\$739	\$889
Mar. 25	\$629	---
Guisa Hotel & La Plata Mar. 18	\$639	\$769
Mar. 25	\$639	---

ORLANDO	1 Week from	2 Weeks from
Air Only Mar. 25	\$289	\$289
Apr. 01 - Apr. 08	\$329	\$329
Apr. 15	\$299	---
Air + Car Mar. 25	\$339	\$389
Apr. 01 - Apr. 08	\$379	\$429
Apr. 15	\$349	---
Days Inn East of Universal Studios room Mar. 25	\$489*	\$679
Apr. 01 - Apr. 08	\$529	\$699
Apr. 15	\$519	---
Econolodge International Drive - studio Apr. 01 - Apr. 08	\$549	\$729
Apr. 15	\$539	---

PUNTA CANA	1 Week from	2 Weeks from
Bavaro Beach Resort (includes breakfast and dinner daily) Mar. 16	\$909	\$1279
Mar. 23	\$819	\$1089
Mar. 30	\$689	---
Apr. 06	\$599	---
Apr. 13	\$589	---

ANTIGUA	1 Week from	2 Weeks from
Jolly Beach Hotel (Standard room with fan Includes breakfast and dinner daily) Mar. 20	---	\$1539

BARBADOS	1 Week from	2 Weeks from
Blue Horizon - studio Mar. 18	---	\$1169
Mar. 24 - Mar. 25	\$749	\$1049
Apr. 07 - Apr. 08	\$789	\$1079
Apr. 14 - Apr. 15	\$699	\$889
Welcome Inn - superior Mar. 24 - Mar. 25	\$839	\$1209
Apr. 07 - Apr. 08	\$879	\$1239
Apr. 14 - Apr. 15	\$869	\$1229
St. Lawrence Apt. East Apr. 07 - Apr. 08	\$689	\$879
Apr. 14 - Apr. 15	\$679	\$849

ACAPULCO	1 Week from	2 Weeks from
Air Only Mar. 25	\$499	---
Apr. 01 - Apr. 08	\$509	---
Apr. 15 - Apr. 22	\$509	\$509
Acapulco Dolphin Mar. 25	\$669	---
Apr. 01	\$639	---
Apr. 08	\$639	---
Calinda Acapulco - mountain view rm Mar. 25	\$809	---
Apr. 01	\$769	---
Apr. 08	\$699	---
Club Del Sol Mar. 25	\$669	---
Apr. 01	\$629	---
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Air Only Mar. 26	---	\$489
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Air Only Mar. 17 - Mar. 24	---	\$749
Outrigger West - studio Mar. 17 - Mar. 24	---	\$1439
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Mar. 24	---	\$1299

Above prices are per person based on double occupancy. Prices will vary dependent upon departure date and choice of accommodation. All offers are subject to availability at time of booking and do not include taxes or service charges. Prices are applicable to new bookings only. For exact inclusions, exclusions and conditions, please consult the Air Canada Touram Sun Holiday brochure. Air Canada Touram is registered under the Ontario Travel Act under number 1171197.

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