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Travel | Stories
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Select a budget: Monday, May 3, 2010 Go

BC-MCT-TRAVEL-BJT — travel (2700 words)

McClatchy-Tribune News Service
Travel Budget for Monday, May 3, 2010

Updated at 8 a.m. EDT (1200 UTC).

TOP STORIES

Cashing in around Vegas: Nature offers plenty of action away from the Strip

UST-VEGASHIKE:MW—Not much of a gambler? Finding outdoorsy things to do within a short drive of Las Vegas is a safe bet.

Going for a hike can mean more than strolling down the Strip, taking in the extravagantly colorful sights engineered by humankind over the last half-century.

Going for a hike also can mean walking past awe-inspiring red geologic formations carved by nature over millions of years, since Las Vegas also makes a great home base for adventures that won't put your bank account in jeopardy.

Some parks are close enough that you can be back on the Strip in time to catch a Cirque du Soleil show, though if the nightlife keeps you from rising early, it may be wise to book a 10 p.m. showing.

Spring is an especially good time to explore the area, before the heat makes hiking tiring or even dangerous. If you're lucky enough to hit the desert when it's in bloom, consider putting some money down on the roulette wheel afterward.

To savor a few hours of peace and quiet away from the constant casino cacophony, here are a few options.

2050 by Karen Samelson. MOVED

TEXT | HTML | PHOTOS

Vegas is a cheap jumping-off point to national parks

UST-VEGASHIKE-PARKS:MW—Even if you aren't tempted by Sin City's allure, Las Vegas can be a relatively cheap and easy place to start a trip to other parks in the Southwest.

450 by Karen Samelson. MOVED

TEXT | HTML

In Holden's footsteps: Take a walking tour of Caulfield's Manhattan haunts

UST-CAULFIELD-TOUR:LA—Holden Caulfield was a flaneur. That's not generally how we think of him, this archetype of adolescent alienation, this detester of phonies, this poor little lost boy whose voice — by turns knowing, childlike, cynical and bereft — drives J.D. Salinger's iconic 1951 novel, "The Catcher in the Rye." Yet, from the moment, about a quarter of the way through the book, he arrives by train at Manhattan's now-demolished original Pennsylvania Station building, he is our guide on one of the 20th century's great literary walking tours.

This kind of foot-level interaction with the city begins before Holden ever gets to Manhattan, when he is saying his goodbyes at Pencey Prep. Visiting with a teacher, Old Spencer, he starts to think about the lagoon at the south end of Central Park. "I was wondering," he tells us, "if it would be frozen over when I got home, and if it was, where did the ducks go. I was wondering where the ducks went when the lagoon got all icy and frozen over. I wondered if some guy came in a truck and took them away to a zoo or something. Or if they just flew away."

In early March, not much more than a month after Salinger's death on Jan. 27 at age 91, I stood at the edge of the still icy lagoon and asked myself these very questions as I watched a cluster of ducks among the reeds. Had they just returned, I wondered, or had they spent the winter elsewhere? This, it turns out, is among the novel's legacies; according to a 2001 New York Times piece, the Department of Parks and Recreation gets several letters and phone calls about the ducks each year.

1850 by David L. Ulin. MOVED

TEXT | HTML | GRAPHIC

U.S. DESTINATIONS

In rural Iowa, whiskey delights

UST-TEMPLETON:TB—There is Templeton Rye whiskey, the golden-brown stuff that's a tad bitter as a rye should be, available in the clear, weighty bottle for about \$40 at the liquor store.

Then there is Templeton Rye whiskey, what locals in this town of 332 consider the real thing. It's what their parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles made in basements and closets for decades, just past the eye of the authorities. It's a recipe that saved this town from the Depression, then was passed from generation to generation. It supposedly was Al Capone's favorite. Rumor says it is still made quietly today.

The first version is easy to find in Iowa and Illinois liquor stores and on the Internet. The second one, well, that's harder. Distilling liquor without a license is illegal, so ask around town, and you'll get tight lips and shakes of the head, albeit with an Iowan civility.

Though the county road running alongside Templeton is Rye Avenue — and the town logo includes a whiskey bottle — it is as if a ghost hangs over this town two hours northwest of Des Moines. A whiskey-soaked ghost.

1450 by Josh Noel. MOVED

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Holden Caulfield tour

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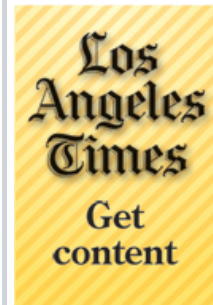
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[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#) | [PHOTOS](#)**These are some of Georgia's best-kept secrets**

[UST-GASECRETS-CORRECTION:MCT](#)—Psssst! Want to hear a secret? Actually, want to hear five secrets? With the summer vacation season fast approaching, there are a few places that are little known outside the Peach State — but once you visit they will always keep Georgia on your mind.

In all of Georgia there is no place better to canoe or kayak than the Altamaha River. The Altamaha, named by The Nature Conservancy as one of the “Last Great Places” in the world and also called “Georgia’s Little Amazon,” is created at the confluence of the Ocmulgee and Oconee Rivers and then meanders 137 miles to the coast near Darien. On that undammed run to the Atlantic, only six times is it crossed by roads and just twice by active rail lines.

Parts of the river are so solitary and remote that you can paddle for miles without seeing another living soul. For long stretches, it’s just you, the river, turtles and fish, whitetail deer, a few egrets or herons singing through the deep forests, and maybe on rare occasions a manatee.

1350 by Mary Ann Anderson. MOVED

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#) | [PHOTOS](#)**Miami Springs, Fla., home of aviation pioneer Glenn Curtiss mansion rises from the ashes**

[UST-CURTISS:MI](#)—Poor Glenn Curtiss. The aviation pioneer rivaled, perhaps exceeded, the Wright Brothers in accomplishment. He held the first U.S. pilot’s license and the world land-speed record, 136 mph, set on the sands of Ormond Beach, Fla., on a motorcycle of his design and manufacture. He practically invented and built U.S. naval aviation.

Along the way, Curtiss also found time to develop Hialeah, Opa-locka and Miami Springs, Fla.

But he had the misfortune of dying young, at 52 in 1930, and his once-electrifying fame faded.

So did one of the brightest, most singular bits of Curtiss’s legacy: his Miami Springs mansion, a picturesque Pueblo-style sprawl built in 1925 on the edge of the town’s golf course. Abandoned after long use as a hotel, the Curtiss house burned to a roofless husk in a series of fires a decade ago.

Now the house is rising again, Phoenix-like, rebuilt by the town and a nonprofit foundation whose officers hope its resurrection will also help restore Glenn Hammond Curtiss to his rightful place in history. Plans call for museum and exhibition galleries, a conference center and a full professional kitchen to cater events like weddings.

1000 by Andres Viglucchi. MOVED

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#) | [PHOTOS](#)**Play in Peoria: From food to art to sports to a riverboat, the historic city has it all**

[UST-BORCOVER-COLUMN:TB](#)—Remember the old quip “How will it play in Peoria?” The question stems from vaudeville jokes and from marketing and political gurus concerned about how a product or topic will be received in mainstream America. A better question for potential visitors might be, “Why play in Peoria?”

Situated almost midway between Chicago and St. Louis, Peoria is steeped in history. Jacques Marquette and Louis Jolliet passed through the valley in 1673 during their Mississippi River exploration.

700 by Alfred Borcover. MOVED

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)**ASIA****Great mall of China: From specialty stores to street corners, the country beckons shoppers**

[WLT-CHINA-2:DE](#)—Shopping in China seems counterintuitive. If practically everything Americans buy in the U.S. is made in China, what’s to buy in China?

It’s a dilemma, because tourists who head out on their own often find that small gift shops stock cheap trinkets they can find in the dollar store back home. And really interesting stuff — like scorpions on a stick or live eels — could be pretty hard to get through U.S. Customs.

And if you give in and buy from the man on the street — “Two Rolex, \$5!” was the feature outside Beijing’s Summer Palace — your purchase might fall apart before you get home.

So what’s to buy in China? If you’re patient, you can find some gems.

The truth is, most group tours generally herd foreign visitors into gigantic stores meant for them.

Buses stop at the jade store on the way to the Great Wall, the silk shop in Suzhou, the tea shop in Hangzhou, the rug shop in Shanghai. Bangle bracelets of pure white jade are affixed to shoppers’ wrists, all the better to coax a \$1,000 buy — or better yet, how about a \$120,000 giant jade carving of a Chinese cabbage?

1500 by Ellen Creager. MOVED

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)**Shanghai Expo on tap**

[WLT-CHINA-2-EXPO:DE](#)—To Americans, he looks like a cross between Gumby and a tooth.

To the Chinese people, he’s the character that means “people.”

It’s Haibao, symbol of Shanghai World Expo 2010, the big exposition that opened May 1 and runs through October.

And his image is everywhere.

250 by Ellen Creager. MOVED

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)**Low-cost inns set for high-end hot Japanese spring resort**

[WLT-JAPAN-CHEAPRESORTS:YS](#)—A chain of low-cost inns was scheduled to open a property last week in the Wakura Onsen hot spring resort in Nanao, Ishikawa Prefecture, where a number of high-class inns are located.

The Wakura Onsen Kinnami-so inn will offer one night’s accommodation, including two meals, for 7,800 yen, in its 112 rooms. Such a low cost was achieved by implementing a raft of cost reduction measures, including operating the inn without an okami proprietress or nakai waitresses to serve guests in their rooms.

600 by The Yomiuri Shimbun. MOVED

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)**OTHER WORLD DESTINATIONS****A new traveler to the Old World learns lessons**

[WLT-EUROPE-FIRST:PH](#)—My mother always says, “Don’t try to do everything before you’re 21.” Well, Mom, I finally made it to Europe — at age 56, and after more than four years as a travel editor. Ironic, isn’t it?

True, I’ve journeyed to the four corners of the Lower 48 states — and stood on the Four Corners of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and Colorado. I’ve cruised in the Caribbean, down to South America, and up to Canada. I’ve climbed Mayan pyramids in

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Mexico. But I've only flown a handful of times, mostly before 9-11.

So, even with all of my travels, plus the many consumer tips and travelers' tales I've edited, everything about my seven-day trip to Portugal was new: booking an international flight, finding places to stay, buying foreign currency and an electric converter, calculating baggage fees, and getting through security.

I made plenty of rookie mistakes, but they were mixed in with enough good moves — and good luck — to rate this overseas adventure a winner.

3200 by Bill Reed. MOVED

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## TRAVEL TIPS

### Missing the train: Why America still needs Amtrak

[CNS-AMTRAK-COMMENTARY:WA](#)—U.S. travelers have grown accustomed to long airport security lines, delayed and crowded flights, and congested roadways.

It should come as little surprise to anyone, then, to encounter similar hassles on America's long-neglected passenger railroad, Amtrak.

In an April 25 travel story, Washington Post reporters Andrea Sachs and Nancy Trejos described the plight of two chronically late trains to Washington — one from Boston, the other from Charlotte, N.C.

Regular Amtrak riders from coast to coast have come to expect delays, and to be sure, many trains almost never run on time.

However, the Post article only examined two schedules out of hundreds and only in one sliver of the country, giving readers an incomplete rendering of Amtrak's problems and their underlying causes.

950 by Curtis Tate. (Moved April 27) MOVED

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### Chicago's Alinea restaurant ranks No. 1 in U.S., No. 7 in the world

[UST-TOPRESTAURANT:TB](#)—Alinea is the seventh-best restaurant in the world. Better still, it's the best restaurant in America.

In Europe, hands are wringing and ink is flowing over the news that Spain's El Bulli has been supplanted by Denmark's Noma as No.1 on Restaurant Magazine's annual World's 50 Best Restaurants list, announced April 26 in London.

In Chicago, corks are popping on Halsted Street because No. 7 Alinea (it was No. 10 last year) is the highest-ranked restaurant in the United States. Actually, the highest-ranked restaurant in North America.

450 by Phil Vettel. MOVED

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#) | [PHOTO](#)

### '3 hours or you're off' law might cause problems

[CREAGER-COLUMN:DE](#)—Whenever the government gets involved in micromanaging a business, there's the risk of unintended consequences for the public.

That's what I'm worried about with this new three-hour tarmac rule, which went into effect last week.

The rule says that any plane sitting on the tarmac for three hours without giving passengers a chance to get off will face heavy fines.

500 by Ellen Creager. MOVED

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### Quips and quotes about travel

[WARNER-COLUMN:OC](#)—From a vaporetto swung along the Grand Canal in Venice, I saw these words chiseled in stone on the side of a building:

Open my heart and you will see

Grav'd inside of it, "Italy."

It's from Robert Browning's poem, "De Gustibus."

I keep a list of travel-related quotes that I sprinkle into stories from time to time. Pieces of wisdom or humor in a line or two.

400 by Gary A. Warner. MOVED

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### Airline wants to charge for carry-ons? No problem

[CNS-PACKINGLIGHT:TB](#)—When Spirit Airlines broke new ground by announcing that it will charge passengers \$45 for carry-on bags starting Aug.1, I took it as a personal challenge. I had to prove I could travel without even a carry-on.

The answer is in what the airlines call a "personal item."

350 by Ross Werland. MOVED

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CNS-TRAVELGEAR:TB will not move this week.

## FIXTURES

### Ask Airfarewatchdog

[AIRFAREWATCHDOG:MCT](#)—Air travel Q&A.

650 by George Hobica. MOVED

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### Fees charged for changing flights, kids flying alone

[BESTFARES:DA](#)—Airline fees continue to change, with most fees headed up and a few headed down. One thing's for sure, these fees are here to stay, so you need to be informed to avoid being surprised.

650 by Tom Parsons. MOVED

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### Foreign correspondence: Golf exploding in China? That's a fair way to put it

[WLT-CORRESPONDENCE:CH](#)—Tenniell Chu, 34, is executive director of Mission Hills China, which owns and operates 15 golf courses at two resorts in southern China.

700 by John Bordsen. MOVED

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**Family travel five**

[FAMILYTRAVEL5:DA](#)—Hotels, resorts offer deals.  
500 by Lynn O'Rourke Hayes. MOVED  
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**The Frugal Traveler: Staying fit on the road**

[CNS-FRUGALTRAVELER:MCT](#)—Staying fit on the road.  
450 by Sharon Harvey Rosenberg and Myscha Theriault. MOVED  
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**The weekly geography quiz**

[GEOQUIZ:TB](#)—Fredericksburg, site of a major Civil War battle in 1862, is on the Rappahannock River in which state?  
150. MOVED  
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**Travel Q&A: Guided tours of Italy**

[TRAVADVICE:CC](#)—Guided tours of Italy.  
200 by Ann Tatko-Peterson. MOVED  
[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)

**Web Buzz**

[CPT-WEBBUZZ:LA](#)—IWannaGoThere.com lets you customize your travel plans.  
150 by Jen Leo. MOVED  
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Travel Editor: John Price, 202-383-6083, [jprice@mctinfoservices.com](mailto:jprice@mctinfoservices.com)  
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