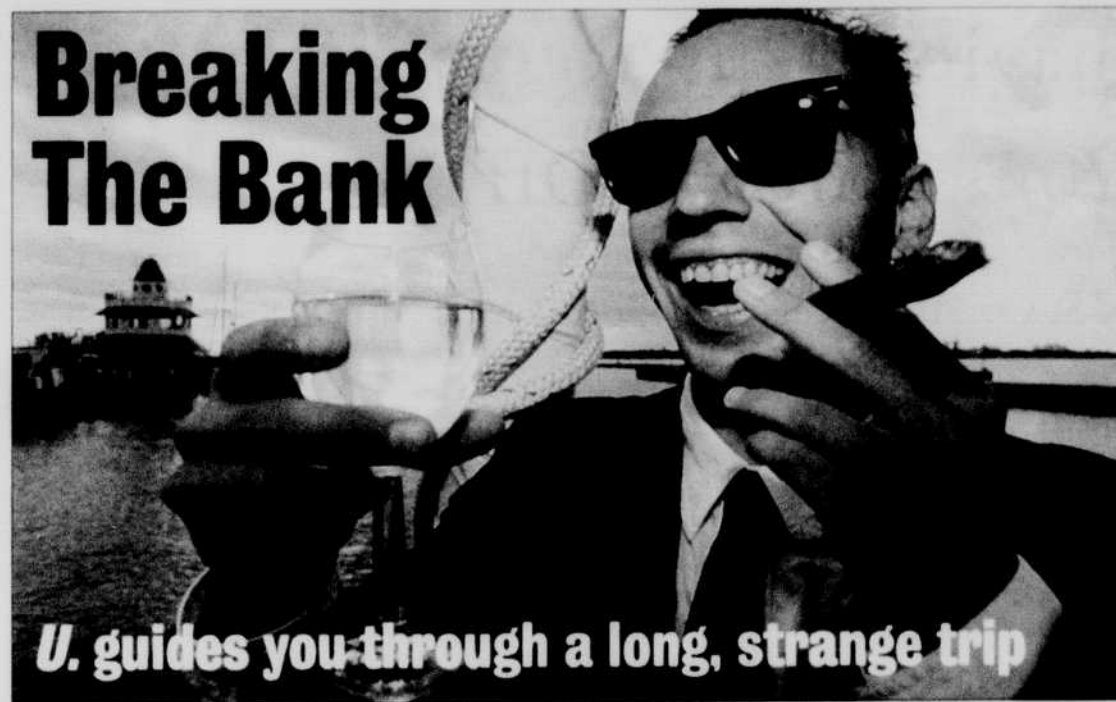


Breaking The Bank



U. guides you through a long, strange trip

Daytona is so-so. Fort Lauderdale is pleasant. Cancún? Bahamas? Nice weather, but you're looking for a change of hemisphere. Those destinations are fine for some, but you've been planning this break for some time. It's your ultimate break — time to ditch that old flannel shirt for a fancy-shmancy silk one.

So cash the financial aid check, sell the VW, find out the going rate for plasma and call the travel agent.

This newfound wealth will make you the upper crust of the upper crust. Your dough flows like cheap wine and you're not afraid to spread it around. (Here's a C-note for your trouble my good man, the McNuggets were *magnifique!*)

While everyone else is cramming all 40 of their friends into a subcompact, you'll be departing Los Angeles International Airport at 8:30 p.m. on Friday. Bring those old issues of *Poseur* magazine you've been meaning to read, because you won't touch down in Cairns, Australia, until Sunday at 7:20 a.m.

You've lost a day, so the jet lag is going to be pretty intense. Better wait a while to unload your scuba equipment so you don't get the bends. But once you're ready, hit the Great Barrier Reef.

Then pop over to Green Island, a coral cay where you can feed the fish and check out 400 varieties of coral. A glass-bottomed boat will transport you into the coral kingdom without getting your expensive shoes wet.

Being part of the *nouveau riche*, you're also environmentally trendy and should check out the rain forest which surrounds Cairns.

At night you're in Pell Grant Paradise, taking in everything as you devour the Australian drinking and dining experience. You didn't get rich without knowing a good deal when you see one — beers are only about a buck.

After a prosperous night's rest, unwind on the beach while you wait for the limousine to the airport. Then it's off to Fiji.

You'll depart from Cairns at 1:45 p.m. to catch a connecting flight to Sydney and arrive at Nadi, Fiji, a little after midnight. The morning ferry will cost you about \$20 American (you drop

that bill like Monopoly money) and will deliver you and your designer luggage to Beachcomber Island.

The Beachcomber Island Resort is the sole hotel and is the focal point of all activity for you and the other 200 or so inhabitants. You'll stay at one of the opulent private bure (cottages) beach front. Expenses be damned! You rent one for yourself and another for your luggage.

Remember to throw down some bucks on sunscreen, because the Fiji islands record the highest sunshine factor in the Pacific.

After a long lounge in the sun, you'll feast on kakoda (a local fish steamed in coconut cream and lime), raurau (a taro leaf dish) and kassaua (tapioca in coconut cream with bananas).

Wash it down with a toast of Yagona (the drink everyone who's anyone is enjoying) out of a coconut shell. Slightly lightheaded, you guffaw with well-to-do delight, snorting and throwing down shrimp and scallops like only the truly, filthy rich can. As you eat, you'll be treated to exhibitions of dancing and fire walking. You consider dropping the fire walkers a little something to put in their pocket, but are refused since tipping is discouraged in Fiji.

But alas, though you party through the night, that ferry back to Nadi comes quickly. Your flight back to Sydney departs at 8 a.m. and your woozy and formerly prosperous head spins a bit as you return to L.A. four hours before you left Sydney.

"My goodness, I'm rich!" you say one last time before you face the realities of being broke and school bound. But the depression of your true existence is tempered by your ability to think ahead. Who needs two kidneys, when everyone knows one will do just fine?

Perhaps next break, you muse, I'll try the French Alps. I'll relax at the Mont Vallon hotel, indulging my gluttonous appetite for fine wine and fondue.

"Next time..." you say out loud. "It's expensive, but I'm worth it." **U**



COURTESY FIJI VISITORS BUREAU

SPRING BREAK '94

... Realistic Options

Spring break in America. Discerning students know it can be the apex of higher education. Resort area locals either loathe it or laugh madly with dollar-sign eyeballs.



COURTESY PANAMA CITY

Since it's a real drag finding out that your spot has rolled up the red carpet when you were just about to cross the city limits, *U.* has dug up the haps on spring break locales, in the interest of shameless hedonists nationwide.

CANCUN, MEXICO: One of the best break spots if you've got the dough. Excellent snorkeling, good shopping, and a strip of clubs, restaurants and bars several miles long make it a multi-flavored Mexican getaway. Package deals are probably the best bet, as airfare alone will cut pretty deeply into your cash reserves.

Added bonuses (boni, bonum?): There is no minimum drinking age and public consumption of alcohol is allowed. "People were offering us beers when we stepped off the airplane," says Todd Kuimjian, a senior at Virginia Tech. "And in one bar guys jumped on your table and poured margaritas down your throat while everybody else went nuts."

On a more sober note, he suggests bringing along enough pesos for parasailing and jet skiing, two of Cancun's most popular activities.

PANAMA CITY, FLA.: The Sunshine State's newly crowned capital of sinful delight, taking up the slack for Daytona and Fort Lauderdale. Week-long hotel accommodations are only about \$130, but tan lines aren't guaranteed. It may still be a little chilly in the early weeks of March.

"It's fun, but it gets sort of strange sometimes," says Tina Smith, a junior at the U. of Florida. "If you don't mind the pickups and cut-off jeans, you'll be all right."

Go before the locals decide the cash just isn't worth the debauchery.

LAKE HAVASU, ARIZ.: Good weather and innumerable diversions have made Havasu the West's hot spot. (That, and Sonny Bono's "War on Thongs" in Palm Springs, Calif.)

"They have a lot of things oriented to college students," says Kathryn Land, a senior at the U. of Nevada. "People drink, but there's plenty of other stuff to get into besides alcohol."

The 45-mile lake is the center of entertainment, with houseboat and water-ski rentals and parasailing available.

Last year, the break got out of hand when an outside promoter marketed the place to high school students. This year Havasu is trying to regain control and keep it college-aged and respectable. Get reservations early, 'cause they go quick.

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, TEXAS: Located at the southern tip of the state, Padre offers a fairly wild party environment (bars close at 1:30, though). It'll cost you a little more than a spot like Panama City, but it's a short hop across the Mexican border. Perfect for collegiate felons or tequila freaks.

"You can go down to Matamoros (30 minutes south of the border) and get away with more," says Josie Garcia, a senior at the U. of Texas. Garcia explains "more" involves, among other things, stealing road signs. But be advised: Below-the-border jails are all they're cracked up to be. Not so *bueno*.

Before you bust the pig and jump on the highway, keep in mind that these spots are being marketed heavily. Thus, hordes of students are going, and can go fairly cheaply with the help of various package deals. In a spring break survey, we found 62 percent of our readers were heading to the beach, 45 percent in their cars, where 40 percent will stay in hotels, 70 percent will be using sunscreen and 29 percent will be wearing hats. You know what that means — the roads will be overrun with beach-bound, hat-wearing *U.* readers smothered in sunscreen and trying to force 100 percent of themselves into your hotel room. ■ **Chad Runyon, Collegiate Times, Virginia Tech**

By Dan Pawlowski, *Technician*, North Carolina State U.