Find time to travel in the year ahead

Travel is something many people love but few have the time to do. While some people avoid travel because it can be costly, many more admit they would travel more if they simply had the time. So how can you make travel a bigger part of your life in the year ahead? Consider the following tips.

• Use your vacation days. Many people don't travel because they simply aren't using their paid time off. A Harris Interactive survey conducted for the career website Glassdoor found that only 51 percent of American employees use all of their eligible paid time off and vacation time. Some of those workers may be hesitant to take days off for fear of upsetting their superiors, but another survey suggests that might be a mistake. A 2015 study from the staffing firm The Creative Group found that 40 percent of executives feel their employees would be more productive if they used their allotted vacation time.

• Hit the road and work at the same time. If things at work are simply too hectic, consider hitting the road and working at the same time. While unencumbered travel tends to be the most relaxing, working vacations can allow you to let off some steam and get your work done outside the hustle and bustle of the office. Resolve to work only a few hours each day, tackling a few projects in the early morning before you call it quits and enjoy your destination. The ease of working remotely can make it easier than ever before to stay connected to the office while still getting time to travel.

• Make better use of weekends. Travel need not be limited to vacations. If you truly love to get up and go, plan more weekend trips. Find places within a few hours of your home so you spend less time behind the wheel and more time enjoying your destination. Plan ahead for three-day weekends so you don't have to scramble at the last minute to make arrangements.

• Extend work trips. Another way to see new places is to extend work trips. If you have a business trip coming up, add an extra day at the end of the trip so you can explore a new locale without the burden of having to work. This can be a cost-effective way to travel, as your company will no doubt still pay to fly you home even if you stay an extra day to do some sightseeing. Finding time to travel is not as hard as many working professionals may think. Oftentimes all it takes is a little extra effort and the willingness to leave the office behind for a few days.

Traditions of Three Kings Day

Christmas celebrants realize that the holiday season does not end on December 26 or even January 2. For many people, Christmas and New Year's Eve are merely a prelude to the real celebration to come on Three Kings Day. Three Kings Day, or Día de los Très Reyes, is celebrated on January 6 to honor the wise men who visited and brought gifts to Jesus Christ. Also known as the Epiphany, the holiday marks the end of the Christmas season for many practicing Christians.

Very little is known about the kings, or magi. These kings, who are only mentioned once in the Gospel of Matthew, are never named. The story says they hail from the "east" and are guided to the manger by a mysterious light in the sky. They begin a journey to bring gold, frankincense and myrrh to the newborn king. Unbeknownst to many, the popular song "The 12 Days of Christmas" actually marks the 12 days following Christmas, ending on the Feast of the Epiphany, and not the 12 days preceding Christmas Day.

Many traditions are associated with the Epiphany. Celebrants in Mexico serve Rosca de Reyes, an oval-shaped cake that symbolizes a crown. The cake has a small doll inside that represents baby Jesus and the hiding of Jesus from King Herod's troops. Herod ordered his soldiers to seek out and murder all male infants born in Bethlehem in retaliation of the prophecy that a messiah would come and become the new King of Jerusalem.

Roscas can be made with dried and candied fruits to symbolize the jewels that adorn real crowns. Whoever receives the plastic doll in his or her slice of cake is expected to throw a party on Diá de la Candelaria (Candlemas Day), which occurs each year on February 2. Unlike in the United States, where gifts are typically exchanged on Christmas Day, much of the Latin community exchange gifts on the eve of January 6. Puerto Rican children have been known to gather grass or straw in shoeboxes for the kings' horses or camels. Some families display carvings and artwork of the three magi atop camels.

Many celebrants participate in Three Kings Day parades and festivals. Family gatherings and parties that would rival other special holidays are common as well. A special meal consisting of corn tamales and hot chocolate may be served, while others may enjoy black beans, picadillo and yucca.

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