

Culture File 37, Unit 37

Vacations

In North America, a **vacation** is time off work, and a **holiday** is a special national day, like Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, Independence Day or Labor Day. In British English both are called holidays. In the U.K., a day when all offices and factories are closed is a **bank holiday**.

The majority of Americans spend their vacation in the

U.S.A., but it is a very large country. Mexico, The Caribbean and Canada (which are also in North America) are the most popular destinations outside the U.S.A. However, a greater percentage of British people travel abroad for their vacations. Spain, France, Italy, Greece and the U.S.A. and Canada are the most popular destinations for British tourists.

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Air tickets

Open tickets cost you more. All **First** and **Business class** tickets are open, i.e. you can change your flight times.

Full-fare Coach / **Economy** tickets are usually open.

Cheaper tickets are usually **Restricted**, i.e. you can't change them. The best-known type is **APEX** (Advance Purchase Excursion).

Often you have to stay overnight – something most business travelers won't want to do! It's also cheaper if you stay over on a Saturday night for the same reason.

In the U.S.A., it's cheaper to travel at **off peak** times. Flights on Monday mornings and Friday afternoons are the most expensive.

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Paying over the phone

When you pay by credit card over the phone, they will ask for your name 'as printed' on the card. This must be exact. For example, Jack Smith could be:

Jack Smith / J. Smith / J.D. Smith / Jack D. Smith / J. Daniel Smith

And some people put a title in front (Mr.) and others don't.

On U.K. cards, some men put esq. (esquire) at the end instead of Mr. at the front. It means the same.

Expiration date is **expiry date** in British English. If you have to telephone your credit card company, they will want to check that you are the correct person. You may be asked for a password. This is often your mother's maiden name (her name before she was married) and your place of birth.

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Medical services

There is no national health plan in the U.S.A. so private medical insurance is essential for visitors. If you don't have insurance, you could be refused admission to a hospital (unless your problem is very serious).

You will have to pay even in a public hospital. Even with a simple illness, you may have more tests than in your own country because American doctors can have legal problems if they have not checked every possibility.

In the U.S.A., Canada, the U.K. and Australia, many medicines (e.g. antibiotics) must be prescribed by a doctor. You cannot simply buy them at a pharmacy.