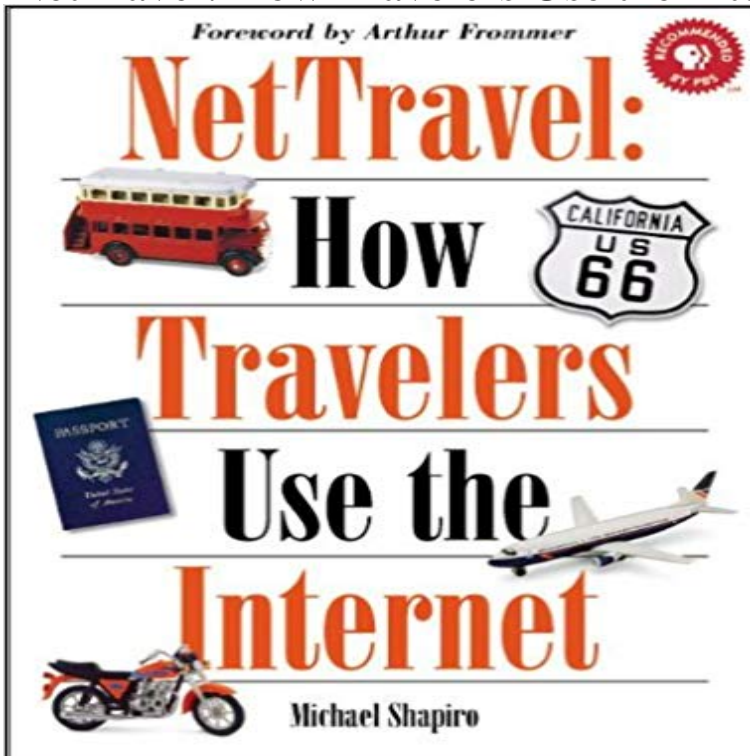


NetTravel: How Travelers Use the Internet (Songline Guides)



The Internet has thrown open travel resource channels that were previously accessible only to professional travel agents. Airlines, hotels, and tour companies are all moving onto the Web as a more direct way to connect with their customers. Author/Journalist Michael Shapiro explains how travelers using the Internet can save money by cutting out the travel services middlemen. The Net allows business and vacation travelers to get personally involved in their own travel. It gives them the freedom to learn more, choose wisely, and save money by searching for the best deals. NetTravel features: First-hand accounts of how people discover hard-to-find information, get good deals, discover exotic destinations and find information their travel agents might never have provided. (For example, one man tells how his motorcycle trip through Europe was planned and arranged using Internet newsgroups. Another traveler tells how he and his wife were able to prepare an entire itinerary for a two-week train trip through Italy using rail schedules on the Net. The book emphasizes how empowering and exciting it is to have direct access to the information and plan one's own trip. Travelers are no longer at the mercy of travel agents -- they can now put their trip planning into their own hands. NetTravel highlights some of the best travel Web sites on the Net and how to make most effective use of these sites. Most importantly, Shapiro tells how researching and planning your trip on the Net enriches the entire experience. Advance research about the destination teaches you things you never knew about the places you will visit, history of the area, art and cultural information and more. Knowing ahead of time about modes of transportation, schedules, cost etc. takes the pressure off and allows travelers to fully enjoy their travels. And the Net often leads to personal connections with other who have similar

interests, for example the American cyclist who, through Net newsgroups, met a British rider that he later connected with for bike trips through England. Who will this book appeal to. Simply everyone who's ever stood at a reservation counter and wished they could turn the screen around and see what the agent is seeing. All the tools necessary to arrange entire journeys are now available on the Internet. Airline reservations and ticket purchases, train schedules, hotel reservations, car rentals agencies... they are all there at the user's fingertips. Whether travelers need a flight schedule for the L.A.-N.Y. corridor, rail schedules for France, or rent-a-car information for Japan, the Net is the first place to look. This allows travelers to compare prices for tickets and services and to find obscure deals that travel agents would either miss or have not vested interest in offering. NetTravel Road Map Shapiro draws a virtual road map to travel resources on the Net and shows how travelers are already using them. He tells how to distinguish good travel bargains from travel scams, how to find last-minute deals on air fares, home-swaps worldwide, and how to mine Internet newsgroups for tips and advice from fellow travelers. NetTravel also discusses the travel resources found on gated online services such as America Online and CompuServe. While these proprietary networks don't offer the variety found on the IWeb, Shapiro explains that online services tend to be easier to use and better organized. For those new to the Net, these services are a good place to start. Shapiro says that using the Net to research and plan a trip enriches the journey. Besides commercial travel considerations; tickets, accommodations and car rentals, most destinations also are extensively featured on various Web sites. Chambers of commerce and tourist agencies post information about local attractions. Governments post lists of regional agencies, travel advisories, and other useful information. Universities and museums post local historical, archeological and

artistic information. Boning up on the areas to visited on the Net before leaving on a trip, Shapiro says, gives the traveler a deeper and richer appreciation of their destination when they arrive. Travel Agents While many travel agents see the Internet as the enemy, a growing number of enlightened agents are embracing the Net and using it to supplement their services. By setting up their own homepages on the Net, agents are able to feature travel specials. Some are installing Internet terminals in their offices allowing their customers to surf travel opportunities and then help them make final travel arrangements when they find what they want. And by using email travel agents are finding it easier to stay in touch with their regular customers regardless where they may be in the world. And lastly, Shapiro explains how veteran travelers use the Net while on the road. Business travelers use the Net to stay in touch via email and Intranets with the home office. Vacationers and trekers can connect via laptop to the Net to research a trip in progress or make changes in their itinerary. NetTravel is the first book to offer more than hype, platitudes and out-dated travel site links. NetTravel is a virtual toolbox of online travel advice readers can put into action the day they begin reading. Readers can follow in the tracks of those who tell their stories in the book, or use the advice to blaze their own trail.

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