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# For the frugal, the hungry, the men

The Boston Globe



Public transport can be your first savings in a city like Atlanta.

By Richard P. Carpenter  
Globe Correspondent / May 18, 2008

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There I was at Hartsfield-Jackson Airport, pondering how best to get to my downtown Atlanta hotel. I could take a cab for \$32, a shuttle for \$16.50, or the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority for \$2.

No contest. I rode a clean, safe MARTA train to within two blocks of my hotel and, since I had only a carry-on bag, easily walked the rest of the way. I had saved enough for a down payment on an extravagant meal, complete with mint julep, at Pittypat's Porch.

Atlanta isn't alone in offering economical public transportation, via subway or light rail, from its airport. "I always take the El from O'Hare," a Chicagoan told me. "Not only is it cheaper, it's a lot faster during rush hour." Public transit may not be for those weighted down with luggage, but it is available at several city airports from Boston to Philadelphia to Minneapolis/St. Paul to San Francisco.

Go to the website of the airport or public transit system to find out if such travel is available, and where at the airport the transit station is. (Atlanta, [marta.com](http://marta.com) and [atlanta-airport.com](http://atlanta-airport.com); Chicago, [transitchicago.com](http://transitchicago.com) and [ohare.com](http://ohare.com); Boston, [massport.com/logan](http://massport.com/logan) and [mbta.com](http://mbta.com); Philadelphia, [septa.com](http://septa.com) and [phl.org](http://phl.org); Minneapolis/St. Paul, [metrotransit.org/rail](http://metrotransit.org/rail) and [mairport.com](http://mairport.com).)

## Pack a snack

Never travel without a sandwich or snack in your carry-on. After my 10:50 a.m. American Airlines flight sat on the runway for more than two hours, I figured I

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could stave off hunger by buying a sandwich on the plane. But everyone was ravenous by then and anything resembling food sold out before the flight attendants reached my row. There was no time to eat at the airport, either, as I scurried to make my connecting flight. I was finally able to buy food on my second flight, but it had been 11 hours between bites.

### Michigan by train

The Mystic Valley Railway Society wants to take you from Massachusetts to Michigan Oct. 18-26 aboard Amtrak's Lake Shore Limited, with several Bay State boarding locations and a choice of accommodations. Participants will tour Michigan from shore to shore, along the way visiting Henry Ford's Greenfield Village, the Christmas town of Frankenmuth, the capital, Lansing, and the city of Holland. The starting cost of \$1,300 per person includes coach class, lodging, many meals, touring, and transfers.

Visit [mysticvalleyrs.org](http://mysticvalleyrs.org) and click on Trips or call 617-361-4445.

### Bites in Britain

You thrifty travelers will want to sample [Toptable.co.uk](http://Toptable.co.uk), which focuses on deals and discounts from thousands of restaurants. The booking website offers up to half off on meals at some of London's top spots, including Gilgamesh and the Terrace Restaurant at Le Meridien Hotel. Meanwhile, [VisitBritain.com](http://VisitBritain.com) advises that you watch for lunch and pre-theater specials. The Michelin-starred restaurant Arbutus, for example, has a three-course pre-theater menu for about \$34 US.

### For men only

There are many offers for women traveling together, but every so often one for the guys appears. The Mancation from Northern Outdoors features weekends in the wilderness of western Maine. All-inclusive packages include two nights' lodging, meals, and a full day of whitewater rafting on the Dead River. Prices start at \$300 a person for a group of four.

Visit [northernoutdoors.com](http://northernoutdoors.com) and click on Vacation Packages or call 800-765-7238.

### Valleys of the deals

Many properties are offering lodging packages for Rally in the Valley, the mountain motorcycle adventure in New Hampshire's Mount Washington Valley June 14-22. Packages start under \$50 per person per night. Many include extras like Jacuzzi suites, breakfast and dinner, and gifts. Wristbands offering discounts throughout the valley will be available through lodging packages.

For a list of offers, visit [mtwashingtonvalley.org](http://mtwashingtonvalley.org) and click on the Rally in the Valley logo. The home page has links to other deals and packages as well.

Also in New Hampshire, Waterville Valley Resort's 10th Annual Chili Challenge takes place May 25 at noon in Town Square as restaurants compete for the honors. A Summer Unlimited Package features two nights' lodging, tickets to the chili challenge, \$50 in "Town Square bucks," and a variety of Summer Unlimited activities. Prices start at \$43 per person per night, quad occupancy.

Go to [visitwatervillevalley.com](http://visitwatervillevalley.com), click on the Things to Do dropdown menu and select Summertime fun, or call 800-GOVALLEY (800-468-2553).



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When not included, hotel taxes, airport fees, and port charges can add significantly to the price of a trip. Most prices quoted are for double occupancy; solo travelers will usually pay more. Offers are subject to availability and there may be blackout dates. Richard P. Carpenter can be reached at [carpenter@globe.com](mailto:carpenter@globe.com). ■

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