

Remember those frozen winter days not so many years ago, when you couldn't take all the ice and snow any longer? You stuck that damned shovel into the nearest snowbank, revved up your '79 Chevvy and skidded down to the local travel agency. After leafing through the daily newspaper vacation ads and a dozen brochures, you decided to fly to some warm spot, paid the deposit, then skidded back home to pack. Then, maybe a week or two later, you'd be on your way to the airport to board that big TWA 707.



Since then, the Internet has taken over and greatly speeded up the travel scene. If you want to find a nice warm place to get away from winter as early as tomorrow in a super-fast jet, all you have to do is crank up the old Mac or Windows laptop. A few minutes of clicks, smart research on a dozen or so travel websites, some bargain hunting and soon you're on your way to where snow and ice are just bad memories.

Some of those websites are as familiar to travelers as the daily newspaper and travel brochures once were. In addition to quickie bargains, they have ever-changing offers, auctions, last-minute-deals, suggestions and all kinds of destination information. Many have become familiar household names.

You know when Captain Kirk says he has bargains at travelocity.com, you can bet your spacesuit on it. Among other major players are expedia.com and orbitz.com. However, as convenient as those online travel agencies are, when booking air, hotel, cruises or any other travel resource, also check directly with their own individual and chain websites.

Ready! Get set! Go for it!