

# LEISURE & TRAVEL

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Whether you're travelling for business, pleasure or a combination of both, you can't beat California for sun and fun. PHOTO: CATHY DONALDSON/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

## 'Bleisure' travel, California style

### United's Moncton-Newark flight makes journey a breeze

CATHY DONALDSON  
TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

Pinch me. Make that, pinch us. Not long off our flight to sunny Los Angeles from Moncton's never-ending winter, my husband, two daughters and I have ditched our shoes and are squishing our respective toes into the warm sands of California's Santa Monica Beach.

Ahh... Before day's end, our euphoric foursome has explored the city's famed pier, watched surfers catch some serious waves and devoured an awesome seafood feast.

Before week's end, we've ventured much further, driving north along the spectacular Pacific Coast Highway, past the mansion-lined shores of Malibu to stunning Monterey, eventually leaving our hearts in dazzling San Francisco.

By the last day, no one in our clan wants to leave 'The Golden State.' Ever. Amid the fun, my husband has squeezed in a work-related conference. In fact, we planned our trip around his for a little family bonding.

It's not the first time we combined my husband's busy business travel schedule with a family trek. In fact, it's one of our favourite ways to stay connected.

When my hubby had travels in San Diego last year, I joined him for some solo sun and fun while he attended meetings after which he took a few days off so we could enjoy the city together.

When he was in Paris a few years back, my daughters and I and my parents tagged along. We had no shortage



Pondering a great bleisure travel destination? Consider a spin along California's spectacular Pacific Coast Highway. PHOTO: CATHY DONALDSON/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

PLEASE SEE → BLEISURE, G3



From beachside pubs to sleek restaurants, California has a diverse range of dining options for the bleisure traveller. Here, a shrimp fettuccine dish tempts customers at the beautiful Chop House in Palm Springs.

PHOTO: CATHY DONALDSON/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT



Bleisure travel is a great way to connect with family while also making those business meetings more palatable. Here, Cathy Donaldson's husband Keith enjoys a work break with his daughters Sidney, left and Sarah in Santa Monica.

PHOTO: CATHY DONALDSON/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

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# 'Bleisure travel' easily doable from Metro

BLEISURE → G1

of things to do in the City of Light until hubby came up for air and joined us for a week's holiday.

With today's busy family schedules and the growing trend toward improving work-life balance, blending business and leisure travel just makes sense.

And apparently my family is not the only one fond of this aptly-named 'bleisure' travel.

While it's not a completely new phenomenon, bleisure trips have reportedly been on the rise in recent years. A 2011 survey by Embassy Suites showed that U.S. business travellers extended their stay by an average of three extra days to take in the sights and culture of the area, or just to relax. In many cases, those extra days involved partners or families accompanying the business traveller.

Of course, whether or not you bring anyone along, there's no question that one of the key reasons for combining business and leisure travel is cost savings, with airfare often being the biggest discount.

Maybe you've always wanted to check out San Francisco and suddenly have an opportunity to fly to the city on company business. Add a few days of personal time to explore the city and live your dream instead of paying for a future flight yourself.

Bleisure travel is particularly doable from our region with United Airline's Moncton-Newark flight, launched in May 2006. United flies to more than 150 destinations in North and South America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia giving bleisure travellers flying a plethora of trip options.

"Whether you're a leisure or business traveller, United's flight from Greater Moncton can connect you to the top business and leisure destinations in North America and around the world," says Julie Pondant, spokesperson for the Greater Moncton International Airport.

It certainly connected our family to some amazing locales on our family's recent jaunt to California. From comfortable flights to attentive service, United made good on its slogan 'Fly the friendly skies' as we voyaged from Moncton to Newark to L.A. and, following our adventure, home again via San Francisco.

Daily non-stop United flights to Newark from GMIA depart at approximately 6 a.m., with return flights departing



You never know who you might bump into on those bleisure travels. Here, Cathy Donaldson and husband Keith snuggle in on either side of actress Melina Kanaokaredes for a photo outside the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, San Francisco.

PHOTO: CATHY DONALDSON/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT



Many Californians apparently understand the importance of work-life balance, Bleisure trips can also help.

PHOTO: CATHY DONALDSON/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

Newark at about 8 p.m. (Eastern)

Considering a family 'bleisure' trip and looking for ways to keep the trip budget-friendly? Try some of these tips:

- If you or your partner have a credit card or airline loyalty program, consider redeeming points or rewards toward a family member's flight, rental car or accommodation costs.
- Check with hotels regarding seasonal discounts or packages for families. Some hotels provide children under the age of 12 with free meals or free access to a kids' club while the parent is working. Babysitting services are also often available.
- Investigate kid-friendly options at your hotel such as pools, play equipment and gaming systems. Don't forget to review what's near the hotel so you have quick and easy access to family fun when you get a break from business.
- Be reasonable. Don't expect to work

a full week with family in tow. Consider book-ending your week with family fun or divide the trip on a work/pleasure basis making sure everyone knows your schedule (especially your partner, who will likely be the one responsible for tending to the brood while you work.)

- Look for hotel properties with breakfast or parking included, or self-parking options, to make family stays more affordable.
- Keep business and personal expenses separate to avoid confusion back at the office.
- Are you an executive in search of a meeting destination that will allow staff to blend business and pleasure? Hotels and other venues are working hard to accommodate the mix as pleasure becomes more of a priority. Check for properties that offer a variety of family-oriented amenities on site as well as exciting attractions nearby.
- Need help planning a 'bleisure' trip to California? Check out VisitCalifornia.com, the state's official consumer website. Canadians can also receive travel planning info on California by calling 1 (877) 225-4367.
- Interested in learning about destinations possible via United Airline's Moncton-Newark flight? Visit United.com.

**Cathy Donaldson**

A travel writer and communications consultant living in Moncton, Cathy Donaldson will contribute more features on California family travel destinations in upcoming editions of the Times & Transcript.



Nothing says relaxation like a walk along the beach. Here, Sidney and Sarah Donaldson take a stroll near the Santa Monica Pier. PHOTO: CATHY DONALDSON



The Miramonte Resort & Spa in Indian Wells, part of Greater Palm Springs, is an excellent choice for conferences, meetings and other events, treating attendees to spectacular outdoor venues, not to mention amazing desert sunrises and sunsets. PHOTO: CATHY DONALDSON/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT



United's daily flight from Greater Moncton makes bleisure travel a breeze, connecting travellers to destinations around the world. PHOTO: CATHY DONALDSON/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

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