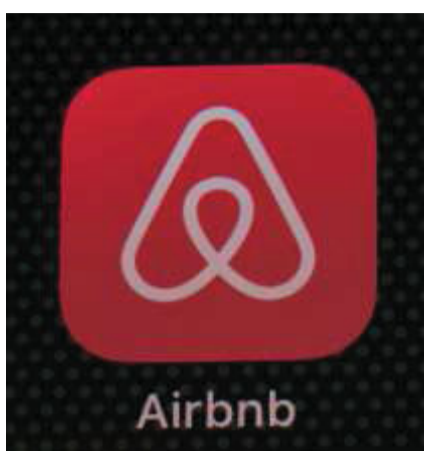


The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTER



PATRICK SEMANSKY/AP

The Airbnb app icon.

Airbnb host canceled, and now I have to pay \$1,300 more

By Christopher Elliott
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Q. I recently reserved a two-bedroom apartment in Washington, D.C., through Airbnb. My host canceled our reservation within 24 hours of my arrival. Airbnb sent me substitute listings, but all of them were much more expensive and smaller than the one we had booked. I quickly chose a one-bedroom apartment that cost \$1,300 more. Airbnb offered me a \$200 coupon for a future booking. That's it. They won't even talk to me.

I think Airbnb should cover the \$1,300 difference from the original booking. Our original booking was one block away from where we needed to be. Our new location is 1.1 miles away, which means we also have travel expenses that we wouldn't have had before. Can you help?

CURTIS RAHMAN,
St. Louis Park, Minn.

A. If a host cancels, Airbnb promises a full refund, according to its Rebooking and Refund Policy. And if a host cancels a month or less before your check-in, and you contact Airbnb, it promises to "assist" you with finding comparable or better accommodations.

But here's where things get a little fuzzy. Airbnb says that as part of providing rebooking assistance, it may — but is not obligated to — pay for or contribute to the cost of new accommodations. "We may also provide guests with the option of applying the value of a canceled reservation to new accommodations, or of receiving travel credit in lieu of getting a cash refund," as written in the policy.

In other words, it's up to Airbnb to decide how much of your new accommodations it will cover. Interestingly, it recently changed its rebooking policy to remove language that required hosts to cover the extra expense of rebooking. That leaves you in a gray area for getting your refund. When you rented the new place, I think you could have asked Airbnb to pay for it. If it agreed, you should have asked for that promise in writing.

Instead, it looks as if Airbnb believed you asked for your money back. "Unfortunately, your host needed to cancel the reservation due to unforeseen, extenuating circumstances," a representative wrote to you in an email. "In compliance with our terms of service, we provided you with a full refund plus a coupon for the value of \$200."

I think you may have gotten your wires crossed with Airbnb. The misunderstanding continued as you asked for a supervisor but just found yourself talking to another customer service representative. Worse, you didn't even see the \$200 coupon, and by the time you did, you had already booked a new apartment, and the coupon was a few weeks away from expiring.

In a situation like this, you can reach out to one of the Airbnb executive contacts that I list on my consumer website at www.elliott.org/company-contacts/airbnb-customer-service-contacts/.

I contacted Airbnb on your behalf. A representative contacted you a few hours later. Airbnb provided you with a full refund of the \$1,300 and another \$200 coupon that expires within a year.

Christopher Elliott is the chief advocacy officer of Elliott Advocacy, a nonprofit organization that helps consumers resolve their problems. Elliott's latest book is "How To Be The World's Smartest Traveler" (National Geographic). Contact him at elliott.org/help or chris@elliott.org.

THE VIP LOUNGE

John Jorgenson on his current tour, love of Italy, and 'quite long legs'

Grammy-winning musician John Jorgenson has performed with some of the biggest names in the business, from Elton John to Bonnie Raitt, but his true passion these days is bringing the unique "gypsy jazz" sound that he has mastered to the masses. His current tour, with the John Jorgenson Quintet, includes a stop at the Center for Arts in Natick on July 30. In a recent phone call from Seattle, where he was performing, Jorgenson, 66, explained how he became interested in this particular kind of jazz music upon learning about the "brilliant, innovative, and so technically advanced" Romani-French jazz guitarist and composer Jean "Django" Reinhardt. "Literally every style of guitar playing points back to him as raising the bar. This was the 1930s and in those days, jazz was played more on the trumpet, clarinet, saxophone, trombone. ... The guitar was not centered like a jazz instrument," Jorgenson explained. "Gypsy jazz is a very colorful style of music; very high energy. It's very melodic, very emotional, kind of romantic ... and I bring all kinds of different influences into it, like with the bouzouki, a Greek instrument." Jorgenson, who was born in Madison, Wis., and raised in Redlands, Calif., said that concertgoers can expect to see "some of the best musicians in the world in a very tight ensemble setting." The accomplished musician, who has two stepsons and two grandchildren, said that he has a special fondness for New England, where he has many friends and fans. "It will be special for me and I'm very excited to be back," he said. We caught up with Jorgenson, who lives in Ventura, Calif., and Nashville, Tenn., with his wife, Dixie Gamble, to talk about all things travel.



John Jorgenson in front of the Milan Cathedral when he was on tour with Elton John in spring 2019.

Favorite vacation destination? I do really love Italy. It's a country I feel very comfortable in. Of course, the food is amazing and even truck stop cappuccinos are incredibly good. Architecture and art are also a draw, but the warm hearts of

the people there is what keeps me returning to this fascinating country.

Favorite food or drink while vacationing? I love savory crepes — especially cheese with salt and pepper — from the street vendors in Paris.

Where would you like to travel to but haven't? So many spots are still on my list: Turkey, Morocco, Egypt, India. ... The music from these countries intrigues me and I'd love to be able to immerse in their cultures.

One item you can't leave home without when traveling? Comfortable shoes.

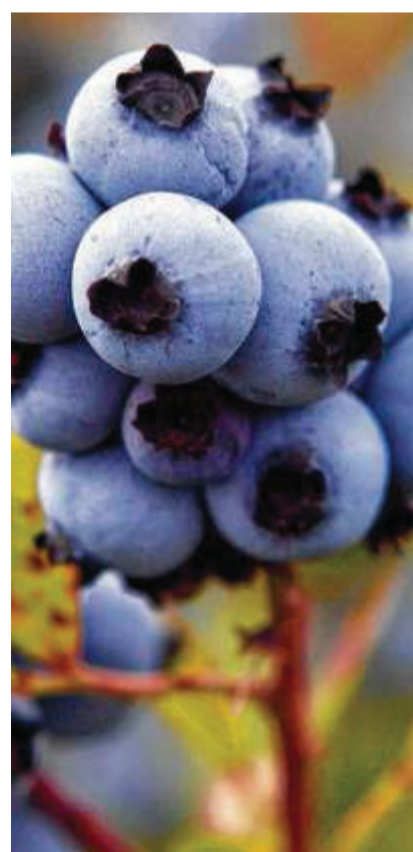
Aisle or window? Aisle nearly always, as I have quite long legs. Bulkhead aisle? Even better.

Favorite childhood travel memory? Climbing the 40-foot ladder at Mesa Verde National Park. As a young child it was exciting, but now I'd be terrified.

Guilty pleasure when traveling? Gossip magazines.

Best travel tip? Travel as lightly as possible, bring comfortable clothes that can be hand-washed if need be, and be as kind as possible to your fellow travelers and locals — it can really truly make the difference between a normal trip and an extraordinary one.

JULIET PENNINGTON



HERE

BERRY DELICIOUS WEEKEND IN MAINE

Nothing says summer quite like sweet wild blueberries. This summer, Maine is debuting its first Wild Blueberry Weekend (Aug. 6-7) to celebrate the lowbush fruit. More than a dozen farms will be open throughout the state, offering a variety of fun experiences such as learning how crops are grown and harvested; picking your own berries; tractor farm tours; sampling blueberry pies, jams, crisps, ice cream and other tasty treats; and more. In addition, more than 40 restaurants, wineries, and craft breweries are showcasing blueberry foods and beverages. Check the website for map of participants and detailed information on what each venue offers, such as phone numbers and addresses, web links, and hours of operation. www.wildblueberries.com/where-to-buy/wild-blueberry-weekend/

DOUBLE YOUR FUN AT TWO RIVER EVENTS

Two events, the first annual Riverfest Weekend and the 44th New England Paddleboard Championship, are happening on the Connecticut River between southern Vermont and New Hampshire (Aug. 6-7). Free activities at Riverfest include guided and independent opportunities to try canoes, kayaks, and stand-up paddleboards; fly-fish casting; trail rides; and nature walks to Wantastiquet's summit for panoramic views. The Connecticut River Conservancy and partners will offer informational and activity sessions on fly-tying as art; fish tales and paddling adventure stories; nature talks; art and more. On Sunday, cheer on the NEPC racers in canoes, kayaks, surf skis, and stand-up paddleboards



on the stretch of river between Hinsdale, N.H., and Brattleboro-to-Vernon, Vt. Not to be missed: the Riff Raff Regatta, where fanciful home-built crafts race to see who gets to the finish line without sinking. www.criver.org/news-events/nepc-riverfest/

THERE

HISTORIC LODGE MAKEOVER

Travelers heading to the Grand Canyon have a new option for in-park accommodations. After a \$35 million makeover by Xanterra Travel Collection, Maswik South Lodge is the first new lodging inside the park in over 50 years. Located a quarter-mile from the Grand Canyon National Park's South Rim, the 4.5-acre property features two types of accommodations, 90 standard rooms and 30 kitchenettes. Each room features modern furnishings, textiles inspired by Native American arts that reflect the colors of the Grand Canyon, and a private outdoor patio. The buildings have elevators and interior hallway entrances. Maswik South is in close proximity to Maswik Lodge, where guests can access the food court, Pizza Pub, transportation and activities desk, and the Village Loop (Blue) park shuttle line. Rates from \$229. 888-297-2757, www.grandcanyonlodges.com/lodging/maswik-lodge/

CHICANO ART FINDS FAB NEW HOME

Those visiting Los Angeles might want to make a pilgrimage to the newest worldwide home for Chicano Art. Located in Riverside, about 60 miles east of LA, the new Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art & Culture (aka The Cheech) is a unique, \$14.5 million public-private partnership between the renowned comedian and Chicano

art collector Cheech Marin, the Riverside Art Museum, and the City of Riverside. The 61,420-square-foot center (above) exhibits paintings, drawings, photographs, and sculptures — including hundreds of pieces Marin has collected and is gifting to RAM — by artists including Patssi Valdez, Sandy Rodriguez, Carlos Almaraz, Frank Romero, Judith Hernández, and Gilbert "Magú" Luján. The grand opening exhibition, "Collidoscope: de la Torre Brothers Retro-Perspective," features more than 70 mixed-media works, including blown-glass sculptures and installation art, and the artists' latest lenticulars, inspired by Mexican folk art, popular culture, religious imagery, consumer culture, and mythology. 951-684-7111; riverside-artmuseum.org

EVERYWHERE

LOCATION-BASED STORYTELLING APP

Ever wonder about the stories behind the landmarks and towns you pass in your travels? A new location-based storytelling app, Autio, offers an expansive audio library of 9,000+ short stories across the country with narrations by household names such as Kevin Costner, John Lithgow, Phil Jackson, and more. Simply download the app and sign up for an account. Once location access is enabled, geolocation technology automatically plays entertaining tales found in your surroundings. When not traveling, you can access the map and choose content based on your interests. One dollar from each Autio membership will be donated to the storytelling nonprofit The Moth to fund workshops, resources, and provide a stage for people to share their life experiences. Free accounts come with five stories; paid

accounts at \$36/year provide unlimited access. autio.com

WATERPROOF DUFFELS FOR RUGGED TRAVELS

Designed for expedition hunting but good for any outdoor adventures such as hiking, camping, and boating, the new line of Waypoint Duffels is built to withstand the harshest travel conditions. Utilizing an ultra-durable high-density TPU coated nylon ripstop fabric with waterproof welded bottom for maximum water resistance, and fully padded interior for added protection from the outside elements, the duffels offer a secure storage transport solution to ensure your equipment remains protected and dry. Other features include water-resistant zippers; grab handles on sides and ends; exterior end pocket; removable shoulder pack system; stretch-mesh internal pocketing; and more. Available in three sizes: Waypoint 2800 \$199; Waypoint 5500 \$239; and Waypoint 10400 \$299. www.kuiu.com/collections/travel-bags-duffels

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