

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTER

CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT

Seeking relief after runaround

Q. My wife and I recently booked two one-way tickets from Orlando to Paris and from Paris to Orlando through Expedia.

We had an issue on the way back to Orlando. We had a connecting flight in Manchester, England, for both trips. We attempted to print out our tickets for the first leg of our trip from Paris to Manchester on Flybe and check in for our flights the night before at our hotel, but kept getting an error on Expedia's website. So we decided to go to the airport four hours before our flight.

We arrived and tried to print out our tickets at the kiosk, but the slip of paper directed us to go to a Flybe ticket counter. We went to the Flybe counter, and a representative directed us to go to the Air France counter. An Air France employee then instructed us to go back to Flybe.

Air France told us to call Condor Airlines, but Condor directed us to go back to Flybe. We were given the run-around for more than four hours. After all the finger-pointing, we had to buy additional tickets for \$437 from Paris to Manchester to connect to our Orlando flight.

Ultimately, we couldn't use our original tickets for Manchester to Paris. Expedia refused to issue those tickets, and Flybe even reported us as no-shows for the flight, even though we were there four hours early at its ticket counter. Expedia still refuses to refund us, even with us providing supporting documents. Can you help us with our Expedia refund?

JERARD JOSE, *Deland, Fla.*

A. Your tickets from Paris to Manchester should have worked just fine. No need to show up at the airport four hours before your flight, no need to watch Flybe, Air France, and Condor pass you around between gates only to force you to buy a new ticket. I'm sorry your return flight went sideways.

But now that you've survived your flight home, the least your online travel agency can do is fix this by issuing a prompt refund. So why isn't it?

Probably because this was a confusing itinerary. Your tickets appear to have been issued by Condor with a Flybe code-share operated by Air France. I know what you're thinking: "A code-what?" Well, airlines do that. One airline sells the tickets, but then allows another airline to operate the flight. However, according to Flybe, Air France is not a partner of Condor, which is why you were denied boarding in Paris.

I think you should have leaned on Expedia to fix this for you. After all, Expedia is your online travel agent, and it should know which airline is operating which flight. You can find phone numbers for executive contacts of Expedia on my consumer-advocacy site: www.elliott.org/company-contacts/expedia.

I contacted Expedia on your behalf. In response, Expedia refunded the tickets you had to buy in Paris. "We are truly sorry for the incredibly frustrating experience they had while attempting to use their tickets recently, and have added a voucher of \$100 to their Expedia account to use on future travel," a spokeswoman said.

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THE VIP LOUNGE | HANNAH CRUZ

'Hamilton' star says she's enjoying the trip

To call the role of Elizabeth "Eliza" Schuyler Hamilton — wife of American founding father Alexander Hamilton — in the Tony Award-winning musical "Hamilton" the role of a lifetime would be an understatement. Hannah Cruz, 26, was recently cast in the role for the national tour, making her debut in Boston, where the show is at the Opera House through Oct. 19. "It's exhausting, and still very new to me, but it is wonderful. I love playing Eliza," said Cruz. "And the Opera House is incredible." The Newtown, Conn., native, who lives in Brooklyn with her boyfriend, cinematographer Nicasio Zanetti, said the response from audiences has been "phenomenal." "And the people at the stage door are so complimentary and say things like they've been waiting for two years to see 'Hamilton,'" she added. We recently caught up with Cruz — who said that she has been enjoying exploring Boston during the show's monthlong run and has found a couple of small bookstores she likes — to

talk about all things travel.

Favorite vacation destination? Kona, Hawaii. I've only been once, but it was the most adventure-filled, wondrous vacation. So many firsts . . . surfing, swimming with wild dolphins, helicopter ride over the island, [and] my first visit to a coffee farm. It was incredible.

Favorite food or drink while vacationing? I always scope out a good burrito place and some third-wave coffee joints. I also love going to local breweries, [to] get . . . some IPAs and some sour beers.

Where would you like to travel to but haven't? I've never been to Europe. Part of me doesn't even believe it's real. Being in this business doesn't grant a lot of flexibility — or money — so it's never been an option for me. However, I am trying to finally plan something at the end of next year.

One item you can't leave home with-

out when traveling? A book. I am never without a book in my bag.

Aisle or window? Window. I love watching the globe below.

Favorite childhood travel memory? Disney World for sure. My sisters and I really had magical times there. We wouldn't want to waste any of the trip bickering, so we had a phrase we would say to each other when we started to get angry: "bibbidi bobbidi boo," which meant you had to take a breath and be happy again.

Guilty pleasure when traveling? I tend to drink a bit more when I'm in vacation mode.

Best travel tip? Put your phone away. Pictures are important, but so is the moment at hand. These [three pictures submitted for this story] are basically the only photos I have from that trip, and that makes them all the more special to me.

JULIET PENNINGTON



Hannah Cruz and her boyfriend, cinematographer Nicasio Zanetti, on vacation.

HANNAH CRUZ

HERE

BOSTON CELEBRATES WRITERS AND READERS

Bibliophiles won't want to miss the 10th annual Boston Book Festival's full day of free, all-ages activities taking place in and around Copley Square on Oct. 13. The roster of participating authors represents a range of genres including history, fiction, public affairs, and children's literature. Two ticketed events include a Friday evening lecture with food activist Michael Pollan; and Saturday afternoon session with Pulitzer Prize-winning author Doris Kearns Goodwin and former senator and secretary of state John Kerry (\$10). New this year: BBF is expanding its free events to neighborhood festivals in East Boston and Roxbury that will celebrate local authors alongside well-known writers from around the country. Additional festival highlights include teen writing programs, theatrical performances, hands-on kids' activities, music, special visits by favorite children's book characters, and more. bostonbookfest.org

FALL FESTIVITIES IN OGUNQUIT

The 15th annual OgunquitFest makes its spooky arrival this year at the height of New England's foliage season (Oct. 19-21). Events include a costume parade — including festooned canines as part of Dogtoberfest — pumpkin decorating, a whoopee pie eating contest, an antique and classic car show, an autumn bazaar with 75-plus vendors, the High Heel Dash, and more chamber. ogunquit.org/events/details/ogunquitfest-15th-annual-3883. Going for the weekend? The Meadowmere Resort is offering an OgunquitFest Fall Festival package



that includes breakfast, WiFi, parking, and resort amenity access. Booking code: VALUE. Rates from \$189. 800-633-8718, www.meadowmere.com/specials/ogunquitfest-fall-festival

TREK TRAVEL DEBUTS

THERE

FAR-FLUNG CYCLING TOURS

Globetrotting cyclists will want to check out the 20 new destinations offered in Trek Travel's 2019 roster. This active vacation tour operator, specializing in bicycling vacations, is expanding its global reach to faraway places like Colombia, Norway, and Japan. The new offerings aim to combine access to undiscovered routes with intimate cultural experiences. Additional new trips include sojourns in Normandy, France; Sicily, Italy; the Canadian Rockies; Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands; Girona, Spain; Norway Fjordlands; Vermont; a coast-to-coast ride across

the Southern United States; and more. Depending on locale, rider levels range from recreational to active to avid, with durations from 4 to 42 days. Rates from \$1,199, including Trek bikes. 866-464-8735, trektravel.com/trip-collection/new

WOMEN-ONLY EXPEDITION TO EXUMAS

Take a sail on the wild side with one of two hosted trips in December with Wild Women Expeditions. The six-



night Bahamas Sail the Exuma Islands departures each accommodate up to six guests. (Dec. 1-7, Nassau to Staniel Cay; and Dec. 8-14, Staniel Cay to Nassau.) Includes use of a 45-foot, fully equipped catamaran, mooring fees, fuel, water, and charter insurance; the services of a female captain and first mate/cook, who offer local knowledge of the islands; breakfasts, lunches, and welcome snacks on board as well as up to three on-island dinners; and use of double kayaks and stand-up paddleboards. Additional activities include snorkeling, swimming, hiking, and yoga on the beach. Per person double rate \$3,995; upgrade to a single private berth at \$495. 888-993-1222, wildwomenexpeditions.com/trips/sail-the-exuma-islands

EVERYWHERE

TRAVEL SIZE HUMIDIFIER

Dry in-flight air and heated hotel rooms can negatively affect the most seasoned travelers. The lightweight and portable Aquamist II Cool Mist Personal Travel Humidifier by Fancii helps alleviate symptoms of dry skin and nasal passages by adding moisture back in the air. Simply attach any standard-size water bottle to the small device and it transforms into a moisture-producing tank. The cordless feature,



powered by three AA batteries, fits easily in your carry-on or luggage, allowing you to take the device anywhere you go. It can also be plugged into a USB source, such as a laptop, power bank, or wall adapter with the included cable. Adjustable timer allows for two-, four-, six-, and eight-hour automatic shut-off, and added protection when water runs out. \$25.99. fancii.com/collections/accessories/products/fancii-cool-mist-personal-travel-humidifier

JAUNTY FLAG BOWTIES

Proclaim your allegiance to your favorite destination with bowtie.com flag ties. These brightly colored bowties are custom made in Kennebunk, Maine, by designer and owner Lisa Eaton. Available flags include America, The Netherlands, Canada, UK (Union Jack), France, Ireland, Italy, and the state flags of Maine and Texas. They can be ordered "freestyle" or "pre-tied," but are not available as clip-on. Can't decide between two destinations? For an additional \$25, you can choose a different flag on the flip side of your first choice, essentially creating two ties in one. Also, using maps, Eaton offers "CoordinateCoordinates," custom ties (and suspenders) that are designed as one-of-a-kind pieces that spotlight specific locations, such as your family's historic homestead or your destination wedding. \$59-\$129. www.bowtie.com/shop.

NECEE REGIS