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# EXPRESS CHECK-IN

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May 23, 2006 -- AFRAID of [vacationing](#)? That almost makes Tyra Banks' fear of dolphins seem half-way sane.

Yet, we New Yorkers seem to have some hang up or other about leaving town (and we're not talking terrorism jitters).

You have cats to feed, don't want to surrender any more lighters to airport security, or there's too much stored on your Tivo to catch up on as it is - at least, those are the excuses you gave us in an informal poll conducted over the past few weeks.

But what if it's more severe? A spin-off of agoraphobia, the fear of public places, travelphobia might be what ails you.

We spoke to Dr. Michael Brein - maybe the world's only "travel psychologist" (he got his Ph.D. from the University of Hawaii) - who told us that it's not uncommon to fear leaving home:

"You get a greater sense of self by venturing into new, unpredictable situations. But for some, exploration of self can be something to dread - they'd rather stay

**US, SCARED?:** New Yorkers don't like to leave home.  
Photo: Getty

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safely at home, no surprises."

But this kind of homebodiness, even in [New York](#), can come at the cost of mental hygiene.

"When life is routine, it gets boring. This can lead to depression," he warns.

Dr. Brein, who's currently compiling upward of 1,500 individual travel accounts for an upcoming book, pushes the positives of travel:

- (1) It's about achieving goals, like finding food and shelter in a strange land, or picking up a new language.
- (2) Travel offers those so-called "peak" experiences - even if the slide-show recall bores others to tears.
- (3) Travel places your life back home in a more meaningful cultural, even spiritual context.
- (4) Travel provides for a healthy soul: adventure, romance and adrenaline.

**{extra credit sweepstakes}**

Get a chance to win **\$20,000** for college.  
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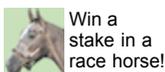
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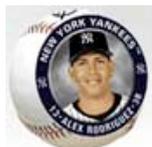
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**THETHREE AMIGOS**

LIKE high school, the travel biz has its freaks and geeks on one hand, and popular kids on the other.

Right now, proudly situated at the jocks' and cheerleaders' table, sit [W Hotels](#), and the youthful bliss spa. Last year, they formed their own cool clique. Why? Well, for one, they're a lot alike: They act fun, young, and other companies want to be like them. (And, dare we say, neither are terribly affordable, considering who they're aiming at).

Now, a new member has been admitted - JetBlue.

There was a big do to celebrate at the W Los Angeles (which is in Westwood, but somehow remains super-hot) the other weekend, where the newest bliss spa opened.

It's 7,000 square feet of bright white, and looks great compared to their older Manhattan spas.

So what is JetBlue bringing to the party? Passengers traveling to cities with a W hotel can book a special package, including an in-flight meal prepared by the hotel. Also, passengers on red-eye flights (re-dubbed "shut-eye" by the airline) get a bliss survival kit, including eye mask, ear plugs and lip balm.

Cute, but it still doesn't beat a Ambien with a \$5 Jack and coke chaser. (Ask your doctor if it's right for you!) compiled by staff

**STEAL THIS DEAL!**

\$499/pp roundtrip to London with four nights at the Eden Plaza Hotel. Book by June 15, travel between Sept. 1 and Oct. 31, taxes and fees are extra (gotoday.com).

**STAR TREK**

Any fond memories from the road?

Jeremy Piven: My best vacation was this little island between Panama and Colombia, south of San Blas. It's not even on the map.

Laurie Heifetz

**OUT IN THE FIELD**

The coolest place we visited last week

We didn't expect to spend a recent evening on Nantucket Island hunkered over tapas in a Mediterranean-style café. But we hadn't yet heard about Cinco, where we ended up devouring Wellfleet oysters with Serrano chiles; house-cured salmon and Pernod-spiked seafood soup with lobster and clams. Bartender Chris makes a mean mojito -tell him we sent you (5 Amelia Drive, Nantucket).

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