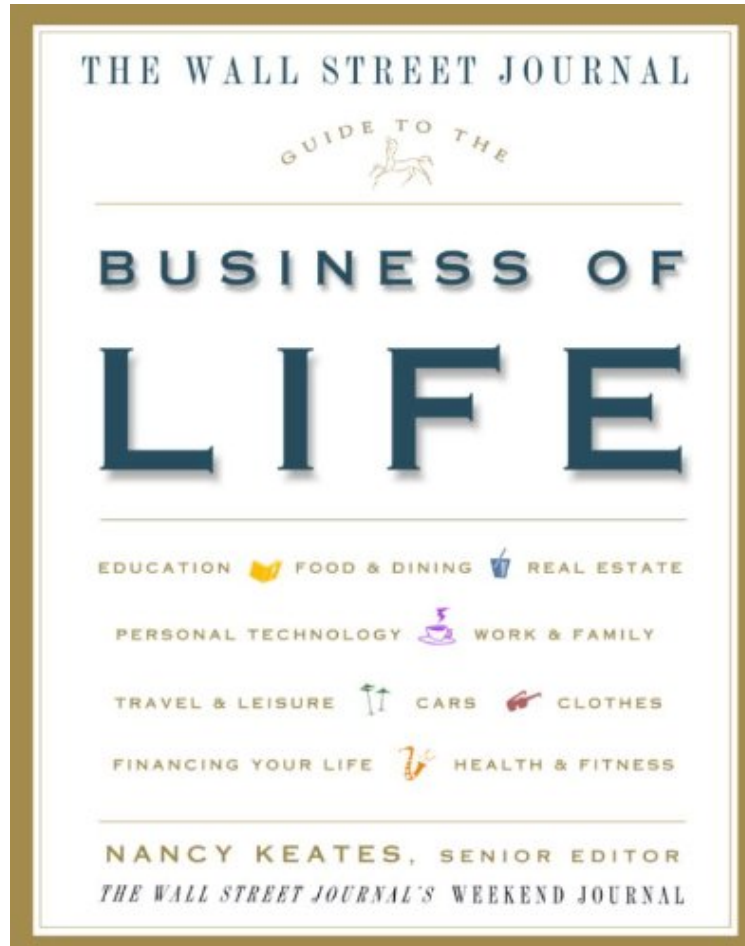


The Wall Street Journal Guide to the Business of Life

Nancy Keates

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Nancy Keates : The Wall Street Journal Guide to the Business of Life before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Wall Street Journal Guide to the Business of Life:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Bookshelf Worthy; Good Chapter on Car BuyingBy J. M.

GormanThis book is difficult to read cover to cover, because all of its lessons cannot simultaneously apply to you at any given point in time.With that being said, I didn't read this book cover to cover, and yet I keep it on my bookshelf, expecting that I'll need to return to a particular lesson later in life.Of Note:- I found the 'Car Buying' chapter to be especially helpful. There are a lot of car resources on the web, and it's nice to know where to turn.- I found the 'Airline' chapter to be boring and not especially helpful. Perhaps I felt that way because most of the tips were old news to me.20 of 27 people found the following review helpful. Life's Angles Taught HereBy JRT S.A great guide on getting the most out of life's everyday transactions. You really get a leg up on everyone else by getting the inside scoop on products and services.Certainly this book can be read straight through, but it's really more of a reference book that you can refer to on a regular basis.16 of 29 people found the following review helpful. The Business of LifeBy S.

Trigg This is a very comprehensive book about many subjects dealing with daily living. It is very well written and easy to comprehend. I thought the section on Travel was particularly helpful. A great reference book to be read again and again.

Almost Everything You Need to Know About Leading the Good Life Too many decisions. Too many choices. What today's smart consumer must have is a money-and-time-saving guide for conducting the business of life—both the big challenges, such as getting top-notch health care for the family and the best education for the kids, and the pleasurable ones, like plotting the family summer vacation. Nancy Keates and her expert colleagues at The Wall Street Journal provide all-new material that gives the lowdown on: The Savvy Traveler: How to cut to the chase and not only avoid the indignity of cramped plane seats and overpriced tickets, but also get the best and safest seats at the same time. The Fine Art of Dining and Drinking: Landing the hottest table in town—at a discount; picking wine without becoming a wine snob; and learning about “barley matters”—the newest, hottest beers. How to Speak Geek: Demystifying tech trends, with smart advice on not only what high-tech gadgets to buy but how to shop for them. Everything You Need to Know About Buying, Selling and Financing a Car: How to get the best and safest vehicle at the best price. Real Estate: Will the bubble burst? Heres' how to be an informed buyer and seller along with the basics of remodeling and designing your home. How to Be an Informed Patient: Choosing a hospital, playing private investigator with your M.D., and learning about the tests you really ought to have (even if you have to pay for them yourself). Getting Real Bang for Your Education Bucks: What you need to know from preschool through college and graduate school. The Great Balancing Act: Managing work and family, and finding out how to avoid the overstretched child and parent syndromes. Financing Your Life: It was easy in the 1990s, but the world has changed dramatically. Heres' how to deal with the new world of saving, investing and borrowing money. Shopping: The New Sex? Throw away your Kama Sutra. The number one thrill in shopping is getting a good deal—heres' how to play the game and get the best stuff at the best price. The Wall Street Journal Guide to the Business of Life is both an instruction manual for living life to the fullest and a fun read about what really matters in the day-to-day. It has all the basic insight and information you need to navigate through life along with hilarious side trips such as “The Three-Decorator Experience” and “Cruises: Sailing New Waters.” From the Hardcover edition.

About the Author Nancy Keates has been a reporter and editor for The Wall Street Journal's Weekend Journal since 1996, covering travel, art, home trends, technology, health, restaurants, shopping, education, and family issues. Before joining The Journal, Nancy was Johannesburg correspondent and bureau chief for AP—Dow Jones, the international arm of the Dow Jones newswires, for three years. She then moved to Washington, D.C., and subsequently covered international trade and finance. She and her husband, David Siker, a physician, live in Portland, Oregon, with their two sons, Vaughan and Teddy. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. CHAPTER ONE: GETTING THERE Secrets of the savvy traveler To travel well you must travel smart. To travel smart you must travel informed. And being informed isn't just being up on sources and methods, though we have plenty of advice for you in that regard in the pages that follow. It's also understanding that when it comes to airfares, time is money. Some people, though, never get it. The Art of the Fare Chase You know the type: Those compulsive deal-finders whose self-esteem depends on getting an absolute rock-bottom price and crowing about it, never mind that they wasted all day Saturday, missing the kids' soccer game, to save \$11.25 on a round-trip to Cleveland. In our opinion, a key factor in booking air travel is knowing when to stop the search. For the search can often be a frustrating and complex endeavor that's akin to shopping in the dark—imagine groping about blindly in Wal-Mart without being able to see the merchandise (and all the while the prices are shifting). Airlines, you see, price tickets not on what it costs to provide the service, but rather on how much money the carrier thinks it can get at any given moment. That means a ticket for the same flight can cost \$200 or \$2,000, depending on when you inquire. So, yes, some endeavor can lead to big savings. But too much can be a huge waste of time. So how do you strike a reasonable balance? Knowing a few basic rules about airfares is a must. 1. Watch carefully for airline announcements of new routes or flights. New service often means—initially, at least—empty seats. To fill those planes, airlines often offer fares at garage-sale prices. 2. Keep an eye out for fare wars, which happen all the time. When one airline announces price cuts, wait a few days to see if the other carriers are matching it (they often do). Then find out from the airlines what time of day they load their computers with new fares. This is easier to do than you think: Airlines routinely list all this information on their websites. (And we run new service announcements in the Wall Street Journal.) Beyond that, several travel websites offer fare alerts—they keep track of airlines' fare sales, and will send you free e-mails to keep you up to date. Travelocity's Fare Watcher (Travelocity.com) will e-mail you if a specific itinerary you requested goes on sale; you can enter a number of cities and choose to be e-mailed either when a price falls by \$25 or if it falls below a threshold you specify. Orbitz (Orbitz.com) will show when the lowest prices are available and has a “Deal Detector” that lets you register a price you want, then alerts you if it shows up. Smarterliving.com offers weekly newsletters with various deal alerts—fare sales from major carriers as

well as last-minute weekend deals from your hometown. Last-minute deals are sent to you on the Wednesday before the weekend that's on sale (Monday for international flights). The newsletters also offer travel tips and news, and Smarterliving.com's site has links to the airlines so you can buy directly from them. A few other tips:

3. Connections are usually cheaper than nonstop flights. You may not like the hassle of a longer trip or the risk of missing a connection, but a few hours of extra travel may be worth saving enough to afford, say, a bottle of really nice champagne when you arrive.
4. Don't be a snob and rule out package deals. Yes, we know that "package travel" often conjures up images of noisy vacationers in baggy Bermuda shorts waiting in endless queues. But one of the industry's best-kept secrets is that packages increasingly are a tool for snagging airfare bargains, not only for last-minute romps but also for business travelers, routine trips and even family emergencies. The idea is essentially to buy the package for its parts, since the airfare is often a bargain—and there isn't a penalty if you ditch the hotel. For most domestic travel, a trip with a Saturday-night or at least a three-night stay will get the best deals. The opposite is true for leisure destinations like Las Vegas or the Caribbean, where midweek travel is the best bet for a cheap package. And bear in mind:
5. Timing is everything. It helps to know when the peak travel times are for where you want to go, since booking the last or first day of the new season can save hundreds of dollars without changing your schedule too drastically. For example, tickets are usually more expensive to the Western United States from June through August and January through March, while on the New York–Boston route it is June through September and the month of December. Peak to European cities is May through September, but the Riviera and Greece are less expensive in September. Also find out what your airline's peak travel times are; in general the most expensive times to fly are between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. There's an old trick frequent fliers use: If they want a peak-hour flight but don't want to pay the peak rate, they make a reservation on a cheaper flight right after it—and then show up at the airport early. Assuming there's room, most ticket agents will let you on the earlier flight without changing the fare. But call first and ask for the airline's policy. A little-noticed rule change is making it easier for travelers to get cheaper tickets on some international flights. Under the new procedures, it is possible for travelers to benefit from the fact that some tickets cost substantially less when bought overseas. Previously, airlines had a system that kept many of these lower prices off-limits for travelers trying to book overseas flights—you had to physically go to, say, Thailand to get cheaper Thai price. But on January 15, an airline trade group discarded that system, putting the new ticketing guidelines into effect. For example, the lowest price on American Airlines for a Dallas-Istanbul business-class round-trip via Zurich used to be \$6,946, not including taxes. Now, however, a traveler can book the same trip as two one-way tickets (instead of one round-trip), and pay \$6,047, undercutting the listed round-trip price by about \$900. That wasn't possible before, because travelers buying outside Istanbul would have been charged the higher Zurich-Dallas fare by default. However, it still can be tricky to take full advantage of the changes. For starters, some travel agents don't know about them yet. In addition, some of the airlines' own Internet sites won't yet process bookings for points of origin that don't match the credit-card address. As a result, calling an airline's 800 number and talking to a human to make a booking may be the best bet. For travelers flying out of the United States, the best deals come on itineraries that include a connection at an airport abroad. That's partly because previously, itineraries that made connections through large hub airports in high-priced markets (say, London), automatically took on the higher fare prices associated with that market—even if the flight was continuing on to a low-fare market such as India. Now, that is no longer the case. (One exception: The higher fares still automatically kick in on flights with a layover of 24 hours or more.) Travelers can benefit by pricing a trip as two one-way tickets because for the first time, they will have access to the cheaper price formerly intended for sale in the low-fare market. Also, keep in mind two other money-saving tips:

1. Flying to an international destination from a hub airport is likely to be more expensive than flying out of a non-hub city.
2. Foreign partners in airline code-share agreements usually have cheaper tickets for the same flight. Now you can start the buying process. Here's what to do: Armed with an Official Airline Guide (OAG), which lists all the flights to every airport in the world, start online by downloading sidestep.com. The service will appear on the left half of your screen and will sift through airline websites and lots of other travel vendors you wouldn't normally search that aren't in the big centralized reservation systems. Then check the Big Three ticket-buying websites—Expedia.com, Travelocity.com and Orbitz.com. Route by route, these can be quite different because they have different pricing negotiated with different carriers. All offer packages of airfare and hotel bookings that can yield savings. And they'll search alternative airports near your destination—a key money-saver. Don't spend more than half an hour trying to find a bargain this way and—unless you really do have all the time in the world, we recommend skipping all the other, smaller sites. Our long experience shows that the return for this extra effort is usually quite slim. On the other hand, beware of hype on the big sites. For example, Travelocity's "Good Buys" simply aren't always the best deal. Orbitz may have good fares but it doesn't negotiate proprietary deals with airlines—meaning other sites may well have deals Orbitz doesn't. That's why the next stop is the airlines' own sites, where they often sell fares that aren't widely available and list last-minute deals. Booking through the sites can also net incentives, like bonus frequent-flier miles, and lets you avoid fees charged by the Big Three. Don't just look at the big carriers—every airline has its

own site and the less-known ones don't show up elsewhere.² Finally, go on Hotwire (www.hotwire.com) and bid 10 or 20 percent lower to see what you get—if you don't like it, you have an hour to cancel the results. Bonus Tip: Keep Looking After Buying Just because you alre...