

15 reasons
**TO HIRE A
PROFESSIONAL
TRAVEL
ADVISOR**



www.soulfulodyssey.com

the BENEFITS



You already hire experts to get a better result

We are all quick to call an expert when we are in a jam or out of our skillset; mechanic, accountant, attorney, dentist, or plumber.

From cutting our hair to preparing our taxes, there are just some tasks that are better left for the pros. Travel is one of the biggest three purchases you'll make in your life after a home and car (or college tuition if that's in the cards for you).

You use experts to save yourself time and stress, but most importantly, to get a better outcome. In this case, a better vacation.

Travel is complex

Of course, booking a cruise online yourself is easy... or is it?

You need a stateroom from category 1D, 2D, 5D, or 7D.

Wait... maybe a 1E or a 2F.

There are dozens of stateroom categories on the one ship and every cruise line has different categories too.

Now you can see why 75% of cruisers hand the job over to a professional travel advisor. They still get amazing value and they also benefit from our in-depth cruise knowledge, ship savvy tricks, and tools, and of course, we are able to offer great perks, amenities and at times, upgrade opportunities.

There are too many options on the internet

- There are 370 cruise ships to choose from.
- In 2026, 74 new ships are on order.
- There are over 2200 ports of call around the world to cruise to of which almost 600 are by river only and the other 1600 by ocean cruising.

That is a LOT of options.

There is quite literally a ship and an itinerary for every style of traveler BUT not every ship or itinerary is for everyone.

We are experts at matchmaking travelers to the perfect ship and itinerary.

Navigating the fine print

Every element of your vacation including but not limited to your accommodation, flights, tours, cruise, and travel insurance, all have "fine print" also known as terms & conditions. This isn't new news at all.

But what is new is the number of changes that each travel company is currently making to their services. Changes come out of nowhere and are often effective immediately.

Navigating all of the date changes, and schedule change fees and rules can be a nightmare.

The good news is... we're really good at it. You can trust that we have checked the fine print - and understood it before we lock in your travel bookings. If you want flexible travel arrangements - we'll make sure to book it that way.



Choosing a destination for your vacation is different now.

Travelers around the world consider different factors than Covid-19 pre-pandemic. Now people think more about flexibility, crowd levels, and how easy it is to change plans if needed. Flexibility matters more. Travelers care a lot more about travel insurance, cancellation policies, and refundable or changeable bookings.

Destination choice is now also about peace of mind. Choices now include places that are easy to reach, less stressful to navigate, and stable in terms of entry rules and local restrictions.

You also need to know the entry requirements for your destination.

- Will you need a visa?
- Does your passport have enough validity to satisfy the country's and the airline's rules?
- Will you need an Electronic Travel Authorization?
- Is any special health paperwork required?

These are all super important questions to consider. And the most challenging part? The rules are shifting goalposts. They change often.

There are a lot of moving parts

The average 7 day vacation to Europe or the Caribbean has up to 15 separate bookings in it.

- Accommodation (maybe 1-3 properties)
- Flights (perhaps a few booked separately with different airlines (for better value and logistics)
- Airport transfers to and from your home, accommodation, and the airport (between 2 and 6 of these)
- Travel insurance to match exactly what you booked
- A few day trips or excursions with the same or different tour companies
- Museum, gallery, or social attraction tickets to avoid waiting in line
- Car rental

Did you know that each of these separate bookings (usually through different companies) comes with its own rules and fine print? They can be incredibly complex to stitch together into one itinerary. Just take a flight layover for example. Did you know that different airports around the world have “legal connection times”, a minimum amount of time required to connect two flights together?

Why on earth would you put yourself through the stress of researching and planning all of these bookings when you can rely on a professional travel advisor (like me) to do it for you for one low planning fee?



We are connected to the right people

One of my favorite things about working in the travel industry is the relationships and friendships that we form.

It's not uncommon for travel advisors to go to several conferences and training events each year and meet with the CEOs and Presidents of the biggest travel companies in the world. We have email addresses, phone numbers, and most importantly open lines of communication with decision-makers and problem solvers at many cruise lines, resorts, hotel chains, and airlines.

We won't hesitate to call them if we need them whether it be planning your vacation - or troubleshooting while you are away. Know that we put in that call for you.

What you see online is not always what you get

Have you ever arrived at a hotel to find that your room is nothing like what you thought you had booked? It happens more often than you know.

And it's so disappointing.

When you check into a hotel you have expectations about the room design, space, cleanliness, and of course the room amenities. You also probably have specific ideas about what breakfast, parking, the gym, room service, or lobby cafe will be like.

We are experts at navigating the complexities of booking hotel rooms and knowing what to look for in the clever marketing speak that hotels throw out there like "partial sea view". Nobody loves a partial sea view standing on the toilet and covering your left eye to catch a "glimpse".

Not only will we make sure you don't end up at the wrong hotel, in the wrong room, or in the middle of constructions or closures, but we also have access (that you can't get) to upgrades, perks, and amenities.

We know about new and rare experiences

That feeling of wanting to go on vacation, of needing a vacation. You know it right?
When you're so fed up with the monotony of day-to-day life that you just need a break?

The first decision you need to make is when to go and then the second decision is where to go.

Let me ask you a question though... have you considered letting a professional travel advisor give you a shortlist of destination ideas? Perhaps somewhere that you've heard of but never been to or maybe a totally new destination full of new experiences.

As professional travel advisors, we hear about new destinations and experiences before they go to market - that new overwater bungalow hotel in the Caribbean? The new all-suite hotel with Eiffel Tower views and private balconies? Or maybe that new state-of-the-art river cruise ship in Egypt sailing on the Nile River.



Do you ever feel like you need a vacation to recover from planning your vacation?

Are you the person who always ends up organizing everyone, researching everything, collecting everyone's payments, and making sure everything is booked?

It is stressful and time-consuming to book travel.

More than likely you end up with dozens of browser tabs open looking at options you've already looked at thousand times over.

You don't need to do that anymore. I'm sure there are other things you'd rather do with your time.

Emergencies happen

Sometimes life will throw you a curveball when you're on vacation - it could be a family emergency back home, a border closing, civil unrest, an airline strike or Mother Nature getting sassy.

In fact, all of these things have happened in the past few years. And when something happens on vacation, you want to know that someone has your back.

When you allow a professional travel professional (like me) to manage your travel, I can support you and advocate for you no matter where in the world you are. I can jump on the phone to airlines, tour operators, and tourism boards. I can change your plans or make new plans.

I can get you home or move you somewhere else. And I'm only ever one click away from - my messenger, email, or phone.

When you book travel on your own or through an online travel website, you don't get that. You are left on your own to troubleshoot everything - often in a foreign country, language and currency.

Don't let that happen to you.

You'll end up down a rabbit hole

Have you ever tried to find a really quick answer to a really simple question? And it turned out that hours later you had no clarity and no answer, despite having 45 tabs open on your computer?

That happens all the time to most people who plan their own travel. Now that anyone can post anything to the internet it's hard to distinguish fact from opinion.

Just because you read something on a travel chat forum or social media thread, doesn't make it accurate. If it even was accurate, it may have changed since it was written.

One of the many benefits of using a professional travel advisor like me is that we often have direct contact with travel industry partners like cruise lines, hotels, resorts, and tour operators. When there is big news, they often let us know first.



Avoid scams

Over the past year you may have seen on the news, a continuous stream of reports where hard-working people just like you have been scammed out of thousands of dollars.

Scammers pretending to be travel companies are rife. Their websites look and sound real and they often have great deals and discounts, or availability when everything else seems fully booked.

While they fool many people, they don't fool a professional travel advisor like me. I know exactly how to spot them and avoid the scam. I am directly connected to the actual suppliers - no shady websites or robocall centers.

When you use a professional travel advisor like me, you can have 100% trust and peace that you won't be scammed. You won't lose your money and you won't be taken advantage of.

Stick within your comfortable spending limit

Recently a friend of mine told me that she thought you had to be rich or spend tens of thousands of dollars on a vacation in order to use a professional travel advisor.

Myth: A professional travel advisor will always try to upsell you and make you spend more than you have or want to so that they earn a commission.

Truth: FALSE. Big fat lie. Big fact misunderstanding. Here's how it works...

1. Qualified and certified professionals like myself often charge a one-off planning fee (just like if you went to see an attorney or tax specialist). For that one fee, we do all of the planning, research, verifications, and bookings. We then put together all of the individual elements into one set of easy-to-follow travel documents.
2. We ALWAYS work inside your budget. If your budget is \$1,000 or \$10,000, all you have to do is let us know. We will present flight and accommodation/cruise options that fit that budget. We may suggest adjusting the length of your vacation or the style of accommodation, or perhaps a different flight to help your budget.

But know this... our goal is ALWAYS to get your next best vacation booked just the way you need it.

Nobody is going to thank you for putting in all those hours of work

If I asked you to find 20 hours of time that you can dedicate (next week) to plan your next vacation, I think you'd look at me like I'm crazy.

Who just has 20 hours of planning time to look at, compare and book flights, cruises, hotels, transfers, resorts, tours, and travel insurance.

NOBODY!

Well, actually we do. Because planning vacations is my profession (one that I trained and certified in) it takes me much less time to find what you need. It takes me less time to know what will work and what won't.

I don't have to plan your vacation around anything else because it's quite literally my job.

Consider it as attractive as handing over those other time-consuming tasks that no one will thank you for - doing laundry, cleaning the house, or mowing the lawn.