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5 Proven Strategies for Cost-Effective Travel

Traveling can be an enriching and fulfilling experience, but it can also be costly. Many people dream of exploring new destinations, but financial constraints can be limiting. Fortunately, we're here to share five practical tips to help you save money while enjoying your trip.

Plan and budget ahead.

One of the most effective ways to save money is by planning and budgeting your trip in advance. Create a comprehensive budget that includes airfare, accommodation, food, transportation, and activities. Having a budget lets you track your expenses and helps you avoid overspending. You can also take advantage of early bird rates for flights and hotels.

Cancel unnecessary subscriptions.

Before you travel, review your monthly subscriptions like gym memberships, streaming services, or magazines you won't

use while you're away. Temporarily canceling these subscriptions can free up extra cash for your travel fund.

Look for discounts and offers.

Keep an eye out for discounts, offers, and coupons that can help you save money on activities, dining, and shopping. Websites like Groupon and LivingSocial offer various deals that could be useful during your trip. These websites often provide discounted tickets to attractions, cheaper dining options, and even discounted rates for experiences like spa treatments or outdoor activities.

Travel during off-peak seasons.

Traveling during off-peak seasons will save you money on flights, hotels, and activities. You also benefit from less crowded destinations and shorter queues for popular tourist attractions. This is a win-win for travelers seeking a budget-friendly and less-crowded travel experience.

Use local grocery stores and pack snacks.

Another way to save money while you travel is by shopping at local grocery stores for snacks and meals rather than eating out for every meal. This gives you a taste of local businesses and culture. Packing snacks can also help you avoid buying overpriced food at airports or touristy areas.

By implementing these tips into your travel planning and experience, you can stretch your dollar further without compromising the quality of your trip. Happy traveling!



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STARability's STAR Gala 2024 Sets the Stage for Transformative Change!

HOW THIS FOUNDATION HAS MADE AN IMPACT



Every February, the STARability Foundation has its STAR Gala, a beautiful event that helps raise funds for their cause to "[transform] the lives of people with disabilities through social, vocational, and educational connections to the community."

My wife and I have worked with STARability for years, thanks to our 16-year-old son Nathan, who has autism. But, if you've never heard of STARability before, it's a local

nonprofit right here in Naples whose mission is to change the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They offer several programs for individuals of all ages to enlist the help of our community to help participants learn job skills and find work with employers who believe in their abilities.

Their pioneering program is their Trailblazer Academy, which helps young adults achieve their future dreams — *whatever* that looks like for them. Whether that path is life enrichment or a career, the Trailblazer Academy will help them work with businesses and organizations in our community to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to make their dreams a reality.

The thing my wife and I really love about STARability is how far they truly go to help the individuals participating in their programs. For example, years ago, my wife wanted to help create a group housing program

that would cater to individuals with disabilities, where they could live semi-independently. She worked for many months to make this happen, calling developers, organizations, the city, the state, and everyone in between. Then, one day, she got a phone call from STARability. They told her they'd heard of all the work she had been doing and were actually looking to add a housing component to their foundation as well. "So," they said to her through the phone, "would you be interested in working together to make this happen?"



From there, we've worked closely with the STARability Foundation and attended last year's STAR Gala in February. The 2023 event was sold out, with over 600 guests, and raised \$2.9 million!

This year, the STAR Gala's theme is "travel" and is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 3, at The Ritz-Carlton Naples, Tiburón. There will be cocktails, dinner, live entertainment,

and exciting live and silent auctions, which will help fundraise for the foundation to preserve and expand its programs and services.

If you'd like to attend the STAR Gala this year, you can reserve your seat by visiting [Starability.org/gala](https://starability.org/gala). But, if you're unable to attend the Gala or are interested in helping STARability's mission in other ways, you can always choose to donate or volunteer. Visit [Starability.org](https://starability.org) and click on their "Ways to Give" tab at the top to see how you can get involved!

-Marc L. Shapiro



When Privilege Kills

A Look Back at the Case of ‘Affluenza’ Teen Ethan Couch

It was a case that enraged the nation: A teenager named Ethan Couch combined alcohol, arrogance, reckless behavior, and manslaughter in what became known as the “affluenza” case.

On June 15, 2013, the 16-year-old and a group of friends stole beer from a store and had a party at his parents’ house before going for a drive. As Couch was careening down the road at 70 mph in a 40-mph zone, he barreled into the town of Burleson, Texas.

Speeding along the rural two-lane street, Couch plowed through an SUV that had stopped with car trouble on the side of the road, then slammed into another car that was stopped near the SUV. In the process, he killed four people and seriously injured two others.

Upon his arrest shortly after the terrible crash, Couch’s blood alcohol level was reported as 0.24 — three times the legal limit for drunk driving in Texas.

Two years later, Couch stood trial for the devastation he had caused. He pleaded guilty to four counts of manslaughter, but his attorneys put forth what came to be known as the “affluenza” defense. A psychologist testified for the defense that Couch was a product of wealthy, privileged parents who never set limits for him, so he didn’t fully understand what it meant to have consequences for his actions.



Prosecutors had sought 20 years in prison, but Couch received no prison time. Judge Jean Hudson Boyd gave Couch 10 years of probation, along with an order to undergo long-term therapy. The decision by the juvenile court judge outraged the victims’ families, drunk driving activists, and most of the country.

Over the past decade, Couch has cycled through bouts of disappearing and continuing alcohol abuse. In 2016, he fled with his mother to Mexico to avoid being arrested for a parole violation but was arrested soon after. The judge in that case sentenced Couch to two years in prison. After his release in 2018, he was again arrested in 2020 for allegedly violating his parole, but the charges were later dismissed. His probation is due to end in 2024.



What Evidence Should You Collect After a Slip-and-Fall Accident?

You probably don’t expect to get injured in a slip-and-fall accident when you go to the grocery store, bank, or post office in Florida. What you do expect is for the property owner to put up warning signs steering you away from dangerous conditions. But, according to Florida statutes, if they fail to do that, you may have a slip-and-fall injury case against them.

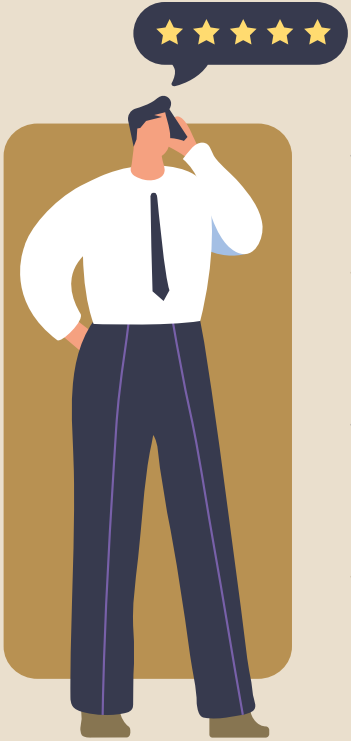
If you want to maximize your compensation, it’s critical to document all evidence as well as you can. Here, we’ll explain what evidence you should gather after your accident.

Photos of the Accident Scene

You may not think of taking pictures of the scene after you’ve fallen, especially if you’re hurt. However, take photos if you can to help strengthen your case against the property owner.

- The Accident Report**
- After slip-and-fall incidents, victims should never leave the property without making an accident report. Without this report, you have no evidence of the fall, and the manager will have no record of it. Consequently, the property owner’s insurance company could deny your claim.
- A Written Account of the Accident**
- If your accident is serious, someone may call the police to the scene. They will talk to you and make a report of the accident. If the police don’t arrive, you can write your account of the incident. In this report, include:
- The date and time of the accident
 - The location where you fell
 - People who saw you fall
 - What you were doing right before the accident
 - What caused you to fall, such as spilled food, wet floors, or a lack of warning signs near construction work

- Witness Statements**
- If you fell in a busy store, there’s a good chance someone saw you take a tumble. These people can make excellent witnesses, and their statements can help corroborate your claim.
- Surveillance Footage**
- Many commercial properties, including grocery stores, hotels, gas stations, and banks, have security cameras for surveillance. Ask the manager or property owner for a copy of the footage. Do this soon after the accident because many surveillance systems overwrite old footage after a certain period — possibly as short as 24 hours after the accident.
- Medical Records**
- Slip-and-fall injuries can be much more serious than you first thought. This is why it’s wise to see a doctor after your accident. Keep copies of your treatment records and give them to your personal injury attorney.



What Our Clients Are Saying

- “Very professional, staff was always on top of my case.”
- Ronnie R.
- “Marc and his team were very helpful through this smooth process! After my car accident, I provided the information and really didn’t have to do much else. Very thankful for them!”
- Jaylin P.
- “My case was handled very professionally and expeditiously. If anyone’s looking for proper representation, look no further.”
- Nerasia T.
- “Absolutely positive experience working with these attorneys. They are very compassionate and always put my interests, feelings, pain, etc., ahead of their own. Could not be more impressed or happy about the results of my case. Thank you so much!”
- Trials T.

Your reviews offer us valuable feedback, but when you recommend our services to others, that’s the ultimate form of praise! Please share your experiences with the Law Offices of Marc L. Shapiro, P.A., on Google or [Facebook.com/AttorneyShapiroLaw](https://www.facebook.com/AttorneyShapiroLaw). Your comments empower us, make us better, and allow us to help others.



WORLD’S BEST BROWNIES

- Ingredients**
- 2/3 cup butter
 - 2 oz unsweetened chocolate
 - 1 cup granulated sugar
 - 2 large eggs
 - 1 tsp vanilla extract
 - 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
 - 1/4 tsp baking powder
 - 1/4 tsp salt
 - 1/2 cup chopped nuts (optional)
- Directions**
1. Preheat oven to 350 F and grease an 8-inch square baking pan.
 2. Melt butter and chocolate in a saucepan over low heat, stirring constantly, then remove from heat and let cool slightly.
 3. In a large bowl, beat together sugar, eggs, and vanilla, then add melted chocolate mixture and blend well.
 4. In a separate bowl, stir together flour, baking powder, and salt.
 5. Gradually add flour mixture to chocolate mixture, stirring until blended, then stir in nuts if desired.
 6. Pour batter into prepared pan and spread evenly.
 7. Bake for 25–30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Word Search

N	C	S	J	N	H	B	E	C	N	L	J	O	Q	Q
J	O	C	E	F	A	C	G	N	H	E	Y	T	E	
P	Z	I	E	Y	V	O	A	R	N	L	T	A	R	Q
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BOOTS	GARNET	OPPOSITE
CANDLES	HOCKEY	RESOLUTION
CARNATION	INSULATE	SKATING
FURNACE	JANUS	SWEATER