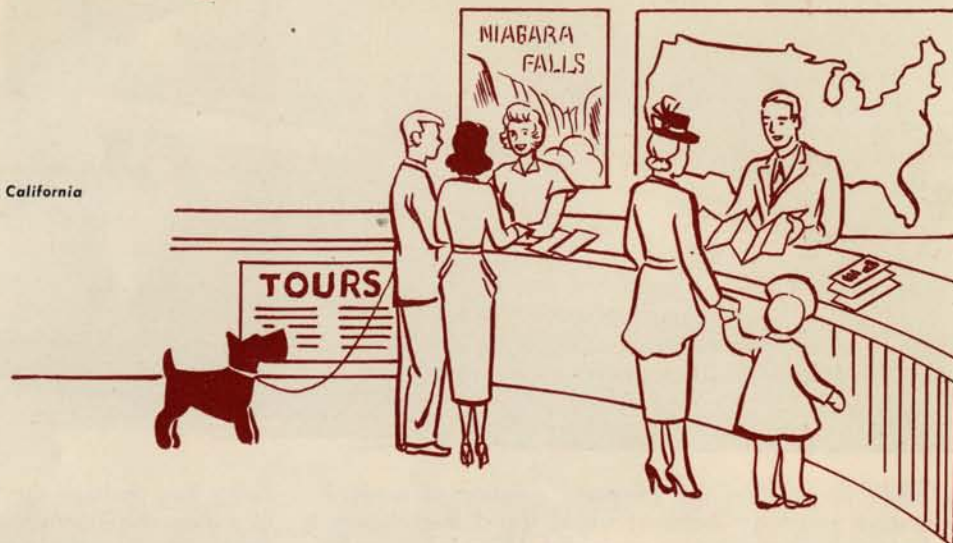


# Selling Travel Specialities

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Travel agent or magician? It's a toss-up as to which title is more applicable. Years of working with ships, trains, planes, and motor vehicles; consultations with people who have been in familiar, funny, and foreign places; traveling personally to all parts of the world—all these, when placed in the travel agent's brain, come out as a stimulating concoction known as a travel specialty.

Usually these interesting blends and combinations are the agent's alone. Mr. and Mrs. Average Traveler haven't the knowledge of or patience with complicated routes, services, and schedules to make their own travel brew. Or they may be fully acquainted with one or more means of transportation and not know about the services which can be made to complement or tie in with them.

Here's a simple example of what can be done. In the early days of selling snow and winter sports to Californians—in the early 30's—searching for a way to compete with railroad snow specials (which did not allow travel agencies a commission) this agency hit upon the idea of using the Sacramento River steamers with chartered buses to hustle the "ski-bunnies" from Sacramento up to the snow. This specialty sold for \$6.50, no meals. Combinations like that are the special forte of the travel agent.

The standard cut-and-dried trip, to cite a more common example, can be made more salable by turning it into a package tour. This is a combination of features, a specialized job which requires foreknowledge of changes, new services, and travel trends. Travel agents throughout the world are following the lead of the American travel man who has developed the technique of the package tour to a new degree of finesse. It's a far cry from the days when Thomas Cook was suspected of having personally built the Pyramids and the Sphinx merely to satisfy the desires of travel-hungry Britons.

On a trip to South America last fall I met a travel agent in Lima, Peru, who illustrates the influence of our methods. He was busily preparing a travel special which included a flight from the Pacific coast across the Andes to Iquitos in the eastern Andean jungle, thence 2,000 miles down the Amazon to the Atlantic by steamer. A

Guatemalan agent we talked to sells a "Jungle Trail Tour" which involves airplane, train, bus, and a launch before its one week's duration is completed.

Coming home again we find a group of 12 competing agents in the San Francisco Bay area calling themselves "Aladdin Tours" who have developed a cooperative tour of the deep South. Another organization operated by agencies in Berkeley and Oakland under the appropriate title of "Scenery Unlimited Tours," works a few miracles on what might otherwise be a routine trip. Now in their fourth year of successful operation, "Scenery Unlimited" each Sunday offers 2-week, all-expense tours from San Francisco to Vancouver and return. A tour leader accompanies each group. Stops are made every night in first-class resorts, hotels, or motels, and interesting stop-overs and side trips are included. A pause at Mystery Trees on the Redwood Highway, a short canoe ride over the rapids of the Rogue River, a visit to Sea Lion Caves on the Oregon coast, are among the unusual, off-the-beaten-track features which have made this package one of the most successful and attractive tour jobs in the West. Biggest selling point is that the tourist without an auto is thus able to see the country even more advantageously than if he were driving his own car.

Because of the war many people had to forego their plans to take pleasure trips. Now, almost 10 years later, some of these same people, for one reason or another, may not be able to attempt covering the fascinating places of their dreams in their own automobiles. Hence a package tour similar to that sold successfully by this Western organization is tailor-made to the travel needs of a large and profitable audience. The idea is old but it's the gimmick that counts.

The hundreds of package tours, travel concoctions, or specialties fill a definite niche for pleasure trippers if you know your market. Whether you're selling New England, the Thousand Islands, Florida, the Colorado Rockies, or the Pacific coast, the big idea is to make your offering as a travel agent something to watch for. You've got specialties now and there are many more to come.