

Warm-weather getaways are 'in' this season

By NANETTE WISER
Copley News Service

Over the river and through the woods to grandma's house isn't your only option this winter. More and more revelers are choosing a warm-weather getaway or a snowy ski resort with or without their families during the holiday season.

Whether you're in the market for a vacation (or have to travel by plane to visit relatives), there are some general guidelines for no-headache travel:

— Travel light to avoid delays. If you must check a bag, check only one, but try for carryon. If you're flying home to visit Mom and Dad, mail your gifts in early December and avoid

losing precious presents in transit. Mark your bags carefully and double-check the airline tags to be sure your suitcase is going where you are.

— Mother Nature and time are your two biggest enemies. Monitor the weather in all cities where you'll be traveling for up-to-the minute information on flights, cancellations and delays. Add extra time for driving to airports, and get your boarding pass early, in case the airline has overbooked the flight. Check through security early so the crowds don't delay your trip.

Now comes the fun part. If you've decided to skip the family homestead, let your fingers do the walking through the travel books at the bookstore and the travel brochures your agency can provide. There are new travel books to fill a suitcase that offer travel tips and destinations

just right for the seasoned traveler, as well as the traveling family.

For globe-trotters, pick up a copy of "In-World Guide" or Carole Haber's "Discriminating Traveler." Closer to home, the books on bed and breakfast as well as Globe Pequot Press's complete line of budget vacations and weekend getaways up and down the Atlantic seaboard will lock your imagination with travel ideas.

For those who want warm-weather getaways, Mexico and Hawaii are two of the most popular choices. Winter revelers will want to head to the ski slopes of Vermont or Colorado and Taos, N.M. For those who want to eat and shop till they drop, Manhattan, Beverly Hills and New Orleans offer an urban holiday to remember. Some highlights include:

— Sun Valley: Averell Harriman found this little

bit of heaven. A classy mecca in pristine Idaho, it hosts 66 runs on two mountains, a ski school with more than 150 master instructors and the casual Trail Creek Cabin, a Hemingway favorite that can be reached by horse-drawn sleigh. Write: Sun Valley Co., Sun Valley, ID 83353.

— Christmas New England: Country Inn Tours is offering a family day at the Trapp Family Lodge in the Vermont mountains, complete with Christmas tree trimming, sleigh rides and both cross-country and downhill skiing. Write: Country Inn Tours, 2930 Camino Diablo, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

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