

Senior Advice: Septuagenarians sign on for safari

by *Doug_Mayberry*

Q: As two widows in our 70s, we have decided to take an adventure trip. We want to go on an African escorted safari. Neither of us has ever been on a trip like this. We giggle when we tell our friends, "It's now or never." None of them has expressed a desire to join us! How should we go about it?

A: Hooray for you two! First, determine when the best weather would be the most desirable. Make appointments to see your doctors and travel agent for the mandatory vaccinations. Some require a time element, and a few of your existing ones could require boosters. Hepatitis and yellow fever shots are usually mandatory. If you use prescription medicines, stock up on them and take copies of the prescriptions in the event of an emergency. Don't forget an extra pair of eyeglasses. Ask for an advance copy of the tour company's list of suggestions for clothing, meals, airline connections, and other pertinent details. Every country has its own regulations prior to admitting you.

Before you plunk down your deposits, try to speak to others who have made that safari. The best source for that information should be your travel agent, senior centers, doctor and the tour company itself.

If possible, it's a good idea to book with a company that gives you a slow start after arrival at your destination. Taking the first day to let your body adjust to local time and rest before tackling the tour is valuable. Passports have gone up in price, and unless you apply early you might have to pay an extra fee.

International travel always opens up new horizons for you. Enjoy, and don't forget to take plenty of photos. Upon your return what fun it will be to share your experiences with your friends. This indeed will be the trip of a lifetime for you both!

Q: I have never had a computer, but my family says I'm long overdue. Even my seven grandchildren are on my case in telling me how easy it will be to keep in touch via e-mail. My birthday is next month, and I have already been alerted my gift will be a computer, with lessons included. I'm panicked because I still own an electric typewriter I had when I was a secretary. I'm really afraid I can't master the machine and don't want to disappoint them. Do you believe I can?

A: Absolutely. As you are already typewriter talented you will find the computer even friendlier. To successfully communicate, to keep in touch with what's happening, and to even process your personal needs such as accessing your bank account, bill updating, information on your mortgage and providing 24-hour access to your family and friends, a computer has almost become mandatory. Access via search engine allows you stay in touch with the world. The computer allows you to have almost all the information you need available right in your home.

Writing letters, waiting for responses, and even playing telephone tag is much slower. Contact via e-mail is open 24 hours every day! Grab the brass ring and accept your birthday gift enthusiastically as new world of opportunity. Many seniors who now use their computers are willing to help you get started. Public libraries and senior centers offer training and updating eager to teach you how to operate the system. If I could not use the computer, I would not be able to write this column.

How lucky you are to have such a loving family who wants to keep in closer touch with you. Who knows? You may even have a grandchild who wants to visit for a few days and help you get started. By using the computer you will enjoy the capability to keep in closer touch with your family and help you keep from being lonely. After you learn computer basics, you'll question why you waited so long. Go for it!

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