

THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR

TRAVEL NOTEBOOK

Agents can help solve trip dilemmas

Half of U.S. [travel](#) was booked online last year, according to the latest PhoCusWright Consumer Travel Trends survey, but the March issue of ShopSmart says there are times when travelers should really consider hiring a travel agent.

The magazine, published by Consumer Report, suggests a travel agent is worth it when:

- **You can't find exactly what you want.** A good agent might have access to booking systems that post more [flights](#) and seat options than travel Web sites.
- **Everything has to be perfect.** An agent can produce itineraries with tours and trips, tailored to your calendar, budget and needs.
- **You need flexibility.** A travel agent can handle rebookings for missed flights more quickly and with less hassle than someone on a Web site help desk.

Smarter travel

Whether played on the long drive in the car or while waiting for the food to arrive at the restaurant, the Think-ets travel game requires no batteries. For ages 8 and older, each game pouch includes 15 collectible miniature trinkets. A player chooses one of the trinkets and uses it as the subject to start a story. The other players follow with their choice of items until they have woven an entire tale. Cost is \$12.99 at www.think-a-lot.com/onlinestore.

--- Zach Dunkin