

THE CONCIERGE

GEO QUIZ

Which city is the westernmost point on the Erie Canal?

- Cincinnati, Ohio
- Pittsburgh, Pa.
- Buffalo, N.Y.

Answer below. Source: National Geographic Bee

TIPSHEET

For a royal time in the U.S., U.K.

MARY FORGIONE

Prince Harry and Meghan Markle will marry in Windsor Castle at noon local time (4 a.m. in Los Angeles) May 19. If you weren't one of the commoners invited, here are five ways to feel like royalty:

Spend like a royal

Not going to Windsor Castle? Live large at the Windsor Court Hotel in New Orleans instead. The luxury hotel offers a \$51,998 package May 17-20 that includes first-class airfare from anywhere in the continental U.S., three nights in the presidential suite, a hat-fitting at a milliner, a chauffeur and car, and more.

Info: windsorcourthotel.com

Take the cake

Claire Ptak, once a pastry chef for Alice Waters' Chez Panisse in Berkeley and now owner of London's Violet Cakes, was tapped to make the wedding confection: a lemon elderflower affair topped with buttercream and flowers. Make like the royal couple and order your own cake: chocolate violet cream or coconut pudding cake (\$68, serves up to 12).

Info: violetcakes.com

Dine like a queen

Queen Elizabeth rarely dines out, but last year she attended a friend's birthday party at the Ivy, a classic eatery in London's Covent Garden. The British press says her favorite place to eat is Bellamy's, where a stop at the Oyster Bar will cost you \$21 to \$38 for half a dozen oysters.

Info: the-ivy.co.uk; bellamysrestaurant.co.uk



MANY EUROPEAN UNION-PROTECTED travelers don't know they may be owed money.

MONEY MATTERS

Help from EU for fliers

Travelers can turn to AirHelp when bad things happen to European Union-protected flights.

By TERRY GARDNER

In a perfect world, when flights are canceled, delayed or overbooked, U.S. airlines would voluntarily cough up compensation to affected passengers.

But we don't live in a perfect world, at least, not in the United States. Most airlines do not offer compensation unless a law requires it.

But within the European Union, this is a different matter. EU law EC 261 covers U.S. travelers "on flights to the EU operated by an EU airline and on flights departing from the EU with any airline."

Under that law, passengers may be owed up to \$700 if their flight meets certain requirements and the disruption wasn't caused by severe weather, civil unrest or other circumstances beyond a carrier's control.

But how do you know?

Enter AirHelp, which assists travelers, covered under EU rules, in

due to an overbooked flight which results in a delay of three or more hours to your final destination," he said.

On that last matter, U.S. airlines have a similar obligation even if the flight isn't headed for Europe. The U.S. Department of Transportation details Consumer Flight Rights on its website (lat.ms/DOTprotection).

But many EU-protected travelers don't realize they are owed money, which in 2017 amounted to more than \$451 million just for disrupted flights under EC 261, Zillmer said.

Many people don't understand their rights so they don't file claims, Zillmer said.

Take the recent tumultuous Easter holiday travel period, which saw 15,800 flight disruptions at U.S. airports, which had a domino effect on Europe-bound passengers. Those travelers may be entitled to nearly \$5 million in compensation, Zillmer said.

AirHelp makes it easy to find out whether you're eligible for a piece of that pie. Those travelers covered by EU rules can check to see whether they have a claim at AirHelp.com or by using its free iOS or Android app.

You sign up for a free account on its website or via its app. Enter your email address, and AirHelp searches

taking a carrier to court, AirHelp takes a fixed fee, which is usually about 25%.

I put it to the test. After downloading the iOS app, I set up my AirHelp account with my Gmail address. It immediately went to work finding all my flight itineraries from the last few years.

To make sure all my flights were registered, I forwarded flight itineraries from my Apple email to my Gmail, and the flights showed up.

Even though I had flown more than 171,000 miles, none of my flights qualified for compensation. (Annoying 30-45 minute delays here and there don't qualify.) The app is intuitive and does all the work for you after you put in your email address or addresses.

Another nice feature: While traveling, you can scan the bar code on your boarding pass to add it to your AirHelp travel map, which gives you a geographic glimpse of your wanderings.

The only flaw I found is that if you book a flight reservation for someone else, it shows up on your map, and you can't manually delete it. AirHelp is working to fix this.

Check it out and see if you are owed something.

TOURS & CRUISES

SCOTLAND

A visit to islands, distilleries

Indulge your fondness for walking and whiskey on an excursion offered by Wilderness Scotland. The six-night tour covers the Argyll Peninsula and four islands of western Scotland and includes daily guided hikes linking prehistoric sites, nature reserves and distilleries. Highlights include a boat ride to the remote island of Jura; a detour to view the Corryvreckan whirlpool, the third-largest in the world; and two nights on the Isle of Islay, known for its eight whiskey distilleries and coastal landscapes. Walks average three to five miles a day.

Dates: Departures May 19, Aug. 18 and Sept. 8. Availability may be limited.

Price: About \$2,400 per person, double occupancy. Includes accommodations in small hotels, most meals, transportation, and distillery tour and tasting. International airfare not included.

Info: Wilderness Scotland, (866) 740-3890, lat.ms/argyllwalkingholiday

— ANNE HARNAGEL

ITALY

Dig into the past

Wander the ancient seaside cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, sites of two of the most catastrophic volcanic eruptions in European history, on a weeklong tour that also allows participants to ascend to the volcanic crater of Mt. Vesuvius. The Campania tour, organized by Andante Travels, is escorted by guides and lecturers who have done excavations in the region and can provide access to sites not usually open to the public.

Dates: Multiple departures in May, September, October and November.

Price: From \$2,795 per person, double occupancy; single supplement \$300. Includes accommodations, meals, entry to all sites, guide and field notes. International airfare not included.

Info: Andante Travels, lat.ms/andantecampania

Attend a soiree

"Downton Abbey" hosts a party, not at the castle used in the popular PBS series, but at a New York City exhibition of the show's sets and fashions. Dress your best for a cocktail party May 19. You'll also get access to the exhibit, which has been extended until Sept. 3. Tickets cost \$215 if purchased by Tuesday, \$225 after that.

Info: downtonexhibition.com

Family portraits

Grab selfies with Britain's royal family... at Madame Tussauds London. A recreation of the Buckingham Palace Balcony has wax doppelgangers of Queen Elizabeth and husband Philip; Prince Charles and wife Camilla; and Prince William and wife Kate. Prince Harry and Meghan Markle will join the display in May. Standard ticket costs \$29.

Info: lat.ms/tussaudslondon

GEO QUIZ ANSWER:

Buffalo, N.Y.

Passengers traveling to, from or within the European Union may be owed money if "the flight is delayed by more than three hours [or] the flight is canceled, and you don't arrive at your destination within two hours of your original scheduled arrival time," Henrik Zillmer, chief executive of AirHelp, said in an email.

You might also be eligible for compensation if "you're denied boarding

dress.

It works with multiple Gmail addresses and one additional Outlook, Yahoo or Hotmail address. It doesn't work yet with Apple (iCloud, .me and .mac) email and several other providers, but AirHelp is working to add more.

If AirHelp finds nothing, you owe them nothing. If it files for and collects on a claim, which may include

flight history mapped out, find out how many miles you've flown, how many days you've spent in the air and even how much time you've spent watching safety demonstrations. (You did pay attention, didn't you?)

It's not a big fat check, but it may give you bragging rights.

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DEAL OF THE WEEK

40% off in Mexico's Riviera Nayarit

The all-inclusive Occidental Nuevo Vallarta on Mexico's Riviera Nayarit takes up to 40% off prices. With the discount, rooms for two guests start at \$172, which includes meals, sports activities and a \$500 resort credit.

The deal: Stay at least two nights and receive the credit, access to five restaurants plus a bar lounge, pool bar and snack bar, as well as kayaking, tennis courts, gym and more. The lowest prices are available in May and June, subject to availability.

Info: (800) 227-2356, lat.ms/occidentalnuevovallarta

—MARY FORGIONE



FRANK FELL/Getty Images

THE BEACHFRONT RESORT Occidental Nuevo Vallarta on Mexico's Riviera Nayarit usually has rates starting at \$320 a night.

ENGLAND

Discover byways

Anglophiles can pamper their inner Englishman on a weeklong trek through the Oxford countryside and the Cotswolds. Participants will walk quiet country roads connecting villages and the region's bustling market towns. In Oxford, the tour will visit the city's iconic sites and Oxford University colleges. Participants also will visit the country home of Winston Churchill; visit Bath, a UNESCO World Heritage site; and tour author Jane Austen's house.

Dates: Custom seven-day tours from May through September.

Price: From \$5,595 per person, based on four-person double occupancy. Includes accommodations, most meals, entrance fees, special events, private transportation and baggage transportation.

Info: Butterfield & Robinson; (866) 551-9090, lat.ms/cotswoldswalking

—ROSEMARY MCCLURE

AIRFARES

	ATLANTA	CHICAGO	DENVER	HONOLULU	LAS VEGAS	NEW YORK/NEWARK, N.J.	PHOENIX	SAN FRANCISCO	SEATTLE	WASHINGTON, D.C.
LAX	\$320	\$332	\$186	\$514	\$88	\$429	\$110	\$88	\$170	\$357
SNA	350	340	226	526	108	462	172	98	170	384
BUR	380	372	238	598	102	462	172	113	186	397
LGB	365	364	233	732	88	455	168	95	171	378
ONT	355	385	186	705	114	389	190	131	188	492
INT'L	AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND*	CABO SAN LUCAS, MEXICO	LONDON*	PARIS*	SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA*	TOKYO*	VANCOUVER, CANADA			
LAX	\$1,198-\$1,248	\$295	\$574-\$859	\$619-\$931	\$1,150-\$1,409	\$673-\$1,108	\$243			

Restricted round-trip airfares are researched on Thursday, the day before the Travel section goes to press. Fares change daily, and availability is not assured. Fares, which may involve a change of planes, are for airlines serving Los Angeles International (LAX), Orange County/John Wayne (SNA), Hollywood Burbank (BUR), Long Beach (LGB) and Ontario (ONT). Domestic fares and international airfares include taxes and fees. *These international fares vary because of differing fuel surcharges on different airlines. Sources: Sabre reservation system, airlines and web.

AUSTRALIA FOR \$1,167

Fare: \$1,167 round trip, nonstop, including taxes and fees, from LAX to Cairns, Australia.

Restrictions: Subject to availability. Sale is set to expire Monday. For travel starting Friday.

Info: (800) 227-4500,

www.qantas.com

Source: Airfarewatchdog.com