

on the go

**Top Daytrips
from LA**

**Impact of
Rescheduling
Cannabis**



**March
April
2025**

PERIODICAL

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International travel should be a dream, not a nightmare, AAA can help you travel with confidence



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Cover

North of I-10 and east of Desert Hot Springs with entrances at Cottonwood Spring, Twentynine Palms and Joshua Tree, Joshua Tree National Park covers more than 800,000 acres. This California desert country contains striking granite formations and mountain ranges rising from flat valleys about 1,800 feet above sea level to elevations of more than 5,000 feet. And it made our list of top daytrip destinations if you're looking for a scenic outdoor adventure while visiting LA. More on page 6.

On The Go

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President's Note

Peter J. Armstrong
President/CEO

“...the problem is clear and keeps getting worse...”

Reducing School Bus Law Violations - What Does It Take?

I wonder if Albert Luce, Sr., who “invented” the school bus back in 1925, thought about how hard it would be to make motorists do what they’re supposed to when interacting with the big, bright yellow coaches. (Fun fact: school buses weren’t uniformly the “National School Bus Glossy Yellow” until 1939; The color was selected because it is most easily detected in ones peripheral vision)

With the introduction of school bus safety laws in the early twentieth century came violations of those same laws. Most states crafted laws that spelled out the responsibilities of motorists when approaching a school bus that is taking on/letting off students. Disturbingly, the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services estimated that there were more than 43.5 million school bus law violations in the US during the 2022-2023 180-day school year. A survey of bus drivers said that the number was more like 45.2 million illegal passing violations during the same period. Whether the real number was 43.5 or 45.2 million, the problem is clear and keeps getting worse.

Recently the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration released a best practices guide on reducing the illegal passing of school buses in response to this national issue.

“Illegal passings of stopped school buses loading and unloading students in violation of these laws are frequent and can lead to serious pedestrian-involved crashes resulting in injury or death,” the report states while offering actionable strategies.

One of the points made in the report was that all U.S. jurisdictions “require a motorist to stop while overtaking from behind a stopped school bus regardless of the road type (undivided or divided).” Forty-two states also require motorists to stop if approaching from the front on an undivided highway. Pennsylvania adds to the law by requiring drivers to stop when a school bus has its red lights flashing

and stop arm extended. You must stop at least ten feet from the school bus when approaching an intersection, following or meeting the bus. You must sit stationary until the school bus turns off the red lights and lowers the stop arm.

By the way, don’t treat the bus’s yellow lights like you do a yellow traffic light - driving faster so as not to be “caught” by the red lights. Children could be running for the bus - right out into traffic - and be struck because you don’t want to be inconvenienced.

The report suggests a Safe System Approach to help reduce stop-arm violations, offering six “Core Principles”:

Deaths & Injuries Are Unacceptable - A Safe System Approach prioritizes the elimination of crashes that result in death and serious injuries.

Humans Make Mistakes - A rational statement - people make mistakes that can lead to or contribute to crashes. How do we get to the point where making an error behind the wheel that can maim or kill a child needs to be viewed as unacceptable?

Humans Are Vulnerable - Human bodies have physical limits, so it is critical to design/operate transportation systems that accommodate those vulnerabilities.

Responsibility Is Shared - All stakeholders are vital to preventing fatalities and serious injuries. (This is one of the tenets brought out in the AAA Driver Improvement Program.)

Safety Is Proactive - Identify and address safety issues rather than wait for crashes to occur and react afterward.

Redundancy Is Crucial - Reducing risk requires the simultaneous use of multiple safety approaches - if one part fails, the other parts will still offer protection to vulnerable road users including children and other pedestrians.

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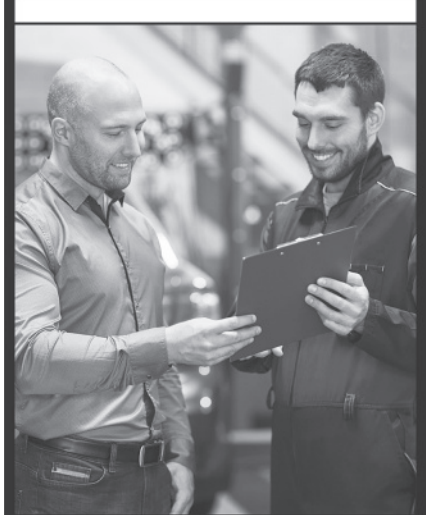
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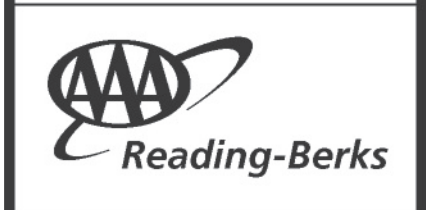
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top day trips from los angeles

Los Angeles is a cultural powerhouse with endless activities for all types of travelers. From the cinematic Hollywood to world-class restaurants, high-end boutiques, the incredible coastline and surrounding mountains, LA truly has something for everyone to love.

Of course, sometimes you need to get away from the bustling city and enjoy something new. With so many options to choose from, it can often be tough finding the right destination for you during your vacation. To help ease your planning process, here are the nine best day trips from Los Angeles that you can explore today.

Joshua Tree National Park

Distance: Four hours from LA

Type of location: Outdoor, unique

Although one of the furthest destinations on this list for a day trip, Joshua Tree National Park is an incredible place to experience truly unique landscapes and fauna.

Located at the cross between the Colorado and Mojave Deserts, Joshua Tree is famous for its namesake trees which are large, twisting and iconic desert plants that create an almost dreamlike landscape.

You'll also find incredible walking trails along the rugged mountains, fresh springs, as well as an amazing night sky for stargazing throughout the year. If you don't wish to hike, you can also drive along most of the main attractions, making it a great place for families of all ages to explore. With such an incredible landscape, Joshua Tree is one of the Los Angeles top places for day trips to check out.

Ojai

Distance: Two hours from LA

Type of location: Cultural, historical, outdoor, relaxing

Ojai is a unique town just outside of LA that combines historical architecture, endless outdoor activities, plus a

unique local culture of New Age wellness spas and natural treatments.

Spend the day enjoying indoor and outdoor spa treatments at hot springs or get active on exciting trails along the Topatopa mountain range. The downtown area is filled with exciting art galleries, boutique shops, plus incredible restaurants offering a variety of cuisines.

Big Bear Lake

Distance: Three hours from LA

Type of location: Outdoor, recreational, sightseeing

Nestled in the San Bernardino National Forest, Big Bear Lake is a scenic area with a thriving community and incredible outdoor offerings year-round. In the winter, hit the slopes and relax at the Bear Mountain Ski Resort among other world-class resorts.

Big Bear is also a wonderful place to enjoy warm summer weather and idyllic mountain views. In Big Bear Lake Village, you can enjoy great shopping and dining opportunities as well to make this a well-rounded day trip from Los Angeles.

San Diego

Distance: Three hours from LA

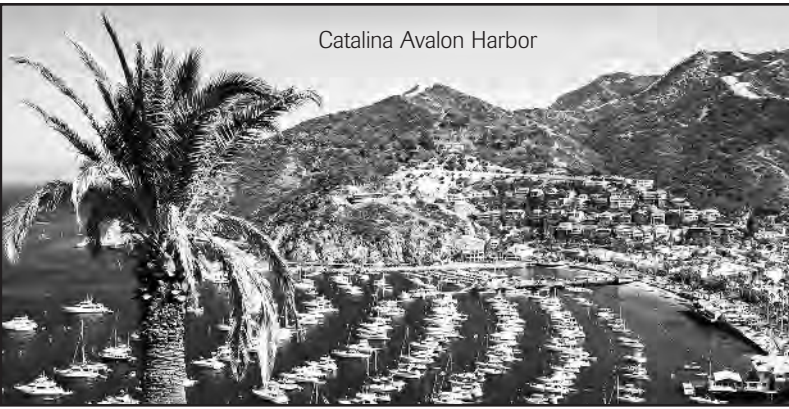
Type of location: Cultural, coastal, scenic

San Diego is a vacation destination in its own right, but it can also be a fun, short getaway stop during your trip to Los Angeles. Explore the bustling downtown complete with gorgeous Mission and Victorian architecture. Then, head to the iconic Hotel del Coronado to relax on the beach near the famous building that was used in films like *Some Like it Hot* and *The Stuntman*.

With a thriving food scene including incredible seafood and Mexican cuisine, plus many outdoor attractions along with the acclaimed San Diego Zoo, San Diego is a great place to unwind and explore during your vacation.



Catalina Avalon Harbor



Catalina Island

Distance: One-hour ferry ride from LA

Type of location: Outdoor, historical, cultural, leisure

With incredible architecture, gorgeous scenery and diverse activities in all seasons, Catalina Island is one of the best day trip locations from Los Angeles that you should visit.

In Avalon, you can enjoy colorful and historical buildings spread throughout the hilly town. Walk around day or night and dive into the world-class restaurants, bars and boutique shops. If you wish to get more active, you can also enjoy wonderful hiking trails plus water activities like sailing, kayaking, diving and more.

“...sometimes you need to get away from the bustling city and enjoy something new...”

Santa Barbara

Distance: One and one-half hours from LA

Type of location: Cultural, sightseeing, active, outdoor

Santa Barbara is a scenic coastal city that combines Spanish architecture and luxurious amenities with a college town atmosphere. In short, it’s an ideal stop for both tranquil getaways and exciting weekend opportunities.

Nestled along the Pacific Coast, you can enjoy gorgeous beaches and the adjacent historical downtown for a variety of meals, shops and endless exploration. Plus, there are a number of bike rentals along the coast and in town, making it a great place for a casual ride along the coast and throughout the city.

Laguna Beach

Distance: One to one and one-half hours from LA

Type of location: Outdoor, recreational, leisure

Located in Orange County, Laguna Beach is a charming beach town with endless activities throughout the year. Enjoy a beautiful mix of rugged coastline along with

quaint white sand beaches. With great coastal bike paths and unforgettable views on every corner, this is a wonderful town to walk or ride a bike in any season.

Afterward, head downtown and enjoy a meal at a cozy café or one of the many trendy restaurants. This charming area is full of exciting art galleries and boutiques as well, making it a great place to stroll day or night. With a relaxing atmosphere and endless activities to enjoy, Laguna Beach makes for a great day trip spot from Los Angeles.

Oceanside

Distance: Two hours from LA

Type of location: Outdoor, recreational, sightseeing

Oceanside is a cozy Californian beach town with gorgeous piers, white sand beaches and an old-school relaxed atmosphere. In town, visit the beautiful Mission San Luis Rey or head to the California Surf Museum to see exciting rotating exhibits on the sport with artifacts from the area and around the world.

If you’re inspired by the museum, you can rent a board nearby and try your hand at surfing for a fun and unique activity. Go whale watching on a private tour or simply lounge at Harbor Beach before exploring the shops at Oceanside Harbor for an unforgettable day.

Disneyland (Anaheim)

Distance: One and one-half hours from LA

Type of location: Theme park, cultural, outdoor

Disneyland is a great Los Angeles day trip for families and visitors of all ages. The park is full of exciting rides and attractions along with unique themed areas and there are often special events throughout the year to make each visit unique.

The surrounding Anaheim area is home to a number of restaurants that you can enjoy after a day of exploring the park.

Big Bear Lake



Top Affordable Places to Ski in Colorado

Colorado is known for its world-class skiing and its status as a top vacation destination, but you don't need to break the bank to hit the slopes. Lesser-known ski area gems have small-town charm, fewer crowds and wallet-friendly prices. Whether you love steep runs, gliding through glades, or cruising groomers, these spots are great for families, powder seekers and all skill levels. All these affordable ski resorts offer daily lift tickets under \$100, and some are even under \$50. Here's how to enjoy eight affordable Colorado ski destinations on and off the slopes.

Granby Ranch: A Grand Getaway

1000 Village Road, Granby, CO 80446

Lift ticket cost: Starting at \$99 for adults

Close to Grand Lake, which is the west entrance of Rocky Mountain National Park, Granby Ranch is an affordable family-friendly ski resort. With 47 trails and 500+ skiable acres, Granby Ranch's East Mountain caters to beginners and intermediates, while West Mountain has more challenging runs for more advanced skiers and riders.

Enjoy the slopes after dark on one of their guided night ski tours. Take a break from downhill skiing and try cross-country skiing, fat biking, or snowshoeing. Go on a guided snowshoe tour to learn about the local history and landscape. Relax and enjoy views during a scenic snowcat tour.

Explore Howelsen Hill Ski Area: Colorado's Oldest Ski Resort

Howelsen Pkwy, Steamboat Springs, CO 80487

Lift ticket cost: Starting at \$49 for adults

Owned by the City of Steamboat Springs, Howelsen Hill Ski Area is rich in skiing history. Open since 1915, it's the oldest continuously operating ski facility in North America.

Founded by Norwegian immigrant and ski jumper Carl Howelsen, it was the site of Steamboat's second winter carnival kicking off its ski jumping legacy. Howelsen Hill is home to North America's largest natural ski jumping complex, where over 100 Olympians have trained. Plus, it's within walking distance from downtown Steamboat Springs. On Ski Free Sundays, grab a free ticket to hit the slopes or Nordic trails where you can cross-country, fat bike or snowshoe. Howelsen Hill also offers tubing or sledding for even more family fun.

Ski Cooper for Spectacular Views

232 Co Rd 29, Leadville, CO 8046

Lift ticket cost: Starting at \$45 for adults

Ski Cooper's laid-back vibe and stunning views of Mount Elbert and Mount Massive, two of Colorado's

14,000-foot peaks make it a hidden gem for families and powder enthusiasts. At 14,438 feet and dubbed "Rooftop of the Rockies," Mount Elbert is Colorado's tallest mountain and second-highest peak in the contiguous United States. Known for short lift lines and long runs, the small ski area near Leadville is the highest unincorporated city in the United States.

Monarch Mountain: Top-Notch Tree Skiing

23715 US-50, Salida, CO 80201

Lift ticket cost: Starting at \$69 for adults

Founded in 1939, Monarch Mountain is 20 miles from Salida and 40 miles from Buena Vista. With 350 inches of snow annually, Monarch Mountain is a prime spot for cat skiing in off-piste terrain zipping down steep chutes, wide open bowls and some of Colorado's best tree skiing. Best of all, it's a very affordable ski resort in Colorado.

Mirkwood Basin is a haven for double-black diamond enthusiasts, while two terrain parks cater to novice and intermediate skiers and riders. If you like to earn your turns or want to ski at sunrise, Monarch offers uphill permits. When you're done skiing or riding for the day, Monarch Tubing Park is perfect for family fun.

Powderhorn Mountain Resort: The World's Largest Flat-top Mountain

48338 Powderhorn Rd, Mesa, CO 81643

Lift ticket cost: Starting at \$69 for adults

Less than 50 minutes from Grand Junction, Powderhorn Mountain Resort sits on the Grand Mesa, the world's largest flat-top mountain. Known for tree skiing and a plethora of intermediate runs, Powderhorn offers a unique skiing experience surrounded by a high-desert landscape. You can also explore Grand Mesa's snowy terrain snowmobiling, snowshoeing, fat biking or cross-country skiing.

With over 300 lakes, it's outstanding for ice fishing. For oodles of family fun, go sledding at Old Mesa Ski Hill, or Old Powderhorn as the locals call it. After a morning on the slopes, spend the afternoon wine tasting and visiting some of the more than 25 wineries in the Grand Valley.

Brenda's Travel Tip

When traveling with family, split up your outfits into each other's suitcases. This way, if one bag goes missing, everyone will still have something to wear.



Like a Good Neighbor...

Dear Ask Ed,

This winter has just been so brutal. Thankfully we are able to keep our car in our garage so we can make regular trips to the car wash to get rid of road salt, chemicals and splashed dirt and slush. Our car is a “daily driver” and - knock on wood - we haven’t had any problems with it starting on these severely cold mornings.

I’m writing to you because I’m concerned for our neighbor who is an elderly widow. She still drives but only when she needs to, which is good that she stays home but not so good for her car being able to start when she wants to go somewhere.

She does have an unheated garage that has electric service from her house and she keeps her car parked inside it. We would get her a trickle charger to use but we’re not always around to disconnect one when she wants to drive or reconnect it when she comes home. And I don’t think she would be capable of raising/closing the car hood or connecting the charger on her own. Do you have any advice?

Much thanks,
Stuart M.

Dear Stuart,

That’s nice that you are looking out for your neighbor, and I’m sure other folks find themselves in a similar situation. While most battery tenders or trickle chargers do require the raising of the vehicle hood in order to attach the connections, there is a way to accommodate someone like your neighbor.

It is possible to connect a battery charge maintainer to the vehicle’s cigarette lighter socket or an accessory power outlet instead of directly to the vehicle battery, which is generally the preferred method. To use a device that utilizes the vehicle’s 12V cigarette lighter or auxiliary port, it is necessary to ensure that the socket is always live - even when the vehicle is turned off. This type of device will not work on a vehicle that has an ignition shut-off.

Another solution is to permanently mount a battery maintainer onto the vehicle under the hood (some are magnetic, some require some sort of fastener). Connect it to the vehicle battery with the plug exposed (without pinching the wire!). She would then be able to easily plug in her battery tender to an extension cord that is plugged into a wall outlet in her garage.

In either case, it is wise to spend an extra dollar or two to get a smart maintainer that will shut off when the



vehicle battery is fully charged.

A word of advice: a battery tender is a maintenance device. It is designed to input a small amount of voltage and then shut off, so it is best used for maintaining a battery’s charge, not for bringing a severely depleted battery back to life. When that happens, you might consider going to your mechanic or a AAA Approved Auto Repair facility to have the battery professionally charged.

Hope this helps. Happy motoring!

Ed

Contact Ask Ed with your automotive questions:

AskEd@aaardgberks.com or write to Ask Ed, AAA, 920 Van Reed Road, Wyomissing, PA 19610.



TSA PreCheck Pop-up Event at AAA Reading-Berks



**Tuesday, April 1 - Friday, April 4
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*Cruise or Tour must be seven (7) nights or longer. Minimum per person rate of \$3,000. Incentives good toward NEW bookings made within 14 days after your TSA appointment.



REAL ID Deadline Real Close: May 7, '25

After a postponement due to COVID-19 and the national emergency declaration, the Federal REAL ID deadline is looming.

Beginning May 7, 2025, residents of Pennsylvania will need a REAL ID-compliant driver's license/photo ID card, or another form of federally-acceptable identification (i.e. a valid passport or military ID) to board a domestic commercial flight or enter a federal building or military installation that requires ID.

Those who wish to obtain a REAL ID must bring the required documents to a Driver Licensing Center

for verification in person. PennDOT does not have a process to pre-scan and upload REAL ID documents from home. Beware of websites that ask for identity documents to be submitted over the internet, claiming that they will forward your docs to PennDOT. Such a website is not affiliated with PennDOT and your identity could be compromised.

REAL ID is optional. If you do not get a REAL ID, you must have an alternate form of federally-acceptable identification (valid passport, military ID, etc.) to board domestic commercial flights and enter certain

federal facilities after May 7, 2025.

You can find a helpful guide that can lead you to decide whether or not a REAL ID is right for you at the PA Commonwealth of Pennsylvania website www.pa.gov.



Record 19M Americans Plan to Cruise in '25

AAA projects 19 million Americans will go on cruises this year, a 4.5% increase over 2024, when 18.2 million Americans went on cruise vacations. 2025 is expected to be the third straight year of record cruise passenger volume. The cruise industry has rebounded post-pandemic more strongly than other travel segments, and cruise demand has exceeded hotel demand the last two years.

"What we're witnessing in the cruise industry is nothing short of amazing, but it's no surprise," said Stacey Barber, Vice President of AAA Travel. "There's a reason most first-time cruise passengers become repeat cruisers. Cruise vacations offer something for everyone, no matter their age. And because most of the vacation is already paid for, travelers can focus on enjoying themselves and making lifelong memories with loved ones."

The cruise industry, which was impacted more severely than other travel segments by the 2020 pandemic, has experienced a remarkable rebound. In 2022, cruise volume rebounded to 84% of 2019's level, then surged to a new high in 2023, nearly 20% above the pre-pandemic baseline. That number has continued to climb since, with 2025 projected to surpass 2019 by 34%.

Seeking Sunshine

Most Americans going on cruises this year are seeking fun in the sun! 72% of U.S. cruise passengers are heading to the Caribbean, making it by far the most popular destination. 6% are taking Alaska cruises and 5% will cruise in the Mediterranean. The Caribbean's dominance this year is on par with its pre-pandemic numbers in 2018 and 2019. The Caribbean's share dipped to 68% in 2022-23 as cruises to Alaska and the Mediterranean surged, but destination shares have returned to pre-pandemic norms over the past year.

Shorter Caribbean cruises are rising in popularity. Even though most cruise itineraries are 6 to 8 days, 18% of Caribbean cruise itineraries this year are 2 to 5 days, compared to only 2% in 2023.

The three busiest cruise ports in the world are in the same state: Florida! Miami, Port Canaveral, and Fort Lauderdale are the busiest ports based on embarkation and debarkation. Miami landed the world's largest cruise ship with the debut of Royal Caribbean's *Icon of the Seas* last year, and this summer, Port Canaveral welcomes the *Icon's* sister ship, the equally large *Star of the Seas*.

You Booked a Cruise ... Now What?!

If you're one of the 19 million Americans going on a cruise this year, AAA Travel has expert advice to ensure your trip is smooth sailing.

Reserve activities ahead of time. Whether it's an excursion,

specialty dinner, or spa treatment, your best bet is to reserve your spot ASAP. Popular cruise activities sell out fast! And while you're planning ahead, consider getting travel insurance to protect your investment in case of a medical emergency or another interruption during your trip.

Arrive the day before. If you're flying into your port city, arrive a day or two before your ship is scheduled to depart. That takes the stress out of worrying about flight delays and cancellations, and it gives you time to explore your departure city. AAA travel agents can help book your flight through the cruise line which can be a convenient way to plan your trip. When you purchase airfare through cruise lines like Carnival, Princess, and Royal Caribbean, they will assist in the event of a travel disruption and help with ground transportation and other arrangements.

Pick your parking spot. If you're driving to your port city, decide ahead of time where you will leave your car. Most cruise ports offer parking right at the terminal, but like airports, those spots come at a premium price. To save some money, look for off-site cruise port parking options that offer a shuttle service. Another option is to look for hotels near the cruise port that offer "park & cruise" options. These packages allow you to stay at the hotel the night before your cruise and park your car there while you're gone. The hotel will then take you to the cruise port on departure day and pick you up once you return.

Download the cruise line's app. You can check in for your cruise through the app, review the itinerary, complete the mandatory lifeboat drill, look at the daily program, and in some cases, open your stateroom door, order food, make dinner reservations, and text your friends. Best of all, you don't need the ship's internet package to use cruise line apps - they are free to use onboard!

Having fun? Run it back! If you're enjoying your vacation at sea, look for the future cruise office onboard to book your next trip. There are often special promotions like onboard credits on top of the regular cruise line offers for bookings made onboard. Your travel agent back home will also be notified about your new booking. Just don't wait until the last minute. The office gets busier as the final day of the cruise approaches, so stop by early in the trip, or make an appointment if the office takes reservations.

Get more helpful cruise and general travel advice from AAA at [Exchange.AAA.com](https://www.aaa.com).

impact of rescheduling cannabis

Recent AAA Foundation study synthesizes existing scientific evidence regarding cannabis use and decriminalization in terms of the factors used to determine drug scheduling under the Controlled Substances Act. Further, it explores expert opinion on potential impacts of cannabis rescheduling.

Cannabis is currently a Schedule I controlled substance under the Federal Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act (Controlled Substances Act, or CSA for short). The Drug Enforcement Administration has an ongoing process to consider moving cannabis to a Schedule III drug, thereby reducing the associated penalties. Arguments have been made in recent years inviting public support for rescheduling and legalization of cannabis in the United States.

In 2017, a committee of experts gathered by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) concluded that there was a lack of scientific research regarding the health effects of using cannabis and cannabis-derived products. Much more modest in scope, the current report endeavors to provide a picture of the current state of scientific knowledge on the impact of cannabis use as it is associated with the factors established by the Controlled Substances Act for drug scheduling.

Methodology

This report included two main tasks. Part I offers a detailed review of the literature, including a description of the approach used to build the review; a brief portrayal of the biological mechanisms by which cannabis components affect (or could affect) human health and behavior; and a summary of findings with references. Additionally, key takeaways are presented in non-academic layman terms. Part II involved focus groups with subject matter experts, who shared their opinion on the potential impacts of cannabis rescheduling on public health and traffic safety.

For the literature review, using the 2017 NASEM report as the starting point, the research team conducted a search of the literature using a variety of scholarly and scientific databases as well as a review of resources available from professional associations and organizations. The results of the search were synthesized and summarized, and were aligned with factors considered under the CSA: Pharmacology, Potential for Abuse, and Public Health Impacts.

This review of the literature was complemented by two focus groups of 14 expert panelists who brought together various viewpoints about future public health and traffic

safety scenarios that may occur should the rescheduling of cannabis be approved. The invitees had expertise in multiple public health arenas that might be impacted by the rescheduling of marijuana on the federal level and included rep-

resentatives from organizations and agencies that have an interest in the topics of marijuana use and related policy.

Key Findings

In general, most of the experts agreed that the main concern coming from the rescheduling relates to how the public would perceive the rescheduling. Panelists were concerned that the public would perceive the rescheduling as an indication that “it [cannabis] is safe,” increasing the likelihood that cannabis-related negative health and safety consequences would develop.

On the other hand, participants agreed that the rescheduling would allow researchers to fully study the public-

“...the current report endeavors to provide a picture of the current state of scientific knowledge...”

health consequences of cannabis, as federal restrictions on the type and strength of cannabis allowed to be used in federally funded research has limited the types of research that can be conducted.

Experts also suggested that cannabis rescheduling would have an impact on traffic safety—that rescheduling could translate into an increase in the unsafe use of cannabis among drivers. The experts overwhelmingly supported continued research to understand both the use of cannabis alone, as well as its cognitive impact and impairment associated with driving. Participants also supported research to develop more tools to assess impairment and continued training efforts for law enforcement officers who are evaluating impairment during a roadside stop.

Traffic Safety Impacts

According to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety (AAAFTS), between 2013 and 2015, about 5% of drivers self-reported driving within an hour of using marijuana (Arnold & Tefft, 2016). In 2021, about 6% of drivers reported this behavior (AAAFTS, 2023). Analyses of the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) database indicated that between 2016 and 2020 the self-reported prevalence of DUI-C was between 4.2% and 4.9% (Salas-Wright et al., 2021; Myers et al., 2023).

Further analyses of the NSDUH data suggest there may be sex differences associated with DUI-C among users of medical and recreational cannabis, with male users of both medical and recreational cannabis more likely to report driving under the influence of cannabis than females (Lloyd et al., 2020).

Risk Perceptions

Cannabis use is still a concern regarding its possible impact on motor vehicle crashes. To address this concern, research has attempted to measure and examine the contribution of cannabis to crash risk. Broadly speaking, two types of studies were conducted to examine the impact of cannabis use on traffic-related outcomes: (1) laboratory and simulator studies and (2) epidemiological studies.

Laboratory and simulator studies have consistently found that the psychomotor skills necessary for safe driving become increasingly impaired at higher doses of cannabis (Sewell et al., 2009). Driving failures such as lane departures tend to occur after acute cannabis use, particularly

among occasional cannabis users, in part because daily users can develop tolerance and/or learn how to compensate for drug effects (e.g., by reducing speed) (Miller et al., 2022). Research also found that when cannabis and alcohol are used together, they yield worse driving performances than when cannabis is used alone (Ortiz-Peregrina et al., 2022).

On one hand, epidemiological studies have clearly shown a sustained increase in the prevalence of THC use among U.S. drivers, as revealed by the 2007 and 2013–2014 National Roadside Surveys (Berning et al., 2015), as well as by data on visits to the Emergency Department (ED)/trauma centers (Roehler et al., 2022; Crocker et al., 2023; Rudisill et al., 2023; Thomas et al., 2022). However, it is unclear whether the increase in prevalence also reflects an increase in cannabis impairment while driving (Myran et al., 2023). Some of the reasons that blur this relationship are as follows:

- Cannabis users tend to have characteristics that are similar to those shown by drivers with other high crash-risk factors, including polysubstance use (alcohol in particular), and being young and male. All these factors could confound cannabis-related crash risk study results if they are not properly controlled for.
- Determination of cannabis impairment at the roadside is difficult to assess (Ramaekers et al., 2023). The dosage and route of administration impact both the time course and intensity of impairment (Preuss et al., 2021). Data on these factors is usually missing in epidemiological studies (Brands et al., 2021).
- Drugged driving data available in the NHTSA Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) is unreliable because it is incomplete (Berning & Smither, 2014). As such, epidemiological studies based on crash data from FARS also yield unreliable results.

Despite these difficulties, researchers have attempted a variety of analytical strategies to assess the contribution of cannabis to crash risk.

You can read the technical report, *Cannabis Use, Public Health, and Traffic Safety: Outcomes from the Scientific Literature and Expert Opinion on the Potential Impacts of Rescheduling*, along with related fact sheets, at AAAFoundation.org.



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Navigate international travel with ease with AAA's expert international travel tips. Drawing from personal experience, we'll provide practical passport and visa guidance, healthy sleep, advice on handling money in other currencies and safety tips to help you plan your travel abroad without getting overwhelmed. With some preparation, you'll be ready to start planning your international travel. Let's dive into our international travel tips.

Prepare Your Documents

A valid passport is crucial not only for entry but also for visa applications and booking flights. Many countries require a passport to be valid for at least six months beyond your travel dates. Before booking your trip, check your U.S. passport, if you have one, to ensure you meet the six-month requirement.

If you don't have a passport, check to see if your local AAA branch offers passport photos. It can take from two to three months to receive a U.S. passport after applying, so do so well before your travel date. If you've found a deal that you just can't pass up or neglected to file for a passport, use a service like RushMyPassport, which gives AAA members a discount to file for an expedited U.S. passport.

Prior to booking, you should also check the entry requirements for the country you wish to travel to. Some countries require U.S. citizens to get a visa. You may also need to get vaccines before traveling. This information can be found on the U.S. State Department's website, travel.state.gov.

Managing Money While Abroad

Traveling abroad involves a host of financial considerations. Before your trip abroad, inform your bank and

credit card company about your itinerary to avoid a card decline or account suspension.

Choose a credit card that has no foreign transaction fees to avoid additional fees. If using a travel rewards credit card, check what benefits are included. Travel credit cards often include some travel insurance benefits, TSA PreCheck application fee waivers and Global Entry credits.

Familiarize yourself with your bank's ATM network and partner ATMs abroad to reduce out-of-network fees. When using ATMs, decline the currency conversion to get a potentially better exchange rate from your bank.

Withdraw cash in the local currency before visiting destinations where ATMs or card machines are not widely available. Also consider keeping most of your cash in a money belt to protect yourself from pickpocketing.



Overcoming Jet Lag

Jet lag is a reality for many international flights. Some people suggest adjusting your sleep patterns a few days before travel by going to bed an hour or two later if traveling west, or earlier if traveling east.

Seasoned AAA travel agents report success with overcoming jet lag by staying awake until the local bedtime once arriving at your destination. Take only short naps if necessary, engage in

social activities and maintain regular exercise to help your body clock adjust to the new time zone.

Drink plenty of fluids before, during and after the flight to stay hydrated, but try to avoid diuretics like caffeine and alcohol, which can disturb sleep.

Staying Connected

Maintaining connectivity during international travel is now simpler than ever. Check your cell phone carrier's international rates. Some plans include international data and texting.

An unlocked cell phone allows the use of local SIM cards, which may be more economical than international phone plans. Various communication apps, such as Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp and Skype, provide communication if you are on Wi-Fi.

Safety Tips

Despite the excitement of traveling abroad, safety should always be prioritized. Some international travel tips to keep in mind are: Use secure pockets or money belts to protect valuables; Carry only essentials when traveling out for the day; Use hotel safes to secure extra money and important documents; Stay vigilant in crowds and near commotions - such situations could be a set up for pickpocketing. Always check your surrounding area for personal items before leaving any location to avoid losing your things.

Enroll in the U.S. State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at mytravel.state.gov/s/step. This will allow you to enroll your international trip with the U.S. Embassy or Consulate. It will also help the U.S. government notify you about updated travel advisories and safety conditions.

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PA Reg Fees Reduced

Last year PennDOT announced that, due to changes established in Act 60 of 2024 signed by Governor Shapiro last summer, the annual income threshold for a retired Pennsylvanian to qualify for a reduced vehicle registration fee was increased, allowing more people to be eligible for this benefit. Plus, some veterans may now be eligible for free vehicle registration and titling fees.

"We're glad that these changes in the law help make things a little easier for older Pennsylvanians and our veterans," said PennDOT Secretary Mike Carroll. "PennDOT and the Shapiro Administration are committed to working with the General Assembly on commonsense changes like these that have a direct, positive impact on people's lives."

Previously, the annual income threshold for a retired customer to qualify for a reduced registration fee of \$11 annually was \$19,200. As of December 16, 2024, the annual income threshold increased to \$29,906 and is subject to annual Consumer Price Index adjustments.

"As we age, many of us find ourselves hitting the road less, yet paying the same registration fee as those who drive more frequently. With the changes to the annual income limits, these reduced fees will enable more older adults to

save some money to spend on other necessities while still having peace of mind on their vehicle's registration," said Pennsylvania Department of Aging Secretary Jason Kavulich.



"Thanks to Governor Shapiro, the General Assembly, and PennDOT for keeping older adults a priority."

For qualifying customers to receive the reduced vehicle registration fee of \$11, they must complete and submit Form MV-371, Application for a Retired Person's Processing Fee of a Vehicle Registration. Customers should attach the completed form to their invitation to renew and return it to PennDOT to be processed. The \$11 annual fee will be applied after the application is processed. More information on eligibility requirements can be found on PennDOT's Driver and Vehicle Services website.

Assistance is also available from the AAA Reading-Berks License & Notary desk Monday through Friday from 9:00am to 3:00pm.

Act 60 also provides for the elimination of registration and title fees for one passenger vehicle or truck weighing 9,000 pounds or less owned by military veterans who meet the following requirements (license plate fees still apply):

- Vehicles registered to a veteran who lost a limb or eye or who became partially paralyzed while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States.

- Vehicles registered to a person who, as a member or the Armed Forces of the United States, was captured by the enemy in any armed conflict for which the Department of Defense authorizes a campaign medal.

- Vehicles registered to a person who has been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

- Vehicles registered to a person who has been awarded the Purple Heart.



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- Lunch at Creekside Inn
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Saturday June 14, 2025
\$339 pp non railroad member
(Friends of the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania)

- Tour, lunch at United Railroad Historical Society of New Jersey
- Dinner at Clinton Station Diner



Annual Meeting

To AAA Reading-Berks members:

In accordance with the Bylaws of AAA Reading-Berks, you are hereby notified that the Annual Meeting of the Club will be held at 4:30 PM on Thursday, April 24, 2025, in the downstairs meeting room at AAA Reading-Berks, 920 Van Reed Road, Wyomissing.

Notice of nominations for Club Directors – in compliance with Article IV, Section 7 of the Club Bylaws, a committee has placed in nomination the following members as Directors for a three-year term: Frances Aitken, Steve Bright, Jan Johnson, and Virgil Kahl.

Note: Any 1% of the membership in good standing may also make nominations, providing such nominations are received by the secretary at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the annual meeting.

#AdultingwithAAA - Financial Literacy

Responsible financial planning is vital to adulting, and it looks different for everyone. Whether it's budgeting, saving, managing debt, being credit aware, or taking control of your finances, adulting comes with the challenges and successes of being a responsible adult.

This #AdultingwithAAA Financial Literacy segment is your friendly financial guide to understanding the power of financial responsibility.

The Power of Financial Literacy

Whether starting with no financial knowledge or if you are a master at balancing your budget regularly, it's your financial responsibility to understand the personal changes affecting your money.

Financial literacy goes beyond just managing money. It involves understanding the different avenues for saving and investing, such as through savings accounts, stocks, or real estate. Additionally, it includes being knowledgeable about managing and getting out of debt, whether it's student loans, credit card debt, or mortgages. By learning these concepts, you can develop a greater sense of financial well-being and independence, leading

How to use financial literacy:

Allocate: Allocating your income involves designating

a portion of your earnings to specific purposes or goals. This could include setting money aside for short-term goals such as a vacation and longer-term goals like saving for a car or paying off student debt.

Budget: Budgeting is an important aspect of responsible financial planning and adulting. Once you've created your allocated spending plan, decide what part of your income goes towards various goals, such as daily expenses, savings, debt repayment, and investments.

Save: Once you've highlighted the significance of budgeting and how it can help you achieve your financial goals, it's time to start saving!

Plan & Pay: It's time to move your income towards your various goals and savings. Paying off credit cards? Trying to secure a loan? This approach can help you maintain financial discipline and focus on what matters most to you, ultimately leading to greater financial stability and security.

Adulting can be both exciting and challenging. As you navigate the responsibilities of everyday life, finding ways to save money, take advantage of benefits, and make informed decisions is essential. Let's embark on this journey of #AdultingwithAAA together!

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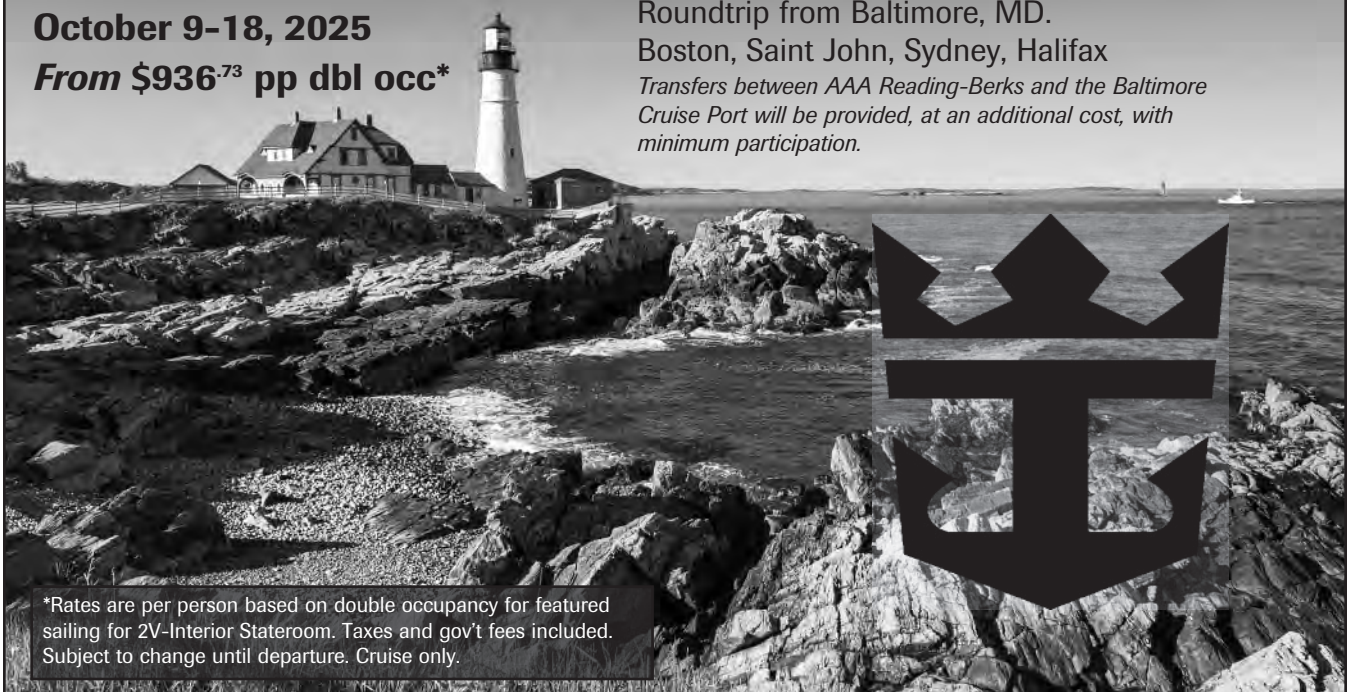


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Dark City Roads Deadliest for Pedestrians

New research from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety reveals concerning trends in pedestrian fatalities in the U.S., which have risen by over 80% in the past fifteen years after reaching a historic low in 2009. Interestingly, almost the entire increase in pedestrian deaths has occurred on urban arterial roads and after dark. These busy city roads are typically built to quickly move a lot of traffic between metropolitan areas while still allowing access to local streets. This means pedestrians and vehicles often share congested roads that are not always well-lit or have appropriate sidewalks, crosswalks, or traffic signals.

"The continued rise in pedestrian fatalities in the U.S. since 2010 is a traffic safety challenge we need to address," said Dr. David Yang, president and executive director of the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. "This study not only identified common underlying factors related to pedestrian deaths but opportunities where stakeholders can collaborate to make improvements in their communities. We need to work together to create safer transportation systems for pedestrians and other road users."

AAA Foundation collaborated with researchers from the Collaborative Sciences Center for Road Safety to study this issue further by performing case studies in three cities with varying levels and trends in pedestrian fatalities. In the cities examined, the researchers found that a large majority of pedestrian fatalities occurred on busy city roads at night, which aligned with national trends.

More alarming, researchers uncovered that a disproportionate number of these pedestrian deaths occurred in socially and economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. Many residents in these areas depend heavily on walking, especially to reach public transportation. Cities continue to grapple with several challenges when it comes to implementing the necessary infrastructure upgrades needed to make roads safer in these communities. AAA urges city planners, public health professionals, legislators, and traffic safety practitioners to work together to reverse these deadly trends.

The study also identified several interconnected factors, including a lack of safe crossing locations, high pedestrian crossing volumes, poorly lit roads without continuous sidewalks, and questions over road ownership (state versus local) and policy challenges.

For the case studies, the research team examined the cities of Albuquerque, NM, Charlotte, NC, and Memphis, TN, and found:

- Most pedestrian fatalities occurred well outside of downtown: more than half happened more than four miles from the city center.
- Most of the pedestrian fatalities occurred on arterial roads, and about half occurred in darkness.
- Injuries and deaths occurred disproportionately in socially and economically disadvantaged neighborhoods and areas with older housing.
- Cities face challenges in improving pedestrian safety, including high costs for infrastructure upgrades, barriers to implementing changes on state-controlled roads, and public

resistance to change.

"Reducing the spike in pedestrian deaths requires data-driven investments where they matter most," said Jake Nelson, AAA's director of traffic safety advocacy. "If safety is truly a top priority for decision-makers, we should expect greater investments in historically underinvested communities where a disproportionate number of pedestrians are hit and killed."

To enhance pedestrian safety and reduce fatalities, AAA suggests several key steps:

- Follow the Data: Let the data be the guide – investing in the areas and solutions that will make the biggest impact. That means targeting unsafe locations outside downtown areas, often in socially and economically disadvantaged neighborhoods.
- Coordinate for Impact: State and local governments can work more closely to invest resources to save lives where needed most, regardless of who owns that roadway.
- Demand a Safer System: A Safe System approach anticipates human mistakes and reduces crash severity by addressing safety holistically through safer roads, vehicles, speeds, and road users.

AAA reminds drivers to do their part by not engaging in risky driving behaviors such as speeding, texting, driving while drowsy or distracted, or driving under the influence of cannabis or alcohol. Stay alert and follow speed limits, and keep your smartphone out of reach.

Pedestrians should use caution by staying on sidewalks and using crosswalks as often as possible. Obey traffic signals, look both ways before crossing. Don't walk and text.

Crash Recon Training Comes to Berks

Crashes happen. Most can be prevented. One way to prevent crashes - and the associated loss of life, financial hit and traffic snarls - is to understand how and why the crash occurred in the first place.

To that end, the Reading-Berks Auto Club Foundation for Safety hosted a one-day training event that helped law enforcement teams learn how to effectively extract crash data "post-crash" from the involved vehicles for analysis.

Training participants from Berks and beyond learned how to draw out data from the vehicle's event data recorder or EDR. This information is one of the most important pieces of evidence to be collected and evaluated as part of a crash investigation.

Stored information can include speed, brake use, and restraint system use/performance to determine what the vehicle was doing before, during and after a crash event. Only properly trained technicians and analysts may access vehicle crash data for use in the reconstruction of traffic crashes.

Crash data gained in this manner is valuable because it provides objective results and is a method for validation of traditional crash reconstruction techniques.

Training was provided by Timothy Cutshaw, an Accredited Accident Reconstructionist (ACTAR) with Technical Collision Solutions LLC of Orwigsburg at AAA Reading-Berks on December 12, 2024.

Twenty members of law enforcement completed the one-day training event and are now qualified to extract and analyze post-crash EDR information for the purpose of crash scene reconstruction.

Use of event data recorders began as far back as the 1990s but were not standard equipment until model

year 2013 vehicles rolled off the assembly lines. As of 2020, about ninety-nine percent of all new models in North America have event data recorders. NHTSA requires manufacturers to capture certain data in their vehicles' EDRs and other modules within the vehicle.

Crash reconstruction is important because it provides scientific evidence and clarity, especially valuable in situations where eye witness accounts do not agree or are absent, or in complex crash scenarios involving multiple vehicles or other road users such as bicyclists or pedestrians.

It also can help determine if the actions of the motor vehicle operator, equipment failure such as a blown tire, or environmental factors such as fog, potholes or sun glare played a role in a collision.



L to R: James Waits (Muhlenberg Twp PD), Timothy Cutshaw (trainer, Technical Collision Solutions LLC), Vince Mazza (Bern Twp PD), and Andrew Keene (Spring Twp PD).



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Christmas at Stone Gables Estate

December 10, 2025 \$190*pp
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Virginia International Tattoo

April 24-27, 2025 \$1,525*pp dbl occ
DID YOU KNOW...
Established in 1997, the Virginia International Tattoo is an annual celebration consisting of music, precision marching, and other demonstrations. It features more than 1,000 civilian and military performers from seven nations, including bagpipe brigades and fife and drum corp and drill teams. 2025 is the 250th anniversary of the US Army, Navy and Marine Corp; this year's celebration will pay tribute to all of our military branches and the brave men and women who are serving now and have served in the past. Returning favorites include



Norway's Band and Drill Team, OzScot Australia - Australia's Premier International Highland Dance Team, Switzerland's Top Secret Drum Corp, and The Netherland's Royal Marine Band. New this year will be the Japan Air Self Defense Force Central Band. There are too many extras to mention here, plus our hotel is right on the beach. Be sure to join us for this thrilling event.

For more information or to book these getaways, contact Rose Fisher, 610.374.5600 x 7938 or rfisher@aaardgberks.com.

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Sept 14-23, 2025 \$4,050 pp* dbl occ
Dublin, Kilkenny, Blarney Castle, The Ring of Kerry, Galway, Sligo. Audio headsets incl.

*Rate is per person, based on dbl occ. Airfare additional. Contact AAA Travel 610-374-5600.

7-nt Bahamas, Mexico & Cayman Cruise

Celebrity *Xcel*

Nov 23-30, 2025 from \$1,648 pp* dbl occ
Roundtrip from Fort Lauderdale: Bimini, Cozumel, and George Town.

*Rate is per person, based on dbl occ for Category DI - Deluxe Inside Stateroom. Taxes and gov't fees additional. Subject to change until departure. Contact AAA Travel 610-374-5600.

Scottish Rite Southern Caribbean Cruise

Royal Caribbean *Odyssey of the Seas*

Jan 26-Feb 7, 2026 from \$1,694⁶³ pp* dbl occ
This cruise is open to all! Join Commander-in-Chief Elect Glen Houck for this 12-night Southern Caribbean Cruise roundtrip from Cape Liberty. San Juan, Charlotte Amalie, St. Johns, Bridgetown, Castries, Philipsburg.

*Rate is per person, based on dbl occ. for Category 4V Interior Stateroom. Taxes and gov't fees included. Contact AAA Travel 610-374-5600.

Contrasts of Switzerland

April 5-12, 2026 \$5,375 pp* dbl occ
Train from Zurich to St. Moritz, Glacier Express Train from St. Moritz to Zermatt, high-speed train from Zermatt to Vevey, Golden Pass route train journey from Geneva to Lucerne, more!

*Rate is per person, based on dbl occ. Roundtrip airfare additional. Contact AAA Travel 610-374-5600.

Spotlight on Northern Italy

April 16-24, 2026 \$4,299 pp* dbl occ book by 10/17/25
Treviso, Verona, Venice, Asolo, Prosecco wine tour, glass-blowing demonstration, much more!

*Rate is per person, based on dbl occ. Inc RT air from PHL. Subject to change. Contact AAA Travel 610-374-5600.

Call AAA for details on these Discoveries tours! 610-374-5600



Pirates vs Phillies

Citizens Bank Park

Saturday, May 17, 2025 \$219 pp*

• Incl Game Ticket: Section 138; Rows 36-39

Mets vs Phillies

Citizens Bank Park

Sunday, June 22, 2025 \$179 pp*

• Incl Game Ticket: Section 310; Rows 4-7

Kellerman's Experience

June 20-22, 2025 \$899 pp*

• Visit real film locations on "Dirty Dancing" tour
• Johnny and Baby's Dirty Dancing lessons
• Mountain Lake Lodge Magical Mountain Getaway
• 2 nights hotel accommodations, 4 meals

Riding the Rails

September 9-15, 2025 \$3,964 pp* AAA member

• Champlain Valley Dinner Train, Saratoga, Corinth & Hudson Railway, Canadian Railway Museum ExpoRail, Montreal/Quebec City Tours
• 6 nts hotel accommodations, 13 meals
• Hosted by Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania

Southern Charm

October 13-19, 2025 \$3,969 pp dbl occ*

• Charleston, Savannah & Jekyll Island
• RT air from PHI w/return from Jacksonville, FL
• 6 nights hotel accommodations, 9 meals
• Sightseeing by luxury motorcoach

*Rates are subject to availability at time of booking and include taxes, fees and fuel surcharges which are subject to change. All pricing and included features are based on a minimum number of full fare passengers. Desired pick up location is not guaranteed until passenger minimums are met.

Renew Your Membership at AAA.com

what's going on

Aging Parent Resource Forum

A Resource for Adult Children Supporting Aging Parents



AAA Reading-Berks is happy to once again host this “drop in” health fair-styled event intended specifically for those caring for an elderly parent or relative.

Attendees will be able to speak with professionals offering financial resources, care alternatives, assistive services and connections to people and programs that can serve them and their loved ones.

MONDAY MARCH 10 4:00-6:00pm at AAA Reading-Berks

No appointment required. This event will be on the lower level of the AAA office at 920 Van Reed Rd, Wyomissing (use side entrance).

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Dave's Auto Service

925 W. Philadelphia Ave, Boyertown 610-367-1844

Dubble's German Motors

2697 Bernville Rd, Rdg 610-375-8330

Dulin's Tire & Service Co.

3151 Centre Avenue, Reading 610-929-5820

1530 Lancaster Avenue, Shillington 610-775-0375

Fred Beans Ford

525 Route 100 N, Boyertown 610-367-2081

Haldeman Ford

15465 Kutztown Road, Kutztown 610-683-3553

Lee Myles Transmissions & Auto Care

914 Fern Avenue, Reading 610-775-3820

6720 Perkiomen Avenue, Birdsboro 610-404-4227

Patriot Buick/GMC

933 E. Philadelphia Ave, Boyertown 610-367-8800

Rich's Automotive Sales & Service

Rot. 12/1340 Clarion St, Reading 610-376-4045

VJ Wood Service Center

411 South Third Street, Hamburg 484-662-4004

Approved Auto Body

Fred Beans Collision Center, 525 Route 100 N, Boyertown 610-367-2680



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