



**SOUTHERN  
CAPITAL**  
SERVICES, INC.

*REGISTERED INVESTMENT ADVISOR SINCE 1982*

August 2024  
Volume 36 Issue 8

## Two Tickets to Paradise

Compiled and Written By: Trace Dixon

1977 was an exciting year. The only person to serve as president without being elected to either the presidency or the vice presidency passed the baton to a nuclear engineer/peanut farmer from the middle-of-nowhere Georgia. “Star Wars” hit the silver screen in late May, a movie which the Louisville Courier-Journal described as “frequently boring with its fairy-tale plot.” and “may seem no more sophisticated or believable than an old Spider Man comic book.” Good thing those two franchises never went anywhere, right? John Travolta also headlined a flick, “Saturday Night Fever,” ushering the song “Stayin’ Alive” by the Bee Gees onto radio waves, disco halls, and party mixtapes. 1977 was also the year that Eddie Money invited his “baby” to pack her bags and leave tonight, because he’s got two tickets to paradise.

While heated political tensions, lightsabers, and “Stayin’ Alive” all have remained ever-present in the ethos of today’s America, what is becoming more and more difficult to justify are those two tickets to paradise. We keep waiting so long, and yet the prices just don’t seem to go down. In 1977, the starting cost of a day at Disney was a whopping \$6.00 per ticket.<sup>1</sup> Today the cheapest you can find those same one-day general admission tickets is \$109.00 plus tax, per person.<sup>2</sup> I think I know what’s fueling the magic and it’s probably not pixie dust! Other vacations aren’t looking that much more affordable with Nerdwallet’s Travel Pricing Index showing a 10% increase from 2020 in the cost of taking a vacation.<sup>3</sup> When we add that to the raised costs of housing, insurance, groceries, and gas, the cost of trying to get away for a week, even to something paradise-adjacent, just feels out of reach for most Americans.

Unfortunately, that has not stopped us from hitting the road. Just like how disco won’t die, so too is the expectation of providing a once-in-a-lifetime summer family road trip each year that will leave the kids with lifechanging memories and make the neighbors and Facebook friends envious of your parenting skills. We all like keeping up with the Jones’s. Unfortunately, that pressure has led to record high credit card debt with nearly one in three Americans stating they plan on going into debt to enjoy their summer vacation.<sup>4</sup>

Per a recent Bankrate study, 36% of Americans taking a vacation this summer are willing to and even plan on using debt to pay for it. Debt options include carrying a balance on a credit card, buy now/pay later services, borrowing from family or friends, or a personal loan. While I am all in favor of savoring every moment of a trip and finding ways to enjoy it even after returning home, this is a lingering reminder that is best left on the beach, in the mountains, or in the furthest back corner of It’s a Small World!

If that’s not enough to concern you, according to a recent survey by WalletHub, 46% of Americans are still paying down their credit card balance from last summer.<sup>5</sup> That same study also found that 45% of Americans are charging everyday purchases to credit cards they are carrying debt on, paying interest on purchases they could’ve just paid in full, and adding to the amount of debt they need to pay off. If we thought a 30-minute layover in Atlanta was stressful enough, imagine paying for that cross terminal 5k for years to come, as well as letting it build upon your day-to-day life!



With all of these statistics in mind, we can be tempted to feel “This could happen to me!” But with three common sense financial fundamentals, we can take steps to avoid the anxiety and safeguard against being pressured into making decisions that have long term payoffs for short term fun.

1. Budget and Save for your vacation, sometimes years out if need be. Budgeting allows us to figure out what you need to give up today to have fun tomorrow.
2. Find Hidden Gems on the Map instead of the current “It” location. Sometimes we have enough set aside for a vacation, just not the vacation. Do not feel you have to go to a name-brand location for it to be a vacation worth you and your family’s time.
3. Search for Ways to Save, like packing food instead of buying it, staying in a hotel away from the action rather than one in the middle of everything, or searching for alternative travel means to get to your destination.

But above all of these tips, it is important to remember to stop letting the sight of other’s experiences get the best of you. If your reason for purchasing an item, paying for a service, or going on a trip is “Well, the Jones’s down the street are doing it!” then you might need to think twice before hitting “buy.” We don’t have to go to far off places to find Instagram-worthy material. We don’t have to enjoy high-end food at high-end restaurants in order to find great bites to eat. Hurting our personal financial health is never worth trying to do what you feel others say you must do to be a good friend, parent, or grandparent.

Does that mean we should never go on vacation? No, take as many trips as you can feasibly budget if that’s what you and your crew enjoy! Take trips to places the Jones’s haven’t been, no need to keep up with them if you’re in front of them! Figure out what is of value to you and maximize that while away rather than spending your hard-earned paycheck on things you really don’t need or value. Having a plan is always the best first step for any big event in life. As this summer winds down and school starts back up, now is a great time to start thinking towards next summer and what you might want to do.

If you want help planning your finances for a future trip to paradise or somewhere paradise-adjacent, feel free to reach out to us to discuss what options are available. We are here to help you with all aspects of life!

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO NOTIFY US IF YOU HAVE HAD ANY MATERIAL CHANGES IN YOUR FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.**

### Sources:

- <sup>1</sup> <https://allears.net/walt-disney-world/wdw-planning/1970s-walt-disney-world-tickets/>
- <sup>2</sup> <https://www.wdw-magazine.com/walt-disney-world-ticket-prices-2024/>
- <sup>3</sup> <https://www.nerdwallet.com/article/travel/travel-price-tracker>
- <sup>4</sup> <https://www.bankrate.com/credit-cards/news/survey-summer-vacation/>
- <sup>5</sup> <https://wallethub.com/blog/credit-card-debt-survey/49637>



The information presented by the author and the publisher is for informational and educational purposes only. It should not be considered specific investment advice, does not take into consideration your specific situation, and does not intend to make an offer or solicitation for the sale or purchase of any securities or investment strategies.

Additionally, no legal or tax advice is being offered. If legal or tax advice is needed, a qualified professional should be engaged. Investments involve risk and are not guaranteed. This newsletter contains information that might be dated and is intended only to educate and entertain. Any links or websites referred to are for informational purposes only. Website not associated with the author are unaffiliated sources of information and the author takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the information provided by these websites. Be sure to consult a qualified financial adviser and/or tax professional before implementing any strategy discussed herein.