



Cast away your worries and enjoy a family holiday at Castaway Island, Fiji (main); or take a guided tour of the Isle of Skye (below).

PICTURES: MATT C BAUER, ISTOCK

YOUR FIRST RESORT

KIM CULVER

We are a family with twin boys, 7, and a five-year-old daughter. We are finding it hard to get a room suitable for five people. Some hotels have told us it is an occupational health and safety issue to have more than four people in certain rooms.

DOC ♦

Try resort-style properties, rather than a hotel which is more geared towards couples and business travellers.

For example, here in Australia you could look at the Paradise Resort on the Gold Coast (paradiseresort.com.au) which offers a range of family rooms catering for up to six people.

They also theme some of the rooms with colourful bunk beds, Xbox 360 or a PlayStation, funky carpet and a play desk.

This resort is full of activities to entertain your family and will give you a bit of a break. There is a huge water park, a kids' club zoned to particular age groups, an ice-skating rink, a 9m-high inflatable slide, adventure park plus plenty more exhausting facilities.

While the kids are busy, you can hang out in the adults' area where you'll find live music, wine tastings and cooking demonstrations. There's

also the beach and Surfers Paradise's other attractions to explore.

For Fiji, have a look at Castaway Island (castawayfiji.com). The accommodation here can be in a five-share bure comprising a king plus three single beds or, if you'd like to share with friends, there is the family bure which sleeps up to 10 people.

The kids' club is open from 9am to 10pm every day and focuses on nature-based play rather than electronic. Activities include crab hunting, snorkelling lessons, ice-cream eating competitions and participating in traditional ceremonies.

The Aulani Disney Resort in Hawaii (resorts.disney.go.com) features two-bedroom suites and one, two or three-bedroom villas to suit families or groups. It's right on the beachfront and has plenty of activities included in

your room rate. The kids' club, called Aunty's Beach House, will immerse the youngsters in Hawaiian culture, art and fun, with a Disney theme. There are also daily pool parties with dancing, Disney characters, surfing and games.

Also have a look at Bali for a good, economical family holiday. Here you

can rent a whole villa with your own chef, pool, outdoor areas and enough bedrooms for any size group. See Ministry of Villas (ministryofvillas.com) for their range in all the popular locations. A villa can be relaxing as a retreat from the crowds

and a place to regroup as a family. Another suggestion is Club Med (clubmed.com.au). Their resorts worldwide cater to families. The Phuket property may interest you as it has interconnecting rooms. Here the kids will be kept busy with qualified youth group leaders while experiencing the Thai culture. As a tip, if you can travel outside school holidays you will generally find better accommodation rates.

LOOKING FOR AN ESCORT

Can you recommend a tour company for my elderly mother and aunt to travel to the UK where they will be escorted the whole way?

DOC ♦

Roundabout Tours offer a personalised and escorted UK tour over four weeks. Highlights include Bath, Waterford, Ring of Kerry, Dublin,



Isle of Skye and York.

AIRFARE REFUND WOES

I recently missed a domestic flight and am told there is absolutely no refund. I would like to question how the airlines can

enforce this under basic consumer law? Can airlines in Australia still enforce a no-refund policy on some tickets as they state?

DOC ♦

Our domestic airlines have always imposed certain restrictions and conditions to each fare level in economy class.

This began in the early days to separate the leisure from the business traveller and provide cheaper flights to the holiday traveller. Those who fly for business purposes want the ability to change and/or cancel flights at short notice without incurring fees and are willing to pay for the privilege.

Holidaymakers and leisure travellers generally lock in their dates or are less likely to make changes to their flights at the last minute, so are happy with the cheaper flights which come with fare conditions. Usually, these cheaper fares state they are non-refundable and non-changeable.

Currently, airlines can and do impose regulations if you need to cancel or change your flight on most cheaper fares. This varies per airline.

Consumer group Choice recently looked at this and discovered that consumer protection by airlines was not at the same standard as other industries. They say, under Australian Consumer Law, you are entitled to a refund no matter how many times the airline states you are not.

They also recommend the appropriate level of cancellation fee should be 10 per cent of the fare instead of the current 100 per cent in most cases.

Another point they highlighted and are looking at is the no-show clause. This has caught many travellers out and left them stranded at transit points or unable to board the flight they thought they were booked on.

This clause allows airlines to cancel the remaining flights of your itinerary if you happen to miss just one leg, usually without any notice.

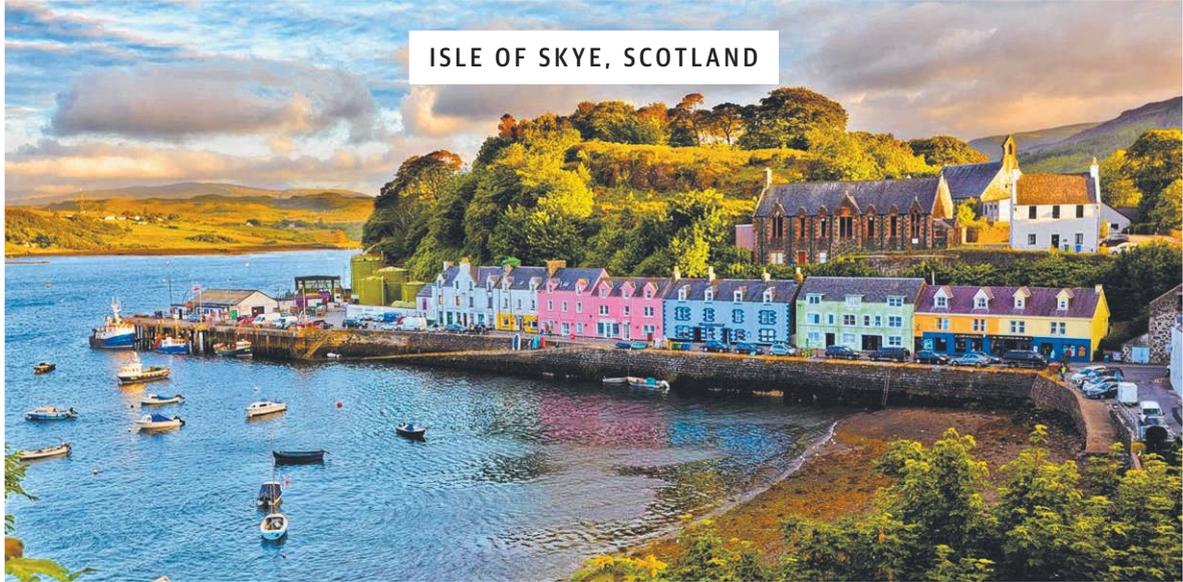
If you aren't having any luck with a refund from your airline, check your travel insurance policy.

It should cover you if you need to cancel due to the unforeseen, and some fares allow you to bank the amount for future use.

DOC'S TIP OF THE WEEK



Check your luggage allowance with each airline before you depart. It may not be the same for your whole itinerary.



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A silhouette of a commercial airplane in flight, angled upwards against a bright blue sky with a few wispy clouds.