

## An expensive family trip

Read On • May 2022 issue • page 8

page 1 of 1

This cartoon by Dave Whamond was published by Cagle Cartoons. It's a cartoon that deals with the high cost of living.

The cartoon is made like a quiz. There's a yellow box with a question in it at the top, which reads: "Which expensive trip did the average family take last year?" Underneath the box there are three possible answers, A, B, or C. Each is illustrated with a drawing. The first answer is "Maui", and the picture shows an idyllic holiday scene with palm trees on a beach and the sun in a blue sky over a clear blue sea. The second answer is "Europe", and there are some famous European buildings in the picture: the Colosseum of Rome, the Eiffel Tower of Paris, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, and the Acropolis of Athens. The third answer is "the grocery store". There aren't any pretty holiday scenes in this picture. The drawing shows a family of four standing at the checkout of a supermarket. The woman is pushing a shopping trolley with groceries. She is looking at a very long receipt and has a shocked expression – she is gritting her teeth and her eyes are almost popping out of her head. In the background, the man is slapping his hand in front of his eyes, looking frustrated and as if he can't believe how much money they have to pay.

The topic taken up in this cartoon is the high cost of living that people are confronted with because of inflation. By contrasting lovely pictures of holiday destinations with real life, the cartoon shows how high prices are and how difficult it has become for the average family to pay the bills. Instead of going on holiday, they're lucky if they still have enough money to pay for a trip to the grocery store.

I think the cartoon is a funny play on expectations. The first two pictures show places that you would expect to see when someone asks about a family trip – the third does not. And it's exactly this that made me laugh because it seems so absurd; it's just such a strong contrast. However, there's also shock at how so many people are struggling these days.



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