

10 Tips for Easier Travel

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1. Let your bank know.

Imagine sitting at a beachside cafe enjoying a specialty sandwich. The server brings your bill with a smile. You hand over your card. Your server returns with a frown. Oops, your bank's security thinks someone is attempting to abscond with your funds in a beachy paradise. Call your bank a few days before you leave to let them know you will be using your card(s) while out of town.

2. Bring the chargers.

You've had a wonderful day exploring the quaint shops and local museums in the previously unvisited country. You arrive back at your hotel and plan on using the WiFi to make a call and let your family and friends know what a fabulous time you are having and how they should plan their own tour as soon as possible. Uh oh, your phone is dead and charger left securely in the outlet at home. Pack all relevant chargers in an easily accessible, separate bag (kept in a small pouch in your carry-on luggage, if flying).

3. Speaking of a carry-on bag, take one!

You have all of that available space under the seat in front of you. OK, you have a small space with strict dimensional guidelines for usage, but it is important to use. There's nothing quite like good teeth brushing, deodorant refresh, and moist facial towelette during a long flight. If the thought of a damp toothbrush returning to your bag does not appeal to you, disposable options are available. Just make sure you take some to share with your traveling companions because once they see how dapper you appear, they'll come calling, and let's

face it, you're not too hard to find in your assigned seat.

4. Dress appropriately (for security).

Have you ever been behind that guy who didn't understand he has to take off his belt to get through airport security? Or stuck waiting for an entire family to take off their shoes? There are two schools of thought behind dressing to fly. The first is geared solely around airport security speed—no belt, no sandals, no hair tie around the wrist (yes, that is a problem). The second is about maximizing your packing. Need hiking boots at your destination? Wear them. Winter coat? Tie it around your waist. Extra reusable water bottles (currently empty, of course)? Tie them to your carry on. You may look odd, but you've just saved yourself quite a bit of space in your checked bag or in your carry on should you travel light.

Either route you choose, be prepared to take off, out, and put back any items that need further examination in a swift, efficient manner. Look up the regulations for each airport because they can and, most likely, will be different, and you don't want to be that person slowing the security line ahead of a bunch of eye rollers.

5. Dress appropriately (culture vs. comfort).

What you would like to wear on the plane/bus/train for comfort is, perhaps, not what is going to be culturally acceptable in your place of destination. Some locales have a different set of rules for tourists that do allow for a different mode of dress, but many do not. It is considered respectful to learn what is acceptable and what is not for each location you will be visiting.

Weather, too, could be drastically different. Again, this is where having a small bag with you containing necessary clothing items for a quick wardrobe change before or upon immediate arrival at your destination is useful.

6. Bring your camera.

Phones are great, but no one argues for a greater cell phone picture quality over a real camera. Consider the purpose of the pictures you are taking. Are they to simply show off on social media or to be viewed merely from your phone? Or, do you have a grander vision of snapping that perfect shot to enlarge and hang in your home? What happens if you discover you are a budding photographer and only have just your phone?

Don't forget the airplane mode or that cute notification that your grandmother posted a new picture of her bichon frise might cost more than such a darling photo was worth.

7. Don't forget packing cubes.

Are you staying in one location for a few days or longer and planning to unpack your suitcase or exceptionally large backpack? (Rule of thumb: If staying longer than three days, unpack.) Or are you going to be hopping from one location to another? Maybe you simply don't like unpacking every few days over a much longer trip. Welcome to packing cubes. There are several brands on the market. Whichever you pick, they are remarkably serviceable in several regards. First, let's go back a moment to airport security. Imagine your bag is randomly selected for further inspection. You've crammed your bag full. The agent unzips the zipper, and <insert most embarrassing item(s) here> comes flying out. Enter packing cubes.

Second, they keep your stuff organized. Even if you are not an organized person, you've grouped like items together and put them in a proverbial travel timeout. Not only will it make it easier to find things, it's easier to repack those same items.

Thirdly, ever mix clean and dirty laundry in your suitcase? Packing cubes! Enough said.

8. Speaking of laundry ...

Take a laundry bag. There are different travel laundry bags that can hang, collapse, have straps and even do your laundry for you. One of those isn't true, but they are quite convenient for keeping dirty clothes isolated while in a hotel room. Should a hotel have laundry services, you're already prepared with your neat bag. If you do take laundry detergent, two recommendations: One, don't put it in your carry-on (liquids, you know), and two, take individual packets. There's nothing quite like laundry detergent spillage—well, unless it's shampoo spillage.

9. Pack your liquids in a waterproof container.

They make lovely bathroom travel bags with plastic zippered compartments to house various liquids. Use them. Not only is it terribly convenient to just grab your bathroom bag, set it on the counter in the bathroom, and retrieve it with little fuss upon your departure, but it will keep your clothes shampoo/conditioner/toner/face wash/shaving cream free. Also, take smaller versions of those items to save space and just in case you do have spillage. It can be great to coordinate with other travelers if sharing a room or going on a longer trip where larger quantities might be needed. "You bring the shampoo. I'll bring the conditioner." Remember, forgotten items can usually be purchased at your destination so don't stress.

10. Don't stress.

Things happen. Be prepared. Don't stress. Take all medications you currently need. Take a few more. Things like antacids, pain relievers, upset tummy medication, insect repellent and Band-Aids can be useful.

If traveling overseas, keep track of your passport, money, credit cards and other important documents. Leave copies of your passport with someone, at home, or have a picture on your phone. If you put items in a hotel safe, make sure you check

said safe before going home or to the next spot. It's demoralizing to find out you've tucked your passport safely away in a hotel safe only to realize you've left it there once you get to the airport.

Find a way to pack that works, and pack the same way every time. It will help you not forget items.

Don't stress. You'll be traveling with the best. They've got this.

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