

# Travelling abroad? Here's your travel checklist

Travelling, whether for business or pleasure, and exploring new places is always an exhilarating experience, but there are certain checks and processes a traveller must go through first such as acquiring a visa and packing for the trip. Andrew Shelton, managing director of Cheapflights says: "The biggest problems travellers regularly encounter are due to lack of proper preparation such as not checking to make sure their passports are valid for at least six months, informing the bank that they'll be traveling (so that their cards don't get frozen), or buying tickets for events and locations in advance."



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"We all want travelling to be as stress-free as possible, and a little planning goes a long way - so we've compiled a handy checklist to assist travellers before they fly."

## Before you go

1. **Do your homework.** Knowing what to expect of your destination means you'll have a much better chance of experiencing all it has to offer. Blogs and websites such as [travel24.com](#), [nomadicmatt.com](#) or [migrationology.com](#), as well as platforms such as Pinterest, offer amazing tips from traveller and locals.

2. You need at least **six months' validity on your passport** to enter some countries so check ahead.

3. **Contact your bank** to make sure your ATM/credit card will work overseas. It's also a good idea to tell bank staff you're

heading away so they don't freeze your card due to unusual activity that will be flagged as fraudulent.

4. **Get a cloud-based storage account** (Google Cloud, iCloud and Dropbox are examples of free cloud storage hosts) and scan all tickets, passports, driver licenses and important documents such as travel insurance policies into it. If anything gets lost or stolen you can easily access the copies. Leave a copy of essential documents at home or with someone you trust too – just in case.

5. Ensure any **vaccinations** you need are up to date. Specialist travel health clinics can help with this.

6. Renew all **essential prescriptions** and take any medication you need with you. Medication names often vary between countries.

7. Pack an **extra set of clothes in your carry-on bag**, as airlines have been known to lose luggage. Flights are occasionally delayed as well and a spare change of clothes will come in handy when a two-hour layover turns into 24.

8. Take a **guide book** on your destination. Lonely Planet, Frommers, Rough Guides – it doesn't matter. With information on food, currency, customs, language, sights, accommodation and much more, a guide book is your bible (especially handy when you don't have ready internet access).

9. If you're traveling to another time zone it helps to reschedule your bedtime by an hour or two. There are plenty of **jet-lag guidelines** out there so do some research on which suits you best. By selecting your normal wake-up time, the time at your destination and the time at home, you'll know when to soak up some light and when to draw the blinds.

## Getting there

10. **Don't joke with security staff** at the airport. It'll just land you in trouble.

11. Think about **where to sit on the plane**. Personal preference varies, of course, but an aisle seat can be a good idea, especially on long-haul flights, as it's nice to be able to move around the plane without having to disturb people beside you. For those who can afford it, business or first class with lie-flat beds or capsules or pods will afford you a better chance of rest than cramped economy class. "We recommend looking at the seating options when booking your flight. Certain airlines only allow you to reserve your preferred seat if you're part of their frequent flyer programme, others might charge an extra fee (which might be worth it if you're very tall and need to book an emergency exit space with more leg room for example)," advises Shelton.

12. **West is best** jet-lag experts say. By travelling west you fly into a longer day and extending your day. By flying east, you're shortening it and losing time. It's easier to stay up later than get to sleep when your body is not ready to rest.

## When you're there

13. Be careful **what you eat and drink**. It's best to stick to bottled water in some countries and be wary of salads (which may have been rinsed in the local water).

14. Take your **dress cues** from the locals, especially in countries where public decency laws might be different from your home.

15. If you're planning a big night out, go with people you know, **stick together** and beware of overly friendly strangers.

16. Carry a small amount of cash in the **local currency**, as not every place takes credit cards, especially train and bus stations.

17. **Buy tickets in advance** for places you know you want to see. You'll be able to skip lines, and you might get a better

deal.

18. Check what **festivals and other events** are on in your destination; attending these is a great way to learn about different cultures and meet the locals.

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