

Travel Arrangements

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Going on a vacation is supposed to be a relaxing, stress-free experience. Unfortunately, you cannot relax until you have made all of the arrangements for your vacation. Where will you go? How will you get there? How will you spend your time? Giving adequate forethought to get ready for your trip will make for a more enjoyable vacation. Use this guide as a tool to help you prepare.

Using a Travel Agent

One option for consumers is to seek professional help from a travel agent or other travel professional. It is a good idea to get a recommendation from a friend or family member for a travel company with an excellent record. You can check with the Better Business Bureau to evaluate a company's credentials.

A good travel agent will be knowledgeable regarding the latest offers and deals available to clients. Travel agents often make recommendations from experiences they have had and based on the experiences of others who have previously used the facility or services. A travel agent will use or recommend a reputable service so you will be a happy traveler.

Reasons you might want to use a travel agent:

Planning. Let them do the work. You can tell them where you want to go and what you want to do and let them work out the details. They can also tell you where or what is available within your budget. They receive updates daily on great places to visit.

All-inclusive options. If you are looking for a getaway with everything included, travel agents will have that information easily available. The travel agent can book your trip so everything you expect to be included is and you can enjoy yourself, worry-free.

Discounts and perks. Often you receive discounts to attractions, rental cars and hotels when making reservations with a travel agency. Travel agents may have access to additional options not available to those planning their own trip. For example, when booking with a travel agent, you may receive free parking at theme parks, a discount at a gift shop, or a voucher for eating at a specific restaurant.

Tour books and maps. Certain travel agencies like AAA can provide wonderful tour books and maps and if you are driving they are willing to map out your trip route.

You may want to plan your own trip. The internet can be a wonderful resource to conduct research on the destination in which you are interested. You will find information about attractions, park systems, hotels, air travel, cruises, maps and more. For more in-depth information, check out guidebooks and maps. Whether you are traveling domestically or internationally, if you are unfamiliar with your destination, be sure to research the general safety for the area you are considering. Remember, the internet is a useful tool, but be sure to evaluate the content before making a purchase. Use only reputable internet sites to make online purchases.

Guidebooks and Apps

Once you've chosen a destination, it is a good idea to invest in a good guidebook and/or apps for your trip. Be on the lookout for a guidebook or app that includes maps and provides you with enough details on major cities that you will not need to purchase additional guide



materials. If you will be downloading a travel app, do so before leaving for your trip to avoid charges from your wireless carrier.

When traveling internationally, you may be nervous about figuring out the local language. You may wish to pick up a small book or download an app that includes key words or phrases in the local language. There are even some apps that will allow you to practice speaking simple phrases in the language before you leave for your trip. In many cases, you will be able to find someone who speaks English, but it is not a guarantee!

Fortunately, most major cities have tourism offices or visitor centers that are very welcoming to travelers and provide maps, itineraries, city guides, and free brochures. It is a good idea to surf their websites before going on your trip—you may find that some of the cities you wish to visit also have websites that provide information on local arts, culture, food, and drink.

Getting Organized

Packing isn't always fun, but it is necessary. Doing your due diligence before you leave for your trip will ensure that you don't forget something you really need.



Getting ready. Look over the trip itinerary and make a list of clothes for each day and activity. As you read the itinerary, consider if an extra set of clothes will even be necessary. Select clothes that might be worn more than once by adding a scarf or sweater to alter the look. If swimming or water sports will be a part of the day, pack bathing suits and beach towels, or plan to get beach towels at your destination.

Select a few jewelry pieces that complement all the outfits you will be wearing on the trip. Simple gold or silver pieces can be beautiful with any style you wear. It is best to leave valuable or irreplaceable jewelry at home. Never place valuable jewelry in a checked piece of luggage.

Anticipating luggage restrictions. If you are flying to your destination, know your airline's baggage policy. Each airline has its own baggage restrictions and fees. These rules and costs are constantly changing and should be checked prior to arriving for your flight. You can look online at the airline's website or consult your travel agent to be prepared for a smooth check-in at the airport.

Traveling with children. When traveling with small children, you may combine all of their clothes into one suitcase to help keep their things together. Some must-have items for little ones may be their favorite night time toy or blanket. Consider using a medium size tote bag for games, toys and snacks.

Packing for the Adventure

Place important items in a carry-on bag if flying and, if traveling by car, keep these things where you can locate them easily. These items might include:

- Airline tickets
- Passports/driver's licenses
- Hotel reservations
- Payment methods
- Prescription medicines
- Directions or GPS device

Make a packing list of the necessary items for your trip.

Add this packing list to your regular suitcase to help you as you prepare for your trips. It is also useful as you repack before you come home to be sure you do not leave anything behind. You may want to make additional copies of the general packing list to use for future travels!

When carrying liquids on airplanes, use the 3-1-1 guideline recommended by the U.S. Transportation Security Administration: 3 ounces or smaller bottles of a liquid must be, placed in a 1 quart clear bag, with 1 bag per traveler being allowed. Liquids larger than 3 ounces must not be in your carry on bag. They must be placed in checked luggage or left at home. Consider this when purchasing your essential supplies such as toiletries and sunscreen.

General Packing List

Clothing Items:

- _ Outfits for each day
- _ Undergarments and socks
- _ Shoes
- _ Sleepwear
- _ Swimwear/active wear

Personal Items:

- _ Toothbrush and tooth paste brush/comb
- _ Shampoo and hair products
- _ Deodorant
- _ Make-up
- _ Lotion
- _ Razor/shaving items

Electronics:

- _ Camera and memory card
- _ Batteries
- _ Cell phone
- _ Chargers for all device

Medical:

- _ Aspirin/pain reliever
- _ Allergy medicine
- _ Prescription medications
- _ Glasses/contacts
- _ First aid kit
- _ Sunscreen

Miscellaneous:

- _ Reservation confirmations
- _ Directions or GPS
- _ Passport and driver's license
- _ Credit cards
- _ Cash
- _ Event tickets

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