International travelers: 20 tips for your next trip.



Your trip is booked, your bags are packed, and you're ready to take off for that dream destination. Make the most of the trip with these 20 international travel tips.

1. **Learn about your destination from the State Department says.** The State Department provides updated safety, travel, health, and embassy information for every country in the world. Before traveling, always search your destination for things like:
    - Travel warnings and advisories
    - Embassy messages and alerts
    - Entry, exit and visa requirements
    - Safety and security notes
    - Driving and road safety tips
    - Local laws
    - Vaccination suggestions
    - General healthcare information
    - Travel and transportation notes
    - Lodging notes

2. **Register your travel plans.** The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program is a free service that allows U.S. citizens to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. When you do, you subscribe to get up-to-date safety and security information about your destination. It will also help the State Department reach you in case of an emergency abroad.
3. **Share your plans with someone you trust.** Choose an important person in your life and let them know when and where you'll be traveling. Create a document to share that includes your flight numbers, hotel details, information on how someone can best reach you, and a copy of your

passport and ID

4. **Make copies of your credit cards, passports and IDs.** You've designated someone at home to keep a copy of your travel documents, but you should have a copy, too. Email them to yourself, save them on your phone, and keep a paper copy in your hotel safe. That way, if you do lose anything important, you can save yourself some unnecessary stress.
5. **Tell your bank you'll be traveling**. When you're abroad, you want frozen gelato … not frozen credit cards. Make a habit of telling your bank you'll be traveling so they can protect you against fraudulent activity and ensure you have access to your funds while you're away.
6. **Store the emergency number.** Emergency numbers can vary from country to country. Look them up and program these into your phone before traveling.
7. **Know the embassy information.** Write down contact details for the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate to carry with you while you're traveling, and make sure your trusted person back home has those details, too.
8. **Find the nearest medical centers.** Note the names, addresses, and phone numbers of nearby hospitals or urgent care clinics in case you need any medical attention.
9. **Learn key words in the language.** It's not only fun to learn some phrases before traveling, but it can also help keep you safe. Brush up on words and phrases like:
    - Hello and goodbye
    - My name is …
    - Do you speak English?
    - My [INSERT LANGUAGE HERE] is not so good.
    - May I have …?
    - Please and thank you
    - Help / emergency
    - Please call a doctor.
    - Please call the police.
    - Please call the American embassy.

10. **Take only the essential electronics.** If you're traveling with too much technology, you could put yourself and your devices in danger. Take only what you need. When you're not using your devices, keep them locked away in a hotel safe. Additionally, ensure chargers are compatible with wall outlets at your destination.
11. **Arrange your phone plan.** Look into your phone carrier's international travel options. Choose the plan that's right for you and know how to use it so there's no disruption in service. In addition, apps like WhatsApp can help you make free calls abroad. Download necessary apps ahead of time and know how to use them.
12. **Choose safer room options.** If you're able to request a hotel room, safety experts recommend staying on the third, fourth, fifth, or sixth floors. You'll be high enough to avoid a break-in but low enough to be reached by a fire engine ladder.
13. **Review your hotel's emergency escape route.** Every room should have a map on the back of the door that shows where you are and where you should go. If you have trouble reading the language, study the emergency escape visuals, explore the hotel upon check-in, or ask the front desk for assistance.
14. **Take two of the hotel's business cards.** Keep one by the phone in your room in case you need to tell someone where you are. Keep the other in your pocket or purse in case you need to tell someone where to take you. You can also take a screenshot of the hotel's name and address and have it accessible on your phone for these scenarios.

15. **Carry small amounts of cash.** What happens when you lose your wallet … or worse? Instead of bringing the entire vacation budget with you, bring enough to get you through the day and keep the rest in your hotel safe. Exchange U.S. dollars for the country's currency before you go so you have a way to pay from the moment you arrive. Typically, airports will have currency exchange services.
16. **Don't keep things in your back pocket.** It's easy for pickpockets to take from your back pocket. Carry valuables in your front pockets, in a cross-body purse worn in front of you, or under your clothing in an undergarment cross-body pouch.
17. **Choose only the safest transportation methods.** According to the World Health Organization, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. citizens abroad. To reduce your risk, travel only in vehicles that look like they're in good condition and offer working seat belts, and if you're driving a rental, learn the driving standards before getting behind the wheel.
18. **Look up while walking.** When you're exploring a new city, don't let yourself get distracted. If you're relying on a navigation app to get you where you're going, plug in an earphone instead of looking down at your smartphone. Always be aware of your surroundings so you're not approached unexpectedly.
19. **Invest in travel insurance.** Most travel insurance policies cover lost luggage, canceled or delayed flights, canceled trips, medical emergencies, emergency evacuations, and more. Choose a policy and enjoy added perks like 24/7 concierge service.
20. **Download safety apps.** Before you depart, download safety apps for location tracking, smooth communication, and more. See the full list of apps to consider.

Knowing and following these 20 international travel tips can help you plan, pack, and enjoy your travels with less worry and more peace of mind. Some insurance carriers provide travel assistance and identity theft protection as value-added services; ask your agent if your insurance includes these services. For even more protection, follow our 11 tips to keep your home safe while you're away, and talk to a local, independent agent about comprehensive home insurance policies.