

FINAL FLIGHT NO.

BEST EVER TRAVEL TIPS

TO 2nd TRANSFER STATION

BY FLIGHT NO.

TOM HALL

TO 1st TRANSFER STATION



When it comes to travel, it's not as easy as it used to be to tell someone something they don't know. The internet now lets us book our own flights and hotels, sniff out the best deals and learn plenty of cunning tricks – in many ways we are all now travel agents. The digital revolution has also provided a wealth of user-friendly tips to make every journey that bit smarter. Search the web for 'travel tips' and you'll get 181,000,000 results at the click of a button. Our collective travel IQ has, in theory, gone through the roof.

When putting together Lonely Planet's Best Ever Travel Tips, then, we knew we had to work a bit harder than usual to help you make travel better. This book is part of the ongoing effort to raise the bar. We're doing this by enlisting the help of recognised experts in their field, be it keeping healthy, packing exactly what you need – and absolutely nothing you don't – or making sure that your trip doesn't cost more than you bargained for. There are some things in here that the travel industry would rather you didn't know. Sometimes those working on the inside needed a little coaxing to reveal their secrets; perhaps not altogether surprisingly, some of these tips were teased out at the end of boozy evenings in various parts of the world.

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The aim of this book is slightly different from the hundreds of detailed, comprehensive Lonely Planet guidebooks available that cover pretty much every country in the world. We're trying to pass on tips – and the odd insider secret – that even seasoned travellers will benefit from. It might even save you some money. You'll definitely have a lot of fun putting some of the suggestions here into practice. If you do, we'd love to hear how you get on.

Tom Hall London, October 2010



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CHAPTER 1 PACKING AND PREPARATION

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Let's face it: most of us are dismal at packing. Too much unnecessary stuff shoved into the wrong kind of bag, carried around for the whole trip. Here's some professional advice, from bag selection to hints on what to put in it – and what to leave behind.

- Check the expiry date on your passport. Many countries require at least six months' validity. And if you do have to renew, make sure you leave plenty of time, especially during peak travel periods. You can check if a visa is required at www.iatatravel centre.com.
- Make your case stand out from the crowd. Tie a ribbon, clip a rainbow-coloured strap around your case or put stickers all over it. Just think how many identical black, roll-on cases there are spinning around the carousels in airports. Bright colours will make it easier for you to spot and might just make a baggage handler pick it out sooner.
- Pack for your bag to be lost and leave anything you can't bear to lose at home. This means having a change of clothes, which should pack down

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CHAPTER 2 MONEY

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Once you've got the cash to hit the road, money matters can cause plenty of headaches. As well as the startling speed with which it can dwindle, there are questions on how to change the stuff, how to carry exotic foreign notes and how to make sure you don't come home to any nasty surprises in your bank statement.

A secure way to carry cash abroad is to use a prepaid cash card like those offered by FairFX (www.fairfx.com) and Travelex (www.travelex.com). Rates aren't quite as good as using a no-fee debit or credit card, but not only does it not have interest or loading fees, you can preload cash onto cards and spend abroad without incurring extra costs. These cards also offer peace of mind – if you lose your card you can get another issued for a small fee.

Know your rights – you're often entitled to hotel accommodation, transfers onto other airlines or even compensation if denied boarding (and always if your luggage is lost), but sometimes you'll have to ask for it. You're due assistance if delayed on flights to, from or within the EU, whether you're an

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CHAPTER 5 © AIR TRANSPORT

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No mode of transport holds as much mystique, ritual and glamour as getting on a plane. Given how much flying has changed over the past decade it's remarkable that this is still true, but it is. Besides figuring out the simple matter of getting from A to B, it pays to know your stuff: a plane ticket can often be the biggest single cost of any trip. There are still special rules, loopholes and tricks that can make or break the whole adventure.

Flights usually go on sale up to 11 months in advance of the departure date. On a scheduled airline, this is usually the best time to book, unless you happen across a seat sale. These discounting periods usually happen in the new year, but more recently they're being spotted throughout the year, particularly on budget airlines. Sign up for email alerts to find out out about the newest deals first.

Buying a ticket closer to the departure time of a scheduled flight will mark you out as someone who is desperate rather than a bargain hunter, so don't expect any last-minute deals. A direct flight from London to New York booked only a few days in advance

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CHAPTER 9 © MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TRIP

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If you're reading this, you probably already love to travel; you're probably even planning your next trip. There's a lot you can do to make a good trip a great one – and squeeze every last drop of fun out of your hard-earned time off.

If you're travelling for a special occasion, say so. While a business-class upgrade is rare, a special occasion might just tilt the balance in your favour when trying to score that room with a view, a table at a happening restaurant or a visit to the VIP lounge.

When taking a long weekend make it a long midweek instead. Not only will you find flights easier to come by – provided you avoid key business flights – you'll avoid the Friday-night and Sunday-night crushes at the airport. You'll also find museums and galleries open, missing the dreaded Monday closures, plus it'll be easier to get into restaurants. Bear in mind, though, that business hotels will be busier midweek.

Getting local advice is often recommended, but what if you don't know any locals or can't crack the language barrier? Many cities offer tours or