

# CONTENTS



## PACK LIKE A PRO

Pre-departure checklist	10-11
Five tips for travelling light	12-13
The ultimate clothes-packing tip	14-15
Backpacker's packing list	16-17
Travel gadgets	18-19
International plug sockets	20-21
Old school tech	22-23



## SAVE MONEY

Budgeting tips	26-27
The best time to book flights to get the best rates	28-29
How to bag a bargain in an airline sale	30
The truth about flight upgrades	31
Tips for getting the most from a round-the-world airline ticket	32-33
First-timer tips for private lodging	34-35
How to get the best deal on a hotel room	36-37
Avoid the solo surcharge	38-39
Fancy a home swap?	40-41
Claw back the cost of your trip	42-43



## + STAY SAVE AND HEALTHY

Malaria around the world	46-47
Stay healthy while travelling	48
First aid kit	49
Beat jetlag	50
Travelling with a gluten intolerance	51
Fitness hacks for travellers	52-53
How to be a woman travelling alone	54-55
Street food smarts	56-57
Go vegan on the road	58-59



## AVOID PITFALLS

How to turn rainy seasons to your advantage	62-63
Complain well	64
What to look for in a travel insurance policy	65
Classic honeymoon fails and how to avoid them	66-67
How to avoid first-time cruise fails	68-69
An expert's advice on train travel	70-71
Avoiding theft and scams	72
Scams to watch out for	73
Surviving a small group tour	74-75
Overcoming loneliness	75
Haggle like master	76-77
How to travel with friends	77



## DO THE RIGHT THING

Alternatives to flying	80-81
Find a bona fide eco-hotel	82-83
Avoiding offence	84-85
World tipping chart	86-87
Tips for travelling plastic-free	88-89
How to interact ethically with wildlife	90-91
Spend your money wisely	92-93



## ENJOY EVERY MINUTE

Year-round trip planner	96-97
Things an airline pilot knows about travel	98-99
When you can't control the weather	100-101
Curb your fear of flying	102-103
How to turn any business trip into a mini-break	104
How a concierge can make your trip unstoppable	105
Top tips for family fun while you travel	106-107
Snag the hottest table	108-109
Adventure up your trip	110
Push the limits of your comfort zone	110-11
Tips for your first ever digital detox	112-13
Ten golden rules for travel photography	114-15
How to get the perfect Instagram shot	116
Capture the trip	117
Staying mindful on the road	118-119
Eat well while travelling	120-121
Useful apps and websites for travellers	122-23





## INTRODUCTION

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For a travel geek, the prospect of putting together a book like this is a dream assignment: attempt to distil all the important travel knowledge in the world into 62 individual, bitesized tips.

While making sure they're not too obvious – 'don't sit in the sun until you turn the colour of a lobster' is not much of a tip – there's also a need to avoid topics that are too obscure, so there are no guidelines here on how best to tour the rock churches of Lalibela in Ethiopia, magnificent as they are, or map the backwaters of Pohnpei's lagoon canals.

This is also not a task best approached in isolation. We've spoken to several dozen seriously clued-up travel experts about everything from packing to adventure, and urban exploration to getting the most out of technology, and when you should think about leaving it behind. The aim is to pass on universal advice that you can take with you wherever in the world you go, and whatever your budget. And if we pass on a trade secret or two then we, and we're sure you, won't mind at all.

*Tom Hall*





**PACK**  
**LIKE A PRO**

# Pre-departure checklist

## Don't leave home without getting the essentials in check

01

### Your passport

OK, you've probably thought of this one already, but check the expiry date. Some countries require at least six months' validity. And if you have to renew, make sure you leave plenty of time, especially during peak vacation periods. Visa requirements can also change over time so don't assume it's the same arrangement as before if returning somewhere familiar. You can check if a visa is required at [www.iatatravelcentre.com](http://www.iatatravelcentre.com).

### Pre-book and save

Book in advance before getting to the airport for parking and holiday money. Even if you do so on the morning of your trip you'll save. If picking up pre-booked currency, take the card you booked with and take note if you have to go to a particular pickup point to get your cash.



### Safety

Read up on your destination for up-to-the-minute issues that might affect your plans. The US Bureau of Consular Affairs ([travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov)); Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade ([smartraveller.gov.au](http://smartraveller.gov.au)); and the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office ([fco.gov.uk](http://fco.gov.uk)) are the best places to start.

### Get insured – and 'fess up

Travel insurance is mostly health insurance, which is why the cost increases hugely when you get to retirement age. For it to be effective, every pre-existing condition must be declared, otherwise your policy could be worthless and you could end up with a very large bill. Also check that any activity you're planning on undertaking will be included in the price.

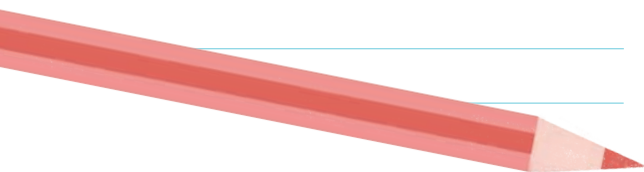
### Medical matters

Start with a checkup at your doctor's and dentist – it's far easier to deal with any potential issues before you hit the road. Try to go as far in advance as you can in case you need to take full courses of immunisations before you travel. You can usually get any necessary vaccinations at your local health clinic, though specialist travel health clinics can also be found in major cities around the world.

### Discount and membership cards

If you're eligible, obtaining an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) or International Youth Travel Card (IYTC) before you go will save you money all over the place – see [www.isic.org](http://www.isic.org) for details of both. Travellers of any age will benefit from Hostelling International membership ([www.hihostels.com](http://www.hihostels.com)). Senior travellers also qualify for travel discounts with some airlines and for ground transport in many countries. Sometimes flashing an ID is enough, sometimes you need to use a local scheme.

## Notes

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal light blue lines. A thick red diagonal stripe runs from the bottom left towards the center. The paper appears to be part of a notebook or a template for writing.

## Index

<b>A</b>	
accommodation	34-35, 36-37, 38-39, 40-41, 82-83
adventure	110, 111
apps	122-123
<b>B</b>	
backpacking	16-17
bicycle travel	81
budgeting	26-27, 35
bundle wrapping	14-15
business trips	104
<b>C</b>	
complaining	64
concierge	105
cruises	68-69
<b>D</b>	
digital detox	112-113, 118-119
discount cards	11, 70
<b>E</b>	
eating	51, 56-57, 58-59, 108-109, 121-122
eco-travel	82-83
etiquette	84-85, 86-87
<b>F</b>	
family holidays	106-107
first aid	49
fitness	52-53
flying	28-29, 30, 31, 80-81, 98-99, 102-103
food	51, 56-57, 58-59, 108-109, 121-122
friends	77

# Index

---

## G

gadgets	18-19, 22-23, 26-27
gluten-free	51
group trips	74-75

## H

haggling	76-77
health	48, 49, 51
home swapping	40-41

## I

immunisations	11
insurance	11, 19, 65
Instagram	116

## J

jetlag	50
--------	----

## L

luggage	12-13, 14-15
---------	--------------

## M

malaria	46-47, 48
mindfulness	118-119
money	26-27, 42-43, 92-93

## P

packing	10-11, 12-13, 14-15, 16-17
passport	10
photography	114-115, 116
plastic-free travel	88-89
plug sockets	20-21
private lodgings	34-35

## R

rainy season	62-63
responsible travel	80-81, 82-83, 88-89, 90-91, 92-93
round-the-world travel	32-33

## S

scams	72, 73
shopping	92-93
social media	116, 123
solo travel	38-39, 54-55, 74-75
street food	56-57

## T

tipping	86-87
train travel	70-71, 81

## V

vegan travel	58-59
visas	10

## W

websites	122-123
wildlife watching	90-91
women travellers	54-55