

# 10 Things You Should Remember While Travelling Abroad

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*Summary: This article talks of a quick checklist when you travel abroad for holiday or work. These include taking a travel insurance, keeping travel documents and adequate foreign exchange, packing smart, making note of important contact details, taking care of things at home and being cognizant of country specific requirements.*

Travelling abroad is both exciting and memorable. Whether you are travelling on business or for a holiday, for a short break or an extended period, it is important that you have a few basic things taken care of, before you embark on your journey. Here are some quick tips on the things you should remember while travelling abroad:

1. **Travel Insurance:** Travel insurance is undoubtedly an absolute must and tops the list of to-dos while travelling abroad. You can shop around and get the best policy available, depending on your needs and the cover required. It should most importantly cover theft, loss of possessions, accidents and illnesses. Sometimes, your existing medical insurance plan covers international travel. You may want to check this and decide accordingly. Watch this space for more details on travel insurance policies and comparison between the top policies in the market today.
2. **Travel documents:** Next come travel documents, which include your passport, visas, tickets and other related documents. Keep all this neatly organized in a separate folder or pouch, such that it is easily accessible. Check your passport validity. Generally you will not get a visa if the passport expiry is less than six months. But what if you go to a country which has 'Visa on Arrival'? I knew of a friend whose passport validity was less than 6 months and arrived at the destination as it was a 'Visa on Arrival' country. But she couldn't clear immigration. You don't want to face such issues when you travel to a new country. Also, remember to keep two copies of all valid travel documents, so that you won't be lost if your originals are misplaced.
3. **Foreign exchange:** It is important that you have sufficient local currency when you travel abroad. Buy foreign exchange from reputed dealers. Do your research well before you decide the dealer as there may be a wide variation in the rates you get. You should also carry an international debit and credit card. Call your Credit Card Company and bank to check the charges applicable for international transactions. You can also consider carrying traveller's cheques which can be purchased from your bank before you leave.
4. **Medicines and first aid kit:** Medicines are critical, especially if they are prescribed drugs which you must absolutely take. Keep a separate pouch for medicines. Remember to keep a first aid kit also, having basic essentials like band-aid, painkillers and the like. If you are travelling with kids, make sure every medicine is readily available.
5. **Note important telephone numbers:** Another important requirement is to make note of all important telephone numbers in a pocket diary or notebook. This way, you will have access to important numbers even if you lose your phone. One important such contact is that of

your bank. If you happen to lose your credit card or debit card, you must have the contact number handy to immediately call your bank and block the card.

6. **Pack smart:** It is recommended to travel light. Agreed, that this may not always be possible. Nevertheless, try to pack smartly. For example, if you are travelling with your spouse, don't pack separately. Divide your clothes and your spouse's clothes in two bags such that you can manage even if you lose one bag. Take extra polythene bags to put wet clothes or unwashed clothes. If you have the facility of a laundry service at the hotel, then reduce the clothes you take accordingly. Also remember to take clothes depending on the climate. Try and take non-bulky games for kids like playing cards or Frisbee which will not occupy much space. Innovate and pack smart.
7. **Small backpack:** Carry a small travel bag or backpack which is not too bulky to put your essentials when you go for sightseeing. Carry essentials like your wallet, passport, cash and mobile phone. It is always best to keep such things in a handy place.
8. **Take care of things at home:** Whether you leave for a short period or for many days, it is very important to take care of things at home before you step out. For example stop essentials like milk, paper, etc for the time you are away. If there is regular mail you get from some place, inform the concerned about your absence. Secure your house well, inform the security and unplug all electronics when you leave. Check for payments which may be due in your absence and pay such bills in advance to avoid unpleasant shocks when you return.
9. **Plan connecting flights:** Sometimes, you may be travelling to more than one destination. In such a case, you may need to catch connecting flights. Plan in such a way that there is sufficient time between such flights. Flight delays are common anywhere in the world and you don't want your schedule to be upset because of improper planning.
10. **Country specific requirements:** Sometimes, some countries require proper inoculation if you want to visit. Understand these requirements and do the needful well in advance. Similarly, electric plugs and voltages are not the same in all countries. If needed, you will have to use an adapter or converter. If you have a relative in the place you plan to visit, this shouldn't be a problem. If not, remember that all hotels do not offer this facility. You may find yourself unable to charge your phone or laptop for this reason. Similarly, you may not know the language of the place you are going to, and English is not spoken everywhere. Download a Translator App which will help you. Buy guidebooks, download maps and learn important words in the local language.

How was your experience when you travelled abroad? Let us know of any tips to include to this list.