



101 TRAVEL TACTICS

The best tips for international vacations, flights, and hotels,
including Internet tricks and literary treks

By Kendall Callas

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“It is better to travel well than to arrive.”

– Buddha

INTRODUCTION

Flying to an international vacation? I want to help you get the most from the wide wonderful world that Internet booking and jet travel bring within reach.

These are my best tips, presented as briefly and readably as possible – *less is more* – with lots of tech tips, and plenty of travel stories from my real experiences.

I hope to share my enthusiasm about travel and the conviction that travel will make you a better person. Web links and Internet searches are included to help you reach out for more information. (The book references reveal me as the son of an English teacher.)

Bon Voyage!

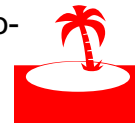




*“All journeys have secret destinations
of which the traveler is unaware.”*
– Martin Buber

DESTINATION INSPIRATION

1. **Travel strategy.** Consider travel as a tool. By getting on that plane, you can see the wonders of the world, learn about the culture and cuisine of foreign lands, gather with friends and family, follow the footsteps of your favorite authors and historical figures, volunteer to help the planet, shop for bargains, even benefit from medical tourism. Here are a few suggestions to help make your choices about why, where and when:
 - Before they're gone: Rising sea levels threaten islands worldwide – the Caribbean, Fiji, Indonesia (Bali, Komodo NP), Macau, Maldives, Philippines, Polynesia, Puerto Rico, Seychelles, Vanuatu – and coastal resorts such as Australia, Belize, Cambodia, Croatia, the Mediterranean, St. Tropez, Thailand, and Vietnam. Venice is threatened by “excess tourism.” Global warming will damage glaciers, beaches, endangered species, and coral reefs. See them while you can.
 - Early in life: See the world, study a language, visit the country of your family's heritage, learn about other cultures. Travel rough and take risks while you can easily handle exertion, hot/cold extremes, and altitude sickness. Walk/backpack/ski/kayak/canoe/raft. Take the long flights and stay in hostels and cheap hotels; tent camp in the wilderness, sleep on the beach.



Recommendations: Parasail, hang glide, parachute! See the Sphinx and Pyramids (Egypt), hike the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu (Peru), walk Hadrian's Wall (England) or the Milford Track (Australia), and tour high altitude destinations (Tibet, Bolivia/Peru, Kilimanjaro, Mt. Everest).

- Physical challenges: Tour South America by horse, kayak Baja Mexico, snorkel the Great Barrier Reef, scale Mt. Everest(!), walk around an island (Isla Espiritu Santo, Baja Mexico).
- Later in life: Relax, shop, sample exotic cuisine, visit distant friends and family, gamble, revisit childhood experiences, tackle your 'bucket' list. You will likely prefer shorter flights, hotels and cushy lodging – fly/cruise/train/barge. Enjoy chaperoned trips that educate with a social component, and minimize risk of falls and accidents. *Recommended:* Packaged tours according to your interests.



- Don't miss:
 - swim in a foreign sea, walk around an island
 - go on safari
 - experience a luxury cruise
 - take a long train trip
 - drink lots of beer at Oktoberfest, Munich, Germany (annually, September - Oct)
 - feel wonder at the world's top museums: the Louvre, Vatican, British Museum ...
 - boat upriver to see the deep jungle: the Amazon, Mekong, Congo, Borneo ...
 - visit one of the world's fleshpots: Bangkok, Amsterdam, Las Vegas, Macau, Havana
 - tour underground: catacombs (Paris or Rome), the Cistern Basilica (Istanbul), the Cu Chi tunnels (Vietnam), under the Metropolitan Cathedral (Mexico City) ...
 - boat a great waterway: the Nile, Danube, Ganges, Panama Canal, Venice canals ...
 - go balloon "flightseeing" over a spectacular panorama: the Pyramids, the Nazca Lines, Cappadocia, the Serengeti ...
 - admire man's great constructions: the Great Wall of China, the Eiffel Tower, Stonehenge, Versailles, the Coliseum ...
 - visit Istanbul, the Taj Mahal, Pompeii, Rio ...
 - ride a giant Ferris wheel: the Millennium Wheel ("London Eye"), Tokyo's Big 'O', the Singapore Flyer, the Riesenrad in Vienna, Austria (built 1897) ...

2. **Walk the wall.** Many fortresses and walled cities have crumbled to ruins. But several famous ancient walls still exist and offer interesting guidelines for an exercise+history vacation. The Great Wall of China is famous (a bus ride from Beijing). Hadrian's Wall separating England from Scotland offers 77 miles of path punctuated by B&Bs and Roman forts. The wall around the old city of Jerusalem provides a 2.5 mile walk. The Anastasian Wall runs 35 miles near Istanbul. The Walls of Benin (Nigeria) comprise the largest ancient man-made structure (lengthwise). And don't forget 155 km of Berlin Wall Trail (and Cycle Path). Europe and Asia are peppered with ancient walled cities. Internet search: "[ancient walls](#)" and see:

England: *At Hadrian's Wall in the spring – lambing season – I saw week-old lambs, pure white, wobbling on their new legs. Two of the cute little guys jumped at each other to playfully butt heads. That night at a pub in Haltwhistle, I felt a pang of remorse as I ate a succulent dinner of lamb shoulder.*

China: *The Great Wall offers a lesson in the folly of expensive military defenses. What good is a wall if invaders can breach it by bribing the guards? (As the Qing armies did in 1644.) And, no, it can't be seen from space.*

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defensive_wall
- history.com/news/history-lists/7-famous-border-walls

Recommended: The Milford Track – the “finest walk in the world” (33 miles in New Zealand), the Inca Trail to the ‘lost city’ of Machu Picchu (4 days, 26 miles, Peru), the Champs-Élysées – 1.2 miles of the ‘most beautiful avenue in the world’ (Paris). *For entertainment:* the Las Vegas Strip, La Rambla – 0.75 mile of shopping and street performers (Barcelona), and the ‘Golden Mile’ of shopping in Kowloon (Hong Kong). *For the penitent:* the Camino de Santiago in Spain/France, the ‘Walk of the Gods’ to Positano on the Amalfi coast, and 6 miles around Ayers Rock (Australia).





3. **Iron road to adventure.** A train trip delivers you to an exotic locale, but the journey can be just as fun as the arrival. Ideal for solos, seniors, families, and challenging weather, the ride includes lodging – you don't need to pack/unpack for each new city. Many routes offer famous trips:

- **Africa:** [*South Africa safari train*](#) – Visit Pretoria, Capetown and Victoria Falls to spot lions, leopards, buffalo, elephants, and black rhinos! Vintage decor, all-you-can-eat+drink inclusive. 3 days, runs all year. [Rovos.com](#)
- **Australia:** [*Indian Pacific*](#), Sydney to Perth. Spot kangaroos in some of the most spectacular terrain on Earth. Coast to coast through the Nullarbor Plain, with a stop in Adelaide. 2700 miles, 3 nights. Runs all year, plus a Christmas special. 'All aboard' for recliner seats, sleeper cabins, or private carriages. <https://JourneyBeyondRail.com.au>
- **Canada:** [*Rocky Mountaineer*](#), Vancouver to Banff through the Canadian Rockies, overnight in Kamloops. 520 miles, 2 days. Runs April - October. www.RockyMountaineer.com or www.CanadianTrainVacations.com. Also, VIA Rail Canada runs Vancouver to Toronto through the Rockies on vintage cars. All year long, 3 trains/week. www.ViaRail.ca.
- **Eurasia:** [*Trans-Siberian Railroad*](#), aka the [*Red Express*](#), is the world's longest train ride. Spot camels and yurts as you cross Siberia and the Mongolian steppes to follow Genghis Khan, pass Lake Baikal, and The Great Wall of China: Berlin - Prague - Warsaw - Leningrad - Moscow - Vladivostok - Harbin - Beijing. 4735 miles, 6 nights. Departs Moscow every Tuesday night. <https://www.TransSiberianExpress.net>
- **Europe:** [*Eurostar Chunnel to Holland*](#), London to Amsterdam at speeds up to 186 mph. 4 hours, runs all year, board at St. Pancras station. www.Eurostar.com
- **Europe:** [*Venice Simplon-Orient Express*](#), London - Calais - Paris - Milan - Venice. Luxurious accommodations, but no showers and no smoking. 800+ miles, 2 days. Runs March - November. www.Belmond.com/trains/europe/venice-simplon-orient-express

- France: [TVG](#), Paris, Calais, Brussels, Marseille, Strasbourg, Basel, etc., at up to 186 mph. Some trains are double-decker. Internet search: "[France + TVG](#)"
- India: [Taj Express](#), New Delhi to Agra, where you can visit the exquisite Taj Mahal. 125 miles, 2 hours. Internet search: "[Taj Express + New Delhi + Agra](#)"
- Japan: [The Shinkansen bullet train](#), Tokyo to Kyoto, 2 or 3 hours depending on train, 320 miles, at speeds up to 170 mph. Runs all year. Internet search: "[Shinkansen + bullet train + Tokyo + Kyoto](#)" Also, a fully autonomous bullet train runs from Beijing to Zhangjiakou, the 2022 Winter Olympics host city.
- Mexico: [El Chepe](#), Chihuahua to the Pacific, through scenic Copper Canyon and rugged Sierra Madre mountains. A/C, 400 miles, 16 hours. Runs all year. www.chepe.mx
- Morocco: [Al Boraq](#), Casablanca to Tangier at 200 mph. 210 miles, 2½ hours. www.oncf.ma/en
- New Zealand: [Taieri Gorge Limited](#), day trip to the sensational South Island gorge. 48-miles, 4 hours. [Roaming Down Under](#)
- Peru: [Andean Explorer](#), Lake Titicaca to Cusco (jumping off point for Machu Picchu). 175 miles, 11 hours. Runs all year, departs early Tuesday mornings from Puno. www.PeruRail.com
- Peru: [Machu Picchu](#), busy line from Cusco (Poroy) follows the Urubamba River and the Sacred Valley to the famous Inca ruins. About 3½ hours. www.PeruRail.com
- Thailand+Malay Peninsula: [Eastern & Oriental Express](#), Bangkok - Kuala Lumpur - Singapore. Cross '[The Bridge on the River Kwai](#)'. A/C, 1260 miles, 3 days. Sept to March. www.Belmond.com/trains/asia/eastern-and-oriental-express
- Vietnam: [Reunification Express](#), Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City, follows the South China Sea coast. 1070 miles, 30 hours. Recommended October to December to avoid monsoon rains. <https://Vietnam-railway.com/train/SapaTourist/reunification-express-train>

(Source: National Geographic, [Journeys of a Lifetime: 500 of the World's Greatest Trips](#))

4. The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Trace the thread of ancient culture by visiting Greece, Turkey, and Egypt.

- 1- [The Great Pyramid of Giza](#), Cairo, Egypt - *Boat the Nile, explore Cairo, see the Sphinx and ponder the Riddle of the Sphinx: "What is the creature that walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon and three in the evening?"*
- 2- [The Colossus of Rhodes](#), island of Rhodes, Greece - destroyed by earthquake (226 BC); marked now by statues of a stag and a doe at the former locations of the feet. *Take a ferry from Athens (Piraeus) for a beautiful, relaxing boat ride; visit the casino and walled fortress, then stroll the harbor where the Colossus once stood.*
- 3- [The Pharos of Alexandria](#), Egypt - Lighthouse destroyed by earthquake (AD 1303); found collapsed in the nearby sea. *The site of the Nile delta and the world's most famous library, Alexandria became the world's premiere storehouse of knowledge with an 'information tax' – a copy was made of every scroll that came into the harbor.*
- 4- [The Mausoleum at Halicarnassus](#), Bodrum, Turkey - collapsed by earthquake. *View a model of the Tomb of King Mausoleus, and visit the scenic Crusader castle on the nearby bay, built using the recycled stones.*
- 5- [The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus](#), near Selcuk, Turkey - destroyed by arson (356 BC) and again by plundering (AD262). *Ephesus is one of Turkey's most fascinating archeological sites.*
- 6- [The Statue of Zeus at Olympia](#), one of the most visited sites in Greece - destroyed by fire.
- 7- [Hanging Gardens of Babylon](#), near Nineveh, Iraq - built by King Nebuchadnezzar II; no longer exist.

Greece: *My favorite transit ever was a ferry, from Crete to Rhodes. After rushing to get on board in time, there's nothing to do but relax and enjoy hours of scenery at the luxuriant pace of water travel. The motion on the water is a kind of physical poetry that slows everything down.*

Visit Turkey! *Though Greece oozes history, Turkey offers great prices, fewer tourists, a beautiful coast, crusader castles, friendly folk, and better Greek ruins than in Greece.*

Turkey: *As we took a ferry across the Bosphorus from Istanbul, we sat inside a comfy cabin and ordered apple tea. Other passengers started paying attention when the waiter came to collect payment. We were completely mystified when an argument broke out (in Turkish). As best we could figure, the waiter had charged us the 'tourist price' and the other passengers were criticizing him for cheating us.*

For more information, visit: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Wonders_of_the_Ancient_World
Also see www.Ancient.eu and www.Britannica.com.



5. Follow famous footsteps.

Trace the journey of a famous author or historical figure. Learn and plan with these books:

Germany: *It was a thrill to eat a berliner (a jelly donut) and appreciate the amusing ambiguity of John F. Kennedy's famous line, "Ich bin ein Berliner."*

- [Alexander the Great](#) - Follow his path of victory through Greece, Turkey, the Middle East, Egypt, and Asia to India, as he conquered the known world, 330-320 BC: [Alexander's Path](#), Stark; [Alexander the Great and His Empire](#), Briant; [In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great: A Journey from Greece to Asia](#), Wood; [Alexander the Great; The Hunt for a New Past](#), Cartledge; [The Genius of Alexander the Great](#), Hammond; [The Nature of Alexander](#), Renault
Click link to open in Google Books
- [Agatha Christie](#) - Trace her 1922 surfing adventures in Hawaii, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand; board a train in Istanbul to follow her trek to Syria, Iraq, and Egypt – see Turkey's Turquoise Coast, Ur (birthplace of the written word), Baghdad, Damascus, and the Nile: [Death on the Nile](#), Christie; [Murder on the Orient Express](#), Christie; [Come, Tell Me How You Live](#), Christie; [Agatha](#), Martinetti; [The Grand Tour](#), Christie; [The 8:55 to Baghdad](#), Eames. (Alas, the Orient Express exists no longer, but you can easily book modern rail transit from Paris to Istanbul.)
- [Cleopatra](#) - Queen of Egypt, who seduced Mark Antony and battled against Rome, leading to her suicide-by-snake in 30 B.C.: [A Brief History of Cleopatra](#), Trow; [Cleopatra: A Life](#), Schiff; [Cleopatra the Great: The Woman Behind the Legend](#), Fletcher; [The Tragedy of Anthony and Cleopatra](#), Shakespeare (Neill ed.); [The Reign of Cleopatra](#), Burstein; [Cleopatra and Rome](#), Kleiner
- [Charles Darwin](#) - In 1831, only 22 years old, Darwin set out on the HMS Beagle on a voyage around the world which changed science forever. Retrace highlights of his

daring 5-year journey by sailing from Rio de Janeiro to Montevideo, the Falkland Islands, Tierra del Fuego, Patagonia, Valparaiso, Lima, the Galapagos Islands, Tahiti, New Zealand, and Australia:

[Voyage of the Beagle](#), Darwin; [Darwin in Galápagos](#), Grant; [Fossils, Finches, and Fuegians: Darwin's Adventures and Discoveries on the Beagle](#), Keynes

- [Charles Dickens](#) - Travels in Britain, France, and Italy: [Pictures from Italy: Genoa, Venice, Rome, Naples, Florence](#), Dickens.
- [Hannibal](#) - The great military general from Carthage crossed the French Alps in 218 BC with 37 elephants and 40,000 soldiers – Cartagena to Marseille to Rome: [Hannibal's Footsteps](#), Bernard
- [Ernest Hemingway](#) - Starting in 1918, for 40 years, he adventured in Italy, Paris, Africa, Spain, and Cuba: [Green Hills of Africa](#), Hemingway; [Hemingway in Africa: The Last Safari](#), Ondaatje; [The Dangerous Summer](#), Hemingway; [Hemingway in Spain; a Personal Reminiscence of Hemingway's Years in Spain by His Friend](#), Puche; [Hemingway's Spain: Imagining the Spanish World](#), Eby
- [Herodotus](#) - The 'first historian' wandered the known world about 450 BC, collecting stories of tribes in Italy, Turkey, the Middle East, Egypt, India, and Persia: [The Histories](#), Herodotus; [The Travels of Herodotus](#), Lister
- [Jack London](#) - Sample his life of adventure, from Hawaii to Tahiti, Bora Bora, Fiji, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, and Australia: [The Cruise of the Snark](#), London; [The Cruise of the Dazzler](#), London; [Jack London's Klondike Adventure: The True Story of Jack London's Personal Odyssey from San Francisco to the Arctic Circle, Across the Breadth of Alaska and Home Again](#), Wilson
- [Florence Nightingale](#) - 1849 visit to Egypt and Greece: [Letters from Egypt: A Journey on the Nile, 1849-1850](#), Nightingale; [The Twelve Rooms of the Nile](#), Shomer

- [Odysseus](#) - Homer's hero (a.k.a. Ulysses) of [The Odyssey](#) struggles home to Greece after the Trojan War, island hopping from Troy (coastal Turkey) to Lesbos, Santorini, Crete, Sicily, Corfu: [No Man's Lands: One Man's Odyssey Through The Odyssey](#), Huler; [The World of Odysseus](#), Finley
- [Marco Polo](#) - Trace his journey into the unknown along the Silk Road in 1300s China, from Venice to Beijing: [The Travels of Marco Polo](#), Polo; [Marco Polo: From Venice to Xanadu](#), Bergreen; [In the Footsteps of Marco Polo](#), Belliveau; [Marco Polo, Venetian Adventurer](#), Hart; [Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World](#), Larner
- [Robert Louis Stevenson](#) - 1870s visits to [France](#) and Scotland, and 1880-90s sailing the South Seas, to Hawaii, Tahiti, and Samoa: [Treasure Island](#), Stevenson; [In the South Seas](#), Stevenson; [Robert Louis Stevenson in Samoa](#), Farrell; [R.L.S. in the South Seas: An Intimate Photographic Record](#), Knight ed.; [Treasure Islands: Sailing the South Seas in the Wake of Fanny and Robert Louis Stevenson](#), Stephenson; [Recollections of Robert Louis Stevenson in the Pacific](#), Johnstone
- [Hunter S. Thompson](#) - Follow the 'gonzo' journalist's [1963 dispatches](#) for the *National Observer* from Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay; [The Footloose American: Following the Hunter S. Thompson Trail Across South America](#), Kevin
- [Mark Twain](#) - 1867 star-studded luxury cruise to the Holy Land on the ship *Quaker City*, and travels to the Middle East, India, Africa, New Zealand, and Australia: [The Innocents Abroad](#), Twain; [A Tramp Abroad](#), Twain; [Roughing it](#), Twain; [Following the Equator](#), Twain; [American Vandal: Mark Twain Abroad](#), Morris; [Around the World with Mark Twain](#), Cooper; [Chasing the Last Laugh: Mark Twain's Raucous and Redemptive Round-the-World Comedy Tour](#), Zacks; [Mark Twain Abroad: The Cruise of the Quaker City](#), Dewey; ["Our Famous Guest": Mark Twain in Vienna](#), Dolmetsch; [Mark Twain in Paradise: His Voyages to Bermuda](#), Hoffmann

6. **Literary walks and guides.** Peek into the homes and haunts of famous authors and historical figures. These books will help:

- Britain + Ireland

Click link to open in Google Books

- [*Criminal London, A Sightseers Guide to the Capital of Crime*](#);

Kris Hollington – Murderers, felons, detectives ... over 100 sites, 3 walks, many curiosities.

- [*Literary Britain and Ireland; A Guide to the Places that Inspired Great Writers*](#);

Jane Struthers – Essays and pics of over 100 sites. (no walks)

- [*A Literary Guide to Ireland*](#);

Susan Cahill – Geographically focused - Joyce, Keats, Shaw, Spencer, Swift ... (no walks)

- [*Literary Landscapes; Walking Tours in Great Britain and Ireland*](#);

L. N. Franco – An essay and walks each for Wordsworth's Lake District, the Brontë's moors, D.H. Lawrence's Midlands, Lewis Carroll's Oxford, Thomas Hardy's Dorset, Jane Austen's Bath, Dylan Thomas's Wales, James Joyce's Dublin, and Yeats' western Ireland.

- [*Mystery Reader's Walking Guide: England*](#);

Alzina Dale – Neighborhood walks connect you to famous mysteries and detectives in Bath, Brighton, Cambridge, Dorchester/Charmouth, Ely, Greenwich/Blackheath, Newmarket, Oxford, Salisbury, Shrewsbury, Stratford-upon-Avon, the Thames River, and Windsor/Eton/Ascot.

- [*Mystery Reader's Walking Guide: London*](#);

Barbara Hendershott – 13 walks to landmarks in The City, Inns of Court/Fleet Street, Covent Garden/The Strand, Bloomsbury, Soho, Mayfair/Oxford Street, St. James, Marylebone/Regent's Park, Westminster, Brompton/Hyde Park, Chelsea, Belgravia/Pimlico, and Hampstead Village/Highgate Village related to famous sleuths, mysteries, and detectives.

England: *The Tower of London is full of history and sparkles with the Crown Jewels. A diamond exhibit there offers an interesting historical anecdote: The Cullinan Diamond (the world's largest uncut diamond – as big as your fist) was unearthed in South Africa in 1905 and sent to London where it was cut into 5 precious stones. Subterfuge was used to assure its safe delivery: A heavily guarded decoy was sent to London by ship; the real gem was sent by ordinary parcel post. Yes, it arrived safely.*

- [*Scotland: A Literary Guide for Travellers*](#); Garry MacKenzie – Insights into Scottish history, literature and architecture, covering Edinburgh, Southern Poets and Adventurers, Glasgow, the Trossachs, Argyll, Hebrides, Shetland, Aberdeenshire, Perthshire, Dundee, Angus and Fife. (no walks)
- France
 - [*France*](#); John Edmondson – French literature and works by Proust, Stein, and Fitzgerald inform highlights of the cultural landscape. Includes listings of famous Paris streets and sites, literary graves, literary museums, writers' houses, etc.; booklist. "A literary guidebook containing over 120 extracts from novels, poems, travel writing, and short stories." Traveller's Literary Companion series. (no walks)
 - [*The French Riviera: A Literary Guide for Travellers*](#); Ted Jones – Discussion of the inspiration and setting for much of the greatest literature of the 19th and 20th centuries in Hyères, Cannes, Antibes, Nice, Cap Ferrat, Monaco, and Menton. Insights into the lives and works of Graham Greene, W. Somerset Maugham, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Guy de Maupassant, as well as Alcott, Boswell, Brecht, Camus, Casanova, Conrad, Dickens, Fleming, Hemingway, Hugo, Huxley, Joyce, Kipling, Milne, Nabokov, Parker, Plath, Sartre, Shaw, Stevenson, Tchekov, Tolstoi, Wells, Wilde, Woolf, Yeats, etc. (no walks)
 - [*The Greater Journey, Americans in Paris*](#); David McCullough – Historical pageant of American authors, statesman, and professionals who discovered Paris in 1830-1900, and were changed by it. (no walks)
 - [*Literary Paris; A Guide*](#); Jessica Powell – Profiles 30 writers (Moliere, Voltaire, de Sade, Balzac, Dumas, Hugo, Verne, Twain, Zola, Wilde, Proust, Stein, Miller, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Orwell, Simenon, Camus, Baldwin ...) and more than 100 sites (left bank cafes, the Bois de Boulogne, Pont Neuf, the Bastille, Catacombs, the Bourse, Moulin-Rouge, the Louvre ...) and the bars, homes, and hotels they lived in. (no walks)

- [*The Paris of the Novelists*](#); Arthur Maurice (1919) – Learn about the City of Light through the history of Hugo, Thackeray, Dumas, Balzac, Zola, Maupassant, Poe, Stevenson, Twain, and many more. (no walks)
- [*Walks in Hemingway's Paris; A Guide to Paris for the Literary Traveler*](#); Noel Fitch – Provides “an intimate visit to major Parisian landmarks” as well as to out-of-the-way cafes, hotels, and residences immortalized by “Papa” and his friends, peppered with colorful anecdotes.
- Greece - [*Greece, A Literary Guide for Travellers*](#); Michael Carroll – A literary guidebook drawing heavily from ancient literature – from Achilles to Xerxes; chapters include the Ionian Islands and Epirus, Northern Greece, Athens, Central Greece, the Peloponnese, Crete, and the Aegean Islands. Shelley said, “We are all Greeks.” (no walks)
- Italy
 - [*Florence and Tuscany, A Literary Guide for Travellers*](#); Ted Jones – Explore the Renaissance cities of Florence, La Spezia, Lucca, Pisa, Livorno, Arezzo, San Gimignano, Volterra, and Siena through their connections to the great writers Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Chaucer, Milton, Browning, Shelley, Dickens, Lawrence, Hardy, Forster, Twain and more. (no walks)
 - [*A Literary Companion to Rome, Including Ten Walking Tours*](#); John Varriano – Useful and erudite insights into the Eternal City.
 - [*A Literary Companion to Venice, Including Seven Walking Tours*](#); Ian Littlewood – See the streets, palaces, churches, and canals through the words of Byron, Goethe, James, Proust, Lawrence, and Pound.
 - [*Sicily, A Literary Guide for Travellers*](#); Andrew Edwards – Learn about the cultural landscape of the largest island in the Mediterranean aided by the works of Aeschylus, Truman Capote, Cervantes, Cicero, Coleridge, D.H. Lawrence, Pindar, Ezra Pound, Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde, Tennessee Williams ... (no walks)

- Japan - [Japan](#); Harry Guest – An accessible introduction to Japan’s history and literature; booklist. “A literary guidebook containing over 75 extracts from novels, poems, travel writing and short stories.” Traveller’s Literary Companion series. (no walks)
- Morocco - [Tangier, A Literary Guide for Travellers](#); Josh Shoemake – Discover the Kasbah and the ‘International Zone’ – which have attracted spies, outlaws, outcasts and writers for centuries – through the “outlaw originality” of Bowles, Burroughs, Dumas, Harris, Pepys, Twain, Wharton, and many more. “Tangier is more than a destination, it is an escape.” (no walks)
- South America
 - [Caribbean](#); James Ferguson – Learn about the cultural origins of exotic islands through the works of 1980s and 90s authors (Naipaul, Walcott, Gellhorn, Greene ...); booklist. “A literary guidebook containing over 170 extracts from novels, poems, travel writing, and short stories.” Traveller’s Literary Companion series. (no walks)
 - [South & Central America, Including Mexico](#); Jason Wilson – Quotes from novelists, poets, and travel writers (Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Carlos Fuentes, Malcolm Lowry, D.H. Lawrence ...) inform discussion of the cultural landscape; booklist. “A literary guidebook containing over 250 extracts from novels, poems, and short stories.” Traveller’s Literary Companion series. (no walks)
- Southeast Asia - [South-east Asia](#); Alastair Dingwall – Citations from the likes of Mark Twain, Graham Greene, and Ho Chi Minh pepper coverage of SE Asia (including Hong Kong) history and literature; booklist. “A literary guidebook containing over 150 extracts from novels, poems, travel writing, and short stories.” Traveller’s Literary Companion series. (no walks)

Mexico: *On a visit to La Casa Azul in Mexico City, Frida Kahlo’s home/museum, I learned that she liked to paint water-melons because they are composed of the same colors as the Mexican flag: red, white, and green.*

- Spain - [*Andalucia, A Literary Guide for Travellers*](#); Andrew Edwards – A literary guidebook with many quotes from Spanish literature. Includes chapters for Seville, Huelva, Cadiz, Malaga, Granada, Cordoba, Jaen, and Almeria. (no walks)

Internet search “Literary walk + country”. Also see the “Walking country” subject category in the catalog of your local library.

7. Watch the video! Get the flavor of your destination with an insightful movie.

- Britain - [*Local Hero*](#), 1983; [*A Hard Day's Night*](#), 1964; [*Henry V*](#), 1989
- China - [*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*](#), 2000; [*Hero*](#), 2002; [*The Assassin*](#), 2015
- Egypt - [*Cleopatra*](#), 1963; *The Mummy*, [*1932*](#) or [*1999*](#) remake
- France - [*Before Sunset*](#), 2004; [*Day for Night*](#), 1973; [*Children of Paradise*](#), 1945; [*Red Balloon*](#), 1956
- Germany - [*The Blue Angel*](#), 1930; [*The Third Man*](#), 1949; [*Cabaret*](#), 1972
- Greece - [*Zorba the Greek*](#), 1964; [*Never on Sunday*](#), 1960; [*300*](#), 2006
- Italy - [*Roman Holiday*](#), 1953; [*A Room with a View*](#), 1985; [*The Bicycle Thief*](#), 1948; [*The Icicle Thief*](#), 1989
- Japan - [*Lost in Translation*](#), 2003; [*Tokyo Story*](#), 1953; [*Shogun*](#), 1980; [*Tampopo*](#), 1985
- Mexico - [*Y Tu Mama Tambien*](#), 2001; [*Pan's Labyrinth*](#), 2006
- Middle East - [*Lawrence of Arabia*](#), 1962
- Pakistan - [*Army of One*](#), 2016
- South America - [*Motorcycle Diaries*](#), 2004
- Spain - [*Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!*](#), 1990

(Source: [*Films to Go, 100 Memorable Movies for Travelers & Others*](#); Jay Boyar)

8. **Visit a movie location.** Take a self-guided or bus tour of a shoot location. Experience the beauty and drama of your most heartfelt cinema setting. Internet search:
- “movie location + *name of film* + [imdb]”
- [Cast Away](#) – Monuriki Island, Fiji (also [Blue Lagoon](#) – Devil’s Beach, Fiji)
 - [Dr. No \(James Bond\)](#) – Crab Key, Jamaica (also James Bond Beach on Oracabessa Bay, Saint Mary, Ocho Rios)
 - [Game of Thrones](#) – Dubrovnik, Croatia (“*Pearl of the Adriatic*”) and Cushendun village, Northern Ireland. www.DiscoverNorthernIreland.com/gameofthrones
 - [Harry Potter](#) – King’s Cross Station, London, Oxford University, and Jacobite Steam Train, Fort William, Scotland
 - [Lord of the Rings](#) – Lake Wakatipu, South Island, New Zealand; also Tongariro National Park on North Island. NewZealand.com/us/home-of-middle-earth
 - [Lost in Translation](#) – the bar at the Park Hyatt Tokyo, Japan
 - [Mamma Mia!](#) – Kastani Beach, island of Skopelos, Greece
 - [Out of Africa](#) – Ngong Hills, Nairobi, Kenya
 - [Rebel Without a Cause](#) – Griffith Observatory, Los Angeles hills (also the starry ‘love dance’ in [La La Land](#))
 - [The Revenant](#) – Fortress Mountain ski resort in Alberta, Canada
 - [Roman Holiday](#) – Trevi Fountain, Rome (also [La Dolce Vita](#) and [Three Coins in the Fountain](#))
 - [The Shape of Water](#) – “Dixie Doug’s Diner” (The Lakeview Restaurant, 1132 Dundas Street West) Toronto, Ontario, Canada
 - [The Sound of Music](#) – Mirabell Gardens, Salzburg, Austria
 - [The Talented Mr. Ripley](#) – Procida Island, Naples bay, Italy (also [Il Postino](#))
 - [The Third Man](#) – giant Ferris wheel (Riesenrad), Leopoldstadt district, Vienna, Austria
 - [Topkapi](#) – Topkapi Palace, Istanbul, Turkey

9. **Phone a pro.** *Talk to a travel agent.* Even if you go on to make your own travel arrangements, your first conversation will give you a chance to ask key questions and get free advice. If you need to book multiple flights or hotels, self-serve on the web is a lot of work. If you have a complex itinerary, or can find a travel agent who has been there before, you can save hours of information overload and a myriad of decisions by using the knowledge, resources, and discounts a professional can provide. They can guide you to places you'd never discover, arrange art/history guides, room upgrades, and after hours/VIP access. They will point you to exclusive deals, train passes, city passes, and 'skip the line' tickets to the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, the Vatican, the Colosseum ... *And if disaster strikes, you've got somebody you can call 24-hours.*

10. **Artificial Intelligence.** AI can provide another authority you may consult for very able help with destination ideas, travel questions, itinerary: "List hotels in Giza." "List a 10-day itinerary for vacation to Sicily." ChatGPT and Bard offer powerful and well-informed brains you may consult anonymously, 24/7:

- **Bard** from Google: (best!)
<http://bard.google.com>

- **ChatGPT** from OpenAI and Microsoft:
<http://chat.openai.com>

Thailand: *A short hop on a regional airline led to a terrific excursion into the back country. Outside of Bangkok, everything is cheap. In Chiang Mai, at the first travel agent I came across, I booked an adventure into the hill country beginning with a jeep ride and a hike into the forest; it included a river trip on a bamboo raft, a night in a jungle hut, and a ride on an elephant. When we pulled up on the river bank at the end of our trek, boy was I surprised when an indigenous woman stepped out of the trees and offered to sell me marijuana.*

Turkey: *Stepping off the ferry to Marmaris, we found that the car rental agency had no knowledge of our reservation. Fortunately, there was a car available, so off we went. The independent path paid off as soon as we got into the countryside: We bought a tin of honey-comb from a guy at the side of the road – a treat with bread.*

Borneo: *I hired a driver for a day to visit an orangutan sanctuary deep in the jungle. I'd heard that they are very clever and steal cameras. So, I took out my red bandana, which I use to mop my brow or cover my neck from the sun, and used it to hide my camera. But one orangutan was watching me carefully; I think he observed how I handled it – and he figured out it was valuable. He stole my bandana!*



*“The world is a book,
and those who do not travel
read only one page.”
– Saint Augustine*

PLANNING YOUR TRIP

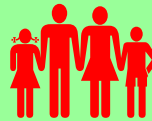
11. Travel truths:

- Book early for the best airfare/hotel/train discounts. You'll also get better flight times and seat selection, and more spacious rooms with better views. See Momondo.com 'Flight insights' for a specific estimate for your flight.
Recommended: Book flights in advance:
 - U.S. + Canada flights - 10 weeks
 - Mexico, Central America - 10 weeks
 - South America - 3-4 months
 - Asia - 4 months (Source: 2018, CheapAir.com)
 - Europe - 5 months
 - Africa, Middle East, S. Pacific - 6-7 months
 - Caribbean - 7 months
- Travel light. *Proven wisdom:* Take half the clothes and twice the money.
- Long live the ATM – the traveler's check is dead. Don't bother to bring currency with you; get it upon arrival at an airport ATM.
- Everything is negotiable. Ask for a hotel discount. Inquire about tour discounts just before the deadline date. If there's no written menu, yes, bargain meal prices.
- Buy supplies outside the tourist corridor – water, snacks, postcards, batteries, film/media ...
- Always ask for the total cost by credit card (beware 'resort fees,' 'fuel surcharges' ...).

12. Pre-trip prep. Get ready to go!

- ☐ Destination research
- ☐ Planning - budget, lodging (neighborhoods and budget), likely activities and day trips
- ☐ Research and book flights
- ☐ Research and book lodging
- ☐ Visa? May need photos.
- ☐ Doctor visit for vaccinations, anti-diarrheal prescription (antibiotic)
- ☐ Plan meds – Ask your pharmacist for a vacation over-ride if you might run out while away.
- ☐ Travel insurance?
- ☐ Shuttles - to airport(s), to hotel(s)
- ☐ Read, plan specific destinations
- ☐ Notifications, preparation
- ☐ Stop mail and newspaper delivery
- ☐ Call credit/debit card issuers
- ☐ Pack - allow plenty of time
- ☐ Check-in, boarding pass
- ☐ Airport security

13. Avoid the crowd. Enjoy the path less traveled to gain flexibility, save time and money – and elbow room. Vacation during the off-peak season for easy hotel and flight reservations. Follow your spirit to travel off the beaten path. Travel mid-week. *Hit must-see sites late in the day.*



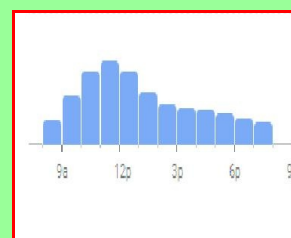
Tech tip: To avoid cruise ship crowds, use the Port Calendar at www.crew-center.com for a chronological list of arrival/departure times.

14. Travel planning links:



- Ideas: - [TripAdvisor.com](https://www.tripadvisor.com)
 - [RickSteves.com](https://www.ricksteves.com)
 - [Fodors.com](https://www.fodors.com)
 - [WorldTravelGuide.net](https://www.worldtravelguide.net)
 - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lists_of **World Heritage Sites**#Lists_by_continent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lists_of_World_Heritage_Sites#Lists_by_continent)
 - [https://www.Forbes.com/sites/robertadams/2016/03/29/the-worlds-best-travel-websites](https://www.forbes.com/sites/robertadams/2016/03/29/the-worlds-best-travel-websites)
 - [Kiplinger.com/article/spending/T059-C000-S001-23-best-travel-sites-to-save-you-money.html](https://www.kiplinger.com/article/spending/T059-C000-S001-23-best-travel-sites-to-save-you-money.html)
- Rain and temperature: [Weather.com](https://www.weather.com)
- Do I need a visa? <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html>
- Is it safe? - <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html>
 - [CIA.gov/the-world-factbook](https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook)
- Vaccinations/health: - [CDC.gov/travel](https://www.cdc.gov/travel)
 - [WHO.int/health-topics/vaccines](https://www.who.int/health-topics/vaccines)
- Airport security: [http://www.TSA.gov/travel/security-screening/whatcanibring](http://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/whatcanibring)
- Your travel rights:
 - [Transportation.gov/airconsumer/fly-rights](https://www.transportation.gov/airconsumer/fly-rights)
- Time change: [TimeAndDate.com/WorldClock](https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock)
- Electricity: <https://www.power-plugs-sockets.com>
(Mexico and Canada are the same as the U.S.)

15. **Brave New Tool.** To help with planning at the time-of-day and day-of-week level, use Google Maps to lookup a business or tourist site, then scroll down to see a **Popular Times®** graph. It's a time/day chart that will appear in the Google Maps report when you do a *precise* search. It provides an activity measure that will help you avoid lines or delays and plan your day by revealing how busy a location usually is at different times and days of the week. *How crowded is it?* Google provides the answer by tracking GPS and Wi-Fi signals (sometimes live) to help you decide the *best time of day?* Click to see *Which day of the week is best?*



Acropolis - afternoon is best

Greece: *The afternoon we hiked up to the Acropolis, we saw dozens of cats. It was a bit of a mystery until we saw a local woman setting out fish heads. When she arrived, every cat in sight sped straight toward her, meowing loudly. As cat experts know, meowing (and purring) means "Pay attention to me" – which tells you a lot about cats.*

The graph shows "average popularity over the last several weeks ... relative to the typical peak popularity for the business for the week."

A Popular Times® graph will appear in your Google Maps search results when you search for any of these tourist destinations:

Louvre	Eiffel Tower
Stonehenge	British Museum
Roman Forum	Roman Coliseum
Leaning Tower of Pisa	Pantheon Rome
Acropolis Athens	Pergamon Museum (Berlin)
Blue Mosque (Istanbul)	Hermitage Museum (Russia)
Great Pyramid of Giza	Sphinx of Giza
Edo Castle (Tokyo)	Chichen Itza
Grand Canyon Park	Museum of Egyptian
Abu Simbel (Egypt)	Antiquities (Cairo)

To research your own destinations, do a very specific Google Maps search; you may need to add the street or street address (and city) to find a

- post office • park • bank • grocery • library
- gas station • transit hub • restaurant/business

Note the average stay estimate. *For restaurants:* See wait times by clicking on an hour's vertical bar.

Google Popular Times® graphs for travelers

– crowd density measured by cell phone and GPS activity

◆ Acropolis - Athens, Greece.

Best: Anytime Wednesday.

Good early (8 - 10) or late (5 - 8) any weekday.

Worst: Sunday 10 - 5.



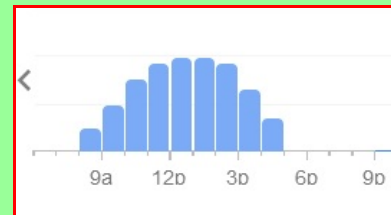
Acropolis uncrowded Wednesdays

◆ Chichen Itza - Mexico.

Best: Monday 8 - 9.

Grows steadily Mon to Sun.

Worst: Sunday mid-day.



Chichen Itza busy mid-day

◆ Edo Castle - Tokyo, Japan.

Best: 3-5 any day.

Worst: Saturday afternoon.

Closed Monday and Friday.



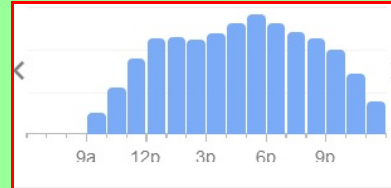
Edo Castle best 3 - 5

◆ Eiffel Tower - Paris, France.

Best: Weekdays 9-11.

Grows steadily Mon to Sat.

Worst: Saturday 4-7.



Sunset draws Sat crowds to Eiffel Twr

◆ Grand Canyon National Park.

Best: Any day before noon.

Grows steadily Mon to Sat.

Heavy weekends.

Worst: Saturday 1-5



Canyon worst Saturday afternoon

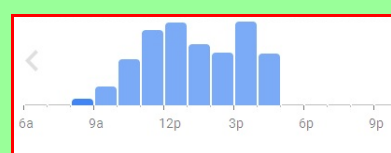
◆ Great Sphinx - Egypt.

Best: Morning hours.

Grows steadily Mon to Fri.

Heavy weekends.

Worst: Mid-day Friday.



Sphinx busiest Friday



16. Internet searches for travelers.

You fill-in the terms in *italics*. Bracketed terms and plus signs are optional.

Search syntax

- Where to stay in + *city*
- *Museum* + hours
- *Airline* + *flight #*
- Literary walk + *country*
- Best view + *location*
- Travel/journey + *name*

You type this

- where to stay in london
- louvre hours
- united airlines 216
- literary walk england
- best view hong kong
- travel ernest hemingway
- journey hannibal

• Tourist sites

[Top ten] + tourist/historical/archaeological sites + *location*

- tourist sites kuala lumpur
- top ten tourist sites rome
- historical sites france
- top ten archaeological sites istanbul

[Top ten] + historical points of interest + *location*

- historical points of interest france
- top ten historical points of interest paris

[Top ten] + antique/flea/open air market + *location*

- antique market budapest
- top ten flea market prague
- best open air market paris
- top ten * market berlin

[Top ten] + museum/gallery/garden/ruin/fort/wall/moat + *location*

- museum amsterdam
- top ten museum london
- gallery moscow
- top ten garden paris
- ruin athens
- top ten fort turkey
- wall berlin
- top ten moat wales

• Cruise ship schedule

Crew center + *port*

• Tours

- crew center panama
- crew center venice
- walking tour dublin
- (bus or guided) tour marrakech
- self guided walking tour florence
- hop on hop off bus berlin
- double decker bus rio

• Rides

- (boat or helicopter) ride mexico
- (funicular or gondola) swiss alps
- (cable car or monorail) singapore
- (zip line or parasail or balloon) kenya
- (ferry or water taxi) manila
- (river or white water) raft austria
- felucca nile
- canal boat panama
- airboat everglades
- venice (kayak or gondola)

- **Food**
 - bangkok street food
 - alsace traditional dish
 - peru food specialties
 - france (cuisine or seafood)
 - japan sushi
 - china dim sum
- **Lessons**
 - madrid cooking class
 - la paz language class
- **Maps**
 - tourist map naples
 - seville (subway or metro) map
- **Souvenirs**
 - netherlands specialties
 - rotterdam souvenirs
- **Famous graves**
 - famous cemetery italy
 - famous grave paris
 - alexandre dumas burial
- **Movie location + *name of film* + [imdb]**
 - movie location james bond imdb
 - movie location evita
- **Cognates +*language* + [wiki]**
 - cognates french
 - cognates german wiki

Power search terms to sharpen your Internet search results:

<u>Term</u>	<u>You type this</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
• distance	➤ distance rome milan ➤ distance [from] 3861 24th st, san francisco, ca [to] 2406 bryant	– for kilometers + drive time between locs
• hotel	➤ rome hotel	– starts Google Travel hotel map
• hours	➤ vatican hours	– for museum or tourist site details
• imdb	➤ cleopatra imdb	– for movie details from Int'l Movie Database
• map	➤ map of baja mexico	– to see map resources and pictures
• menu	➤ olive garden menu	– to get right to the details of a restaurant
• miles	➤ miles 1665 powell	– for distance to an address or destination
• restaurant	➤ red lobster restaurant	– to research meal options
• tickets	➤ louvre tickets	– to purchase entry in advance
• translate	➤ translate spanish	– to find a language translation function
• yelp	➤ paris yelp	– to see dining recommendations from Yelp
• wiki	➤ hannibal wiki	– to lookup encyclopedia info

Refine web searches with special symbols:

<u>Term</u>	<u>You type this</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
*	➤ largest * in the world	– wildcard - to search for unknown words, use the asterisk as a placeholder in your search text
\$ <i>price</i>	➤ camera \$400	– to search for price, put a dollar sign in front of a number (no space)
" <i>exact match</i> "	➤ "tallest building"	– for a precise search, put a word or phrase inside quotation marks
OR	➤ marathon OR race	– to combine searches, use OR between search terms
- <i>minus</i>	➤ travel venice -cruise	– to exclude words to refine a search, put - (hyphen) in front of word(s) to skip (no following space)
site:	➤ site: TSA.gov visa	– to search a specific web site, put site: in front of a domain or site description (no following space)
<i>search video</i>	➤ site: youtube.com lima	– to search for YouTube videos



17. Can you drink the water?

Americans risk diarrhea due to bacteria in the water table outside the continental U.S. (Yes, I met Montezuma in Mexico.) Ask at your lodgings if they treat their water and if it's safe for you to drink. For specific country advice, visit the Centers for Disease Control: CDC.gov/travel; they say "the highest-risk destinations are in most of Asia (except for Japan) as well as the Middle East, Africa, Mexico, and Central and South America." Western Europe is generally safe.

Bolivia: *After a late night arrival, after missing a connecting flight, dehydrated from the high altitude, my hotel in La Paz aggressively overcharged me for a bottle of coke.*

Bolivia: *At a party in a bar in Cochabamba, I was offered chicha, a potent corn beer. Like sake, it's customary to pour for others. But I was advised to refuse – to avoid "traveler's stomach" (because it's made with the local water) – so I'm afraid I was rude. Later on a bus, I overheard someone say "After 3 drinks of chicha, everyone speaks Quechua" (the indigenous dialect).*

Recommended: Pepto Bismal prevents diarrhea! (Two tablets, four times a day.)





*“A vacation spot out of season
always has a very special magic.”
– Max von Sydow*

TRAVEL TIMING

18. Fly early to avoid bumping.

Airline flights are much more vulnerable to delay in the afternoon. *Morning pile-ups make everyone wait.* (Summer thunderstorms are a major source of afternoon delays.) A crosstown taxi to the airport is much swifter in the very early morning, you'll speed through the security check, and your plane is likely already at the airport waiting. And if your flight is canceled, you'll have an easier time rebooking same day. *That 7:00 am departure is worth it!* (On the other hand, a late night flight may help you sleep on the plane.)

Mexico: *Driving out of Cancun city in the early morning, I was surprised to realize that a pedestrian in our way was drunk.*

Recommended: Allow at least one hour between connecting flights.

19. Travel during a slow period:

- Tuesday or Wednesday
- November 1 to mid-December
- Early January to the end of February
- Fall, after school starts
- Off-season or shoulder-season for your destination: Europe in winter, Caribbean in Summer.

20. Don't travel during:

- August - the month that students are out of school and Germany, France, and Italy traditionally take off for vacation, and when Southern Europe hits peak temps.
- Monsoon season - Heavy rains cause floods and landslides June through Nov/Dec in Southeast Asia, India, parts of China, the Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal. Summer also brings storms in Central America, the U.S. East coast (Florida thunderstorms) and Southwest, and hurricane season in the North Atlantic.



Indonesia: *In Bali, I forgot that I'd crossed an international date line, so I thought it was a day earlier in the week. I was surprised to receive a fax at my hotel as I sunbathed beside the pool, reminding me that I'd be picked up for my departure – in an hour!*

- 21. Flight planning.** To get the best deals, watch for sales mornings and weekends (up to 20% lower), especially Sundays. Also look for low fares early in the week, especially Tuesdays. Schedule your flights and shopping on the best day of the week:

AIR TRAVEL CALENDAR – when to buy, when to fly						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Shop for domestic U.S. airfare	Shop for domestic U.S. airfare	Shop for domestic U.S. airfare			Shop for international airfare	Shop for international airfare
<i>Bad day to fly</i>	Good day to fly	Good day to fly		<i>Bad day to fly</i>	Good day to fly	

(Source: FareCompare.com)



*“For once you have tasted flight
you will walk the earth
with your eyes turned skywards,
for there you have been
and there you will long to return.”*
– Leonardo da Vinci

FIND YOUR FLIGHT

22. Fly into hubs, but don't stay.

Because of high passenger volume, major cities offer the cheapest airfares. From the hub city, you can inexpensively travel on by train/bus/ferry or book additional flights on cheap regional airlines. Prices are high in hub cities, so relocate nearby to save on food, lodging and everything else.

Travel writers recommend:

- Oxford instead of London
- Chartres instead of Paris
- Marseille instead of Paris
- Haarlem instead of Amsterdam
- Prato instead of Florence
- Padua instead of Venice
- Avila instead of Madrid
- Osaka instead of Tokyo
- Girona instead of Barcelona.



Malaysia: *While waiting in line at the bus station in Kuala Lumpur, headed to the Cameron Highlands, I made friends with two appealing female travelers. We chatted about the guidebook-recommended guesthouses and agreed on which one was best. But they sat together and I sat with another woman; after a very pleasant chat over the course of the 3-hour bus trip, I made other plans with her.*

Italy: *My EuroPass saved the day for me when the ticket agents went on strike! Traveling from Florence to Rome, you couldn't buy a ticket, but the trains were still running so I was able to board.*

England: *From London, I took a day trip by train and bus to see Stonehenge. It would have been stunning in the right setting; unfortunately, it is now positioned between two highways. Then I took a local bus to see a similar ancient site nearby called Avebury, and was charmed by the Wiltshire countryside, decorated in green with meandering rivers and grazing sheep. Both sites are very old (3800 BC) stone rings within circular ditches, imbued with history and ancient spirits. In an Avebury tourist shop, amongst books on spirituality and healing, I happened to notice a book on 'urine therapy' – I don't think I want to know!*

23. Book your flight. To get a flow of information started, set price alerts as early as possible at Airfarewatchdog.com, or at almost any of the websites below, to learn about sales and seasonal discounts. For a good overview, start at Google.com/flights, Skyscanner.com, or Momondo.com to find the lowest cost days to fly. Cheapoair.com offers a calendar showing prices for each day of the month, a summary of prices by airline, and extensive filtering (after the initial search) by length of flight/layover and # of stops, and sort by shortest/direct flight. Hotwire.com is a discounter that allows easy comparison of budget airlines. Kayak.com is an aggregator that searches many sites at once for a broad canvas of prices (and you can filter length of flight/layover, 0/1/2-stops); hit the 'Explore' button to search domestic airfares with flexible dates. Kayak, Orbitz, and Booking.com offer free cancellation within 24 hours.

Expedia.com is a booking engine that can be viewed in Spanish and lets you sort flights by price, duration, etc. Orbitz.com is a booking engine that shows a calendar of prices for flexible dates, allowing you to pick the best days of the week. All these sites handle hotel rooms, too, and many list cruises as well. Most sites offer newsletters and/or price alerts.

Pick your flight, then check the airline website – it may offer better prices, seats, and flights.

Tech Tip – Recommended travel websites:

- Google.com/flights - filter and map flights by date/price/duration/airport – 'Flight insights' offers a date/price grid, a length of stay graph, and airport map and pricing
- Kayak.com/explore - find bargains by map for flexible dates
- Momondo.com - 'Explore' button for flexible searching – # stops, duration, time of day; 'Flight insights'(appears after search) suggests month, day/time to buy/fly.
- Skyscanner.com - see a pricing map, or 'search everywhere'; 'Non-stop flights only' button; lots of filters, includes a monthly calendar + chart
- Travelocity.com - flight booking engine – with a *price guarantee*, 24-hour hold



24. **See Southwest.** If you're flying south of the border, make sure you check Southwest.com. They do not release their flight information to the online travel sites. Southwest is the only major airline that charges no fee for checked baggage or ticket changes. (Seats are not reserved; seating is by section.) Every other major airline will try to sell you flight insurance.

25. **Seat selection.** Shortly after you book your flight, login to the airline's website. This will confirm that a ticket actually was issued, and provide an opportunity to make your seat selection.

Tech tip: Use SeatGuru.com for seat selection, info on baggage fees (for international flights, as much as \$100 apiece!), and 'eCheck-In'.

Italy: *Flying home from Rome, I was not happy to realize that my seat backed up against a wall – I could not recline!*

Where to sit? *Studies of past crashes suggest that sitting near the back is safest – in the rear third of the aircraft; over the wing is also good. Aisle seats offer better bathroom access. Turbulence is felt less over the wings or towards the front, regarding airsickness.*





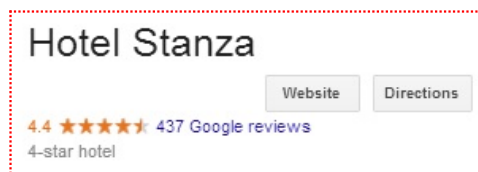
*“Many a trip continues long after
movement in time and space have ceased.”*
– John Steinbeck

LOOK FOR LODGING

26. **Hotel strategy.** Travel agency websites say it pays to book your flight and hotel at the same time; why give two bites at the apple? This means be prepared with ideas about your budget and the hotels or neighborhoods you want to stay in when you book your flight + hotel – a difficult burden. Testing shows this to be a good tactic, but ...

*By email, using simple English,
I've gotten great deals directly
from hotels in Mexico City, Rome,
Florence, Vietnam ... Now, I
routinely email or call to ask for
a 'promotional' or 'cash' discount.*

Tech tip: The best deals are offered by the hotels directly (which saves them a commission). Do a Google search for almost any hotel in the civilized world and you'll get a compact report in your search results showing a picture, the hotel phone #, and a button for the *Website*. Use the Website button to visit the hotel website to find their email address (under 'Contact us'). Use phone or email to inquire and you can save 15 to 30% off the best online offers!



Google search results – hotel Website button

27. **Hotel shopping.** When evaluating lodging options, ask about the features most important to you:

- Air conditioning?
- Breakfast included? (Eggs/hot dishes?)
- Free wi-fi? Printing?
- Tap water safe to drink?
- Safe deposit box in room?
- Daily maid service? Water?
- Airport shuttle/pickup?
- TV with remote control? English language TV?
- DVD, satellite/cable TV?
- Refrigerator in room?
- Microwave/kitchenette?
- Bed size? Room size?
- Desk and chair?
- Windows that open?
- Hair blow dryer?
- 110 volt electrical outlet
- Hot water available 24 hours?
- Electrical adapter/converter to borrow?
- Laundry service? Self service washer/dryer?
- Fitness center, hot tub, daily newspaper?
- Close to transit and tourist sites?

Singapore: *I was disappointed to find that the hotel's breakfast buffet centered around pre-cooked hot dogs and ever-easy fried eggs (in warming pans).*

Thailand: *In Chiang Mai, I paid US \$1.20 per night for a bare room – lamp, ceiling fan, mattress and bedding. The manager was a 'he/she' with beautiful long black hair, down to her hips – an exotic character in an exotic land.*

Mexico: *As we returned to our hotel's parking lot in Merida, we could see a policeman blocking our path due to a street fair. I told Laura, now was the time to turn on her brightest smile.*

Malaysia: *The persistent heat in Kuala Lumpur made the refrigerator/freezer in my hotel room a real luxury – cold beverages!*

Ask about the nearest metro stop and how much a taxi from the airport should cost.

Recommended: *A restaurant in the building.* It can be very convenient to eat breakfast and then finish your morning prep (teeth, sun screen) and use the toilet before you set out on your day's adventures (diarrhea often hits right after breakfast). A hotel restaurant is especially handy when you:

- first arrive (at an odd hour) – hungry!
- need a place to wait for the rain to stop
- are sick (diarrhea is the traveler's curse)
- need a quick meal prior to departure

Mexico: *I loved the fish tacos and vanilla malted milkshakes served in the restaurant so conveniently attached to the lobby of my Mexico City hotel.*

28. **What's nearby?** Search for a hotel in [Google.com/maps](https://www.google.com/maps) to see the "Nearby" button near the top center, which offers printable lists of restaurants/bars/hotels. [Hotels.com](https://www.hotels.com) offers a valuable "What's around" list, showing walk and drive time to landmarks and transit hubs.

Mexico: *We rented a car in Cancun and drove to the fabulous Mayan ruins at nearby Chichen Itza. Driving back after dark, we squished dozens of tarantulas beneath our wheels – they are drawn to the warm asphalt at night.*



29. **Blind bargain.** If you're flexible about your lodging location, and willing to commit before knowing the name or address of the hotel, then [Priceline.com](https://www.priceline.com) "Name Your Own Price" bidding offers fabulous bargains. For a little more control, their "Express Deals" also offer good bargains using blind selection. Prep by reading up at [BiddingForTravel.com](https://www.biddingfortravel.com).

Turkey: *Driving a rental car to Cappadocia, perhaps we misunderstood the traffic cop's directions; we ended up in a small town off the beaten path. We were treated as minor celebrities – every shopkeeper wanted to chat and serve us apple tea.*

[Hotwire.com](https://www.hotwire.com) "Hot Rate Hotels" also offer bargains via blind selection; you'll get only a broad description, such as "3.5-star Hotel in Centro Historico" and a few details such as "75% recommended, free Wi-Fi, airport shuttle, business center" – but you can't see the address first or contact them by phone.





30. **Hotel hotline.** When shopping hotels online, here's a great resource. [Orbitz/Expedia/Travelocity](#) and [Hotels.com](#) offer 24/7 toll free phone numbers to ask questions. They will put you on hold, call the hotel reception desk for you and relay the answers. Sometimes, if you ask politely, they will *connect you directly to the reception desk at the hotel*. So, if you have questions about what's nearby, the laundry facilities, English-language TV, hot tub hours, etc., don't hesitate.

China: *After arriving by bus in Guangzhou (formerly Canton) from Hong Kong, I hurriedly dumped my luggage in the hotel room, emptied my pockets onto the desk, and set off on my Cantonese adventure. While I was out exploring, the hotel floor matron disregarded the "Do Not Disturb" sign I placed on the door and entered my room (to provide a thermos of hot water for tea). Upon my return, she scolded me and told me not to leave cash lying around.*

31. **Book your hotel.** *Shop the Internet:*

Step #1: Develop a short list of neighborhoods/hotels by checking guidebooks and consulting the web. Start your search for lodgings with a simple Internet search ("Where to stay in city") then do some research at [TripAdvisor.com](#) and [Google.com/Travel](#).

Step #2: Narrow your list with research on [Hotels.com](#), [Momondo.com](#), [Booking.com](#) – see the map – and **one** of these sites: [Orbitz.com/Expedia.com/Travelocity.com/Hotwire.com](#) (not Hotwire's "Hot Rate Hotels" – click the "Hotels" button at upper left). Orbitz/Expedia/Travelocity/Hotwire all use the same database, with identical, detailed hotel descriptions (often including room size in square feet), but prices vary.

Use the websites above to find hotels within your budget and desired neighborhood, that offer the features you want: How about free breakfast, A/C, free wifi, 3+ stars, and a guest review/rating of 4+? And maybe laundry service, a pool and restaurant? Sort the list by guest rating (or distance from a landmark) and scan top to bottom for prices in your budget.

Once you've narrowed to a short list of 2 or 3 hotels, research each in detail (price, location, amenities, and what's nearby – and read the reviews, which can be quite telling). Also check pricing on Kayak.com. When you compare pricing, make sure you know if breakfast and taxes are included.

If pricing is close, consider these perks:

- A “price guarantee” is offered by Hotels.com, and Orbitz/Expedia/Hotwire.
- “Free cancellation” is offered on many rooms at Orbitz/Expedia/Hotwire, and Kayak.
- At Orbitz/Expedia/Hotwire, you'll earn 10% off select hotels for membership signup and many rooms offer a “pay later” option.
- After you book 10 nights, you'll earn a free night at Hotels.com.

Step #3: Book your lodging at the site that offers the lowest price and best perks. Pay by credit card for best currency exchange rate.

Recommended: You will get a better price (especially for lengthy stays) by studying the hotel website, then find their phone # or email address and **negotiate directly with the hotel:** Ask for a ‘promotional’ discount. “I’m looking for a room in the \$X range ...”

Italy: *My hotel in Naples gave me a bottle of wine and a package of pasta as a gift to thank me for booking directly.*





*“A journey is a person in itself; no two are alike.
And all plans, safeguards, policing,
and coercion are fruitless.
We find that after years of struggle
that we do not take a trip; a trip takes us.”*
– John Steinbeck

WHAT TO BRING

32. Leave your wardrobe at home.

Take minimal clothes traveling. You'll likely settle into a routine of wearing similar outfits each day with desired features:

- Good pockets for passport, keys, money (with secure closures: zipper/velcro/button)
- Tops that keep you cool
- Pants comfortable for sitting hours in a plane/train/canoe!
- Roomy pants pockets for
 - wallet
 - camera
 - pen + notebook
 - small water bottle

Thailand: *Visiting the hill tribes in the back country near Chiang Mai, I was slipping and sliding on the muddy trails. I had brought the wrong shoes.*

France: *For the summer of my eleventh birthday, I was a French boy. Which meant, of course, that I wore shorts, like every other French boy. At first, I was very embarrassed about my pale white legs. But that was something time took care of in stride; in no time at all my legs were tanned and shorts were my new normal. France changed me. As an adult, I love to wear shorts when I can. I guess it reminds me of my youth.*

Remember, no one is likely to see you more than once!

Recommended: Leave your watch at home. Crime risk. (*In Sao Paulo, Brazil, thieves steal watches off drivers' wrists at traffic stops!*) Your camera or electronic gadget knows the time; just make sure you reset to local time upon arrival.

Tech tip: TravelSmith.com sells luggage and accessories, as well as lightweight, quick drying clothing (and compression socks for those long-haul flights). Also see SierraTradingPost.com and REI.com/outlet and checkout "Travel Accessories" at Ebags.com and Amazon.com.



- 33. Travel notebook.** *Be polite and crime-smart – minimize use of electronic gadgets in public.* Carry a pocket-sized notebook to record notes on paper in a central place – your hotel's wi-fi password, breakfast hours, train/bus/ferry departure times, walking instructions to bank, laundry, tourist sites ... Use a lined spiral bound notebook, about 3x5" – clip a pen in the wire spiral and secure with a rubber band.

Recommended: Keep a **travel diary.** Take notes (and pictures) of car trips, vacations, foreign travel – weather, new friends, adventures, destinations, local foods, souvenirs ... Make daily entries in a journal – a paper notebook or electronic diary/scrapbook. *Add postcards, tickets, receipts, drawings, maps* (highlight your route). Someday you'll want to remember.

France: *As a boy on my first travel adventure, I was encouraged to make daily entries in a travel journal. I didn't know what to write. My most common diary entry was: "See last Tuesday."*

34. Hedge your bets. Anticipate likely risks.

Photocopy the contents of your wallet. Take pictures with your cell phone or camera to carry images of your passport, visa, drivers license, tickets, credit/debit cards, hotel confirmation, itinerary, etc. Snap the sign where you parked the car. Before you drive away in a rental car, document the windshield, doors, bumpers – and the gas gauge upon drop-off. Always carry ID on your person when on foreign soil; lock your passport in your hotel safe and carry an image of it in your wallet or camera. In your carry-on, bring passport photos, and with a variety of U.S. dollar bills – handy for tips, visa fees, emergencies, and that unexpected exit tax.

Tech tip: Scan your passport (and key documents) and email to yourself.



35. A) Critical gear. Don't forget to pack:

- ☐ Sun screen (spray on!)
- ☐ Sun/rain hat
- ☐ Phrase book or translation app
- ☐ Spare batteries
- ☐ Notebook and pens
- ☐ Aspirin or Ibuprofen for pain, blisters ...
- ☐ A pocket knife or wine tool to cut/spread food, open packages, and cut thread or string. Pack it in your checked luggage; upon arrival transfer to your pocket or day pack.
Recommended: Swiss Army knife, but you may have to give it up at regional airport security.
- ☐ Travel alarm clock or app to wake you up if you'll face any early departures.
- ☐ Scarf - for an eye mask, sun protection, tourniquet, to cover up entering a church, or to make your checked bag distinct.

Thailand: *I bought a pocket knife on the streets of Bangkok. It hurt when I had to give it up at airport security when I flew on to Chiang Mai.*

You can purchase many of these items at your destination, but it's much more convenient to take them.

B) Gear up. Don't forget these small items (easy to pack) which can really pay off:

- Inflatable 'O-ring' seat cushion/neck pillow
- Small flashlight
- Electrical adapter/converter for your camera/gadget
- Small compass to quickly orient maps
- Plastic utensils (spoon, fork, serrated knife to make sandwiches or cut fruit/meat/cheese)
- Wool cap (for cold weather)
- Liquid laundry detergent – pack in your leakables bag
- Zip lock baggies - fill one with water, detergent/shampoo, and dirty clothes, for an emergency wash bag
- Deck of playing cards for quick, portable entertainment

Hong Kong: *After a 20-hour flight, my butt was sore! After that, I made it a priority to buy an inflatable seat cushion.*

Italy: *Take a compass to quickly orient your map. It's especially useful in Italy, where street names change almost every block and narrow streets make it difficult to see landmarks. In Naples, I got lost a lot!*




C) Handy tools. Sometimes when traveling, you need an ordinary item that proves difficult to find. Because they are cheap, disposable, and easy to pack, you might want to carry these:

- Paper clips
- Safety pins
- Rubber bands
- Sewing kit
- Wire twist ties (substitute for luggage locks and use to close plastic bags)
- Dental floss (thread, shoelace, a chin strap for your hat, or a laundry line to hang your wash)
- Clothes pins (to help fully close drapes)

Mexico: *At the famous Mayan ruins of Chichen Itza, I saw a bus driver use a liter of Coke to clean his windshield. The bubbles and acidity cut the mud.*

Greece: *On a 23-hour train ride from Istanbul to Thessaloniki, there was no heat and it got very cold that night. I was able to use some tape to put up a tarp over the window to create some insulation – that helped a lot.*

D) Frequent traveler tools:

- Instant coffee – if you're a caffeine addict and will travel in Asia or the U.K.
- Ear plugs and eye mask to help you sleep on plane.
- Binoculars or opera glasses – to appreciate the view, the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, or read that list of train departure gates.
- Extendible tube to bring home rolled up posters, maps, or canvas paintings, or small souvenirs.
- Duct tape
- Folding travel scissors to trim facial hair 

China: *In Chengdu, two health problems afflicted our group. One traveler required a trip to the hospital due to a conspiracy of spicy food, traveler's stress, and foreign germs. Another was briefly laid low by caffeine addiction, requiring a trip to Starbucks. (Coffee is rare in a world that loves tea.)*

Europe: *If you'll be doing a lot of museums and galleries, invest in art history books. I was surprised at how rare explanatory text was, much less in English. (And take your opera glasses to appreciate those ceilings.)*



36. Carry toiletry items. Carry an abbreviated toilet kit in your daypack. When traveling in less developed countries or outside of cities, you may experience a bathroom emergency and not find the usual amenities. To be safe, carry a few small items for a potentially high payoff:

- Partial roll of toilet paper (or packet of Kleenex)
- Small bar of soap (for handwashing or emergency laundry)
- Hand disinfectant (Purell)
- Water
- Wet wipes

Greece: *When I entered a public bathroom on the isle of Crete, a man gave me paper towels. I assumed he was the attendant and thanked him. I was surprised when he came close to kiss me on the cheek. When he put his hand between my legs, I realized this was not some charming local custom. I hastily backed into a stall, locked it, did my business, and left as quickly as I could. I had met a predator and a cretin.*

Turkey: *I'm embarrassed at what a mess I left the first time I used a pit toilet. I was confused about how it worked – it's just a hole in the ground. I didn't realize the bucket of water was for cleanup and flushing.*

37. Bring mementos of home.

To bond with locals – a challenge for any tourist – take along items for show and tell:

- photos of home, family, kids and pets
- your business cards (handy when asking 'Email that picture/recipe to me!')

Turkey: *Gazing at the city lights from atop our tiny hotel in Bodrum, we had a lot of laughs trying to chat with the young hotel manager. He, like every third guy we met in Turkey, was named Mustafa (after national hero Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.)*



38. Bring a book. Sometimes downtime is forced on you, and that's when reading material is useful. A book is easy to start/stop and is not a disaster if lost or stolen, but a smart phone or electronic gadget is a theft magnet and tends to cut you off from the random social moments that can make travel so rewarding. Whether electronic or on paper, keep reading material handy.

Recommended: *Why buy the book?* Valuable free curated resources are just clicks away; use your **public library's** website to search for travel guides and phrase books; renew just before you go. Check out a *Rick Steves* or *Lonely Planet* guidebook, a travelogue, or some fiction related to your destination. Ebooks are instantly accessible. Movies about your destination can also be a treat. Search newspaper and magazine databases to research recipes, movies, your destination country, and specific sites. *All free.*

Singapore: *Checking into my hotel, I bumped into the author of the travel guidebook I was carrying. He was harried and in a rush. He did not seem to be enjoying his travels.*



39. Books of insight. Expand your cultural and historical experience by reading fiction or travelogue about your destination:

- Afghanistan - [*The Kite Runner*](#), Khaled Hosseini (novel)
- Africa - [*Out of Africa*](#), Dinesen (memoir); [*Green Hills of Africa*](#), Hemingway (memoir); [*Heart of Darkness*](#), Conrad (novel); [*Cry, The Beloved Country*](#), Paton (novel); [*The Lost History of Stars*](#), Boling (novel set during the Boer War); [*Love, Africa: A Memoir of Romance, War, and Survival*](#), Gettleman (novel); [*In Morocco*](#), Wharton (travelogue); [*Things Fall Apart*](#), Achebe (novel); [*A Season in Hell*](#), Rimbaud (1873, poetry); [*Travels in the Interior of Africa*](#), Park (travelogue); [*The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency*](#), Smith (novel); [*The Spider's House*](#), Bowles (Morocco)
- Britain - [*Great Expectations*](#), Dickens; [*Pride and Prejudice*](#), Austen; [*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*](#), Carroll (fairy tale); [*Far from the Madding Crowd*](#), Hardy (novel); [*The Cuckoo's Calling*](#), Galbraith/Rowling (crime novel); [*Three Men in a Boat*](#), Jerome (travelogue comedy); [*Hidden Histories: A Spotter's Guide to the British Landscape*](#), Ochota; [*Notes from a Small Island*](#), Bryson (humorous travelogue); [*London Perceived*](#), Pritchett (travelogue)
- China - [*Kowloon Tong*](#), Theroux (novel); [*The Good Earth*](#), Buck; [*The Man Who Loved China*](#), Winchester (tech history); [*The Pleasures and Treasures of Hong Kong*](#), Krannich (shopping guide)
- Cuba - [*The Old Man and the Sea*](#), Hemingway (novella); [*To Have and Have Not*](#), Hemingway; [*Our Man in Havana*](#), Greene (spy travelogue); [*Trading with the Enemy*](#), Miller (travelogue)

- Egypt - [*Death on the Nile*](#), Agatha Christie (mystery); [*Crocodile on the Sandbank*](#), Peters (novel); [*The Alchemist*](#), Coelho (novel); [*An Egyptian Journal*](#), Golding (travelogue); [*Palace Walk*](#) (Cairo Trilogy), Mahfouz (Nobel winner)
- France - [*A Tale of Two Cities*](#), Dickens; [*A Moveable Feast*](#), Hemingway (memoir); [*The Sun Also Rises*](#), Hemingway (novel); [*Tropic of Cancer*](#), Miller (memoir); [*Red Gold*](#), Furst (historical spy drama); [*Seven Ages of Paris*](#), Horne (history); [*Paris Was Ours*](#), Rowlands; [*A Year in Provence*](#), Mayle (memoir); [*Giovanni's Room*](#), Baldwin (novel); [*The Age of Innocence*](#), Wharton (historical fiction); [*Quicksands*](#), Bedford (memoir); [*Henry and June*](#), Anais Nin; [*Murder in the Marais*](#), Cara Black (Aimée Leduc, Parisian detective series); [*Perestroika in Paris*](#), Smiley; [*All the Light We Cannot See*](#), Doerr (novel)
- Germany - [*All Quiet on the Western Front*](#), Remarque (WWI masterpiece); [*Fatherland*](#), Harris (historical fiction); [*A German Requiem*](#), Kerr (Berlin Noir collection); [*The Teleportation Accident*](#), Beauman (historical fantasy); [*The Man in the High Castle*](#), Philip K. Dick (alternative history); [*Goodbye to Berlin*](#), Isherwood (movie title: *Cabaret*); [*Children's and Household Tales*](#) (the Grimm brothers' fairy tales)
- India - [*Plain Tales From the Hills*](#), Kipling; [*The Siege of Krishnapur*](#), Farrell; [*The Great Railway Bazaar*](#), Theroux (travelogue); [*Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found*](#), Mehta (travelogue)





- Italy - [*A Room with a View*](#), Forster; [*A Farewell to Arms*](#), Hemingway (novel); [*The Prince*](#), Machiavelli; [*Italian Hours*](#), James (travelogue); [*Italian Journey 1786–88*](#), Goethe; [*I, Claudius*](#), Graves; [*Pompeii*](#), Harris (novel); [*Death in Venice*](#), Mann (novella); [*The Shape of Water*](#), Camilleri (detective); [*Enchanted April*](#), Arnim; [*Venice*](#), Morris (travelogue); [*Naples '44*](#), Lewis (novel); [*The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone*](#), Tennessee Williams (novel); [*My Brilliant Friend*](#), Elena Ferrante (Neapolitan Novels); [*Death at La Fenice*](#), Donna Leon (detective); [*The Leopard*](#), Lampedusa; [*Still Life*](#), Sarah Winman (novel); [*The Land Where Lemons Grow*](#), Helena Attlee
- Japan - [*Shogun*](#), Clavell; [*The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*](#), Benedict
- Mediterranean - [*The Pillars of Hercules*](#), Theroux (travelogue); [*Edith Wharton Abroad: Selected Travel Writings*](#), Wharton (travelog)
- Mexico - [*Mexico City Blues*](#), Kerouac; [*The Savage Detectives*](#), Bolano (novel); [*Queer*](#), Burroughs (autobiographical novel); [*The Old Gringo*](#), Fuentes (novel); [*Under the Volcano*](#), Lowry (novel); [*Deserted Cities of the Heart*](#), Shiner (science fiction); [*Breaking the Maya Code*](#), Coe (nonfiction); [*Reading the Maya Glyphs*](#), Coe (nonfiction); [*The Death of Artemio Cruz*](#), Fuentes (novel); [*Pedro Páramo*](#), Juan Rulfo (novel); [*Faces in the Crowd*](#), Luiselli (novel)
- Middle East - [*The Innocents Abroad*](#), Mark Twain (travelogue); [*Arabian Sands*](#), Thesiger (travelogue); [*The Road to Oxiana*](#), Byron (travelogue); [*The Great Railway Bazaar*](#), Theroux (travelogue)
- Peru - [*Lost City of the Incas*](#), Hiram Bingham (Machu Picchu travelogue); [*Turn Right at Machu Picchu*](#), Adams (travelogue); [*Machu Picchu Guidebook: A Self-Guided Tour*](#), Wright; [*Lost City: The Discovery of Machu Picchu*](#), Lewin

- Russia - [*Doctor Zhivago*](#), Pasternak; [*One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*](#), Solzhenitsyn (novel); [*Crime and Punishment*](#), Dostoyevsky (novel); [*Dersu the Trapper*](#), Arseniev (travelogue, in Spanish); [*Among the Russians*](#), Thubron (travelogue); [*Eugene Onegin*](#), Pushkin (novel in verse)
- Scotland - [*Ivanhoe*](#) (1819), Sir Walter Scott; [*Rob Roy*](#), Scott
- South America - [*Voyage of the Beagle*](#), Charles Darwin; [*The Log from the Sea of Cortez*](#), John Steinbeck; [*The Teachings of Don Juan*](#), Carlos Castaneda; [*The Motorcycle Diaries*](#), Che Guevara; [*Inca-Kola*](#), Parris; [*The Lost City of Z*](#), Grann (travelogue); [*Walking the Amazon: 860 Days. One Step at a Time*](#), Stafford (travelogue); [*The House of the Spirits*](#), Allende (novel); [*In Patagonia*](#), Chatwin (travelogue); [*Wild Coast*](#), Gimlette (travelogue); [*The Naturalist on the River Amazons*](#), Bates (travelogue)
- Spain - [*Don Quixote*](#), Cervantes; [*For Whom the Bell Tolls*](#), Hemingway (novel); [*Homage to Catalonia*](#), Orwell (autobiographical travelogue); [*The Pilgrimage*](#), Paulo Coelho; [*The Dinner Guest*](#), Gabriela Ybarra; [*A Heart So White*](#), Javier Marias; [*Leaving the Atocha Station*](#), Ben Lerner
- Thailand - [*One Night in Bangkok*](#), Stanley (sci-fi novel); [*The Beach*](#), Garland (novel); [*The Treasures and Pleasures of Thailand*](#), Krannich (shopping guide)
- Turkey - [*An Ottoman Traveller*](#), Dankoff (travelogue ~1650); [*Istanbul Passage*](#), Kanon (historical spy drama); [*The Light of Day*](#), Eric Ambler (spy drama, movie title: *Topkapi*); [*My Name is Red*](#), Pamuk; [*Istanbul, Memories and the City*](#), Pamuk
- Vietnam - [*The Lover*](#), Duras (novel); [*The Quiet American*](#), Graham Greene (novel); [*The Sympathizer*](#), Nguyen (Pulitzer prize-winning spy novel); [*Catfish and Mandala*](#), Pham (travelogue); [*The Treasures and Pleasures of Vietnam and Cambodia*](#), Krannich (shopping guide)



*“Life is a travelling to the edge of knowledge,
then a leap taken.”*

– D. H. Lawrence

LEARN SOME LINGO

40. **Instant translation.**

Automated, 24-hour translation is only a click away. Do a Google search for “English to *language* translation” for a quick, easy, free translation function.

◀ Click the speaker icon
to play the translation!

Tech Tip: On your mobile device, install Google Translate (<https://translate.google.com>) and download a language to use **offline** – even without a wi-fi or network connection. Prepare sentences in advance, then pick from a list to play them as needed: “Excuse me, where is the bathroom?” and “Only peeled or cooked vegetables.” *Mobile translation has arrived, a game changer for the casual tourist!*

Recommended: Take a snapshot of a sign or menu and ‘camera translation’ will instantly read it for you!

China: *Riding up the elevator in my hotel in Beijing, a staff member turned to me and said “Please wait a moment” then exited. I waited ... but he never reappeared. I think he had just mixed up some phrases he had been taught and probably meant to say “Have a nice day.”*

Mexico: *In a bar in the hills above Puerto Vallarta, I asked a local dark-haired beauty, “Would you like to kiss?” Her response needed no translation.*

Switzerland: *At Basel’s cavernous train station, I detrained amidst booming announcements of departure times and track numbers. Though we never did find fondue, I had a fun visit with my college buddy, Steve. In the morning, when I awoke I told him about strange sounds in my dreams. “Fear, phumpf” still echoed in my head. He told me those words meant ‘four’ and ‘five’ in German! (vier, fünf) What an interesting insight into the unconscious mind.*

41. **Vocabulary.** Take a list of vocabulary words important to you. Make a list of language terms you might need – perhaps your favorite fruit or foods, ‘110 volts’ or ‘one way trip’ or ‘laundry’ (*lavanderia* in Spanish/Italian). Go armed with these **6 standard phrases**: *Yes, No, Please, Thank you, Hello, Goodbye*. And add: *I don’t understand, Excuse me, Where is the bathroom?, and What is the price?* Learn a few basics online at www.TravLang.com



42. **Cognates are cool.** An easy way to quickly absorb useful vocabulary, is to focus on words you already know. Cognates have the same meaning and spelling in English and other languages. These words mean the same in English/Spanish/Italian/French (pronunciation varies): *Auto, bar, café, chocolate, cyber, disco, DVD, festival, hotel, Internet, melon, menu, panorama, radio, Skype, taxi, television, and wi-fi*. Search the Internet for “cognates + language + [wiki]” to find resources like:

- French: <https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/xr1/glossaries/ELA/GlossaryCognatesFrenchUpdated5-5-2014.pdf>
- German: https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:List_of_German_cognates_with_English
- Italian: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_English_words_of_Italian_origin
- Spanish: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_English_words_of_Spanish_origin

Italy: *I love eggs (uova); I wanted to try eel in Italy (anguilla), and sfogliatella is a classic Italian pastry.*

Thailand: *Traveling with Ela, an English woman I met flying in to Bangkok, I learned some British-English vocabulary:*
- *muzzy* = mosquito
- *elastic* = rubber band
- *chocy* = chocolate milk
- *plasters* = bandages
- *pudding* = dessert
- *bum* = butt
- *fanny* = vagina (say “bum bag”, not “fanny pack!”)

China: *At a wedding dinner in Sichuan, I was taught to say ‘Thank you’ in Mandarin: “shay-shay.” I asked if it is a plural, because I’d learned that pluralization in Malay is done by repeating the word. (Travel is so broadening.) For example, orang means ‘person’; orang orang means ‘people’. I learned that orang hutan means ‘person from the forest’, hence our word orangutan for the famed primate, the “Wild man of Borneo.”*

Cognates for travelers

<u>English</u>	<u>Spanish</u>	<u>Italian</u>	<u>French</u>
Assistance	Asistencia	Assistenza	Assistance
Authorization	Autorización	Autorizzazione	Autorisation
Bus	Autobus	Autobus	Autobus
Edifice	Edificio	Edificio	Édifice
Entrance	Entrada	Entrance	Entrée
Group	Grupo	Gruppo	Groupe
Hour	Hora	Ora	Heure
Included	Incluido	Incluso	Inclus
Insect	Insecto	Insetto	Insecte
Metro	Metro	Metro	Métro
Minute	Minuto	Minuto	Minute
Museum	Museo	Museo	Musée
Necessary	Necesario	Necessario	Nécessaire
Nights	Noches	Notti	Nuits
Number	Número	Numero	Nombre
One moment	Uno momento	Una moment	Un moment
Pardon	Perdón	Pardon	Pardon
Passport	Pasaporte	Passaporto	Passeport
Person	Persona	Persona	Personne
Possible	Posible	Possibile	Possible
Problem	Problema	Problema	Problème
Recommend	Recomendar	Raccomandare	Recommander
Repeat	Repetir	Ripetere	Répéter
Solo	Solo	Assolo	Solo
Reserve	Reserve	Reserve	Réserve
Train	Treno	Treno	Train
Transport	Transporte	Transporto	Transport
Vacation	Vacaciones	Vacanza	Vacances
Zone	Zona	Zona	Zone
<i>Nightlife:</i>			
Alcohol	Alcohol	Alcool	Alcool
Aspirin	Aspirina	Aspirina	Aspirine
Ibuprofen	Ibuprofeno	Ibuprofene	Ibuprofène
Cinema	Cine	Cinema	Cinéma
Restaurant	Restaurant	Ristorante	Restaurant
<i>Food:</i>			
Coffee	Café	Caffè	Café
Cream	Crema	Crema	Crème
Hamburger	Hamburguesa	Hamburger	Hamburger
Lemon	Limón	Limone	Citron
Mango	Mango	Mango	Mangue
Mayonnaise	Mayonesa	Maionese	Mayonnaise
Pasta	Pastas	Pasta	Pâtes
Salad	Ensalada	Insalata	Salade
Salt	Sal	Sale	Sel
Soup	Sopa	Minestra	Soupe
Tomato	Tomate	Pomodoro	Tomate
Wine	Vino	Vino	Vin
<i>Tech:</i>			
Cable	Cable	Cavo	Câble
Camera	Cámara	Telecamera	Caméra
Disk	Disco	Disco	Disque
Electronic	Electrónico	Elettronico	Électronique
Error	Error	Errore	Erreur
Information	Información	Informazione	Information
Message	Mensaje	Messaggio	Message
Microphone	Micrófono	Microfono	Microphone
Online	En línea	In linea	En ligne
Page	Página	Pagina	Page
Photo	Foto	Foto	Photo
System	Sistema	Sistema	Système
Telephone	Teléfono	Telefono	Téléphone
Website	Sitio web	Sito web	Site Internet



*“Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed
by the things you didn’t do than by the ones you did.
So throw off the bowlines! Sail away from the safe
harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails.
Explore. Dream. Discover.”
– Mark Twain*

\$ € ¥ £

MONEY

- 43. “Charge It”** – after your closing date. Using a credit card earns points and allows you to *dispute the charge* if something goes wrong, so use one especially for your big expenses (flights and lodging). Delay large purchases until the day after your billing period ends – for maximum float.

Mexico: A travel agency in Mexico City tried to charge me a 5% fee to use my credit card to pay for a tour of Teotihuacan. I told them that I objected, and they relented.

Tech tip: For greatest security, provide your credit card number by 1) phone (landline), 2) encrypted email, or 3) fax. Otherwise, split your card number between two emails; after you send Email #1, wait briefly, then send #2:

- Email #1 of 2: 1234-5678-xxxx-xxxx
- Email #2 of 2: xxxx-xxxx-9012-3456 Exp 12/34

Recommended: Ask in advance for the total cost by credit card.

Peru: In Cuzco, I bought a plane ticket to Lima from a travel agent in a small shop near my hotel. Later, when I saw the credit card bill, I learned that he charged me a 50% commission.

44. **Stash your cash.** Spread your risk (of loss/theft/mugging) by taking money with you in different forms – and don't keep it all in one place.

Recommended:

- a credit card in your wallet and another hidden in your carry-on bag (upon arrival, store in hotel safe).
- ATM card in a secure pocket.
- \$500 or more in \$20 bills – hide in your checked bag, then in the hotel safe. Take only perfect bills, no tears or wrinkles.

Peru: *At Lake Titicaca, I lost a credit card paying at a restaurant. I'd used it to book my train to Cuzco, and knew the instructions were to present that card upon boarding. I raced to get to the ticket office early but had, I'm glad to say, no problema.*

45. **Decoy wallet.** While in-country, carry an expendable wallet containing:

- cash for the day - small bills
- credit card with the lowest foreign transaction fee
- ATM/debit card
- copy of your passport
- photo ID (drivers' license)
- hotel card (with address)
- don't carry your Medicare or Social Security card

Italy: *In Naples, a waiter stalled giving me change in order to manipulate a larger tip!*

Carry your hotel key and emergency money in a different bag or pocket – a backup card and a few large bills (enough to fund an emergency taxi ride or snatch up that antique discovery).

Indonesia: *In Bali, I visited a shopping mall complete with movie theater. I had an hour to wait before the movie started, so I took a power tour of the shops – devoid of shoppers – and decided to play American for the evening and dine at the nearby Planet Hollywood. I had a burger, it was good. I was the only customer (it was 5 pm on a Wednesday night). But of all things, I noticed that a 5.5% "service charge" was added to my bill. It felt excessively capitalistic to make tipping mandatory in a country where the practice is rare. (It is not traditional to tip in Asia.)*

46. **Tipping.** Ask your desk clerk or a friendly local about tipping in restaurants and taxis – *do not ask a waiter!* Tip in local currency. Watch for a service charge on the bill. Tipping is not customary in Austria, Belgium, Brazil, China, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, or Switzerland. *Tip early to make it work for you.* (If you plan to tip the hotel maid, begin the first night and parcel it out – a lump sum at the end gets you nothing.) For more, visit etiquettescholar.com.

Shuttle gossip: *Paying for a restaurant meal and figuring the tip, it was discovered that the date had been written at the top of the bill and included in the addition! The waiter claimed it was a mistake.*

47. Contact your bank. Make these 6 banking arrangements to avoid surprises:

1) Alert your credit/debit card issuers of your *travel dates and destinations*; do this any time you leave your state of residence. (Some banks using chipped cards have stopped doing this.)

2) Set the phone # or email address where you can receive fraud alerts while traveling.

Tech tip: Setup a temporary [Gmail.com](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/) account for email while traveling (so you don't have to expose your regular account in a vulnerable setting), or provide the phone #s of your lodgings.

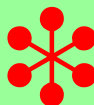
3) Check the *foreign transaction fee* (currency conversion fee) charged for your credit/debit cards, commonly 3% or 1% or 0! Save money by using the card with the lowest fee.

4) Ask to find out your approximate ATM *maximum cash withdrawal in the local currency*. To calculate this, you'll need to know your dollar limit for a foreign withdrawal, and the likely exchange rate. If you exceed this, a fraud alert may shut you down.

5) Get an address near each of your lodgings where you can use your ATM card.

Tech tip: Search for 'ATM' in Google Maps to see locations of nearby cash machines.

6) Request a duplicate credit card (to carry as a backup). (*HSBC, CitiBank, Wells Fargo, and Bank of America will **not** issue duplicate credit or debit cards; Fidelity Investments will duplicate their credit card.*) Make sure your PIN is 4 digits – to assure widest access outside the U.S.



- 48. ATM machines.** The cash machine is a global phenomenon and mighty convenient to the traveler – a reliable way to get local currency with the lowest exchange rate.

Italy: *BofA cut me off after a \$534 ATM withdrawal succeeded at Rome's airport – I wandered Naples for days trying to find cash. (I didn't see the email alerts until I returned home.)*

Travel warning: Outside the U.S., ATM limits (set by the ATM network) may be smaller than you're used to. A "large" withdrawal overseas may trigger a fraud alert and shut down your card; you'll be notified by email or phone according to your account settings, so when you call your bank in advance to tell them you're traveling, change this to a phone alert (and provide dates and phone #s of your lodgings), or make sure you check your email after your first ATM transaction in-country – any time you leave your state. Also, an ATM machine can sometimes be difficult to find or may not work with your card (wrong network). So, *bring alternatives, like cash and multiple credit cards.*

Recommended: Take a written list of PINs and passwords – hide carefully. Being outside your usual environment can make it difficult to remember your PIN when you need it (such as for a credit card cash advance). *Add to the list a phone number to report a stolen card.*





*“Traveling may be one of two things –
an experience we shall always remember,
or an experience which, alas,
we shall never forget.”*
– Rabbi Julius Gordon

MEDICAL MATTERS

49. **Mind your meds.** Be prepared in case you lose your medications. Split key supplies between your carry-on and checked bags. Pack prescriptions or a list of dosages for replacement – in case your bag is lost or delayed – carry this separately from your medications (or store it on-line). Fortunately, in most countries, prescriptions are not required and medications are cheap and easy to replace. Take an empty pill bottle to carry your day's meds – to avoid spilling or losing your main supply.

Bolivia: *At customs in La Paz airport, suffering from the high altitude, standing in line for a visa application delayed by a computer crash, I misplaced a bag holding all my meds.*



50. **Med kit.** Especially for travel where you don't speak the language (where it may be more difficult to quickly find a medical solution), consider traveling with contingency medications – for diarrhea and motion sickness, as well as mosquito repellent, anti-bacterial wipes, hand sanitizer, painkiller, hydrocortisone anti-itch cream, antiseptic ointment, antihistamine, aloe for sunburns, band-aids, face masks ...

Italy: *Ibuprofen helped when I injured my shoulder hefting a heavy bag in Rome.*

Bolivia: *Despite the altitude sickness meds I came prepared with, for most of the trip I felt tingling in my hands, dehydration, and shortness of breath.*

Recommended: Just in case, carry a laxative or stool softener – travel can be stressful, A/C dehydrating, food salty, the weather hot, pushing you into trouble.

51. **Blisters = bad.** When traveling, your feet may limit you, so protect them. If you are tromping the stone roads of Pompeii, hiking the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu, or burning a trail shopping the Vegas Strip, you don't want foot pain to limit your explorations. So, bring a painkiller for blisters, hangover, muscle pain ... **Treatment:** Treat your feet to a hot footbath – *a bidet is great for this*. You want to keep your feet clean and heat will accelerate healing. **Prevention:** Make sure the shoes you'll walk in are well broken in. Pre-bandage (or moleskin) the likely wear points. Wear thick socks, or consider the two-sock system (inner liner of thin cotton, wool outer). Consider shock absorbing gel insoles. Internet search for "blister prevention" and "blister treatment" for a variety of products.

Italy: *I was very glad I had my med kit to treat the blisters I earned from hours of walking the stone streets of Pompeii.*

Recommended: Schedule your most punishing trek late in your trip.

52. **Travel-size!** CVS Pharmacy offers the largest selection of travel-size items: toothpaste, soap, mouthwash, deodorant, shampoo, hair gel, toothbrush kits, skin lotions, body powder, aloe, painkiller, laundry detergent, luggage tags, etc. Also check Lucky, Target, Walgreens, or Safeway. Frequent travelers can save by buying small empty containers and filling them with product.

Recommended: Dramamine, hand sanitizer, first aid kit.



53. **Bed bugs.** To avoid the critters – a worldwide hotel scourge – keep your clothing, shoes, and luggage off the floor. You are less likely to bring home bed bugs if you take home clean clothes; studies show the bugs prefer smelly clothes.

Recommended: Do some laundry before you head home: use a laundry service; if you do it yourself, make sure to use a dryer – it's the heat that kills those devils!





“He who would travel happily must travel light.”
– Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

PACKING

- 54. Check the weather.** You can save space packing your bag if you don't have to bring extra clothes for cold weather or rain. It's worth it to do the research; Internet search “Rome temp” or “Singapore rain” for a good indicator. If it will be hot, skip the jacket; you can buy an umbrella if it rains.

Germany: *It was a stormy night riding the train to Switzerland. Eight times in 5 minutes, I saw lightening, fanned out over a vast plain. I had the sudden insight that the ocean is the reason California gets very little lightening.*

- 55. Plan laundry.** *You can pack less clothing if you do a laundry.* Take laundry detergent on longer trips, or a plastic bag to bring it home dirty. In a pinch, do some laundry in the bathroom sink (use bar soap or shampoo) – underwear and socks can be critical and they're blessedly small. Liquid detergent is much easier to use manually than powder, and can be had in travel-size containers for easy packing – in your leakables bag. Your best option may be laundry service at your hotel, or ask for a nearby recommendation – but it can be a hassle finding a laundry (and returning to pickup) – keep your eyes open.

Thailand: *The white cowboy hat I bought at a Bangkok monastery had become dirty and misshapen. I submitted it to the laundry at my hotel and they did an excellent job cleaning and reshaping it.*

Recommended: Contact your lodging and ask if there are self-serve laundry machines.

Peru: *At Lake Titicaca, the hotel must have boiled my laundry; the elastic bands of my underwear no longer stretched. For the rest of the trip, my underwear kept falling down. Travel often takes one to extremes.*

- 56. Plastic bag toilet kit.** Carry your toiletries in a 'leakables' bag – a sturdy one quart transparent re-sealable plastic bag. It's less bulky than a traditional toilet kit, and makes it much easier to find that elusive nail clipper without having to empty out the whole thing. It also will contain the damage from leaked liquids. *If you pack all your carry-on liquids and metal items in a transparent plastic bag, it's easy to remove for security screening.*

Recommended: Transfer your pants pocket contents into your jacket pockets, then dump the whole jacket into a tray to be scanned.

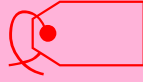
USA: *I had quite an adventure with my house keys forgotten at the bottom of my pants pocket at the security check-point in San Francisco airport.*

- 57. Bring bags.** Plastic bags take up little space in your luggage, weigh nothing, and can be very useful:
- Garbage bag to cover your pack/suitcase in the rain.
 - Sandwich bags if you plan to pack a lunch from your hotel buffet.
 - To carry a wet swimsuit, dirty laundry ...
 - A last-minute flight carry-on for food or fragile souvenirs.
 - 'Leakables' bag to contain liquids in your luggage – a one quart transparent re-sealable plastic bag for lotions, shampoo, toothpaste, deodorant, liquid laundry detergent, mouthwash, contact lens solution, etc. – up to 3.4 ounce containers. *I've seen the mess that can happen!*

Greece: *When it started raining on our backpacks – lined up on the dock to board the ferry for Crete – we were very glad to have brought emergency garbage bags.*

Thailand: *At a turn in the river in the northern hill country, the bamboo raft crashed and everyone's luggage spilled into the water. I wished I'd used a plastic bag as an inner liner.*

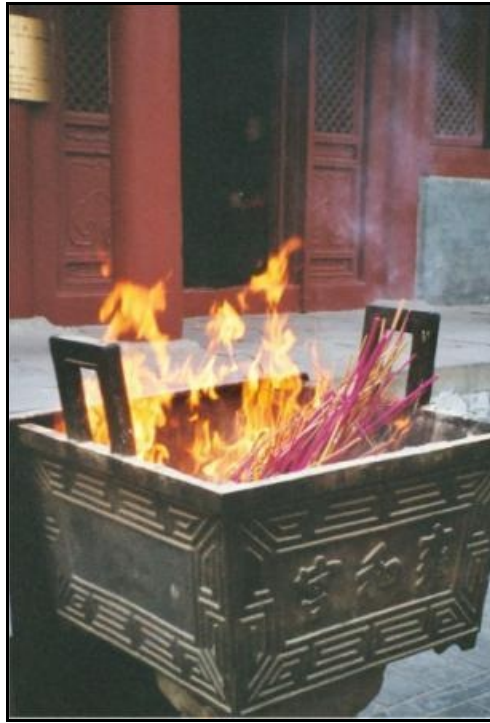
58. **Tag your bag.** To make it easier to spot your luggage on the baggage claim carousel (bleary-eyed after a long flight), add a bright ribbon, tape, scarf, decal, etc. How about a 'Fragile' sticker? *There are a lot of black suitcases in the world.* And tape a business card to your laptop cover. The tag on the outside of your bag should omit or obscure your home address.



59. **Beware lost luggage.** After you've packed, place a copy of your itinerary on the top inside your luggage (and daypack/carry-on) including – *"If lost, please forward this luggage to: ..."* – which lists forwarding locations and how you can be contacted; list phone, email, and delivery address of your lodgings, with dates. Include *"Please email ..."* or *"Please call ..."* Also list a home address, but *don't list the address of your home if it's unattended* and vulnerable to burglary while you're away (news travels fast, even internationally).

Recommended: Take a picture of your luggage so you can describe it precisely on a lost bag form. *At the airport*, get local and central phone numbers for lost bags; see if there's an app.

60. **Sit on it.** To compress your (clean or dirty) laundry for packing, stuff it in a plastic bag, hold the opening loosely in your hand, sit on the bag to squeeze out all the air, twist closed. For large or fragile items, inhale or use a vacuum cleaner hose.



*“Your sacred space
is where you can find yourself
again and again.”
– Joseph Campbell*

JUST BEFORE YOU GO

61. **Synch to local time.** To minimize *jet lag*, as early in your trip as possible (ideally 2-4 days before you depart), incrementally shift meal and bed times to synchronize your body rhythms with the time at your destination. A rule of thumb suggests, for each hour of time shift, it takes a day to recover.

Jet lag SOP: *New personnel posted to an American embassy arrive on a Thursday, use Friday for introductions and orientation, recover from jet lag over the weekend, and are presumed good to go on Monday.*

Recommended: *Sleep on the plane* – bring earplugs and eye mask. An overnight flight may make it easier to sleep. Drink plenty of fluids (but no alcohol). Synch your bedtime ASAP; consider melatonin or sleeping pills to help shift your sleep rhythm. Eat soon after waking. To stay awake, drink coffee, eat, expose your face to bright light, exercise, and shower.



62. **Departure checklist.**

A week or two before your departure:

- ☐ Confirm your flights and lodging. Print your boarding pass as early as possible to reduce risk of bumping.
- ☐ Make a shuttle reservation or ask a friend for a ride to the airport.
- ☐ Alert your credit/debit card issuers of your travel plans.
- ☐ Fill out a 'vacation hold' at the post office to collect your mail – don't specify a redelivery date.
- ☐ Call your pharmacist for a 'vacation override' of your prescription meds – early renewal so you don't run out while away.
- ☐ Schedule or prepay bills due while away.
- ☐ Inform your carrier to stop newspaper delivery, or ...
- ☐ Ask a friend or neighbor to check your doorstep for newspapers, notices, packages, advertising circulars, etc.
- ☐ Do you need a friend or neighbor to put your garbage bins out on collection day?
- ☐ Return/renew your library books, videos.
- ☐ If you regularly record TV programs, trim your schedule.
- ☐ Remove anything showing your address from your car if it will be parked at the airport, on the street, or in a parking lot/garage – insurance, registration, meds ...
- ☐ Assemble your travel papers (itinerary and flight, shuttle, and hotel reservations); make a copy to carry in your carry-on.
- ☐ The night before you go, empty your wallet of cards you won't need: Social Security, public library, local membership/credit cards ... *Bring your business cards.*
- ☐ Just before you leave, unplug or power off the gadgets you leave at home (TV, cell phone, computer, elec. toothbrush, etc.).
- ☐ Set a timer in each room, to enliven a lamp or TV on a daily schedule.

63. Hand carry key items.

During transit, to avoid the problem of lost or delayed baggage, carry critical items in your carry-on or on your person in a secure pocket. Do not put them in a checked bag.

Italy: *Flying home from Rome, I packed my house keys in my checked bag – and Lufthansa delayed my bag overnight! (I forgave them when they compensated me \$176.)*

Recommended carry-on items:

- ☐ Travel vest to carry it all; no need to empty the pockets at security screening, just roll it up and dump it in a security tray
- ☐ Passport
- ☐ Visa
- ☐ Wallet
- ☐ Housekeys
- ☐ Prescription medications for 2 days
- ☐ Ibuprofen or aspirin
- ☐ Copy of itinerary and reservations
- ☐ Snacks
- ☐ Empty water bottle – refill after security on your way to the gate.
- ☐ Guidebook, reading material
- ☐ Notepad, pen
- ☐ Eye mask, earplugs, T-shirt and sweat pants – to sleep in
- ☐ Power cord/charger for your mobile device, if you plan to use it on the plane (or in case you are bumped overnight).

Returning home, you may want to add:

- ☐ Anti-itch cream if bug bites might act up
- ☐ Pepto-Bismal if diarrhea is a problem

No blades, corkscrews, or fluids >3.4 ounces.

64. Search for flight #. Before you leave for the airport, confirm that your departing flight is on time! A simple Internet search for “airline + flight #” will provide the status of your flight. (Example search: United Airlines 216)



*"We travel, some of us forever, to seek
other states, other lives, other souls."*
– Anais Nin

TRANSIT TIPS

65. **Always carry water.** *Stay hydrated.*



Carry an empty bottle through airport security (restrictions on liquids are tight) and fill it before you board your plane. (If you ask politely, the flight attendant will fill it for you.) Dehydration is a major travel issue for many, aggravated by the air conditioning common on flights and in hotels.

Recommended: Buy a bottle. *Juice anyone?* En route or shortly after arriving, buy a beverage to re-use as a water bottle. Regular, full-size water bottles burden you with too much weight and bulk. But a Fanta soda bottle (500 ml), for example, is strong unbreakable plastic with a size that fits better in your pocket, daypack or carry-on.

Italy: *One surprising pleasure I discovered near Sorrento, was the delicious red orange juice from blood oranges. I couldn't get enough.*



66. Pack a snack. *Eat when you want* – on a plane, during layovers, in a taxi – don't be at their mercy! Bring cheese, power bars, carrots, oranges, raisins, apples, sandwiches; after clearing security, buy bottled drinks or chocolate milk. A bag of nuts, dried fruit, or trail mix isn't likely to spill, spoil or crush, and takes up little space. If your lodging includes a breakfast buffet, pack sandwiches, etc., as a lunch contingency. *Be ready to discard foods when crossing a border.* Pack a portable meal in case restaurants are closed, especially when arriving late, and for travel days when you'll spend a lot of time waiting in and for planes.

Recommended: While touring, drop into a market and buy local foods you can eat without prep: veggies, fruits, deli salads, cheese, bread, olives, wine, prepared meats ... *Grocery shopping in a foreign country is a lot of fun – and provides a healthy, educational meal.* Now you are ready for an impromptu dinner in your room or lunch on the church steps.

France: *As a young boy, I spent the summer with a school buddy in a beach town on the Bay of Biscay. I learned to roll my Rs, and was introduced to new foods. Yogurt in those days was sold as a health food; it wasn't flavored, so we were allowed to add sugar. Being kids, we over-did it a bit. We added so much sugar that it crunched when we ate it.*

France: *One beach snack I liked a lot was pan au chocolat – chocolate sandwich! Break off a 3-inch long piece of baguette, then tear lengthwise for a sandwich. Between the two crusts, insert a piece of bar chocolate. Easy, no mess, sweet and crunchy!*

Italy: *Wine was inexpensive everywhere I looked in Germany and Italy. In Florence, I bought a bottle of local wine near my pensione. Upon returning from my day's adventures, I took it to visit the room of the two women I'd chatted with at breakfast. As soon as I noticed that only one of their beds had been slept in, I realized they were a gay couple.*





- 67. Sit smart.** Plan in advance where to sit when making a seat selection, or queuing to board a train/bus/ferry. Where will the sights be, relative to your direction of travel? If you're prepared by knowing where to sit, you can make a bee line to that side, where seats may disappear quickly. Avoid the sunny side if it's hot or you plan to read or watch a (video or computer) screen.

Driving the Amalfi coast, sit on the side facing the sea for photo ops of boats and fabulous mansions; on a double-decker bus in Rome, sit on the right side of the bus (on top is best) when you circle the Colosseum; driving on Highway 1 to Hearst Castle, sit on the ocean side to see the surf and precipitous cliffs.

POSH: *"Port Out, Starboard Home" was a phrase used a hundred years ago by vacationing English to avoid the harsh sun when booking a cabin for round trip steamship travel to India.*

Peru: *Planning and hard work are usually what it takes to succeed. But on my flight from Cuzco to Lima, I won the lottery! My seat number was drawn in Peruvian Airlines' anniversary celebration. Unfortunately, I realized that it would cost more than it was worth to fly back and redeem my prize, a free round trip flight.*



68. In cities, use taxis. A taxi ride saves time, energy and your feet, *provides safety, and prevents you from getting lost*, a real time-waster. It also buys a consultation – your opportunity to pump the driver for local info and ask *any* questions you might have, such as for sightseeing recommendations, directions, pronunciation ... Take a taxi the first time you go to a place you'll need to return to (laundry, bank, etc.) – to get the directions – thereafter you'll be able to find it easily on your own. Before exiting, get specific directions to the entrance of your destination.

Recommended: Don't hail taxis on the street; ask your hotel or restaurant to call one for you. Women traveling alone should keep their luggage close – you don't have control if your luggage is in the trunk (and a suitcase can be used as a shield or defensive weapon).

Italy: *At the train station, arriving in Naples from Rome, I lined up for a taxi. As soon as my luggage was in the trunk and I was in the seat, the taxi driver announced: "Fixed price!"*

Mexico: *In Mexico City, the subway was so packed at rush hour, I couldn't get to the door in time and missed my stop!*

Turkey: *We had a long walk from the Blue Mosque back to our hotel in Istanbul. Turns out it's closed at night. Funny that the taxi driver had enough English to assure us it would be open.*

China: *Departing Beijing, when my taxi arrived at the airport, the driver opened the trunk and allowed two strangers to 'help'. They grabbed my luggage and began to race with it into the terminal. I chased after them and stopped them, when one of them produced a piece of paper, which seemed to be a tariff of some kind, and demanded I pay him the amount shown. I knew immediately it was a scam. I crumpled the paper and gestured for them to shoo!*





*“No one realizes how beautiful it is to travel
until he comes home and rests his head
on his old, familiar pillow.”
– Lin Yutang*

HOTEL/HOME

69. **Your room is not ready!**

Be prepared with a plan in case your room is unavailable when you initially arrive, a common problem, especially if you arrive before 3:00 pm. Sure, you can store your bags and go out to eat, but a short excursion nearby is a better contingency plan. Pre-locate the nearest tourist site, shopping, metro stop, body of water, etc.

Italy: *Waiting for my hotel room near the Piazza Bellini in Naples, I decided to walk around the block. How much trouble could I get in? I got lost and had to precisely retrace my steps to find the hotel again!*

Recommended: Ask the receptionist to recommend a short adventure. If all else fails, *take a (double decker) bus tour!*



70. Room check. Inspect key features when you first see your room – before unpacking:

- ☐ Is there hot water?
- ☐ Does the TV remote control work? Room safe?
- ☐ Smells or noises?
- ☐ Bed bugs? Check the corners and seams of the sheets/ mattress (use a magnifier + flashlight) for:
 - tiny blood stains (look like rust spots)
 - insect body parts
 - very tiny flat ovals, almond-shaped, reddish-brown, size of an apple seed
 - eggs are pearly white, about 1 millimeter long, and appear in clusters

China: *If I'd known, I would have requested a different room. Behind my hotel in a Beijing alley, a work crew raised quite a din – at midnight! I yelled at them in English to no avail. I complained to the front desk and the clerk yelled at them appropriately – in Chinese.*
The lesson: *Avoid rooms near a loading dock.*

Rectify problems immediately; ask for another blanket, pillow, more towels, hangers, etc.

Recommended: If there's any problem with the room, *ask to see another.*



71. Arrival checklist:

- ☐ Reset to local time - camera, watch, phone, gadgets ...
- ☐ Lock your passport+visa in the safe, along with your extra cash and credit/debit cards.
- ☐ If it's hot, draw drapes, chill beverages, turn on air conditioning.
- ☐ Transfer pocket knife/wine tool from checked bag to pocket or daypack.
- ☐ Buy bottled water if the tap water is unsafe to drink.
- ☐ In your hotel, ask other guests to recommend day trips and food.



72. Hotel clerk = info source.

The desk clerk (or concierge) can be an excellent source of information, maybe even in your own language, so capitalize on it. (And tip accordingly.)

Standard questions:

- What time is breakfast?
- May I borrow an electrical adapter?
- What's the wi-fi password?
- Is tipping customary?
- What good tourist sites are nearby?
- Where is the nearest laundry?
- How do I get to ...?
- Can you order a taxi for me?
- How much should a taxi cost to ...?
- Where is it unsafe after dark?
- Can you make a call for me?

Italy: *At the business hotel where I stayed in Rome, there was a significant tourist site nearby, but management made no attempt to inform customers!*

73. Magic ticket home.

Whenever you leave your lodging, carry a card with its name and address. A match book or business card is your 'Get out of Jail Free' card – something to show when instructing a taxi driver or asking for directions back.

Switzerland: *Returning at mid-night after my day's adventure, I couldn't remember the street name where I was staying on a visit to a college buddy in Basel, near the zoo. All I could say to the taxi driver was "Zo".*

Hong Kong: *Navigating the streets was often difficult. On an island, many streets are curved; with skyscrapers all over, it was hard to see landmarks; the profusion of (multi-lingual) signage was confusing. Coming home to the nearby subway station one night, I still had to take a taxi to find my hotel — even though I knew it was within a couple blocks. (Okay, my feet were tired too.)*





*“We shall not cease from exploration,
and the end of all our exploring
will be to arrive where we started
and know the place for the first time.”*
– T. S. Eliot

TECH TALK

- 74. Mobile Maps.** *Maps on mobile devices = a marriage made in heaven.* Electronic maps offer much more detail than paper maps ever could – shops, restaurants, tourist sites, etc. And you can search for ‘ATM’, ‘metro’, ‘grocery’, ‘ice cream’ ...

Mexico: *Before my trip, Google Maps provided a great tool to map key resources around my hotel – ATM, grocery, ice cream.*

Tech Tip: Get Google Maps from your app store or [Google.com/maps](https://www.google.com/maps) – download maps for **offline** use. *Enable GPS location and it will even pinpoint ‘You are here’!*

The Netherlands: *Flying into Amsterdam, I had a long chat with my seat-mate, a local, about the legalization of prostitution and the discrimination it had focused on sex workers. Another time, flying to Asia, I had a fascinating discussion about “sleep hygiene” with a graduate student.*

- 75. Leave your electronics at home.** *“Be here now”* is a wise philosophy. And it spares you the risk of theft/loss, and the entire issue of adapters/converters. Electronic gadgets are too immersing for travel: they reduce your awareness of crime risks around you – and the potential to meet new friends. If you can’t leave your gadget at home, at least leave it in your bag.

Hotel Internet is notoriously dangerous, infrequently scanned for malware and often targeted by criminals, especially in business-center cities. **Key point:** *Don’t login to the wrong network – ask for the hotel’s exact network name – and beware similar ‘evil twins’!*



76. You've got email.

Cyber cafes are common worldwide and a good option compared to carrying a gadget/computer. If you really need to, drop in for some cyber time every few days. Make sure to bring a list of email addresses you might want to use, and all the details you'll need (webmail address, login names, passwords, etc.) – it's easy to forget out of context.

Malaysia: *The power failed while I was checking my email at an Internet café in Kuala Lumpur. I was frustrated by losing work and the sluggish system. Tech problems often spoil that vacation feeling.*

Tech tip: If you decide to travel with a computer, take Skype software (and a headset) with you. Free video calls to other Skype users, and only a couple cents/minute for phone calls to anyone.



77. Charge your gadgets over night.

While you get your rest, remember to use the overnight hours to recharge your camera, batteries, computer, mobile phone, etc., so they're fresh in the morning. Most cameras and computers can handle 110 and 220 volts, but you'll probably still need an international adapter to physically plug in. If your device can only handle 110 volts, then you'll need a converter, too. Many hotels have adapters (and possibly converters) available to borrow from the reception desk; ask in advance.

Italy: *Check for a 110 volt "Shaver" outlet in your bathroom – the staff at my hotel didn't know it was there.*

Tech tip: Carry a 'power bank'. If you are staying in hostels or moving from lodging to lodging, you may find it difficult at times to access a power outlet, or it might expose your gear to theft. A 'power block' USB battery charger may be just the ticket. *Carry power with you to recharge your electronics at any time, even on the go!* Internet search "power bank" for several chargers in the \$20 range.



*“Travel becomes a strategy
for accumulating photographs.”*
– Susan Sontag

CAMERA CLUES

78. Photography secrets.

The best and easiest way to improve your photography: Take lots of photos – many, many photos. Then delete the bad ones to leave the best. A good time to edit is at a restaurant, after you’ve ordered dinner and are waiting in the dim light for your meal to be served.

Recommended: Walk, use the light of magic hour (sunrise or sunset), and hang your camera around your neck – to be ready in museums/galleries or on a bus, and to avoid pickpockets on the street. *Morning is a good time to visit a market or go for a jog.*

Borneo: *After I snapped a photo of the river delta, I saw that a cloud had perfectly bisected the frame – half was sunny and bright, the other half dark and brooding – which seemed to me to reflect the two moods of the island.*

Borneo: *I visited Bako Park in Sarawak, a nature preserve which is only accessible by boat. I took some great photos there. My favorites were of a remarkably pigmented rock face with streaks of yellow and purple. It was a natural work of art. Amazingly, one section strongly resembled the painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel of God’s hand touching Adam’s.*



79. **Photograph faces.** It's the people that matter. If you want your pictures to capture memories, focus on faces and expressions – your fellow travelers and locals who mattered. And make sure *you* are in some of the shots.

Recommended: Ask first. Do not photograph Muslims, monks, people praying, rural Chinese, Gypsies, indigenous peoples, and military installations.

China: *My friend was detained and questioned by Beijing police! A woman had followed her on the street and accused her of taking photos – to steal people's souls!*

Switzerland: *Staying with my buddy Steve in Basel, it was fun to play with his 4 year old daughter. She told me she liked to sing upside down. And then she demonstrated; she hung by her knees and sang a song. She was so cute it made me laugh. It was a rare moment of pure innocence. Where was my camera?*

80. **Store images in your camera.** It's convenient to refer to your passport, visa, itinerary, or ticket if you carry an image of it in your camera or cell phone. (You can refer to your images more effectively if you figure out how to use your camera's zoom feature to magnify the photo you are viewing.) Alternatively, *email the images to yourself.*

81. **Take 'signpost' pictures.** Digital photography makes picture-taking almost free. So, go wild and expand your photos to grab visual information of all kinds. Menus, meals (colorful and evocative), before and after a haircut or packing your luggage, the people you meet, your lodgings, the vehicles you travel in. Snap shots to help identify locations and objects you've photographed: building names, store signage, freeway and street signs, art captions, and museum legends.

Recommended: Grab images of bus maps, train schedules – where you parked, or the sign on the bus you'll need to return to after the tour.



*“Unusual travel suggestions are
dancing lessons from the gods.”
– Kurt Vonnegut*

TRAVEL ‘TO-DO’

- 82. Do the double-decker.** A bus tour gives an easy, inexpensive, informative introduction to an area, spares your feet – and usually offers free wi-fi. Don’t forget hat, sun screen, water, and camera. Suggested Internet searches: “[hop on hop off bus](#)”, “[bus tours](#)”, “[double decker bus](#)”.



Recommended: Best view is on top! (unless it’s raining, or you’re in Britain).

Turkey: *We jumped on a bus in Istanbul, but couldn’t figure out how to pay. As fate would have it, a few minutes later an inspector got on the bus and started eyeing us and trying to talk to us, no doubt asking to see our tickets. Soon, several passengers started arguing with the inspector; I think he wanted to fine us for fare evasion! We played dumb (we were dumb) and escaped at the next stop.*

- 83. Borrow-a-bike.**



Ride to nearby attractions for an inexpensive adventure. Many major tourist destinations (Amsterdam, Beijing, Copenhagen, London, Mexico City, Madrid, Milan, NY City, Paris, Seville, Stockholm, Vienna) have bike-share programs – short term, one-way bicycle rentals from 24-hour automated racks. Many are priced as low as \$10 a day. And now scooters are spreading, too!

84. Steam, soak or scrub?

Relax with a steam bath or hot tub – a pleasant break for the family or solo traveler, especially on a rainy day. If you've really done your duty as a tourist and pounded out the miles, ask for a foot massage!

Turkey: *I enjoyed a 100 year old Turkish bath (hamami) in Istanbul. You can find them in many Eastern and Western cities, including Bath, Beirut, Budapest, Istanbul, London, Marrakech, Paris, Rome, and Vienna.*

Lourdes (France), Baden-Baden (Germany), and Marienbad (Czech Republic) are world famous for their waters, but many countries have notable thermal baths:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_hot_springs
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_spa_towns

85. Visit a vista. It seems human

nature to look as far as the eye can see. Shanghai Tower offers the world's highest observation deck (as well as the world's fastest elevators). For a high altitude thrill, walk into space 1,017 feet up on the glass-floored 'Mahana-khon SkyWalk' atop Bangkok's tallest building. Survey the sights from other famous high points, such as the Eiffel Tower (Paris), the Leaning Tower of Pisa (Italy), the Empire State Building (NY City), the Acropolis (Athens), the Millennium Wheel ("London Eye" Ferris wheel), the Petronas Twin Towers (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), the Torre Latinoamericana (Mexico City), the hilltop statue of Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro, the Travelator escalator system in the Hong Kong hills, and the Stratosphere roller-coaster (Las Vegas). Get the details with these Internet searches: "top vista + location" or "best view + location" or "famous view + country" and check this list: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Observation_deck

Bolivia: *I love a ride in the sky and the Teleférico La Paz aerial cable car system offers an impressive moving panorama. Have a treat nearby: Try a dulce de leche salteño.*



86. **Go grave-hunting.** Paying respect to the dead is an ancient custom. Many graveyards are famous for the people interred there and can provide a moment of tranquility for families and solo travelers amongst beautiful tailored gardens and impressive statuary. [Père Lachaise Cemetery](#) (Paris), the most visited cemetery in the world, is famous for its long list of luminaries, including Oscar Wilde, Gertrude Stein, Jim Morrison, Richard Wright, Simone Signoret, Edith Piaf, Chopin, Molière, Proust, and Balzac. [Montmartre Cemetery](#) (Paris) includes Stendahl, Truffaut, and a Zola bust. [Montparnasse Cemetery](#) (Paris) inters Simone de Beauvoir, Samuel Beckett, Guy de Maupassant, and Jean-Paul Sartre. The [Panthéon](#) (Paris) holds Victor Hugo, Rousseau, Voltaire, and Zola. [Westminster Abbey](#) (London) is the final resting place for several monarchs, as well as Chaucer, Darwin, Dickens, Handel, Thomas Hardy, Samuel Johnson, Ben Jonson, Kipling, Isaac Newton, Laurence Olivier, Edmund Spenser, and Tennyson. [Highgate Cemetery](#) (London) is where Karl Marx (“Workers of All Lands, Unite”), George Eliot, and Douglas Adams are buried. [Hollywood Forever Cemetery](#) (Los Angeles) is the resting place for Cecil B. DeMille, Rudolph Valentino, Mel Blanc, and the Ramones. Keats and Shelley are buried at the [Protestant Cemetery](#) (Rome). [La Recoleta Cemetery](#) (Buenos Aires) holds the elaborate tomb of Eva Perón. Find the specifics with this Internet search: “famous cemetery + *location*” or “famous grave + *location*” or “*name* + burial”. Looking for someone specific? Check www.findagrave.com/famous-memorial.

England: *The architecture at Westminster Abbey in London is very impressive, as is the collection of famous people buried there. I was reminded of a famous line from English poet Thomas Gray: “The paths of glory lead but to the grave.”*

Recommended: Take paper and charcoal or chalk to make a tombstone rubbing.

87. Hotel history. Some hotels have a notable past. Celebrity visits, historical events, tragedies ... things have to happen somewhere. If you're in the neighborhood, check out:

- Australia, Sydney, [Ritz-Carlton](#), Room 534
 - 1997 suicide of Michael Hutchence, lead singer of Aussie rock group INXS. He hanged himself with his belt under the influence of several drugs. The property is now the Sir Stamford Hotel at Double Bay.
- Cuba, Havana, [Ambos Mundos Hotel](#), Room 511
 - Ernest Hemingway lived here for 7 years while writing *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940).
- Egypt, Aswan, [Old Cataract Hotel](#) - Agatha Christie wrote and set her novel *Death on the Nile* here on the banks of the Nile in 1937.
- England, London, [Ritz Hotel](#), Trafalgar Suite
 - Setting for the 1999 movie *Notting Hill* starring Hugh Grant and Julia Roberts.
- France, Cannes, [Carlton Intercontinental Hotel](#)
 - Alfred Hitchcock's 1955 film *To Catch a Thief*, starring Grace Kelly and Cary Grant, was set here, on the luxurious Riviera.
- France, Paris, [Hotel Lancaster](#), Marlene Dietrich Suite - Home for 3 years to world famous film star Marlene Dietrich in the 1930s.
- France, Paris, [Le Meurice](#), Presidential Suite
 - Rooms 106-108 served as home to Salvador Dali for 2 months a year for 30 years, beginning in 1927.
- Italy, Venice, [Grand Hotel des Bains](#)
 - Provided the setting for *Death in Venice*, by Thomas Mann, the 1912 novel and 1971 film.
- Kenya, Aberdare, [Treetops Lodge](#)
 - In 1952, Princess Elizabeth of England visited this safari lodge for her honeymoon with Prince Philip. While there, King George VI died, making her Queen Elizabeth II. 'She arrived a princess and left a queen.'
- The Netherlands, [Amsterdam Hilton](#), Room 902
 - 1969 "bed-in for peace" during the honeymoon of Beatle John Lennon and Yoko Ono.
- Philippines, [Manila Hotel](#), Room 901
 - 1935 to 1941, the penthouse served as the residence for Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

(Source: [Hotel Secrets from the Travel Detective](#), Peter Greenberg)

88. Martial arts. For the athletically inclined, a short lesson in a fighting art can offer a memorable experience and valuable cultural insights. Visit a martial arts studio or ask your hotel for a recommendation. A 2-hour private lesson is enough time to learn the bow, the stance, the yell, and one technique:

China: “Striking asp” is a traditional Kung Fu lesson in how to deliver a poke in the eye.

- Brazil - *Capoeira* – learn to cartwheel
- China - *Kung fu* – learn “Striking asp”
- Japan - *Judo* – learn to fall
 - *Karate* – learn the twisting punch
 - *Kendo* – learn to respect the weapon
 - *Ninja* – visit a Ninja Academy in Tokyo
 - *Sumo* – visit the [National Sumo Stadium](#)
- Korea - *Tae Kwon Do* – learn the snap kick
- Philippines - *Escrima* – learn stick fighting basics
- Thailand - *Muay Thai* – watch a match; fights are scheduled every weekend in Bangkok

89. Shoot the moon. Learning to shoot a gun, or doing it just for fun, can entertain the family or solo traveler (especially on a rainy day). In Las Vegas, you can shoot a machine gun! *Blast terrorists with a .50 cal!* If you happen to be in [Phnom Penh](#) (Cambodia), you can experience anything from rocking with an AK-47, to exploding a hand grenade, to firing an RPG or rocket launcher! Internet search: “Rifle/pistol/gun/shooting range + location”

Cambodia: When I arrived in Siem Reap (near Angkor Wat), I engaged a fixed rate taxi (\$10) from a booth at the airport. On the way to my hotel, the driver convinced me to engage him for \$40 a day. I had heard you can shoot any weapon you choose in Cambodia, so I was not surprised when he showed me a photo array of 'Things to do' which included a shooting gallery. It seemed like a fun idea, so the next day we passed the army base as we arrived at RN Shooting Range. Oddly, they had no brochure and said there was no website or email address. I was shown a menu of pistols, rifles, and machine guns. I chose the M16, the iconic American infantry weapon of the Vietnam War (they call it the American War), and for \$60 shot 30 rounds, much of it on 'full auto'. I have no experience with guns, so I was impressed by the smell of the cordite, the lack of recoil, and the puff of dust as each bullet hit the target and – mostly – the wall.

90. **Suit up.** In many countries, the cost of labor and cloth is low compared to what you'll find at home. Tailors who make *custom-made suits* want your measurements in major cities across the world, Hong Kong leading the way.

Recommended: Allow at least a week, more if you want 2 fittings. While you're at it, why not buy two?

91. **Shop nonstop!** Classic shopping experiences:

- [Grand Bazaar](#), Istanbul - A warren of 4,000+ shops steeped in history. Bargain!
- [Patpong](#), Bangkok - famous red light district and night market (pedestrian zone)
- [Champs-Élysées](#), Paris - 1.2 miles of cafes, theaters, and luxury shops to the finish line for the Tour de France bicycle race
- [Mercado Central](#), Lima - multi-story, largest market in South America; worth a full day
- [Mercado de la Merced](#), Mexico City - 15,000 stalls of food, clothing, everything ...
- [The Golden Mile](#), Nathan Road, Kowloon (Hong Kong) - 2.2 miles of restaurants, hotels, shops (jewelry, electronics ...)

92. Super souvenirs:

- music (CDs)
- recipe book
- haircut
- coins, stamps
- cooking or language lesson
- colorful liquor in an attractive bottle
- candy, chocolate
- dance or circus performance



Recommended: Don't be afraid to buy it the first time you see it. Don't wait for a bargain; often crafts and unusual items don't turn up again. *I wish I'd bought those elephant opium weights in Thailand, Limoncello in a star-shaped bottle on Procida, and ceviche in Lima!*

93. Solo travelers:

- Travel by bus.
- Try group activities: bus tours, cooking or language classes, steam bath, hot springs ...
- Book group tours. They'll assign a roommate at intrepidtravel.com or contiki.com. See also solotravel.org, eldertreks.com, adventurecenter.com, gadventures.com, and specialtytravel.com.
- Look for lodging at hostels that offer drink specials, a public TV room, pub crawls.
- Go on a guided walking tour (many are free).
- Ask to eat at the bar instead of a table.

Turkey: *On the Turquoise Coast, I bought music I heard in a music shop. I was amused to find out later that it was an anti-American protest song. When you don't understand the language, the words just become another instrument.*

Italy: *Take envelopes to a volcano. That's what I learned reading Goethe's Italian Journey; he got close enough to char the edges of an envelope on Vesuvius. Can't beat that as a unique souvenir you can make yourself, like a penny on a railroad track.*

Turkey: *In Istanbul's Grand Bazaar in 1989, I was scouting for a leather jacket in a back alley shop. I haggled hard with the proprietor's son who chain-smoked throughout. I refused to budge from US \$60 so he wasn't happy, but his Dad gave the nod, and he took the cash. When we shook hands, he kept his cigarette in the hand he shook with. I decided it would be fruitless to feel insulted. Instead, I made a quick exit, happy with my victory.*

Turkey: *I was about to buy shoes in an Istanbul shop, but the clerk insisted on charging more than the price tag. I thought he was trying to cheat me, but finally he relented. Later, I realized that, in my stupidity, I had browbeaten him into a discount – I had forgotten about a modern invention called “sales tax.”*

Thailand: *Landing in Bangkok, I queued for a taxi to my hotel. “Are you a backpacker?” asked the woman in line behind me. We ended up sharing a taxi, and my hotel room. Ela was English – designed lamps – returning from a trade show in Sydney. We teamed up for a trip to Chiang Mai. Travel creates instant friends.*

94. Food specialities not to be missed:

- Austria - sacher-torte, Tafelspitz
- Bolivia - salteña, quinoa, peanut soup, Pisco sour
- Brazil - feijoada, churrasco, pastel, passion fruit, acai, Caipirinha
- Canada - poutine, split pea soup – the bacon
- China - dim sum, century eggs, noodles, wonton soup, Kung Pao
- England - cheddar, Yorkshire pudding, fish and chips, bangers and mash, Bubble and Squeak, Spotted Dick, Beef Wellington, high tea
- France - croissant, baguette, goat cheese, fruit tart, charcute, escargot, champagne, wine
- Germany - bratwurst, beer, schnitzel, sauerbraten, sauerkraut, strudel
- Greece - moussaka, dolma, baklava, ouzo, retsina
- India - tandouri, biryani, curry, masala, saag, vindaloo, dosa, darjeeling tea
- Italy - pizza, lasagna, cannoli, polenta, prosciuto, calamari, gelato, sfogliatella, espresso, cappuccino, grappa, Chianti
- Japan - sushi, tempura, ramen, tonkatsu, soba, udon, gyoza, sake
- Korea - kimchi, bibimbap, bulgogi, tofu soup

Bolivia: *I finally found peanut soup! In the middle of Lake Titicaca. I had been asking around for 'sopa de mani' and there I was on the Isla del Sol; it wasn't on the menu, but I asked and the answer was 'sí.' I loved the noodles made of extruded potato.*

China: *One evening in Beijing, I stumbled on a night market; there must have been 20 stalls offering a huge variety of food-on-a-stick: fish balls, shrimp, squid, crawdads, snake, star fish (!), tiny scorpions, beetles, and ... penis! (That's what the man said, but I was afraid to ask.)*

China: *Throughout my tour of Sichuan province, the food was, yes, spicy. Perhaps you've had Kung Pao in America and thought it was hot; in Sichuan, it's cooked with mouth-searing red peppers and a secret ingredient, a spice (it resembles sprigs of pepper corns) which actually numbs the mouth – to improve one's ability to enjoy the nuances of the flavors. This took some adjusting to.*

France: *During our tour of the Alsace region, Steve and I lunched in Colmar: a feast called choucroute, a regional specialty. Called Berner Platte by the Germans (i.e., a plate for the stout folk of Bern), it is a small mountain of sauerkraut surrounded by potatoes and pig derivatives (ham, bacon, pig's feet pâté, and a few kinds of sausage). We made a valiant effort.*

France: *One summer, I vacationed with my 5th grade classmate to visit his grandparents. I learned to swim in the Atlantic, and to appreciate the fruit tart – a delightful mix of flavors and colors, flaky and sweet. Yum!*

- Peru - ceviche, quinoa, pepino, guinea pig, chicharrones
- Russia - borscht, pelmeni, piroshki, beef stroganoff, bliny, caviar, vodka
- South America - fish tacos, guacamole, fresh sliced mango, chilaquiles, empanadas, ceviche, seafood, dulce de leche, hard boiled quail eggs, anticuchos
- Thailand - Tom Ka soup, green mango, lichee, rambutan, durian
- Turkey - souvlaki, kebab, eggplant, Turkish delight, Smyrna figs, Turkish coffee, dolma, baklava, raki



Thailand: This is the land of street food. Mobile carts are everywhere offering (under \$1) fresh fruit (pineapple, water-melon, papaya, etc.), soup, oyster omelets, chestnuts, and food-on-a-stick: satay, sausages, squid, ornately carved hot dogs, rice-filled sausage casings, and batter-fried fake crab – my fav.

Thailand: Every great city has a river. In Bangkok, it's the Chao Phraya. The long-tail boats make for a fun ride or a speedy commute for only a dime. Especially near the river, street vendors will cook you a treat – an oyster omelet – briny with the fresh taste of the delta!

Thailand: Rambutan is the world's weirdest-looking fruit! Outside, they are surrounded by gangly red hairs which look and feel like plastic. Inside, juicy and sweet, like lichee. Luscious!

Indonesia: On a small island near Bali, I stayed overnight in a recently remodeled room on the beach for US \$9 per night. For breakfast one day, I had an inspiring introduction to a new food: Jaffle – a stuffed waffle. Mine was filled with cooked fruit (pineapple). Delicious!

Indonesia: I love seafood. My all-time favorite meal anywhere was grilled fish with lime in Bali, with a beverage made of avocado; #2 would be fish chowder in Lima (which contained a poached egg); #3 was batter-fried shrimp in London, served in a funnel folded of newspaper.

Italy: I had pizza 3 times in Naples, the place where pizza was invented; each time it was very salty – I think that's a response to the hot climate. Did you know that pizza was invented to display the colors of the Italian flag? Basil, mozzarella, and tomato make the Margherita pizza green, white and red.

Malaysia: Inside the elevator of my hotel in Kuala Lumpur, a sign was posted picturing a fruit that resembled a pineapple. The fruit was crossed out above the words: "No Durians." They are said to smell like a rotting corpse. With a review like that, I had to try it; mine didn't smell that bad, but it also didn't taste that good. "It's good to try new things."

Malaysia: I saw a demonstration of how bird nests (for soup) are reconstructed. To avoid twigs, feathers, etc., the individual strands of bird saliva are removed with tweezers and set into a mold.

Peru: My favorite South American fruit is the pepino – yellow-skinned with brown stripes, something like an apple, with a sweet juicy cantaloupe taste and a crisp mouthfeel.



*“Own only what you can carry with you;
know language, know countries, know people.
Let your memory be your travel bag.”*
– Aleksander Solzhenitsyn

NUTS AND BOLTS

- 95. Be time-smart.** Avoid commute and weekend congestion, and remember which day is the Sabbath – Friday (Islamic), Saturday (Jewish) or Sunday (Christian) – when banks/offices/shops/transit/restaurants may be less available. *First things first, but not if everyone does it.* It’s human nature to prioritize, consequently major tourist sites are heavily visited in the first half of the day – try to avoid the tour buses and cruise ships. It often works best to delay your visit to must-see spots until the relaxed priorities of late afternoon.

Tech Tip: Before visiting a potentially crowded venue, do a Google search to see the Popular Times® graph, like the 3 shown at right. (To learn more, see Brave New Tool, [Tip #14.](#))

New Google tool: *I’ve missed several tourist sites because I arrived too late in the day, just before closing. If you’re connected to the Internet, Google’s new Popular Times® bar graphs can help! They show opening, closing, and busy times.*



Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy



Hermitage Museum, Russia



Frida Kahlo Museum, Mexico City

96. **Mind your Mondays.** Most museums in the world are closed on Monday. But you can avoid a surprise with a simple Internet search: “museum name + hours”. *Instead, how about a bus or walking tour, boat ride, visit to a park or archeological site, or a shopping expedition!*

Recommended: Avoid museums on free days (often Tuesdays); lines will be long and crowds will be thick.

Germany: *I arrived in Staufen to see the alchemy lab of Faust (site of the famous ‘deal with the devil’ explosion), only to find it closed that day. Instead, I hiked up to the local castle, surrounded by scenic vineyards, to watch the sun set – after supplying myself with bread, cheese, grapes and a doomed bottle of Riesling.*



97. **Look for lines.** Sometimes it pays to follow the wisdom of the crowd. A queue beside a restaurant or street food stall is a good recommendation. When in Rome or Asian capitals, cross the street by following other pedestrians through wild traffic. Offloading at the airport, follow your fellow passengers to the baggage claim carousel. *Ask travelers coming from your destination about visas, transit, lodging, and sightseeing.* A crowd of tourists can signal a site you didn’t know about, a vantage point for photos, when to queue for boarding, or when to get off at the right bus/train stop. There’s safety in numbers; if they are doing it, maybe it’s right for you, too!

Italy: *If I hadn’t noticed a tour group following their leader’s flag, I would have missed the cemetery in Rome where Keats and Shelley are buried – a tranquil and reflective spot with its own ancient pyramid!*

Peru: *I was attracted by a Sunday parade and ceremony at the main square in Cuzco. I watched for a while then strolled off to follow a stream of pedestrians into a “chicharroneria” – What’s that? Soon, I was enjoying a once-in-a-lifetime treat of steaming chicharrones (sinfully fatty pork with crispy skin) just as the line outside for lunch swelled at parade’s end.*

Germany: *On a day trip into the Black Forest, I failed to notice the tiny word ‘Bus’ on one leg of my return train ticket – and foolishly ignored the crowd queued at the bus stop. I missed my transfer back to the main train station and had to walk a mile in the dark along a spur track to get there.*

98. Wake up an hour earlier, painlessly.

Take advantage of jet lag. Next time you return from vacation in another time zone, reset your rising time when you get back. Since you've got to reset your daily cycle anyway, might as well exploit it. Simply reset your alarm clock an hour earlier. To help your body adhere to the new rhythm, go to sleep at the same time each night, eat soon after waking, get plenty of sunlight and daytime exercise.



99. Go all the way. Head all the way in

to begin your tour of a fair, amusement park, or archeological site, then enjoy the sights as you **work your way back out**. That is, expend the maximum energy initially – then drift back to your entry point – so that when you're done (and tired), you're near the exit. Check out: ThemeParkInsider.com and PlanDisney.disney.go.com.



Recommended: Arrive early to queue up for the morning opening to enjoy the top attractions without waiting; it's likely to be cooler, less crowded, and you can park closer. Check the web to pre-plan parking and food.

Italy: *Tired after pounding the streets of Pompeii for hours under the hot sun (there is no shade there because the volcano's eruption in 79 AD collapsed all the roofs), I left abruptly when I stumbled across a back exit – and had a long walk back to the train station. I never did find the ancient brothel.*

China: *As part of a wedding party, I was privileged to visit the Jiuzhaigou nature preserve. Recently opened, it is nestled in the mountains of the Tibetan plateau in Southwestern China – a forty minute flight north from Chengdu. The peaks wore caps of pure white snow. The lakes pooled water clear as glass. Good timing rewarded us with amazing contrasts in the color of the tree leaves: red, orange, green, and yellow. The streams and waterfalls sparkled with water that glowed iridescent with minerals leached from the mountains. Every snapshot was worthy of a postcard. It is the most beautiful place I know on Earth.*

100. **Taboos.** It's polite to learn local customs, so do a bit of research. Dress and act respectfully when visiting religious sites. Pointing or beckoning with a finger is risky in many countries, as is the 'V' for victory/peace sign and the thumbs up hitchhiking signal. More often than not, if you compliment an item, it will be given to you in China and Arab nations. Touching and public display of affection is risky in Egypt and the Middle East. The OK signal (thumb touching index finger) is an insult in Russia, Germany and Latin America. For more, visit traveletiquette.co.uk



Indonesia: *When I beckoned across the room, gesturing 'come here' by curling my index finger, I got a strong negative reaction. I had apparently implied that his penis was only that big. Oops! I was confronted, his voice rose, and it took an abject apology to smooth over my social faux pas.*

China: *On the bus ride from Beijing to The Great Wall, I sat next to a student who had a persimmon perched atop the book on his lap. I told him I liked persimmons very much – and he immediately gave it to me! Traveling light, I had nothing I could spare to give him in return; all I could do was give him my business card and smile thankfully.*

Peru: *I was lucky enough to visit Lima at Halloween. It was a fine adventure, a giant mercado, and great food. And it turns out that they are really enthusiastic about Halloween; skulls and spider webs were all over the storefronts.*

In Muslim countries – Africa, India, Indonesia, the Middle East, Pakistan, Turkey:

- Do not use your left hand – to touch people or food, or handle money or gifts. It the hand used for personal hygiene and considered unclean.
- A gift is customary when visiting a home, but not made of pig skin. *No footballs!*
- Do not touch people on the head (the most sacred part of the body).
- Do not expose the sole of your foot (as when crossing your legs).

In Buddhist countries – Bali, China, Japan, Korea, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, Tibet, Vietnam:

- Do not touch people on the head (such as children)
- Feet are unholy. Do not expose the sole of your foot or touch anyone or anything with your feet.

Thailand: *In the hill country near Chiang Mai, we were admonished not to sleep with our feet pointing at the shrine near the entrance to our hut.*

101. Counter crime. *A passport plus a gadget is an irresistible target to thieves!*

- Don't look like a tourist:
Avoid the fanny pack, shorts, logo-emblazoned T-shirts, and bright sports shoes ...
- Don't act like a tourist: Try not to use electronics/earbuds /headphones, take pictures, or read maps in public.
- Maintain awareness of who might be watching you. Stay alert (and sober), especially in crowds, just before the bus or train leaves, or when a stranger offers to help (with your baggage, etc.).
- Use ATMs during bank hours.
- Be careful what you write in social media – don't advertise that your home is vacant.
- Carry coin for restrooms and transit, and small bills so you avoid problems getting change.
- Count your change immediately
- Avoid arrival in an unfamiliar place after dark.
- When you leave your hotel room, leave the TV on and use the 'Do Not Disturb' sign to give the impression that you're in the room.
- Sit mid-bus or -train car for a more comfortable ride and a safer experience (regarding assault/theft/collision).
- Women: Wear a wedding ring. Minimize jewelry and makeup.
- Carry a whistle in case of trouble.
- Use an app like getbSafe.com or goBugle.com to setup alerts.
- Be wary after a purchase if the shopkeeper offers to package it for you *in the back room*, likewise free shipping.

China: *In Macau, a gambling resort, I was briefly caught up in a wave of prostitutes! Apparently, as the beat cops make their rounds, the women race away from them – whistling to warn each other – and at times this creates a powerful ripple effect.*

Italy: *In Rome, when I saw the same guy three times, I realized that I was being followed. I stared at him hard until he nonchalantly drifted away.*

Peru: *On a Cuzco street, a gang of pickpockets got my camera after they crowded me against a wall and threw sand at the back of my neck to distract me.*

Italy: *On a train Rome to Naples, a young couple told me how someone helped put their luggage (several wheeled cases) on the rack above our seating. A case was maneuvered to block view of their backpack (cash inside) – which they discovered was missing just as the train pulled out.*

Italy: *In Rome, I used a bill to pay for my Metro fare at a ticket booth. I was given coin in change and left. Minutes later, I realized I was due some paper bills as well – I got the small change but not the big change. I went back and accosted the agent in the booth, to no avail. I learned later this cheat is called giving 'slow change.'*

The Netherlands: *In Amsterdam, there are dozens of 'coffee shops' where you can buy marijuana – and probably also get a cuppa java. I watched a demo of a vaporizer (powered by a light bulb) – designed to heat the green stuff to release the active ingredient without actually burning it – no smoke is better for the lungs. At the end of the presentation, the man turned to me and asked if I wanted to try it. I was floored to be offered marijuana in a commercial setting – in broad daylight!*

- 102. Travel by numbers.** Outside the U.S., you'll often need to deal with metric values. When writing or typing money amounts, it's extremely important to use the correct notation: In metric, use a comma as the *decimal separator* (1 gallon = 3,8 liters, \$1 = €1,15) – instead of period/dot as in the U.S. and Britain. In metric, use a period/dot as the *thousands/millions symbol* (1.000,00 euros) – instead of comma as in the U.S. and Britain. More examples: 98,6° and €1.000.000,00

Temperature: When using a weather report to plan your next day's adventure, or deciding on a setting for the air conditioning:

212°F	= 100°C (boiling)	64	= 18
98.6	= 37	62	= 17
90	= 32	60	= 16
80	= 27	58	= 14
72	= 22	56	= 13
70	= 21	50	= 10
68	= 20 (A/C target)	40	= 4
66	= 19	32	= 0 (freezing)

Speed/distance/length: When looking at a map or road signs or estimating travel times:

1 inch	= 2.5 centimeters
8 inches	= 20 cm
1 foot	= 0.3 meter (30.5 cm)
1 yard	= 0.91 meter (91 cm)
39 inches	= 1 meter (3.28 feet) ≈ 1 yard
5 feet	= 1.5 meters (152 cm)
0.62 miles	= 1 kilometer
1 mile	= 1.6 km
100 miles	= 161 km
150 miles	= 241 km
25 mph	= 40 km per hour
45 mph	= 70 km per hour
68 mph	= 110 km per hour

Weight: For buying candy or groceries:

1 ounce	= 28 grams
3.5 ounces	= 100 grams
1 pound	= 0.45 kilogram (454 grams)
35 ounces	= 1 kg = 2.2 pounds
100 pounds	= 45 kg
175 pounds	= 79 kg

Volume: When shopping or filling the gas tank:

0.42 cup	= 100 ml = 3.4 oz (carry-on liquid max)
1 cup	= 284 ml = 0.28 liter
4.2 cups	= 1 liter ≈ 1 quart = 0.26 gallon
1 gallon	= 3.8 liters (3785 milliliters)



103. Travel risks. Danger! Danger! *Don't do that.* Beware common travel risks. It's easy to screw up when suffering from jet lag, diarrhea, travelers' stress, or disorientation. Use caution when tired or attempting something for the first time.

Do not:

- Get too close to wild animals (so cute!)
- Drive:
 - on the wrong side of the street(!)
 - if signage is in a foreign language
 - an unfamiliar vehicle (Segway, boat, motorcycle, manual transmission ...)
- Do risky new things when jet-lagged (parasail, jet ski, horseback riding, bike or scooter ride ...)
- Take risks to snap that terrific photo for social media or the perfect selfie
- Eat risky street food – only eat cooked foods and washed or peeled fruit and vegetables
- Forget to wash your hands
- Take a tumble getting on/off buses or boats, or walking on cobblestones or potholed streets/sidewalks
- Forget to use your seatbelt in a plane or taxi
- Drink too much
- Blindly follow others into risky behavior

Why buy travel insurance?

Your health insurance may not cover you outside your healthcare system. Medicare coverage stops at U.S. borders. Hurricanes can be unpredictable.



104. English spoken here! Leap over a major tourist challenge. Below is a short list of destinations with an English-language advantage:

- American Samoa
 - Australia
 - Bahamas
 - Barbados
 - Belize
 - Bermuda
 - Canada
 - Cayman Islands
 - Dominica
 - England
 - Fiji
 - Gibraltar
 - Grenada
 - Guam
 - Hong Kong
 - India
 - Ireland
 - Israel
 - Jamaica
 - New Zealand
 - Palau
 - Philippines
 - Puerto Rico
 - Scotland
 - Singapore
 - Vanuatu
 - Vietnam
 - Virgin Islands
- ... and much of Africa, including
- Botswana
 - Ethiopia
 - Gambia
 - Ghana
 - Kenya
 - Lesotho
 - Liberia
 - Malawi
 - Namibia
 - Nigeria
 - Sierra Leone
 - Somalia
 - South Africa
 - Swaziland
 - Uganda
 - Zambia
 - Zimbabwe

105. Free language lessons. Two esteemed sources of online language training:

- www.bbc.co.uk/languages
- www.freelanguage.com

106. Last minute travel. *Throw caution to the wind!* Ready your passport and eye mask. Pack your toothbrush and charger cables! Check these travel websites for deals if you have a flexible schedule and attitude:

- VacationsToGo.com 800-338-4962
- TravelZoo.com 877-966-0000
- LastMinuteTravel.com 844-821-3454

And consider the Frontier Airlines “Go Wild” pass. All-you-can-fly. Summer \$499/year, Fall & Winter \$299/year, All year \$1,999. Must book 1-day before domestic travel, 10-days before international travel.

www.flyfrontier.com/deals/gowild-pass

Also check www.Hotwire.com for their “Hot Rates.” Non-refundable, and ineligible for hotel loyalty points, you choose the hotel location, amenities, and star-rating, but don’t learn the name until you book.



“What draws me in is that a trip is a leap in the dark. It's like a metaphor for life. You set off from home, and in the classic travel book, you go to an unknown place. You discover a different world, and you discover yourself.”

– Paul Theroux

RECOMMENDED READING

Click link to open in Google Books

[1001 Walks You Must Take Before You Die; Country Hikes, Heritage Trails, Coastal Strolls, Mountain Paths, City Walks](#); Barry Stone (ed.) – this thick reference has them all, from **Australia** (the Uluru Circuit trail around Ayers Rock) to **Vietnam** (the Ho Chi Minh Trail). Each walk links to a route on Google Maps. A tour de force.

[The Adventurous Traveler's Guide to Health](#); Christopher Sanford, M.D.

[Ask Arthur Frommer; and Travel Better, Cheaper, Smarter](#); “The ultimate travel guide that answers every major question” – comprehensive tips from a world expert.

[Fodor's 1,001 Smart Travel Tips](#); Laura Kidder

[Frommer's Places for Passion; The 75 Most Romantic Destinations in the World Travel Tips](#); Pepper Schwartz

[The Frugal Travel Guy Handbook](#); Rick Ingersoll – How to game the system to earn points, miles and vouchers.

[Gestures: The Do's and Taboos of Body Language Around the World](#); Roger Axtell

[How to Pack; Travel Smart for Any Trip](#); Hitha Palepu – *A handsome, insightful handbook with excellent coverage of more than you would expect.*

[How to Travel the World on \\$50 a Day; Travel Cheaper, Longer, Smarter](#); Matt Kepnes (Nomadicmatt.com)

[The Smart Traveler's Passport; 399 Tips From Seasoned Travelers](#); Erik Torkels

[Walks Through Britain's History](#); Over 100 walks exploring Britain's heritage; Alexandra d'Arnoux

Literary guidebooks: (Also lookup the subject category "Literary landmarks country" in the catalog of your local library.)

[100 Great Journeys; Exciting Voyages Through History and Literature](#); Keith Lye (ed.) (Hammond) – *Wide coverage of historical and literary trips, and the great explorers, including Alexander the Great, Austen, Casanova, Christ, Darwin, Defoe, Hannibal, Hemingway, Mozart, Napoleon, Odysseus, Marco Polo, Steinbeck, R.L. Stevenson, Twain, Verne, Voltaire, and many exotic land and sea destinations.*

[Literary Trips; Following in the Footsteps of Fame](#); Victoria Brooks, ed. – *Trace the steps of famous authors: Lawrence of Arabia in Jordan, Hemingway in Cuba, Ian Fleming and Noël Coward in Jamaica, John Stevens in Mayan Mexico, Yeats in Ireland, the Brontë sisters in the Yorkshire moors, A. A. Milne in Sussex, and Agatha Christie and Jane Austen in Southern England, plus famous expats in 1920s Paris.*

[Novel Destinations; Literary Landmarks from Jane Austen's Bath to Ernest Hemingway's Key West](#); Shannon Schmidt – *A jackpot for fans of Agatha Christie, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Mark Twain, Edith Wharton, Henry James, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Victor Hugo, James Joyce, Franz Kafka, Louisa May Alcott, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ernest Hemingway, Harper Lee, and John Steinbeck.*

[Off the Beaten Page; The Best Trips for Lit Lovers, Book Clubs, and Girls on Getaways;](#)
Terri Peterson Smith – *Tips on literary travel, and specific bibliographies and itineraries for Boston, Newport, NY City, Charleston, Miami, Minneapolis, Chicago, Memphis, New Orleans, Boulder, Austin, Santa Fe, Seattle, San Francisco, and Santa Monica.*

Lonely Planet ([Lonelyplanet.com](https://lonelyplanet.com)) offers excellent city, state, and country guides, and a monthly magazine:

[The Best Things in Life Are Free; The Ultimate Money-Saving Travel Guide;](#) Isabel Albitston

[Epic Bike Rides of the World; Explore the Planet's Most Thrilling Cycling Routes](#)

[Europe's Best Trips; 40 Amazing Road Trips;](#)
Belinda Dixon – *A valuable handbook packed with walks, color maps, but limited 'Eating & Sleeping' tips: The Grand Tour, Amalfi Coast, D-Day Beaches, the Riviera, pilgrimages, vineyards, castles ...*

[Food Lover's Guide to the World; Experience the Great GlobalCuisines;](#) Carolyn Bain

[Great Journeys; Travel the World's Most Spectacular Routes;](#) Andrew Bain – *Over 70 historical and literary road/boat/rail trips; includes travel notes for fans of Marco Polo, Amelia Earhart, Alexander the Great, Theroux, Homer, Che Guevara, R. L. Stevenson, and many exotic land and sea destinations.*

[How to Pack for Any Trip;](#) Sarah Barrell – *Helpful discussion of luggage, folding vs. rolling, packing for different types of trips etc.*

[Lonely Planet's Atlas of Adventure; Discover a World of Thrilling Outdoor Activities;](#) A country guide to hiking and climbing, caving, biking, snow sports, rafting, paddling, surfing, sailing, diving, base jumping, paragliding, safaris, and camel trekking – *whew!*

[Lonely Planet's Guide to Travel Photography;](#)
Richard l'Anson

[The Solo Travel Handbook; Practical Tips and Inspiration for a Safe, Fun and Fearless Trip](#);
Sarah Reid – Bonus notes about hostels and suggested apps.

[Where to Go When, the Ultimate Trip Planner for Every Month of the Year](#); Sarah Baxter

National Geographic ([Natgeo.com](https://www.natgeo.com)) publishes a famous magazine and beautiful books:

[How to be the World's Smartest Traveler \(and Save Time, Money, and Hassle\)](#); Christopher Elliott ([Elliott.org](https://elliott.org))

[Journeys of a Lifetime: 500 of the World's Greatest Trips](#), 2nd ed (2018); George Stone - A coffee-table sized book, divided by type of activity, a tour de force!

[Timeless Journeys; Travels to the World's Legendary Places](#); A coffee table book with brief reviews and big gorgeous photos of 50 destinations.

[The World's Most Romantic Destinations; 50 Dreamy Getaways, Private Retreats, and Enchanting Places to Celebrate Love](#); Abbie Kozolchyk

Rick Steves ([Ricksteves.com](https://www.ricksteves.com)) is a pillar of the travel industry, often seen on TV, offering videos, phrase books and country guidebooks about Europe:

[Europe Through the Back Door](#)

[Rick Steves' Best European City Walks and Museums](#)

[Rick Steves' Mona Winks: Self-Guided Tours of Europe's Top Museums](#)



Ta Prohm temple roots, Angkor Wat

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