

# The Travel Checklist



Totally Useful Airport Advice from **AirportTips.com**

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## Introduction

Back in the days when people would venture overseas via luxury liner or traverse cross-country in a sumptuous railway car, travel was actually a glamorous proposition. Today ... well, not so much.

Instead of sleeper cars, we're wedged into tiny seats with a perfectly acceptable amount of legroom if you happen to be under three-feet tall. The rest of us contort ourselves into pretzels and pray the guy in front of us doesn't feel like reclining.

Though flying can be an excruciating process, the discomforts of flight can be the least of the traveler's problems. There's packing, parking, and the much-dreaded security line. Which is why we came up with AirportTips.com and *The Travel Checklist*.

By combining our research with user reviews and advice, AirportTips.com will answer all these questions (and more!) with our fun, user-friendly platform. We can help you solve dilemmas like -

- ▶ **I'm at Terminal 5 at JFK and I'm supposed to be at Terminal 9 - what's the quickest way to get there?**
- ▶ **I'm planning a trip to Chicago - what are the public transportation options out of the airport?**
- ▶ **Where can I find a gluten-free, vegan meal in LaGuardia airport?**

While *The Travel Checklist* will help turn your next business trip into a pleasure by breaking down the process and making it easy and efficient. For example ...

- ▶ **Is the pin in my femur going to set off the metal detector?**
- ▶ **How can I cram a Paul Smith suit into a carry-on?**
- ▶ **They want me to go through one of those scanners - are there going to be even more naked photos of me on the internet now?**

Before you roll your eyes and decide that someone as organized as you doesn't need to bother with a checklist, know that extensive research has proven that having a set checklist of procedures to follow makes any process approximately a thousand times easier and more efficient. When Dr. Atul Gawande - author of *The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right*, instituted a simple checklist program into eight hospitals in 2008, "major surgery complications dropped 36% and deaths plunged 47%."\*

Hear that? Deaths were cut nearly in half.

Now obviously, we're not talking about life or death situations here, but if you've ever missed a flight or arrived at your hotel only to realize you'd stumbled into a swinger's convention (or worse, prom!), this book is for you.

In fact, if you've ever made a travel mistake EVER, this book will help you. We can't guarantee that your flight will be on time, but we can help you pack efficiently, pass through security unscathed, and who knows - possibly even land at your destination wearing a smile.

\* *Time Magazine*, "Atul Gawande: How to Make Doctors Better," 1/4/2010.



# How to Book a Trip Without Losing Your Mind or Emptying Your Bank Account

It used to be that even mid-sized companies had a department – or at least an employee – who would make all the business travel arrangements. These days, though, along with cutting back on expense accounts across the board, most of us wind up booking our own tickets and figuring out where we’re going to stay on our own.

But how? With the bottom-line on everyone’s mind, finding the least expensive option is usually a priority. Luckily, that doesn’t mean business travel has to be unpleasant. By following the checklists and guides we’ve included, travel might actually become something you look forward to doing.

**Q Should I book my flight and hotel together?**

**A It depends. You can save some money purchasing a package deal, but the only way to know for sure is to do a lot of comparison shopping, and be very flexible about flight times and hotel locations. Since most business travelers don’t have this luxury, we’re going to concentrate on booking them both separately.**

# Checklist for Cheap Flights

To get the cheapest possible flights you should ask yourself the following questions. Have I ...

- given up caring about which carrier I fly? My **frequent flyer miles** will not grow mold.
- started this process no more than **a month before my travel dates**, but no less than two weeks?
- compared multiple websites?** (A consolidator site like Kayak can do this for you)
- checked individual airlines' websites**, because sometimes there are unadvertised specials?
- tried to get **the lowest advertised price** through the airline's website in order to maintain frequent flier points?
- purchased my ticket on a **Tuesday around noon**, as that's the cheapest time to buy?
- arranged it so (if possible), I'll be flying on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Saturday - **ideally Wednesday?**
- avoided traveling around the holidays?** If I must, I'll fly on the actual holiday itself.
- chosen flights that are **early in the morning or in the evening?** I've avoided mid-day - that's for the lazies (and the folks with money to burn).
- accepted that I might have to deal with a **layover?** The difference can sometimes be hundreds of dollars. (See page TK for how to make the most of your layover.)



# Checklist for Getting a Great Seat

Have you ever found yourself wedged in the middle seat of the last row in front of the bathroom? That seat doesn't recline – but the ones in front of it certainly do. Meanwhile, you're bolt upright, squished between a five-year-old traveling alone for the first time and a chatty obese cat lady who smells of cheese.

In order to get the best seat possible, make certain you've ...

- joined that airline's **frequent flier program** as soon as I decided which tickets I was going to buy.
- arranged to purchase my ticket **one month in advance** – more notice means more seating choices.
- gone onto **seatguru.com** to figure out the best seats on the particular type of plane I'll be flying.
- kept the **seatguru.com** window open as I purchased my ticket, and completed the checklist below!

# Checklist for Picking Your Seat

Before I've picked my seat(s), I've made sure to **avoid** ...

- Front-row seats facing a wall.** I need leg room and who wants to stare at a wall for hours!
- Last-row seats**, even along an exit row, because they don't recline.
- "Between" window seats.** While not as unbearable as a middle seat, a window seat with no window is not fun for anyone.
- Any seat too close to the bathrooms.** Even setting aside the smell factor - which can be epic, especially on a long haul - people will constantly be hovering over you and bumping your book or laptop. Then there's the smell.
- Sitting too far from the wings if you get freaked out by turbulence.** The closer you are to the wings, the less you will feel it.
- Pretty much any seat that's not an aisle seat.** Aisle seats mean extra legroom, which counts for a lot in coach!

If, after following all these steps, you still end up with a horrible seat, try to get to the airport early enough to ask the person manning the check-in counter to swap you.



## *Travel Tip: 5 Best Travel Apps*

Your smartphone is only as clever as what you've put into it, so make sure to download these apps before you leave home.

- ❶ **Wi-Fi Finder** - this bad boy will direct you to the nearest Wi-Fi hotspot, so you never have to worry about roaming.
- ❷ **Google Maps** - this is a no-brainer.
- ❸ **Flight Board** or **TriplIt** - either of these will give you up-to-the-minute details of your flight status. Also good if you're picking up someone from the airport - no need to sit around in the parking lot for an hour.
- ❹ **Sit or Squat** - when you gotta go, you gotta go. And this app will tell you where the nearest place to do so is located.
- ❺ **Using Miles** - coordinates all your frequent flier miles and hotel-reward points, so you'll know instantly when you've accumulated enough work miles to take a vacation.

# 5 Tips That May Help You Get an Upgrade

Even as Americans got fatter, economy-class seats are tinier than they've ever been. There's no leg room and heaven help you if the guy in front decides to fully recline. But business and first class can be prohibitively expensive. However, sometimes the fates (and a sympathetic airline employee) will smile down and upgrade you for seemingly no reason at all. Here are some ways you can make that more likely to happen:

- 1 Belong to that airline's frequent flyer program.** The more points you have, the more likely this holy grail is to happen.
- 2 Dress neatly and nicely.** The experienced travelers at Frommer's say a well-dressed traveler is more likely to get upgraded than a slob. A friend of one of the writers was handed a first-class boarding pass out of the blue and when he asked the flight attendant why he'd been chosen, she answered, "our station manager noticed how well-dressed you were and told me to upgrade you."
- 3 Even if you checked in online, use the check-in kiosk and ask.** Note that it will help your cause if you're also extremely polite and friendly. It may also help if you're preternaturally good looking.
- 4 Leave the kids at home.** Nobody wants a howling brat in the seat next to them, least of all people who paid four times what you did for their ticket.
- 5 Be open to moving your seat once you're on the plane** – if the honeymooning couple wants to sit together, be a sport. You may be rewarded with a cushy seat in business.
- 6** Okay, I said only five tips, but this last one will guarantee you an upgrade: **pay for it.** Lots of airlines offer day-of discount upgrades to frequent fliers. It may not be worth it for short-haul flights, but for cross-country flights you may make up the price difference in free cocktails and salty snacks.



## Where Should I Stay?

If you're traveling to a convention in the middle of the sticks, you might not have many options, but if you're going to be in a large, or even medium-sized city, your choices open up. You can narrow these choices down by asking yourself the following questions:

- Have I read the reviews?** Before choosing a place to lay your head, check out consumer reviews on a site like Hotels.com, Tripadvisor.com, and yes, unfortunately, Bedbugregistry.com.
- How far is it from the airport and is it within walking or public transportation distance of where I need to be?** A slightly higher room rate might be worth the savings in cabs and/or rental cars.
- Do I really need a pool, a gym, and a free continental breakfast?** More amenities mean higher prices.
- Which hotels will give me miles?** Many of the big chains will.

# How Can I Get a Nice Room at a Reasonable Rate?

Depending on what city you're staying in and what time of year it is, hotel rates can vary dramatically. Here are some questions to ask yourself as you book your hotel.

- Have I compared prices?** You can easily do so by comparing Travelocity, Kayak and Quikbook.
- Have I considered “opaque” sites such as Priceline or Hotwire?** If you're not overly choosy about where you're staying they offer the lowest prices – just make sure to check out <http://biddingfortravel.yuku.com> before you bid.
- Have I shopped the “private sales” sites?** Just as you can buy deeply discounted Louboutins through these membership sites, so can you purchase luxury hotel stays at a fraction of their normal cost.
- Have I searched for discount codes online?**
- After I've found the cheapest rate online, **I've called the hotel I'm most interested in and see if they can do better.** Often they can and will.

# How Can I Make Sure I Get *the Best Room Possible*?

Okay, you've chosen and booked your hotel – how you just need to get in your room. Will it be within earshot of the raucous bar? Stuck next to the elevator bank? Will your view consist of a brick wall and/or a naked neighbor? To ensure a bad room doesn't happen to a good person (you) make sure you've done the following upon booking your room.

- Joined that hotel's loyalty program prior to checking in** (or even leaving home).
- Checked out the hotel's website to get a lay of the land.** While you're there, you look for discount/upgrade offers.
- Politely emailed or called the manager in advance with whatever your request might be** (high/low floor, far from elevator, etc.).



## The A-B-C's of P-A-C-K-I-N-G (or How to Leave Home without Losing Your Mind (or Forgetting Your Socks))

We got it. You spent a month backpacking through Europe with only a change of underwear, an extra pair of Levis and a dog-eared copy of *On the Road*. Surely someone as worldly, accomplished, and good-looking as you are doesn't need a checklist with step-by-step instructions on anything as mundane as packing, but humor us. You're not on your parents' dime anymore; you're on your boss's. And if you show up for that important meeting in a wrinkled shirt with a big mustard blob smeared across it, you're not only going to look like a slob, you could be jeopardizing your job. So listen-up!

### **A week before my trip I've ...**

- made a list of everything I'll be packing. Like Santa, I will check it twice.
- figured out exactly which business attire I'm going to need.

- brought the dirty and/or rumpled pieces to the dry cleaner.
- made sure I have enough of any prescription drugs I will need.
- purchased travel-sized versions of my toiletries or decanted them into three-ounce containers.
- determined whether or not these drugs can be used for fun and if so, I've obtained a doctor's note saying I actually need them to stay sane.
- whipped out my trusty tape measure and figured out if my bag meets TSA and airline size requirements:
- Checked bags can't weigh more than 50 pounds and can't exceed a 62 linear inches (l + w + h = total linear inches).
- Carry-on bags can weigh no more than 40 pounds (so forget about bringing my hand weights along) and measure no more than 22"x14"x9".

### **Two days before my trip I've ...**

- picked up my **dry cleaning**.
- ascertained that I'll have enough **socks and underwear** to last the trip - if not, I have a load of laundry in the machine or the FedEx man is bringing me some replacements in the morning.
- purchased **a real luggage tag**, because I know the ones they hand out at the check-in counter are cheaply made and have a tendency to fall off.
- polished, or at least cleaned, the **shoes** I plan on bringing.
- emailed one copy of my **itinerary** to a loved one and another to my assistant.
- become a better groomed version of myself:** a haircut if necessary, and a mani/pedi if I'm of the female persuasion. Random hairs have been shaved, plucked, waxed, or lasered off.



## What should I bring?

What to wear is such an important question that entire reality TV empires have been built on the premise. It's also one of the most important travel decisions you'll be making. Too much is almost as bad as too little. To avoid over- or under-packing, you should carefully look at your calendar and see exactly what's scheduled for each day. Hint: No need for those sky-high heels and an evening gown if they're only going to take up valuable real estate in your bag.

### As you assemble what you're bringing ... I've ...

- made certain that most clothing is from the **same color family**, so I can mix, match, and re-wear.
- ascertained that I'll have one **business outfit** for every day I'll need one, as well as a few casual items of clothing.
- assembled a **small travel pack** of coordinating jewelry, tie clips or cufflinks if I wear them.
- if I'm a fan of the fitness, I have a couple **workout outfits**.
- added at least one **extra** dress shirt/blouse in case of a tragic toothpaste spill or exploding-pen disaster.
- ditto an extra pair or two of **socks, hosiery, and underwear**.

# 10-Step Method of Folding a Suit without Using a Garment Bag

- 1 Find a smooth, flat, **CLEAN**, surface on which to perform this delicate operation.
- 2 Set aside a **gallon-sized Zip-loc bag**.
- 3 Turn the jacket **inside out** – leaving the sleeves inside, but shoulders protruding.
- 4 **Fold** the jacket in half, lengthwise, tucking one shoulder into the other.
- 5 Lay it flat on a smooth, **clean surface** (i.e., table or bed).
- 6 Put the pant **legs together**, minding the crease, and laid them perpendicular, across the bottom of the folded jacket.
- 7 **Fold** the top of the jacket over the pants, which will help cushion the jacket to prevent wrinkling.
- 8 Fold the lower third of the pants **over** the jacket – if there’s extra fabric, tuck under the jacket.
- 9 Fold the upper third of the pants over the jacket and bottom third of the pants, forming a nice, **neat square**.
- 10 Tucked the neatly folded square into the Zip-Loc bag, making sure to leave air inside for **cushioning**.

# The day before my trip – *packing!*

## Part 1: The Clothing

**It's the night before my flight, so I've ...**

- stuck an address label with my **contact info** on the inside of my bag in case the luggage tag gets lost.
- gathered everything I plan on packing and checked it against **my list**.
- planned my **in-flight outfit**. This includes my heaviest clothing, like my coat and/or bulky sweater. On my feet, the biggest pair of shoes I'm bringing.
- opened bag, **commenced** packing.
- lined the inside edges of the bag with my **shoes**, soles facing out.
- stuffed underwear, socks and hosiery **inside** my shoes.
- rolled**, not folded, the bulk of my clothing to save space.
- placed my **heaviest** items along the bottom of the suitcase. This includes rolled jeans, pants, and skirts to fill in the footwear frame I've assembled.
- laid a layer of my tightly rolled soft-and-squishies – sweaters, tights, leggings, socks, underwear, t-shirts, pajamas, etc., in the **middle**.
- placed my **toiletries** (see “Toiletries and extras”) either on top of that layer, or inside and inner zipped pocket.
- carefully placed the **Zip-loc(s)** containing my neatly folded business wear (see “10-Step Method of Folding a Suit Without Using a Garment Bag) – across the top of the bag.
- placed sealed bag of **toiletries on top** of the final layer of clothing or inside in an inner pocket so the TSA agent won't have to tear my bag apart looking for contraband hair care products.
- zipped** that sucker shut.

## Part 2: Toiletries and extras

### What to bring

Aside from medications, this is the area of packing with the least repercussions if you forget something behind. Almost every hotel gives you soap, shampoo and conditioner – and if you need to buy something like hairspray or shaving gel, that’s a pretty minimal purchase. Here are some basics you should bring with (adjust to your gender/needs accordingly):

- Shampoo and conditioner
- Soap
- Cosmetics
- Make-up remover/cleanser wipes
- Moisturizer, sunscreen, and any lotions you use daily
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrush
- Dental floss
- Tweezers
- Emery board (not a pointy nail file!)
- Nail polish remover wipes
- Tide stick or a stain removing stick or wipe
- Pre-moistened towelettes and/or hand sanitizer
- Travel pack of tissues
- Comb or hairbrush
- Pocket mirror
- Shaving cream
- Razor
- Q-tips
- Sample-size ibuprofen or aspirin
- Deodorant/antiperspirant

### **If I'm bringing a carry-on bag, I've ...**

- made sure to follow the 3-1-1 rule: all liquids and gels have to be in three-ounce containers and everything has to fit into a quart-sized, clear plastic Zip-loc bag.
- packed my prescription meds (along with documentation) in with my toiletries.
- remembered to leave any potential weapons (nail files, scissors, plastic explosives) at home.

### **If I'm checking my bag, I've ...**

- (mostly) followed the 3-1-1 rule, but only to save space. I can bring larger containers, but why would I? More volume means more potential for spills.
- kept my prescription medicines (and documentation) separated to bring in my small carry-on or laptop bag. If I have too much medication to carry-on, I've put two or three days' worth in a pillbox and packed the rest.
- made certain not to pack any valuable jewelry or electronics, as they have a way of disappearing in-flight.



### My laptop and/or handbag contains ...

- any and all **jewelry**.
- anything I plan on **reading** in-flight.
- all **electronics** - laptop, phone, camera, etc.
- chargers** for all my electronics.
- a printout of my **itinerary**, e-tickets and emergency phone numbers.
- wallet** containing ID, credit cards, bank card, passport (if necessary) and some cash.
- a few **snacks** - since airlines charge you for their miserable food anyway, you may as well bring something edible.

# 8 Tips To Help You Avoid Unexpected Bag Fees

- 1 Read your ticket. Sounds like a no-brainer, but some airlines (cough, Spirit, cough) are even charging passengers to stow a bag in the overhead compartment!
- 2 Weigh your bag. Even if it's carry-on, if it's a fatty, you're going to pay.
- 3 If you're carrying anything out of the ordinary - musical instruments, camera equipment, etc.- check with your carrier and make special accommodations for it.
- 4 Measure your bag and be sure it conforms to your airline's requirements. They tend to vary by an inch or two.
- 5 Pack light! You can always rinse your underwear and rewear the next day. But if your bag is rejected for being too heavy, you're SOL.
- 6 Kindness counts. You aren't the only one put out by the airline industries annoying new austerity practices - imagine doing three jobs instead of the one you were originally hired to do. Though charm doesn't always work, a "please" and "thanks so much" can go a long way and might just get you onboard with an extra pound of souvenirs from your journey.
- 7 FedEx is your friend. Especially if you're going on a longer stay, it might be worthwhile to ship most of your belongings to your destination ahead of time. Or if you use your time between meetings to do some retail therapy, you can even have the store ship your purchases back home.
- 8 Rewards programs can come in handy. Not only can they eventually garner you free trips, they can also save you money on baggage fees.



## 5 Extras No Traveler Should Leave Home Without

- ❶ **Tide Stick** - invaluable for lipstick smears, condiment drops, and most any other contained laundry calamity.
- ❷ **Zip-Loc Bags** - the quart-sized will hold your toiletries, the gallon-sized will hold your formal wear, and the little ones can help organize your jewelry.
- ❸ **Safety pins** - these punk-rock staples can temporarily solve almost any wardrobe malfunction.
- ❹ **Disposable cleansing cloths** - they're no substitution for a hot shower after a long flight, but they will do in a pinch.
- ❺ **Notebook and pen** - your laptop and smartphone are great, but batteries can lose their charge and signals can get crossed.

# Beginning Your Journey

A lot can happen between the time you zip your bag shut and the moment you board the plane. Passports and ID can be left behind! Zippers can break! Flights can be cancelled! But if you follow this checklist ... well, we can't guarantee a flawless flight experience, but we can guarantee that any errors won't be your fault.

## **A few hours before leaving for the airport, I've made sure to ...**

- download a flight-checker app for my smartphone or tablet. (FlightView, FlightWise, and FlightTrack, are a few you might choose between.)
- check the app to make sure my flight is on time and hasn't been cancelled.
- check the airline's website to find out what kind of entertainment is provided. This way if it's lacking, I have time to upload movies onto my computer or dig up DVDs.
- double-check my rental-car, hotel shuttle, or cab reservation, or investigated public transport options from the airport through AirportTips.com
- placed the following either in an easy-to-access place in my carry-on bag or jacket pocket:
  - Passport
  - Tickets
  - Other travel documents
- Wallet containing driver's license, credit cards and some cash (international currency if I'm traveling abroad).
- tracked down a pen and notepad to tuck into my carry-on.
- charged my phone, laptop, and any other electronics I might use in-flight.

# The Getting-to-the-Airport Checklist

Depending on where you live and where you're going, getting to the airport can take as long as your flight and cost close to as much.

**To make sure you have the optimal in-transit experience, ask yourself if you've ...**



- re-checked** to make sure your flight is still on time?
- looked up which **terminal** you'll be departing from?
- done the math and figured out the **most cost-effective way to get to the airport?** Long-term parking can get expensive, so if you're traveling with family, friends, colleagues, or a cushy expense account, a cab might be the way to go. If you're solo, or paying for it out-of-pocket, look into your public transport options.
- considered using **public transportation** if you're leaving during rush hour, even if you are traveling with others?
- allowed yourself more time if you're **checking bags?**
- allowed yourself enough time to be at the airport **three hours early if you're flying internationally;** two hours if domestically?
- rechecked that you have all your **travel documents and ID?**

# The Once-You're-At-the-Airport Checklist

## Checklist for Navigating the Dreaded Security Line

Nobody likes going through airport security. The long lines, the senseless shoe removal, the intrusive patting down ... security is probably the second-worst thing about airplane travel (first is the food). So to make sure your trip is as pain-free as possible, we suggest you do the following.

### As soon as you get in line you ...

- take your boarding pass and ID out of your pocket so you're ready to show them to TSA Officer #1.
- try to determine the shortest, quickest-moving line and maneuver your way into it.
- take a deep breath when that line then immediately becomes the slowest-moving line.
- start unlacing/unbuckling your shoes, if you were unfortunate enough to wear non slip-ons.
- high-five yourself for remembering to wear socks as you watch a fellow traveler step in puddle of mystery liquids.
- grab at least three plastic trays for your things.
- put your shoes in the first one and slide it down the conveyer belt.
- place your laptop - removed from its case - in the next one and push it behind your shoes.
- squeeze your laptop bag and small-carry-on purse/murse in the next tray and put it in line.

- grab a fourth tray if you're wearing a coat – by now you know the drill.
- give yourself a pat-down to make sure you've removed anything that'll set the metal detector off – jewelry, watches, belts, exotic piercings (no joke!), and pockets full of change.
- wait for the security agent to give you the signal to go through the metal detector.
- follow the agent's instructions.

**If the TSA gives you the all clear, you ...**

- grab the bins containing your things, and move aside.
- put on your shoes first – don't bother to tie laces, you want to keep moving.
- put on belt, jewelry, and redeposit change back into your pocket.
- put on your coat.
- slide laptop back into bag and secure it.
- make sure you have laptop bag and carry-on(s) with you.
- stack the bins and return them to where they belong.
- proceed to your gate.

**If you're selected for additional screening, remember to ...**

- avoid panicking, it's nothing personal.
- follow instructions carefully.
- avoid saying anything stupid! (See sidebar)

# 5 Ridiculous Things the TSA has Confiscated

Along with loaded handguns, dynamite and box-cutters, airport security confiscates a lot of, well, stupid crap. Like plastic swords, bowling pins, fuzzy handcuffs and, in Washington State, one agent reported relieving a passenger of something called a “Sit ’n’ Putt,” which is a golf club you can use on the toilet. Um, what?!

Here are five more notably ridiculous things the TSA will take from you if you attempt to bring on board:

- 1 The Olympic Torch** - This was classified by San Francisco TSA officers as a “slow burning explosive device,” and both the torch and its holder were denied passage.
- 2 Play-Doh** - One minute your baby’s unwrapping Play-Doh from Santa, the next minute the security scrooges at the NOLA airport are pulling it out of your child’s sticky little hands.
- 3 Snow Globes** - Though at first glance these might look like somewhat tacky, but innocent, souvenirs. Look a little closer and it becomes clear that they’re actually a grave risk to national security. Especially the ones where the “snow” is substituted with glitter.
- 4 Baby Food** - This has happened a bunch of times - once after a jar of food tested positive for explosives! (The officers explained they get lots of false positives, but dumped it just the same.) Pre-pumped breast milk has also proven problematic. No wonder there are always so many screaming babies on flights - they’re hungry!
- 5 Exotic Piercings** - This happened in Lubbock, Texas and yes, the woman had to remove the piercings in question. One of them even required a plier for removal. Enough said.

# 5 Stupid Things People have Said to TSA Agents (And Been Arrested Over!)

- ❶ **“I’ve got a bomb.”** British student Samantha Morson probably thought she was being cheeky when she joked with the officer inspecting her bag. One pair of steel bracelets, four nights in the pokey – while looking at a possible 15-year sentence – wiped the smile right off her face!
- ❷ **“I’m Al Qaeda. I’m with them. I’m here to blow things up.”** Cabbie Asfaw Ermiyas is another wiseass who decided to have a little “fun” at the airport after agents questioned him about the “Dubai” sticker on his luggage. Oops.
- ❸ **“No.”** Don’t want your child patted down by TSA agents? Tough luck. Nashville resident, Andrea Fornella Abbott learned that when you say no to them, you say hello to jail time.
- ❹ **Via Twitter: “Robin Hood airport is closed. You’ve got a week and a bit to get your shit together, otherwise I’m blowing the airport sky high!”** Brit Paul Chambers was frustrated by weather-related travel delays and took to Twitter to vent. A few days later, the police stopped by his office to interrogate and arrest the man.
- ❺ **“#\$?!%&@ YOU! Go ahead - arrest me!”** When tipsy Jack Jordan II, of New Hampshire, drunkenly slurred that challenge to airport officials, he probably didn’t expect them to take him up on it. He was wrong.



## How to Make the Most of Your Layover

Does anyone actually enjoy layovers? You're usually halfway to wherever you're going to or coming from, and anxious to just get there already. But sometimes they're a necessary (i.e., money-saving) evil, so you may as well make the most of the time you have. Here are ten questions to ask yourself before you arrive at your half-destination:

- Allowing at least an hour to re-clear security**, do I have enough of a layover to make standing in that TSA line again worth it?
- If so, am I anywhere near anything worth seeing?** Amsterdam, yes; Albany, probably not.
- Is there rail travel available out of the airport?** Because it's generally less expensive and there's less chance of a traffic delay.
- If I'm staying put, **have I checked [AirportTips.com](http://AirportTips.com) to see the eating/drinking/leisure activities** in my airport?
- Does my airline have a "luxury club" in this airport?** If so, it may be worth it to buy a day pass (usually around fifty bucks), to take advantage of the comfortable seating, complimentary Wi-Fi, and relative calmness.

# Minimizing the Chances of Missing Your Connecting Flight

Sure, sometimes there's an hour or two scheduled between your flights, but with delays and cancellations becoming epidemic, the window of time you need to get from one gate – or terminal – to another can get very small, very quickly. Here are some ways to ensure you don't wind up watching your connecting flight take off without you.

- Make sure you have plenty of time between flights.** Waiting an extra hour in the airport is a whole lot easier than rebooking a flight.
- Keep carry-ons to a minimum.** Twenty bucks is a small price to pay if it means you make your next flight by running unencumbered.
- When you're at the gate, **tell the clerk that you're going to be on a connecting flight** to see if she can move you closer to an exit.
- Also ask her to **double-check** your connecting flight's gate.
- Log onto **AirportTips.com** to see how far it is from your arrival gate to your departure's gate.
- Stay calm.** If you're mid-air and it looks like you're going to be cutting it close, tell the flight attendant – she may be able to get you off the plane first or find out if your next flight's status.
- Double-check that you have an easily accessible copy of your **itinerary**.
- Write down your airline's customer service numbers** – don't over-rely on your smart phone.

# *Too Late!*

## What To Do When You Miss Your Connecting Flight

- If someone's picking you up at the airport or expecting you on the other end, **let them know** you won't be there.
- Talk to customer service.** If it's the airline's fault that you missed your connecting flight, they're obligated to get you on the next one. (This only works if both flights are through the same carrier.)
- If you missed a different airline's flight**, and the first airline can't help you re-book, find customer service for the connecting carrier and ask them for help.
- If you missed the last flight out due to your airline's error**, they should book you on another airline or put you up in a hotel, but they're not legally obligated to do so. (Boo!)
- If you missed a flight of your own volition** (Was the fourth quarter of that Knicks game really worth watching? It's not like they ever win!), you're most likely going to have to pay a fee to rebook.



## *Travel Tip: 10 Great Airport Restaurants*

Though most food you get on the plane (if you even get any food on the plane) is going to be well, gross, there's no longer any need to settle for the Golden Arches in the terminal. Here are ten great airport restaurants.

- 1 New York, Deep Blue (JFK)** Deep inside the ultra-mod, recently refurbished Jet Blue terminal you can tuck into sushi, duck-confit noodles, lobster ... a far cry from Cinnabon, hon.
- 2 Chicago, Tortas Frontera (ORD)** Buh-bye, mall-Mexican from Chili's, hello, Rick Bayless and thank you for these delicious South-of-the-Border sandwiches.
- 3 Los Angeles, Encounter** Get in the mood for your flight by chowing down on light Cali fare in this saucer-shaped restaurant.

- 4 Boston, Legal Seafoods (BOS)** Yes, it's a chain, but you're safe because the seafood is not only legal, it's delicious.
- 5 Stuttgart, Top Air (STR)** Perhaps the only airport restaurant in possession of a Michelin star, you definitely won't find cheese fries, but you will find filet of Wagyu beef, oyster ravioli, and langoustines all the way from New Zealand.
- 6 Minneapolis, Ike's Food and Cocktails (MSP)** For good ole home cookin', you go to Ike's. Turkey dinners with gravy, milkshakes, steaks and plenty of cocktails will fill you up before you fly.
- 7 Zurich, Runway 34 (ZRH)** The serving staff wears pilot or flight attendant outfits and serves up Swiss/Asian/Mediterranean fusion cuisine under the wings of a retired Russian war plane.
- 8 England, Wagamama (LHR)** The UK hasn't always been known for their fine dining options, but this light, bright, noodle house in Terminal 5, is wildly popular for good reason.
- 9 Hong Kong, Tian Xia Dumplings (HKG)** According to *Esquire* magazine, Tian Xia's delicious dumplings are closer to street food than fine dining, but insists that "what it lacks in ambiance it makes up for in flavor."
- 10 Amsterdam, Bubbles Seafood & Wine Bar (AMS)** Bubbles' giant salt-water aquarium will keep your eyes occupied as you slurp briny oysters, accompanied by delicate flutes of champagne.

# Checklist for International Travel

Before scheduling a meeting, buying a ticket or booking a hotel, ask yourself the following questions.

## **Do I have a valid passport?**

- yes
- no

## **If I answered yes, do I know where it's currently located?**

- yes
- I guess I haven't seen it in a while, but I think it's in the top drawer of the dresser in the guest room. (Go find it right now. This minute. We're not kidding!)

If the answer is no, you don't have a passport, it's time to get one. Here are some basic steps to getting a US Passport if you are a US citizen.

## **You must apply in person if ...**

- you are getting your first passport.
- your previous passport was issued when you were under the age of 16.
- your previous passport was issued more than 15 years ago.
- your previous passport was lost, stolen, or damaged.
- your name has changed since your last passport was issued, but you don't have legal documentation of this fact.

## **To successfully obtain your very first passport, it's important that you ...**

- Go to <http://travel.state.gov/passport> and download form DS-11: Application for a US Passport.
- Fill out the form, but DO NOT SIGN IT until you are at the passport office, being instructed to do so by the clerk.
- Locate the closest Passport Agency or Acceptance Facility (this may be as easy as your local post office - you can find out on the aforementioned website).

- Bring evidence that you are a citizen of the United States of America. That can be any of the following:
  - Certified birth certificate
  - Naturalization certificate
  - Certificate of citizenship
  - Consular Report of Birth Abroad or Certification of Birth
- Bring a valid form of identification ALONG WITH A PHOTOCOPY OF THE FRONT AND BACK OF THE DOCUMENT. Among the accepted forms are:
  - A valid driver's license
  - Naturalization certificate
  - Current government ID (city, state, or federal)
  - Current military ID (military and dependents)
- Bring the appropriate fee, which can be paid via check, credit card, debit card, money order; the exception being cash. You can find out the price by going to [http://travel.state.gov/passport/fees/fees\\_837.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/fees/fees_837.html).
- Provide one passport photo.

**Your passport photo should follow these parameters:**

- It needs to be in color.
- Has to have been taken within the last six months (it's not like online dating where you can get away with a photo from your glory days).
- You need to be in front of a plain white or off-white background.
- You must be facing the camera. No arty profiles.
- You can't be too happy or sad looking – you need to have a neutral expression on your face and both eyes must be open.
- Printed on high-quality photo paper.
- It should measure 2 inches by 2 inches.

- It should be sized so that your head is between 1” and 1.38” from bottom of the chin to top of the head. Yes, they’re that picky.
- You need to be dressed like you normally dress, so avoid the following:
  - Uniforms. Aside from religious garb that’s worn constantly, clothing must be plain.
  - No hats or headgear, unless worn for religious purposes. And even then, it can’t cast a shadow over the face.
  - You should know this, Mr. Spock, but leave your Bluetooth device out of this.
  - If you normally wear glasses or a hearing aid, you can wear that in the photo – but no sunglasses or faux smarty-pants glasses.
  - If you wear glasses, make sure there’s no glare coming off them in the photo, because your eyes have to be visible.

## Renewing your passport

If you have an expired passport and a couple months before you have to travel, you can save yourself a few hours in line by renewing your passport through the mail.

### **You can renew your passport if the following statements are true:**

- My passport is undamaged and I’m able to send it in with my renewal application.
- It was issued when I was 16 years of age or older.
- It was issued within the past 15 years.
- My name is either the same as it was when it was issued, or I have legal documentation of my name change.
- You can deal with waiting four to six weeks for regular service, or two to three weeks for expedited service. (If you need it sooner, see instructions on how to get a same-day renewal.)

If any of the above aren’t true, you’re going to have to renew your passport in person.

**To renew my passport by mail, I have done the following:**

- Downloaded, printed, and filled out form DS-82 from the State Department's website. ([http://travel.state.gov/passport/renew/renew\\_833.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/renew/renew_833.html))
- Signed and dated form DS-82.
- Included my date of travel.
- Stapled my new passport photo (See page TK for photo instructions) to the appropriate area on form DS-82, using four vertical staples - one in each corner.
- Left my second passport photo unattached.
- Included a check or money order for the correct amount - see State Department website, because these change. ([http://travel.state.gov/passport/fees/fees\\_837.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/fees/fees_837.html))
- Added an additional \$60 fee if I am expediting the process.
- Located my expired passport.
- If I've changed my name I've included my marriage certificate or court order.
- Slipped all of this documentation into a padded envelope.
- If you are expediting your passport, write "EXPEDITE" on the outside of this envelope.
- Used a traceable delivery method (i.e., FedEx, UPS, or USPS Priority Mail) and sent it to the appropriate office at the National Passport Processing Center.

**for regular service:**

Post Office Box 90155, Philadelphia, PA 19190-0155

**for expedited service:**

Post Office Box 90955, Philadelphia, PA 19190-0955

## What to do if you need your passport, like yesterday!?

You've bought the tickets, booked the hotel, cruise, or expedition, and then you check your passport to see if that photo is as bad as you recall. It is. But even worse, you notice that it expired last month and your flight is leaving next week. It is possible to speed up the process. Here is the step-by-step you need for several different scenarios.

I'm traveling internationally within two weeks or I need a passport within four weeks to obtain a foreign visa, so I've ...

- Scheduled an appointment at a regional passport agency. (Find the nearest one on the State Department's website, <http://travel.state.gov/passport>, or by calling 1-877-487-2778.)
- Printed hard copies of my travel itinerary, tickets, or other proof of travel. (Unless you live in Colorado, Minneapolis, or Vermont, an e-verification on your smart phone is not going to cut it.)
- Brought along my checkbook, credit or debit cards because fast means more expensive.
- Downloaded, printed and filled out form DS-82 from the State Department's website. (Do NOT mail this beforehand - bring it with you.)
- Left any weapons at home. (Even if it's legal in your state, it's against the law to enter a US Passport office armed.)

# 4 Vital Things to Check Before you Leave the Country

- 1 Visa isn't just a credit card.** Before you even think about memorizing “where’s the bathroom?” in the native language of the country you’re visiting, you need to find out if you need a travel visa. Some countries are easy – Canada doesn’t require one, nor does Mexico. Any of the European nations will be happy with a passport, as will any island in the Caribbean. But if you’re going anywhere more far-flung – or plan on working while you’re there – check the State Department website at [http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_4965.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4965.html)
- 2 Do you have your shots?** While you won’t need anything stronger than Pepto for the post-Poutine agita in Montreal, there are some places in the world you’d best prepare your body to handle. The Centers for Disease Control (<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations>) has up-to-the-minute health information for every country in the world.
- 3 Will I be safe?** Because you never know when a civil-war will break out or a cholera epidemic will erupt, it’s important to check the CDC’s website for up-to-date information.
- 4 What if I’m a thrill-seeker?** If you insist on traveling to war-torn nations or other seriously scary places, there is a free “Smart Traveler” registry for US citizens on the State Department’s website. You can leave emergency contact info there and have updates about impending “situations” pinged to you as you travel. (<https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>)



## Tragic Cautionary Tale: *Dude! Where's My Passport?!*

When my best friend told me that she and her boyfriend were booking a trip to San Miguel del Allende, Mexico and that me and mine should come along, I was excited. I'd only been to Tijuana, and as we all know, that doesn't really count as seeing Mexico. My normally travel-reluctant boyfriend agreed to go. The only issue: he didn't have a current passport.

But our trip was four months away, so he had plenty of time. Even though he's a Greek citizen and this meant navigating the cigarette-smoke-choked bureaucracy of the Greek Embassy. I implored to take care of it right away. He assured me he would. I bought two non-refundable, round-trip tickets and sent my friend our portion of the rent for the house.

One month passed. No movement on the passport front. I "mentioned" it a few times. He kept putting me off, promising to get to it.

Two months passed. I was starting to panic. He went online and read that it only takes a month to get a Greek passport (!!!!) and told me to calm down. He'd get to it.

Three months passed. Now I was hyperventilating on a daily basis. He went to the embassy. After an interminable wait, they sent him to get photographed around the corner from their office.

When he returned to the embassy, it was lunch time, which looked like it might last the rest of the day.

He returned the next day, photographs and identification in hand. They looked him up in the computer and determined that he hadn't served in the Greek military, therefore they weren't granting him a passport. (He has lived in the US since he was a toddler.)

They tell him he has to get special dispensation from some other office and only then will they consider giving him a passport.

It's now two weeks before our trip. My panic has turned to a blind fury. He got the dispensation from the special, top-secret government office, but the workers at the embassy laugh hysterically when he asks if he'll get his passport in time for our trip.

I enjoy a week in a romantic villa in Mexico with my best friend and her boyfriend. Alone. As a third wheel.

Four years later. We're still together, but he's still not forgiven.



## 5 Best International Travel Apps

- 1 **World Clock Time Zones** – jet lag means you might think you’re calling your wife at 3pm, but it’s really the middle of the night where she’s sleeping. This will help you stay on time.
- 2 **XE Currency** – never wonder how many dollars are in a Krugerrand (or vice versa) again.
- 3 **Google Translate** – this comes in pretty handy when you really need to figure out where the bathroom is located.
- 4 **All Subway HD** – whether it’s the metro, the tram, or the tube you’re looking for, this app has subway maps for nearly 130 cities around the world.
- 5 **Lonely Planet** – you can download individual guides for \$5.99 a pop, so you’ll no longer be the lost-looking tourist perusing his guidebook.

# Travel Tip: How NOT to Speak a Foreign Language

The first thing trade journalist Ivan L. does whenever he finds out he's traveling to a new country on business, is teach himself a few phrases in that country's language. "It's just polite that if you make an effort to accommodate your host country," he says.

Unfortunately, too many Americans think speaking English, no matter where in the world they happen to be, is their birthright. But what they lack in linguistics, they make up for in volume.

Ivan says, "I was stuck at the airport in Berlin for a few hours and I wanted a coffee. So I walked over to the coffee concession and whipped out my phrase book.

"Guten Tag. Entschuldigen Sie bitte, aber ich spreche wenig Deutsch," I asked awkwardly. [Translation: "Hello, I'm very sorry, but I don't speak much German."]

I fumbled for the food section and asked "Kann ich einen Kaffee mit Milch und Zucker haben?"

The barista smiled kindly at Ivan and replied in perfect English, "You'd like a coffee with milk and sugar?"

To his great relief, Ivan was able to order a few other items - in English - as well, and sat down at a table with his coffee and magazine. A few minutes later, another American marched up to the counter and loudly ordered a coffee and croissant.

"The barista just stared at him," Ivan laughs. So the American repeated his order even louder. The barista shrugged, feigning confusion, so the American went up several more decibels.

The barista stared at the red-faced, shrieking man and pleasantly chirped, "Obwohl ich perfekt Englisch spreche, tue ich jetzt mal so als ob ich kein Wort verstehe, weil Du ein aufdringlicher und ungehobelter Amerikaner bist." [Translation: Even though I speak the Queen's English, I'm going to pretend I don't because you are a loud, boorish American jerk.]

Okay, Ivan isn't positive that's what the barista said, but that other American never got his coffee and stormed off in a huff.



## *Travel Tip: You Can't Come In:* 10 Weird Rules that'll Keep You Out of a Country

- ❶ For a country that's known for their beer, it's kind of ironic that you can't cross the **Canadian** border if you've been convicted of a DUI in the past ten years.
- ❷ Though this is an unofficial "rule," **Saudi Arabia** has been known to deny entrance to Israelis, or even anyone who has an Israeli stamp on their passport.
- ❸ If you plan on staying in **Russia** for a while, plan on getting an AIDS/HIV test and passing it, or your entrance will be denied.
- ❹ Check that any medications you're bringing along are legal in the country you're visiting. Sudafed is illegal in **Japan** and **Ambien** (even with an Rx) is verboten in **Dubai**. Other countries have similarly restrictive rules, so be careful.

- ⑤ While **Germany** may welcome you with open arms, your pet pit bull can't stay for more than four weeks.
- ⑥ Don't show up in **Thailand** without your skivvies. It's illegal to be out and about sans underwear.
- ⑦ Swallow your gum before you get off the plane when entering **Singapore**, because chewing the stuff is illegal. (And littering even more so!)
- ⑧ Leave your camo t-shirt at home if you're going to **Antigua**. Camouflage material on anything - including suitcases - is against the law.
- ⑨ If you're passing through the **United Arab Emirates**, just say no to that second (or third or worse) cocktail on the plane. Intoxicated travelers can be arrested and face up to four years in the pokey. As for illegal drugs ... don't even think about it.
- ⑩ If you're even vaguely contagious don't bother getting off the plane in **China**. They currently forbid anyone with Hansen's disease (aka, leprosy), AIDS/HIV, any venereal diseases, pulmonary tuberculosis and other infectious diseases.

# How to Make *the Most* of Your Stay

## Checking in: When you arrive at the hotel ...

- Politely ask if there are any big bashes** such as weddings, bachelor parties or (gasp!) prom happening during your stay and request to be roomed far, far away, on another planet (or floor).
- Before they give you the key, **remind them of any arrangements you've made** during your previous chat with management.
- If you're there for a **special occasion**, now's the time to tell them!

## Checking in: When You Get to Your Room ...

- Stow luggage on top of toilet or in tub and **check room for bedbugs** (see "Travel Tip: How to Check Your Room For Bedbugs")
- Upon determining that your room is bug-free, **begin to unpack**.
- Hang up your business clothing/formalwear** to determine whether you'll need to borrow a steamer or have it pressed.
- Put your other clothing away** in drawers or closet.
- Put your **toiletries** in the bathroom.
- Lock up any valuables in **the safe**.
- Charge** electronics.
- Take advantage of the **hotel's amenities** - more and more hotels are offering in-room fitness programs. If there's a pool, relax with a swim.
- Relax**.

# *Travel Tip:* How to Check your Room for Bedbugs

- Before you leave, search **BedBugRegistry.com** to make sure they're not listed.
- Buy a small **travel flashlight** - this will come in handy for other things anyway.
- Once in the room, **do not put any of your bags on the floor**. Leave them on the toilet or in the shower. No, seriously.
- Start by checking the bed linens** for any signs of infestation. Pull back the sheets and look at the mattress - especially around stitching and piping.
- Bedbugs are oval, brownish/reddish creatures** - but as they're wiley, you should also be looking for tiny black spots and/or piles of pale brown skin casings.
- If you find any evidence, go to management** and request a different room. Lather, rinse, repeat.

## Checking Out: The Night Before

Most hotels have you check out by about 11:00 AM, which can leave you without a lot of time in the morning, so before you go to sleep you should ...

- Neatly **re-pack** most of your bag - without doing the final close - using the same techniques we discussed earlier.
- Leave out** an outfit and whatever toiletries you'll need for the following day.
- Call the front desk and ask them to **send up your bill** so if there's a discrepancy you can take it up with them before you're stressed and/or half-asleep.
- Go online and **double-check** the following day's flight information.
- Arrange for a taxi** pick-up or figure out the shuttle or public transportation situation.
- If you're going to need to do a late checkout, alert the desk so they can proceed accordingly. You may be able to hang onto your room, you may need to stow your bags elsewhere.

## Checking Out: The Day You Leave

Before turning in your key card you should ...

- Return everything you brought with you to your suitcase, including toiletries, dirty clothes, and that commemorative snow globe.
- Run a dum-dum check on your room, which means you've scanned every surface, looked under every piece of furniture and - most importantly, checked the hook on the back of the bathroom door for left-behind shirts, shoes, and jewelry.
- Double-checked your airport transportation
- Left your usual daily gratuity for the maid - maybe a little extra if you were extra demanding.
- Scan your bill one more time for errors.
- Drop off your key, and begin your journey homeward.



## *Travel Tip:* 5 Ways to Make Your Cold, Impersonal Hotel Room Cozy

- 1 Unpack.** Living out of a suitcase can feel chaotic. When everything's in its (temporary) place, you'll feel calmer.
- 2 Bring a photo from home.** Whether it's Mr. Whiskers or the man you married, it's nice to see someone you love.
- 3 Travel candle.** Not only does everyone look better by candlelight, the room will smell better.
- 4 Small speakers for your MP3 player** will let you play your favorite music and make even the strangest place seem more familiar.
- 5 Fresh flowers** will not only improve the smell of your room, they'll cheer you up after a brutal day of meetings.

# The Home Sweet Home Checklist

No matter how fantastic, relaxing, or productive your journey was, there truly is no place like home. (Thanks, Dorothy!) To make the most of your return, ask yourself if you've . . .

- remembered all your baggage.**
- kicked off your shoes** so your traveling toes can relax and breathe.
- hugged** your spouse, partner, cat and/or dog?
- distributed **souvenirs** of your trip to your spouse, partner, cat and/or dog (the goldfish gets neither hug nor snowglobe).
- unbuckled your belt/unzipped your skirt - **aaaaahhhhhh!!!!**
- collapsed on the sofa** and cracked open a cold one - no more travel 'til the next trip!

We hope you enjoyed *The Travel CheckList* and, more importantly, that it helped you get from Point A to Point B and back home to Point A again with a little less stress and a lot more fun.

**For more travel tips, please check out  
[AirportTips.com](http://AirportTips.com).**

