



SIX THINGS YOU NEED TO DO BEFORE ANY INTERNATIONAL TRIP

Whether you are planning a trip to Italy or Africa, it can be tempting to think about all the wonderful things that you'll experience while away from home. But don't let the destination guides fool you – the best international trips require more than just your best hopes and dreams to have a good time. Great vacations require planning – good planning to be exact. To get you started in thinking strategically about your trip, we've included six things you might want to cross off your checklist right now.



Update Your Passport

Do you know where your passport is? Are you aware of the date on which it expires? A good rule of thumb is to renew your passport

about six months before it expires as most countries want to be sure that you're six months or more pre-renewal before you visit. Take a look at the State Department's website to look up the country to which you are travelling and see preferred timelines during which to renew your passport.



Check For Travel Advisories

It's important to check for travel warnings and advisories before you book your trip, prior to departure and even during your travels. Check

with your country's Department of Foreign Affairs for travel alerts and advisories. It may also help to have a list of contact information for your country's embassy in the destinations to which you will be travelling.



Get Vaccinated

Many travel destinations require travellers to be up-to-date on certain vaccinations before entering the country. For the most comprehensive and up-to-date medical recommendations, check in with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website. It's also a good rule of thumb to make sure you have enough prescription medication that will last the duration (plus any unexpected delays) of your trip. Remember to pack common over-the-counter medications for colds, headaches, digestive issues, etc., as these things may not always be easy to find upon arrival at certain destinations.



Learn Key Words and Phrases

When you set out to learn key words and phrases in the local language, it's more than simple courtesy or learning how to ask where the bathroom is. There are times when being able to effectively communicate is a matter of health and safety. For example, in a foreign country it may be important to learn how to indicate to those around you that you or someone you are travelling with has a food allergy or a certain medical condition.



Evaluate your Finances

Before you leave, be sure to call your bank and credit card providers to advise them that you will be travelling, so that your international charges won't cause any suspicion or locked accounts. Do your research and be knowledgeable on exchange rates and how much things cost where you are going so that you can gauge how much you are spending.



Get a Travel Insurance Plan

Travel insurance is more than coverage for medical incidents while abroad. While this is an important reason to seek coverage, many plans cover travellers for things like cancelling a trip for a covered reason, trip interruptions and baggage loss. Additionally, many Travel Guard® travel insurance plans include travel assistance services like hotel and flight rebooking, baggage location assistance, up-to-the-minute travel alerts and even concierge services to make vacations more memorable. To learn about more handy international travel tips, see this article from Fodor's and to learn more about finding the right travel insurance plan to fit your needs, visit aig.com/travel.

Sources:

1 <http://www.fodors.com/news/10-things-you-need-to-do-before-any-international-trip-11431>

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