

There's a few great reasons why We Know Travel Best. Whether an intrepid traveller or taking your first trip, travel benefits best when using tips from others, such as taking this addition to our Inside Scoop series, packed with essential and helpful information.

travel: delighting in the spirit of adventure • a vacation from home to explore places that are not your home • knowing life is different, knowing this is a joy of travel • enjoying the journey, not just the destination • a privilege best used with patience, humour and curiosity • fun • coming home with great tales •

Bring clear resealable plastic bags of differing sizes (wet clothes, treasures, food, to protect lotions). Packing cubes are helpful for underwear and socks, everyone with their own colour. For clothes, think layers for warmth. Help kids pack their own suitcase; it trains them to choose wisely, especially if they will be the ones to pull or carry it.

Your Counsellor

Our knowledge and experience help turn dreams into first-rate vacations. Ask your counsellor about any details, including:

- booking destination events and activities in advance
- the best insurance
- security, health, weather alerts (don't panic!).

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Inside Scoop: General Planning & Packing Tips

With increased baggage restrictions—and as you're usually responsible for your luggage—remember the main packing rule: "When in doubt, leave it out." This applies to toiletries (most hotels supply shampoo and conditioner), hair dryers (most hotels supply these) and clothes. Other tips:

- Beforehand, check itineraries for seat assignments and make any changes you need. If you did not add your frequent flyer number to your reservation, add it now.
- If the flight offers meal service (some charters, international) and you need a special meal such as vegan or Kosher, book it in advance. Also request any essential needs in advance such as wheelchair service or gate assistance for those with disabilities.
- Book the hotel and car rental for arrival cities in advance—you don't want to arrive and start searching.
- Before leaving, read the general information for passports, visas, and insurance documents. Give your itinerary and contact information to family/friends at home.
- When going to a sunny locale (even winter glare) take a double-duty high SPF and moisturizer. Your family can share a large tube of toothpaste (pack in checked bags). Do not pack valuables such as money, car keys, documents or medications in checked bags. Always put important items in your carry-on bag. And lose the jewels—leave any good stuff like your Grandmother's ring and gold watch at home.
- If you're not going to wear a piece of clothing at least twice, consider leaving it at home; can you leave a pair of shoes? Are 3 purses essential?
- For minimal packing (and dragging), mix and match clothes. Most airlines charge now for the first checked bag unless you are on a package. If you jam items into carry-on, check with your airline for carry-on and checked weight restrictions.
- The day before you leave, check tourism websites for weather forecasts.

Planning Tips

- Always have a valid passport. It's not just a lovely fantasy that a trip could drop in your lap—we've had clients win trips or have had to rush to another country because of family illness. If you always renew your passport at least 6 months prior to its expiry date, you won't have the hassle www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/index.asp. Keep a separate photocopy of its ID page with your other records or snap a cell phone photo.
- Different airports in other countries have different security protocols—it might not make sense but accept all security protocols. Some ask you to remove shoes (wear socks) to put in a bin that goes through screening and some don't (shoes that don't have metal). Watch people a few ahead of you for clues. Before getting in line, have your boarding pass for security and metal/coins out of your pockets.
- Get insurance well before going anywhere, e.g., Cuba requires proof, in France it's imperative. In an emergency, the last thing you want is to lose deposits or be airlifted home with a \$45,000 bill (insurance can cover being unable to travel if subpoenaed as a witness or job loss). Don't buy extra insurance at car rental counters; talk to your counsellor, read our Inside Scoop: Insurance. We strongly suggest you invest in LeGrow's Travel medical and cancellation/interruption insurance to cover any unanticipated glitches.
- Travelling with a child? Read our Inside Scoop: Solo Parents. If travelling to a Spanish-speaking country, take our Inside Scoop: Spanish, packed with handy tips.
- Pack sharp objects such as scissors in checked luggage, as well as any liquids or lotions more than 100ml (3.4oz). For those 100ml or less, put in a 1 litre resealable plastic bag (usually at airport security). Prescription medicine and baby formula/pumped breast milk is allowed for a travelling child under 2yrs (0-24 months). Check with your counsellor for any special health precautions or documents you must take.

Document Checklist

- Valid passport for each person
- Any visas or travellers cards
- Copies: passport ID page (or take a cell photo), credit card and debit card numbers/emergency contacts
- Extra baggage tags for inside and outside luggage with contact info
- Copies of insurance card/policies: read fine print in advance
- Canadian driver's license, insurance, car rental info, CAA card
- Hotel and transport vouchers, etickets, boarding passes, confirmation/reservation numbers, frequent flyer cards
- Your itinerary/contact information given to your home contacts
- If a solo parent, notarized letter allowing child to travel and custody documents



See our **Get Packing Checklist**

www.legrowstravel.ca/inside-scoops

- Your sense of adventure & humour!

Tips: To cut down on clothing, take laundry detergent from home in a resealable plastic bag and hand wash items. Some travellers take clothes they were intending to donate anyway and leave them at their destination, particularly clothing for children. Scarves and shawls are a mainstay of regular travellers as they're multifunctional—to dress up or change an outfit, ward off a chill or cover a swimsuit.



Websites and emails in blue are hyperlinked; just click!

Canadian citizens: Canada has more than 270 offices abroad with various consular services. Get information for the countries you'll visit: <https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/embassies-consulates>. Emergency? In North America call Global Affairs 1-888-949-9993. Outside North America 613-996-8885 (collect if needed), sos@international.gc.ca, <https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-assistance>.

Your Airline

With new tracking systems, very few checked bags are delayed or lost but put your airline's baggage tag on the outside with your phone numbers and destination, with contact information inside each bag. With increased security, you might have to open luggage so have your key ready or use a TSA-approved lock. If your lock is not approved, the lock may get cut open in a spot check or to remove a restricted item. If so, they'll place a card inside your bag to inform you.

For carry-on restrictions see the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority www.catsa.gc.ca/home and check with your airline for their restrictions as to weight and sizes for checked and carry-on bags and such items as sports equipment. Travellers are to know the parameters for bringing items back into Canada such as alcohol www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/bgb-rmf-eng.html.

Tips: Register online for your airline's very helpful flight notification service (for delays and gate changes) Check your departing airport's website for hints and travel alerts. As well as posting flight status and delays, many airports post weather updates, general information for travellers and tips to help them navigate around that airport.

Staying Connected (or Not)

If you're a gadget guru, great...before you go, snap photos of documents and load maps and destination info on your phone or device (pack SIM cards, batteries, chargers, adapters, etc.). Use waiting time at airports to surf or find an internet café to email if you want to stay in touch at home. Surf for updated local offerings and pick up a local newspaper or event guide when you get to your destination for local happenings. Don't just rely on devices (possible connectivity issues, charges); bring a guidebook and peruse a great map. Don't use devices all the time, a reason for travelling.

Going on Adventures?

If you're planning on going on adventures or excursions, talk with your counsellor as the more you book from home, the less cash you'll need on site and you can budget in advance. Also, **booking in advance guarantees you spots** with reputable tour companies that we've already checked out.

If you plan to go on active adventures, more than say a sunset cruise (some call that extreme or risky) make sure your insurance covers such activities as some high-risk escapades are not covered. For example, underwater activities involving self-contained underwater breathing apparatus are not covered unless you have an open water diving certificate. Many people assume that because they're signing up to be "certified" in a pool at a destination they'll be insured, but that's not true. Before going on vacation, prepare—take the world's Professional Association of Diving Instructors open water diver course www.padi.com at your local diving training centre.

Gear Tips

- If you dive or snorkel, you might want to consider taking your favourite gear. Occasionally, the gear at resorts or a rental site might not be what you're used to or as clean as you might like. Also, if others have reserved the gear, something becomes broken or a previous renter doesn't get gear back on time, those kinds of delays might compromise your plans.
- If you're going to a resort stay with family members—consider texting plans or even walkie talkies! Besides being old school technology fun for the kids, it helps people in groups be connected (then bring batteries).
- If you're going on walks or hiking, take comfy walking shoes and a cross body bag or backpack that has a spot for a water bottle. A hat, sunscreen, sunglasses and change of socks can be lifesavers...

Our 24/7 Emergency Service

We constantly survey airlines, local tour companies and hotels to ensure they meet our customer service standards, so don't let a problem ruin your holiday. Nearly all issues can be handled quickly on site—first seek help from the venue's local staff. Otherwise, call our Emergency Travel Service at **1-888-551-1181**. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferrable. Schedule changes can occur and airlines and tour operators have the right to change flight and/or tour times, alter, combine services or substitute accommodations. Your counsellor will work with you to ensure you receive information as soon as possible and ensure satisfaction. See your brochure and ticket terms and conditions.

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