

Last minute reminders

This article was written prior to Covid.

Great advice from our travel insurance company:

- Print, fold and carry your policy certificate with you. This is important because it has the 24/7 assistance telephone numbers you might need in an emergency. It's also a good idea to leave a copy with someone at home.
- Scan or photocopy your passport and email it to yourself (in case you lose it).
- Take photographs of any valuables that you're taking away with you. These may be useful should you need to make a claim.
- Record the serial numbers of any electronic equipment you are taking with you.
- When packing, make sure you don't keep all your money and valuables in the one place.

Carrying Your Money

The golden rule when traveling is NEVER have all your money in one place. If you have your cash, cards, passport and phone in your day bag and that gets stolen or lost it isn't a pleasant experience!

Spread out cash and cards between people and bags and try to always have something hidden somewhere in reserve just in case.

Don't rely on just one form of funds, depending on where you're traveling, take a combination of travelers cheques, local currency and credit cards. Most countries now have ATMs that dispense local currency to foreign cardholders but make sure to check this with your bank before departing for bank fees associated with credit card transactions overseas and fees for withdrawing cash from foreign ATMs. Also, don't forget to check the expiry date on your card before you leave.

Travel Money Tips:

- If you are planning to wear a money belt, make sure to wear it *inside* your clothes. You might also want to wear another one on the outside but keep nothing in it - which works well as a decoy to would be pickpockets.
- Empty out any unnecessary cards from your wallet or purse before you go - that way there's less bulge to attract thieves and less to lose.

- Carry some \$AUS or \$US cash as this is the most universally accepted currency.
- Try to have a few dollars in the local currency before you arrive so you can catch a bus or taxi and not be forced to change money at the airport or border.

Your Passport

Make sure your passport is current for at least six months after you intend to return from your travels and has enough blank pages for the stamps you'll accrue. Apply for any necessary visas well in advance - contact the embassies or consulates of the countries you are visiting to find out if you require a visa, remembering you may also need a visa for any countries that are transit stops. Fold your Travel Insurance Certificate of Insurance and keep it with your passport in case of emergency.

Health & Vaccinations

Make sure you're up to date with standard immunisations like tetanus, diphtheria, polio, measles and rubella. Check with your GP or specialist travellers medical centre for any additional vaccinations or medications required for your destination. Seek advice at least six weeks before your departure, since some vaccinations don't take effect for several weeks and/or require a series of injections.

Find out if you'll be travelling through a malarial area and ensure you have the correct anti-malarial medication for the particular region (this varies according to the destination and the mozzies' resistance levels).

When traveling with prescription medication, carry it in your hand luggage, along with a copy of the prescription and a letter from your doctor. The letter should include the name of the medicine, the dosage, how much you need to travel with, and state that the medicine is for your personal use. Also remember your optical prescription if you wear prescription glasses.

Some drugs, particularly those classified as drugs of addiction (like ones containing codeine or strong painkillers) should not be transported into another country, even if you have a legal prescription for them. Check with the consulate of the country you are visiting to see if your drugs are considered legal. If they are not, you will need to travel with a customs clearance from the country concerned.

If you take medication that is administered by self-injection, you should also check with the embassy or consulate of the country you are visiting to make sure you can travel with your own needles or syringes. Also inform your airline that you will be traveling with these medical items and arrange a letter from your doctor explaining why you need to carry them. If you buy needles or syringes while overseas, ensure the packs are sterile and properly sealed.

Don't forget to get a dental check up before you leave as well!

Packing

Now you'll be getting excited! Be sure you pack your own bag and that you are certain of its contents when you're crossing borders, catching flights or passing through Customs. Never ever carry anything for anyone else. Everyone's heard stories about drugs that were 'planted' in some unsuspecting traveller's luggage. But you also need to be aware of particular countries' quarantine laws and be sure you're not importing illegal substances - which could be as innocent as fruit or wood carvings, or as sinister as the body parts of endangered animals.

Take a sturdy bag that's not easily tampered with and keep it securely locked. Make sure your lock is in accordance with the specific airline baggage lock requirements - they will have a key to open most locks.

Emergency Contacts

If you are away for more than a few days, agree to a 'keep in touch' plan with friends and family so that they know where you are and can raise the alarm if you don't turn up as expected. Leave them a copy of your itinerary including details of where and when they can contact you. You can also register online with DFAT at www.smartraveller.gov.au to facilitate contacting you in an emergency.

Departure Checklist

It's always a good idea to have copies of the following somewhere in a safe place away from your main belongings and with friends or relatives in case of emergency.

- Photocopy of your passport(s)
- Photocopy of any Visas
- Spare passport photo's
- A copy of your Travel Certificate of Insurance
- Contact details of your country's consulate in your destinations