



60+ OF THE BEST

# TRAVEL TIPS

(UPDATED FOR 2020)

Travel is constantly changing. With the technology rolling through and bulldozing over the old way of doing things, we must adapt to the changes.

Therefore, I've compiled a list of over 60 of the best travel tips out there to save you time, money, and stress. After more than 20 years of bi-annual vacations (thanks mom and dad) and 5+ years of solo travel, I've collected tons of insight from good ol' trial and error. Plus, I gathered the experience from hundreds of fellow travelers along the way.

I wrote down every great tip that makes traveling easier in terms of money, time, and stress. I've also scoured the web for others' first-hand experience to bring you some of the most helpful travel tips of all time.

These tips are those I use myself, but I also included some that I don't personally use, but I know that other trusted sources use them often. I left out the tips in which I don't have experience or trusted knowledge so that all of these tips are verified.

I think it's only fair to share them with you.

Please note: I could add a thousand more tips aimed at businessmen and women, hippies, minimalists, you name it. However, as a long-term traveler who likes to spend her money, time, *and* energy only where it truly counts and not where it doesn't, these tips are also aimed at these types of travelers.

What this list does NOT include are common sense tips. Quality trumps quantity in my eyes. These are tips that have been the *most* influential in my and others' travels.

Read on as I divulge my best travel tips to help you save big while traveling.

## 1. Have money with you, but don't appear rich.

Looking wealthy is a great way to be taken advantage of. However, looking grungy is going to get you the opposite treatment, so find a balance somewhere in the middle. Dress more like the locals and you will be treated more like one. The more you look like a tourist, the more you are treated like one.

## 2. Go with the flow.

Some of the best stories come from when nothing goes according to plan and you just go with the flow.

## 3. Open Private Browsing or an Incognito Window when viewing flight routes to avoid price changes based on your visits.

This is because many websites track your IP address when booking flights so you'll book faster. VPNs do an even better job by hiding your IP address from websites.

## 4. Check out [freecitytours.com](http://freecitytours.com), [freetour.com](http://freetour.com), or simply do a search online for free tours in locations around the world.

5. Standard chemical sunscreens (that contain avobenzone and other cancer-causing chemicals) are harmful to both your body and the earth.

Instead, buy sunscreens with natural ingredients such as zinc oxide, raspberry seed oil, carrot seed oil, coconut oil, and/or Shea butter.



*Available at [badgerbalm.com](http://badgerbalm.com)*

## 6. Bring a sarong.

They're super versatile (for guys, too) and can be used as a beach cover-up, blanket, pillow, headrest while traveling, scarf, etc.



*Photo courtesy of justimagine-ddoc.com*

## 7. Take advantage of student discounts.

Many museums, aquariums, botanical gardens, etc. around the world will offer you free or discounted entry when you show your ID card.

## 8. Let your bank know where and when you are traveling so that they don't put your card on hold in avoidance of fraud.

## 9. Remember to enjoy the free stuff.

Things like exploring a new city by foot, climbing a mountain, taking photos at sunset, and attending museums on free days can be some of the most worthwhile adventures of your trip.



*Lisbon, Portugal*

## 10. Apply olive oil or diluted apple cider vinegar on a sunburn and leave it on overnight.

This can heal your skin and may even turn it to a tan.

## 11. No one really has a clue when the best time to book your flight is.

Some say weekends, others say Tuesday before the lunch hour. I've heard to book around 57 days ahead, yet I found the best prices from Denver, USA to Medellín, Colombia just a couple weeks before my departure.

I've done a lot of research on this topic and booked a lot of flights throughout five years of solo travel. Still, I've found that there is no correct answer. This is because there are so many factors involved. The price will depend on if you're flying internationally, if you want to fly business or coach, what month you'd like to go, what time zone you're in, what the airline is, and more.

No one truly knows and everyone has something different to say about it. Plus, times and trends are quickly changing.

However, generally the higher the demand, the higher the prices. Even still, airlines change flight prices multiple times a day. So with all this in mind, check your flight route as early as possible (six months before to be safe) and keep checking every day, preferably numerous times a day to see the trends. Just remember to use tip #3 each time you look.

Anyway, I know that's a lot of work to get a great price. You can get flight alerts from your favorite flight booking website, but just know they won't be as accurate as if you do the work yourself.

A good rule of thumb: if you find a good price, **jump on it**. If it seems like a great deal and you did your research on the route for that time of year, then take it. Don't wait for an hour to think about it because chances are it will go up. Spoken from experience.

\*Bonus tip: Southwest Airlines is one of the best budget airlines from the USA, yet they aren't listed on flight aggregators like Google Flights or Kayak. Check their website to see if they offer service to your desired destination. They could have the best prices available.

12. Drink enough water before, during, and after your flight.

Being at such high altitude dehydrates the body and makes you feel sleepy and just... bleh. Drinking water will help you stay feeling good and at your best for your trip. Plus, it helps equalize the pressure in your ears.

13. To lessen jet lag, change the time on your devices &/or watch to the time of your destination.

This will help you accommodate to the new schedule faster.

14. Avoid putting your things in the airplane's seat back pockets if you want to keep them.

This is a great place to forget your valuables.

15. If you're short enough and didn't bring a pillow to sleep with, use the airplane's tray table as a headrest.

Sorry, Sasquatch. Try sleeping with the sarong, instead (tip #6).

16. If you've got an overweight bag and don't want to throw anything away or send any items home, layer on some of your clothes. Jackets, especially.

Don't overdo it. One guy literally collapsed from heat exhaustion because he layered on so many clothes. Others have gotten denied boarding the plane. That being said, make sure you pack light to begin with and pack wisely. Refer to tip #24 for help.



## 17. Have a quality backpack or suitcase.

By spending more upfront, you have less to worry about because it will be meant to last a long time.

## 18. Pack a first-aid kit and include useful things like a small roll of duct tape and blister packs.

I can't tell you how many times I've used my first aid kit along my travels. Plus, you'll be a godsend to friends who don't have one and desperately need it in an emergency. Make your own with all that you could need and put it in a waterproof bag.

## 19. If you love walking around new places, invest in a great pair of shoes.

The cheap ones you buy (that will inevitably break due to cheap design and material) could add up to buy yourself a pair of really nice shoes that feel good, look good, and save you from a future visit to the foot doctor.

## 20. Use Instagram hashtags and geotags to research the place you're going.

There is a wealth of information on Instagram, so take advantage.

## 21. Put liquids in a plastic bag before flying.

They will almost always explode, at least slightly, at high altitude.

## 22. Pack your clothes in packing cubes.

Organization is very important when you are living out of your bag for however long.

## 23. Avoid checking bags.

This saves a lot of time, money, and stress in the long run. Not only will you have less to lug around, you won't have to pay for the bag, avoid it getting lost, and there's no waiting at the claim belt. Pack smart. Refer to the tip below for help.

## 24. Take only what you love or what you deem absolutely essential.

Especially if you're traveling long term, clothes and other items that you *might* use should be left behind. When in doubt, leave it behind and save room for souvenirs. You can always buy new things at your destination.

## 25. If you take photos, keep your camera attached to you at all times possible.

Not only will you capture that split-second picture-perfect moment, but the chances of someone stealing it go way down if it's hanging around your neck.

## 26. Roll your clothes.

This save tons of space. I have no clue why. Physics? Bring a rollable vacuum seal bag to save even more space.

## 27. Take headphones and/or quality earplugs with you.

If there's a snorer in your dorm or the room next door, put some headphones in and fall asleep to some soft instrumental music or use a decent pair of earplugs (bonus tip: not all earplugs are built the same!).

## 28. Be nice.

Seriously. I can't stress enough how valuable being kind is and it will save you stress in so many ways.

## 29. Learn key phrases of the language.

Memorize or write down "hello", "please", "thank you", "where is the bathroom", "excuse me", and other important phrases in the language of your destination. This will make communication much easier and will earn you points as a considerate tourist.

## 30. Have a physical and/or digital copy of your passport.

If it's digital (and I recommend it is), make sure it's on an online cloud somewhere. In case it gets lost or stolen, you'll have a backup.

## 31. Be aware of your surroundings at all times.

Especially when traveling alone.

## 32. Use your intuition.

The above tip is great in all places and in all cases, but if you feel "off" about a place or a person, you're probably better off booting it. There's a reason you have a gut feeling!

33. If you're traveling with a baby, ask for a bassinet on the plane.



*Photo courtesy of sleepbaby.org*

34. Another baby tip: Airbnbs and some hotels will provide high chairs.

35. Use an offline map such as Google Maps (download the map for the location before arriving) or Maps.me while exploring a new city.

I use both of these together because while Google gives more info about nearby landmarks, it's not so great on GPS accuracy, whereas Maps.me surprisingly is.

It's worth noting that there are other offline maps services available and each will offer different services depending on where their developer is from.

36. Bring a filter water bottle and an extra filter.

Many places don't have great tap water and buying water can get expensive and heavy.

37. Bring snacks on the plane.

Airplane snacks are usually overpriced and unhealthy. On that note, avoid airplane coffee. Water on airplanes is \*barely\* drinkable.

38. Use a translation app when traveling.

I download languages to use offline with Google Translate. It allows me to type in what I want to say and easily translate to the language I need, with or without internet. If I do have internet, I like to use Google's speech translator.

39. Use alternatives to taxis such as Lyft, Bolt, or Uber.

They are less expensive, safer, and you know the rate ahead of time so you won't get scammed.

40. I'm aware that in some cities, you absolutely must use a taxi. So in these cases, know what the rate should be (by asking your hotel or searching online) before accepting a ride.

Taxi drivers are notorious for scamming ignorant tourists. Spoken from experience.

41. The above tip goes for ferry rides, boat taxis, tuk tuks, and other forms of transportation as well.

42. Airbnbs or private rooms in dorms are almost always a better value than hotels.

You'll get all the necessities a hotel usually provides, and sometimes much more. In Poland I paid for a simple room with a small kitchen in someone's home (planning to cook my own meals) and was given coffee and multiple days of homemade, three-course meals typical to their country, just because they were super friendly hosts.

While this type of experience isn't always the case, one can have a lot of control over the host and overall experience for less than one would pay at a hotel.

43. Avoid currency exchanges at the airport.

Avoid currency exchanges everywhere, if possible. These are notorious for overcharging tourists who don't know any better and the airports provide the worst rates. Now you know better. Choose to exchange money with your bank before your trip. Or, grab money from an ATM away from the tourist areas like airports (because these are also notorious for overcharging).

44. When asked, choose to pay in the local currency.

This goes for ATM withdrawals and general transactions. The reason is because the bank will charge extra for the additional currency exchange.

45. See if your bank will refund foreign exchange fees.

46. Be flexible.

Planning is great and helps a lot, but don't fill your entire itinerary before you get there. By leaving some days open, you can leave room for some amazing spontaneous experiences you wouldn't have known before arriving.

47. Bring more than one bank card with you.

Make sure they are linked to separate accounts in case one isn't accessible. You may lose your card, your bank may be inaccessible, or you might get your wallet stolen. Anything can happen, so it's better to be safe than sorry.

48. Prepare for the worst and hope for the best.

So many things can go right on vacation and similarly, so many things can go wrong, too. Imagine certain things that could go wrong and prepare for them. Still, staying generally positive is important too; there's definitely a balance. All in all, keep your mind open to the possibilities.

## 49. The restaurants with the best food usually have the smallest menu.

Think about it. If a restaurant is successful off of just a few options on their menu, they must be doing something right. The most memorable restaurants I've been to while abroad have the least amount of choices on the menu.

## 50. Document your journeys.

Write it down. Take photos and videos. Make voice recordings. Have a playlist while you travel - you'll end up feeling some of the same feelings when you play it back months or years later.

These are some of the best memories of your life and chances are you will be happy to have details when you're older.

If you like to take photos of yourself but you're traveling solo, place your camera somewhere safe, focus the image, turn on the video, and film yourself enjoying the view and eating a taco or something. Personally I love candid travel photos over smiles and poses, but that's just me. You can take photos from the videos later on and have a great memory.

## 51. Pack clothes that allow you to make lots of different combinations.

Black is great because it goes with almost everything. White is too, but stains easily, so I suggest keeping white clothes to a minimum. The more combinations you can make with your clothes, the less you look and feel grungy.

## 52. Be aware that free public WiFi hotspots are the perfect places for scammers to hack users.

Avoid entering sensitive information (bank account log in, credit card numbers, etc.) while using free public WiFi hotspots.

## 53. Get travel insurance.

Peace of mind is arguably extra important while traveling, and this will give you that, even if you think you'll be extra careful. I said it before and I'll say it again: anything can happen.

## 54. Travel to a destination in the off-season if it's an extra touristy spot, like Venice or Lisbon.

I traveled to Venice during the off-season and it was still pretty busy, but I heard from many that in the Summers it's like a zoo everywhere you go.

By avoiding the high season, you'll also avoid the higher prices. Alternatively, choose the lesser known destinations (which are usually just as good, if not better, than the touristy cities).

## 55. Stay healthy.

The way you feel in your body *really* affects the way you feel on a trip. While traveling, you are exposed to many more types of bacteria than you would be at home. Therefore, it's super important to think positively, get enough sleep, eat as healthy as you can, and drink plenty of water. Go drinking and have fun, but please remember to drink your water. Love, mom.

## 56. Bring a deck of cards.

It can be a lot of fun playing cards with people from different cultures. Plus it's a great ice-breaker.

## 57. Keep an open mind. Ask questions.

You will come across a lot of cultures very different from your own. Perspective is everything; what's considered "good" in your country may be the complete opposite in the one in which you're traveling. The more open you are, the more fun you're going to have.

## 58. Bring flip flops and wear them while showering.

I've heard from a former hotel maid from Belgium that they rarely scrub the bathtubs in hotels. Plus, hostel showers are a great place for foot bacteria to spread. Therefore, make it a habit to wear your flip flops while showering.

## 59. Think twice before spending the bare minimum for a night in a hostel.

The price may be tempting, but these places usually do as little as possible to keep up with cleaning, which means there is a higher chance of bed bugs. Trust me, you DO NOT want to have experience with bed bugs.

Story time. While traveling in Mexico, I was on a budget. Upon arrival in Cancun, a man approached me saying there was a room available in a dorm for \$8. I wanted something cheap and admittedly wanted to see a more local side to Cancun. This man knew very little about the hostel except that it was cheap, and asked me for a tip for his info.

It had to have been the dirtiest hostel I've ever been to and I quickly learned my lesson. The beds were barely made, the nightstand was broken in many places,

the floor wasn't swept, and I got some funny looks walking through reception. I still met some cool people and nothing really happened, but I was paranoid about bed bugs and made sure I thoroughly washed all my things after leaving.

Lesson learned. You get what you pay for. And check the reviews online before you buy.

## 60. Bring a portable charger.

In this day and age, when travels are so closely linked to the use of technology, I consider it one of my favorite things to pack on any trip I take. A dead battery causes a lot of issues that can be easily avoided by bringing a portable charger.

## 61. Go where you're actually interested in going, not just where it's popular to go.

Personally, I didn't really care for Paris, yet some other travelers see it as a home away from home. Everyone is different, so do your research before you go.

## 62. Consider traveling slow.

You don't always have to see every famous landmark in a city. That can be exhausting. Sometimes it's more fun to take the scenic route to a single place, discovering the hidden gems along the way.

These are the best travel tips I've come across, and the list is growing. As the technology is constantly changing, I'm updating this list frequently. I'll keep you posted on updates to the list sent to your inbox.

Also, if you have some tips to add to the list, please be sure to email me ([hailey@freedom-mindset.com](mailto:hailey@freedom-mindset.com)) or use the contact form at the bottom of my website.



Happy travels!