



Blue Dolphin Travel

Travel Tips For Stress Free Travel Be Prepared

Much of what happens at the airport and during your travels is out of your control so be prepared. Follow these tips for a less stressful experience at the beginning of, and during, your travels.



Show up at the airport well rested and way ahead of flight time. Reading a paperback or the daily newspaper for an hour at the departure gate is much less stressful than trying to rush through the airport at the last minute or possibly missing your flight due to an unexpected delay. One missed flight can have a “domino effect” and ruin an entire vacation.

Dress for comfort during your flight. Using a blanket in-flight is better than being uncomfortable in bulky clothing for hours on the aircraft. Wear easy-off, easy-on shoes so that you can slip them off during flight and give your feet a rest. Leave the big hats, big purses and oversize shopping bags at home. They are uncomfortable, hard to store in overhead bins or under seats and usually are more trouble than they are worth. For long flights ask for a blanket and a pillow early. They are often all taken by the time you want them.



Remember, less is best. Pack as light as possible. Mix and match clothing so that you can assemble and coordinate various outfits with the least amount of items. Dress for comfort according to the climate you will experience at your destination. Cotton and Khaki slacks and jackets are a good choice. Cotton shirts are also a good choice. Often, a light jacket and light sweater is better than one heavy coat. They are easier to pack and allow you to dress in layers. Pack socks and undergarments that can be hand washed in your hotel room and be dry by morning. Always include a comfortable pair of walking shoes even if your travels require more formal attire. It will make your leisure time more comfortable.



Assemble a survival kit for your carry-on including a fully charged cell phone, phone numbers for your airline, hotel, rental car agency, consulate offices, business contacts, friends and family to contact if necessary and the numbers of your credit card, bank and travelers Check Company in the event of loss or theft. Include activities to keep you entertained during flights and lay-overs such as paperback books, magazines, a movie or music player, plenty of snacks and a bottle of water. If you will be traveling to an unfamiliar location, pick up a copy of a travel guide and familiarize yourself with local customs such as tipping, dress, food and beverage customs etc. Also include any prescription medications and copies of the prescriptions as well as two copies of the identification page of your passport. Keep one copy in your carry-on and another in your checked luggage. In the event you lose your medications or passport, this will greatly help in obtaining replacements as quickly as possible. Don't forget a spare pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses if you need them for reading or day-to-day activities.





Travel Tips

Always reconfirm your flight before leaving home. Be sure to ask about in-flight meal service. Grabbing a quick sandwich at the airport is better than going hungry for the duration of your flight. If you will be eating airline meals in-flight inform the airline if you have special dietary requirements or have serious food allergies (especially peanuts) when you make your reservations. For flights that provide meal service you can request low-sodium, vegetarian, kosher or diabetic meals at little or no additional cost.



Avoid the ticket counter. At the airport, use curbside check-in for checked luggage, use self-serve kiosks, or go online and print out your boarding pass whenever possible. When checking luggage, pay attention to the destination code on the baggage tags to be sure that your luggage is going to the same destination you are. If you use a curbside check in service, a gratuity of one dollar per bag for the curbside baggage handler is appropriate and worth the cost.



At the security line be packed and dressed for success. Wear easy-off, easy-on shoes and make sure your see-through bag of three-ounce toiletries is easily accessible. **Before you get in the security line** put your watch, jewelry, big-buckled belts, loose change and other metal items in a see through bag that can be slipped into your carry-on and retrieved prior to boarding. This will speed up the security procedures and get you on your way as quickly as possible.



At your destination, go directly to the baggage claim area if you have checked luggage. Depending on how many bags you are traveling with or how far you may have to carry them to ground transportation, you may want to use a baggage handler. Again a gratuity of one dollar per bag is appropriate. In the event your bags don't show up, report it to the airline baggage claim office or the attendant immediately. You will give a description of your luggage and arrangements can be made to have them delivered to your hotel or residence on arrival. You may also be entitled to compensation for, or replacement of, necessary toiletry and other items.



If you experience flight delays, cancellations or other unexpected events, speak to the gate agent or a ticketing agent. Remember, it is *not* their fault that the delay occurred. They are likely just as frustrated as you are. Remain calm and politely explain your situation and request their assistance in resolving the problem. At this point, anger, being demanding or confrontational *will not help* your situation! They have great latitude in making alternative arrangements for later flights, connecting flights, booking you with another airline or overnight accommodations and meal vouchers if the delay will be excessive.





Travel Tips

When you get to your hotel and check in, reconfirm your quoted room rate and ask about any amenities that the hotel has to offer such as health spas, in-room massage service, laundry and dry cleaning, room service hours and any other services that you may be interested in. When you get to your room, take a few minutes to relax before rushing out to begin your day. Review the in-room hotel information book for services available, local dining options, local attractions and entertainment. Take advantage of the hotel Concierge service for making reservations for dining, event tickets, ground transportation and suggestions for restaurants, entertainment venues and points of interest. They are there to assist you and can often make arrangements that you cannot make yourself. A gratuity is proper for Concierge services.



A few words on tipping. Usually 15-20% is the norm in restaurants, two dollars per day for in room maid service, 15-20% for room service delivery (on top of the included room service charge) etc. Depending on your destination and the country or region you are staying in, tipping may or may not be expected or proper. If you will be traveling to an unfamiliar area, refer to a local travelers guide for information on tipping. It is also proper to inquire at your hotel desk or Concierge for advice. You should know when tipping is, or is not, expected locally, how much to tip, and if tips are automatically included in you bill. Tipping should always be equal to the service received. A minimum tip for minimal service and a generous tip for exceptional service. However, it is never appropriate to “stiff” a server or service provider even if the service was less than it should have been. It is better to leave a small tip and avoid a confrontation with a discourteous server and simply not patronize the establishment again



Keep some snacks in your room along with bottled water or soft drinks. It's better to have them on hand than doing without late at night when everything is closed. Be aware that the in-room “mini-bar” items are usually very expensive. If you are on a budget, avoid the mini-bar and pick up a few items locally or at the hotel gift shop for your room.



When charging your cell phone in a hotel room, put the phone in your carry-on bag or purse so you don't forget it in the morning rush. Don't leave your cell phone in plain sight in your room when you are away. The temptation for a maid or service person to “call home” from your phone may be too great to resist and you can be responsible for what may be excessive charges.

Use credit cards and travelers checks whenever possible. When buying your travelers checks, it is better to deal with a well known company (American Express or Thomas Cook). Local bank traveler's checks are often not recognized or accepted by foreign merchants. Try not to carry any more cash than you will need for the day and the purchase of small items. Consider using a money belt or other secure inside pocket for extra cash.



Never display a big roll of cash. Separate your cash into two or more pockets and use the smallest bills possible. If you need to make change for a large bill, do it at your hotel desk or at a local bank. If you will be exchanging money for local currency, avoid the money changers at the airports where the exchange rate is typically less than at a local bank or currency exchange office.





Travel Tips



Leave the flashy jewelry at home. Depending on your destination, expensive watches, rings and other jewelry is an invitation for thieves and street crime. Leave the flash at home. Wear a minimum of expensive jewelry and instead opt for an inexpensive watch or carry your watch in a pants pocket. Big hand bags and purses are also an easy target. It's better to use a small clutch bag that can be carried close to your person. "Fanny" or day packs can also be targets. If you must carry one, carry it with the pack in front of you and, if possible, under a shirt tail, jacket or sweater. If you are shopping, try to do it with a companion and carry as little as possible. Last but not least, when using public transportation such as busses or taxi cabs, always take a moment to double check your seat before exiting. Once you leave the vehicle and a package or purse behind it will be nearly impossible to recover.



Take advantage of the hotel or in-room safe for items left in your room. They are typically safe and secure and keep valuables out of sight of maids and service workers.



Ship home large items you have purchased whenever possible. Dragging that huge teddy bear or large crystal vase through the airports and on your flight is uncomfortable and an invitation for breakage. If you must carry an item (or items) with you, pack them securely with plenty of protective packing material and in a sturdy box.

Consider travel insurance when booking your trip. It's a good investment for most types of leisure travel and is not expensive compared to the overall cost of your trip.



Remember, your travel agent is there to help. If you have a change of plans mid-trip, contact your agent to make arrangements for you.

Planning Is The Key To Stress Free Travel.

Don't Forget Your Camera

