

50 travel tips for Seniors



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You've worked hard your whole life and now you have the time and inclination to see the world.

To help you get the most out of your next holiday, we've compiled this list of 50 handy travel tips. There are 5 tips for each category including health, safety, transport and leisure.

Print a copy of this guide to help you plan your next trip.



5 PACKING TIPS

Rolling along

Buy suitcases that have roller wheels. It will make it much easier to navigate through airports and hotels rather than carrying a bag. If your suitcase doesn't have a divider, use a piece of strong cardboard to keep your clothes neat and organised.

Pack light

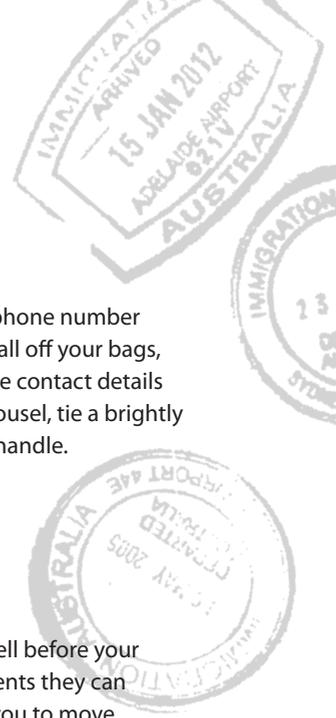
Maximise your luggage space by taking clothing items that can be layered and interchanged. If you are travelling for a few weeks, you can wash your clothes and reuse them. Roll your bulky items such as jumpers to save space in your luggage. If you are travelling as a couple, divide your clothes, money and belongings evenly between each of your suitcases. If one of your bags gets delayed or lost you will still have something to wear and money to spend.

Take care with spares

Take a spare pair of your prescription glasses in case you lose or break your pair. It is also handy to take an eye glasses script should you need to get a new pair while you are away. If you wear hearing aids, take spare batteries with you as they might be hard to find. If you use dentures, take enough denture adhesive for the entire trip.

Roaming around

Ring your mobile phone company and turn off global roaming and data on your phone before you leave. Overseas roaming charges are extremely expensive. Pick up a local SIM card at your destination to make cheap local calls and lower cost international calls.



Identify yourself

Clearly label your luggage with your name, home address and phone number with international dialling codes. If the airline luggage stickers fall off your bags, you stand more chance of your bags being returned if they have contact details securely attached. To help your luggage stand out baggage carousel, tie a brightly coloured piece of material (preferably with a pattern) around a handle.

5 FLYING TIPS

Easy access

If you have any mobility issues be sure to contact your airline well before your departure time to find out what services and seating arrangements they can offer you. Try asking for an aisle seat as it will make it easier for you to move around the aircraft.

Keeping hydrated

The low humidity on planes can be dehydrating. Drink plenty of water on your flight to stay hydrated. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, as these can dehydrate you faster. Use moisturiser to prevent your hands from drying out.

Avoiding DVT

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) commonly effects the elderly and those with heart disease or circulatory problems. Sitting still for long periods of time (such as on a plane) can increase these DVT risk factors. Do arm, leg and foot stretching exercises when you are seated. When possible, get up and walk up and down the aisles. Wear compression stockings to increase blood flow in your lower legs.

Mindful of medications

Pack a week's supply of your regular medications in your carry-on luggage. This way, if your luggage is lost or delayed you won't have any concern over taking your medication as required.

Breathe easy

If you require oxygen or use of respiratory equipment such as a CPAP machine, contact your airline at least 72 hours before you fly so they can make arrangements.



5 HEALTH TIPS

Travel Insurance Necessity

Take out Travel Insurance before you leave home with a company like Australian Seniors™ Travel Insurance. Ensure you choose the right cover if you have pre-existing conditions. You never know when a medical or dental emergency could occur.

Health check

Visit your doctor and dentist for a general check-up before you leave. Ask about any vaccinations relevant to your destination. Ensure your regular vaccinations such as the flu shot and tetanus shot are up to date. Get your doctor to print a list of all your current medications, their generic names, dosages and frequency taken. Print a spare copy and keep it separate from your main luggage.

Water, water everywhere

Drinking local tap water may make you sick. At all times, drink bottled water. Ask for drinks without ice cubes. Brush your teeth using bottled or boiled water.

Food for thought

Avoid eating food from street vendors. They often don't have adequate food storage, refrigeration or hygiene. Ask for meat well cooked. Wash raw food and fruit with germ-free water before eating.

Look after your feet

Wear comfortable shoes. If you have bought new shoes, wear them for several weeks before you leave to break them in. Get cushioned sole inserts to ease the pain of walking.



5 SAFETY TIPS

Carry safely

Carry your wallet, passport and money in a travel belt around your waist or a pouch around your neck. Ensure it is under your clothes and can't be seen. Leave your expensive jewellery at home. Wearing excessive jewellery can make you a target for pickpockets.

In case of emergency

Find out the emergency services contact numbers for the regions you are travelling in. Record the numbers for police, ambulance, your travel insurance provider and the nearest Australian Embassy.

Copy everything

Make a photocopy of your passport and travel documents including travel insurance policy, travellers cheques, visas and credit cards. Carry a copy with you, separate from your main luggage and leave a copy with a family member or friend at home.

Looking lost?

If you are unsure of where you're going, ask someone in uniform such as a police officer, transport attendant or information desk assistant. Asking any member of the public can leave you vulnerable to theft or deception.

Scam watch

Read up on common scams in the cities you are travelling to. Stick only with trusted and reputable tour providers and official taxi services. If you have been scammed, report it immediately to the local police and notify your credit card provider.



5 MONEY TIPS

Change currency carefully

Hotels and airports charge high rates for currency conversions. Find a local bank to get a much better rate for your cash or travellers cheques.

Suffering withdrawals

ATM's are the easiest way to get cash overseas using your bank or debit card.

Be warned that fees can be high for international transactions and you may also be charged by the ATM provider. Never use a credit card at an ATM to withdraw cash. You will be charged a fee and a high interest rate that often has no interest-free period.

Frozen cards

Let your credit card company know that you are travelling overseas. Tell them the dates you will be away and the countries you are visiting. This can stop your card from being frozen if they suspect fraud.

Don't get maxed out

Be wary of hold charges that tour operators or hotels can put on your credit card. A bond charge can sometimes take days or weeks to be reversed. If this is a sizeable amount of money you can inadvertently max your card out.

Change mix

When receiving change after a purchase, ask for a mix of smaller notes. It makes it easier to pay for small items or to use in ticket and vending machines.



5 SHOPPING TIPS

Ask before you buy

If an item has no price, always ask the price of it first. Sellers can often take advantage of tourists by stating inflated prices.

Bag yourself a deal

Souvenir shops and tourist areas are the most expensive places to buy gifts. Find the local markets. Initial prices will be grossly marked up to allow for bargaining. Decide on the lowest price you are willing to pay, then go up from there until you meet an agreed price with the seller.

In plain sight

Always have your purchased item wrapped in front of you, to ensure you are getting what you paid for. At markets, don't try on clothes or shoes 'out the back' you might be intimidated to buy at an inflated price.

Go prepared

Do shopping research before you leave. What is your destination famous for making? Think about what you want to buy and get a general price guide so you know what is good value.

Shopping to excess

If you get carried away with your shopping, consider posting some of your items home. Excess baggage charges on airlines are very costly. Make sure you ship your items with insurance.



5 LEISURE TIPS

Rest those legs

If a lot of walking or standing is required, think about hiring a wheelchair or electric scooter. Most places of interest such as museums, theme parks, gardens offer these for free or at a small cost.

Absorb the atmosphere

Soak in the atmosphere of a busy street or piazza by buying a drink at an outdoor cafe. For the small charge you can enjoy people watching and rest your feet.

Recharge your batteries

Schedule in rest days where you can relax and recharge. Having a packed schedule will only add to your fatigue. Do activities in the morning and return the hotel in the afternoon for a shower and an afternoon nap. You will leave for dinner feeling refreshed.

Be guided

Consider taking organised day trips. It can give you access to places that may be hard to get to on your own. You will also benefit from the knowledge of the tour guide.

Library in your pocket

Get an ebook reader and download books onto it before you leave home. Ebook readers are light and save you carrying around books.



5 CULTURE TIPS

Culture shock

Culture shock can hit when you arrive at your destination. Understand that it is normal and that you will take some time to adjust. Look at the changes as being exciting and make an effort to learn about your new surrounds to ease your anxiety.

Bonjour, Je suis Australien!

Try learning a few basic words in your destination's native language. Words like 'hello', 'please', 'thank you', 'help', 'goodbye', 'sorry' and 'excuse me' will go a long way to fitting in. Locals will really appreciate your efforts even if they are not perfect!

No flash photography

Ask permission before you take a photo of someone. If they say no, respect their decision. It can be illegal to take photos of police or military personnel or property. Check for warning signs or ask an official first. If in doubt, don't take the photo.

Places of worship

If you are visiting places of worship such as churches, temples and mosques; be conscious of the dress standards. Footwear may need to be removed and women may be required to cover their head with a scarf. Consider wearing shoes that are easy to take off on days you will be visiting places of worship.

Actions louder than words

Be mindful that gestures such as pointing, waving or clapping may have different meanings to other cultures. Avoid being considered rude by finding out what they mean to the locals.



5 ACCOMMODATION TIPS

Ask and you might receive

Don't be shy to ask for an upgrade or a room with a view. If the hotel is under booked they might be willing to oblige especially if you are staying for more than a few days. The worst they can say is no.

Don't take the stairs

Ask for a room close to the elevators, it will cut down the amount of walking you have to do each day. If the hotel does not have an elevator, ask for a ground floor room. If no ground floor rooms are available ask for assistance in getting your luggage up the stairs.

Smoking requests

If you're a non-smoker ask for a room on a non-smoking floor. Non-smoking rooms on smoking floors are still susceptible to smoke seeping through the air conditioning vents.

Mini-bar misery

Buy your own alcohol and snacks to avoid the high prices of the mini bar. Stock up at a local supermarket or convenience store. Take advantage of happy hour at the hotel bar.

Stay connected

In-room wi-fi internet charges can be very expensive. Some hotels offer free wi-fi in the lobby or bar areas. If the hotel offers no free internet, many cafés and coffee houses offer free wi-fi with any purchase.



5 TRANSPORTATION TIPS

Airport transport

Organise a taxi, hire car or shuttle bus service that will offer door to door service and assistance with your luggage. Public transport might be cheaper, but you will have to manage your luggage and finding your hotel on your own.

Metered on/off

If taking a taxi a short distance, insist on the meter being used. For longer journeys, consider negotiating the price of your fare upfront. Don't forget to include a tip if it is customary to do so.

Flash your card

Show your seniors or pension card as it could entitle you to discounts off local transport fares. Senior rates can be up to 50% of the fare for trains, trams, buses and ferries.

Like a local

Research all of your local transportation options. Many cities have combined travel tickets that give you access to multiple transport modes (bus, train, tram, ferry). Consider a multi-day or weekly pass if you are staying for a few days.

On the open roads

If you are planning on driving overseas, get an International Driving Permit before you go. These can be obtained through your state motor vehicle registry office.

Enjoy your upcoming travel adventure!



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