

Travel Tips: Make the Most of Your Trip

Traveling is one of the most enjoyable and fulfilling activities you can do in your lifetime. We humans have always had the urge to wander off to places we haven't been, even before civilization as we know it existed. The dawn of passenger airplanes, cruise ships, and other forms of mass transportation have made it much easier for the average person to travel to almost any part of the world. The internet and social media age has given travel an exponential boost in popularity in the 20th century. Planning and making the most of our trip takes time, and gathering travel tips from research and friends and family is part of the fun.

There were over 1 billion international tourist arrivals in 2017 alone, with Europe taking a large chunk with over 670.6 million arrivals. International tourism revenue also amounted to \$1.34 trillion U.S. dollars in the same year. There is no doubt at all that traveling is a worldwide phenomenon which will grow even more in the next few decades.

There are a lot of things you can do to make your next trip enjoyable and productive. Here are some travel tips that I've collected in the past few years of traveling and exploring new places on my own.



Making the Most Out of That Plane Ticket

Everyone, from your 9-year-old niece to your 70-year-old grandfather, has talked about wanting to travel to some famous city or shared a post about a well-known exotic beach haven. A great number of travel writers and social media influencers make a living by creating content and sharing pictures of them having a good time in popular places or well-known slices of paradise. I personally share tons of travel photos and videos. If I could, I'd travel all the time.

But if you're a busy bee like me who mostly has a packed schedule, you'll be able to relate with the agony of finding the perfect opportunity to book that plane ticket as well as the crazy amounts of money you have to save to have an enjoyable trip. When you do finally get that plane ticket booked, you want to pick up travel trips along the way and make the most out of your trip, right?

Are You a Tourist or a Traveler?

The perceived differences between calling oneself a "tourist" and a "traveler" may be inconsequential. But for the sake of argument, to make the most out of a trip, you have to think like a traveler instead of a tourist. What's the difference? Tourists are those who prefer having tour guides and most things pre-packaged when in foreign lands, while travelers are those who seek to experience their destinations as genuinely as possible.

This is more of a personal concept that I've come up with in my years of travel across Asia and some parts of Europe. I'm not saying one is better than the other. It's kind of like how some people prefer Apple over Android: some people want simple and straightforward, while others want more control and flexibility. If you're reading this, then you're probably part of the latter.



Tour Packages versus Independent Travel

As someone who considers himself a “traveler” type, I’ve always made it a point to make the most out of the money I spend on plane tickets. In my early days of traveling, I remember relying on tour packages that had me spending time standing in line for tourist traps or waiting inside the tour bus. Later on, I’d realize that I could have spent that time doing more substantial things. For example, on my second trip to Hong Kong, I opted not to take any tour packages and do my own research. The difference between that and my first trip was huge!

Plan your Trip Thoroughly

Chances are you've only got a limited amount of time to work with during your trip. You have to plan everything ahead of schedule if you want to have meaningful experiences and memorable activities given your limited time away. Nowadays you can find *everything* on the Internet. Want to know where the best spots are in the city? Where are the most delicious but affordable culinary destinations? What kind of transport options will you have and how much do they cost? Where is the ideal district to book an Airbnb? These are just *some* of the questions you have to ask yourself when planning out your trip. Do this well enough, and you can make sure that you have a smooth time away from home.



Travel Solo Versus Companion Travel

Not to be anti-social or anything, but sometimes having companions can be more of a burden than a blessing especially if they aren't really the traveler type. Previous experiences have shown me that it is infinitely easier to plan a solo trip. Once you shake off the notion that traveling solo is scary, [especially if you're a solo female traveler](#), you'll actually be surprised at how much fun you can have.

Of course, there will be times when you'll be traveling with others. If that's the case, then you're going to have to agree with your companion on your intended itinerary. The last thing you need are tensions once you're already there. Make the most of traveling with a companion and let yourself discover and try something new.



Install Travel Apps

Traveling to a completely foreign land can be very intimidating. Sometimes no matter how much you plan, some things are bound to go wrong. One thing that can go a long way is to get your phone ready with [apps that can help you navigate various foreign cities](#). Consider apps like Airbnb or HotelQuickly for your lodging needs, PackPoint, Travel Packing List, and Easy Currency Converter. There are a lot more apps you can find out there depending on what you plan to do during your trip.

Set a Few Hours for Aimless Exploration

I know, I know, I did say you should plan out your trip thoroughly. However, it's also a good idea to plan to wander around your destination especially if you're going to an urban area. Roam the streets, befriend the people, eat where the locals eat, and discover the best-kept secrets of the city. These instances are when you'll usually find experiences not many people go through, the kind you will boast to your friends when you get back home. Get lost in the city and be surprised by what you can find.



Don't Take Photos of Everything

It may be tempting just to go all out taking photos of everything you come across especially when you bring a great camera along your travels. This can do you more harm than good. Trying to capture your every experience abroad using your camera can detach you from the moment. We don't want that kind of counter-productivity with the limited time you have to work with. Plus, as someone who does film photography, I know for a fact that thinking carefully before pressing the shutter button can result in better and more intimate photographs.

Be a Wise Traveler

Traveling is hard work; there's no secret about that. A lot can go wrong if you don't plan your trip accordingly. But if you think about what you want to get out of the trip, and you anticipate problems, you just might make your trip more productive and meaningful than ever. If you follow these few travel tips, I assure you that you will have a trip worth remembering.



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