

Travel Past 50

Checklist for Safe and Secure Travel

Whether you travel internationally or domestically, whether you take frequent short trips or leave home for lengthy seasonal getaways, keeping your home secure and your travel support systems ready-to-go takes much of the stress out of travel.

Before you go: Leave Your Home Safe and Sound

- Install a Wi-Fi remote-controlled thermostat.
- Use smart lighting indoors and out with pre-set on and off times. This keeps your home from looking vacant.
- Consider a home security system to alert you of any opened doors or windows.
- Go paperless. If you haven't already, eliminate all paper mail, including bank and credit card statements, doctors' and insurance bills, and Social Security mailings.
- Hold or forward mail: The US Postal Service will hold mail for up to 30 days. For longer trips, consider USPS Informed Delivery, or forward your mail to a P.O. box accessible to a trusted family or friend.
- Arrange house and/or pet sitters: See more pet-sitting options in our post, ["What to Do with Your Dog While on Vacation."](#)
- Do let a neighbor know your travel dates and how to reach you.
- Sell or store your car: Avoid unnecessary auto expenses by storing your car, disconnecting the battery, and removing insurance (except comprehensive) if it's not being driven for a longer time.

Before You Go: Travel Documents

- **Passport.** Keep copies of your passport in one of your bags plus a digital copy on your phone.
- **Visa and entry requirements.** To check on visa requirements and any other entry policies, start by visiting the [U.S. State Department travel page](#).
- **TSAPre.** TSA PreCheck, like other services such as CLEAR, will expedite your security process at U.S. airports. Global Entry is an advance security process that hastens your return through the United States' passport control areas and includes TSA Pre. Learn more about these options in our post, ["Cutting in Line with Global Entry."](#)
- **Frequent Flyer Loyalty Programs.** Before you book your international flight, sign up for frequent flyer programs with any airlines you might be using. This provides you with relevant notifications and gathers your Trusted Traveler and frequent flyer numbers on your boarding passes.

Before You Go: Tend to Your Travel Health and Wellness

- **Prescription Medications.** Plan ahead to be sure you have an adequate supply. Keep a printed or digital record of your prescriptions with you in case you need to replace or refill your meds.
- **Travel clinics:** Visit your doctor or a travel clinic with your specific destination in mind. Learn about required immunizations and potential diseases and dangers in certain regions of the world. Your clinic may also help supply first aid items and medicines, such as antidiarrheal or antibiotic pills or medicine to prevent altitude sickness or seasickness.
- **Global health updates:** Do research the current conditions in your intended destination(s).

- **Pack appropriately.** Plan for the climate and your activities: e.g. sunscreen, insect repellent, water bottle

Before You Go: Purchase Travel Insurance

A good travel insurance program will (a) allow the traveler to find an emergency room or medical care provider quickly; (b) provide for emergency evacuation as the medical condition or situation dictates; and (c) offer appropriate coverage (i.e. of your investments in flights, hotels, and tours) with minimal prior approval requirements. Read our post, [Travel Insurance Basics: What to Look For and When to Buy](#).

Before You Go: Prepare your online banking and travel credit cards

- Find a travel [credit card](#) that doesn't charge [foreign transaction fees](#).
- Know your credit card benefits. Know in advance, for example, which credit card you want to use to book a rental car so that you will realize built-in insurance benefits.
- Advise credit card companies of your travel.
- ATMs use debit cards, so carry one debit card and know your PIN.
- Leave unnecessary credit cards and jewelry at home.
- Carry and exchange minimal cash. Again, the [State Department Travel site](#) provides basic info on your destination country's currency regulations.

Before You Go: Set up secure digital records and mobile communications

- Scan or photograph your passport and credit cards and know where to access these on your phone or computer (preferably both).
- Update any travel-related apps, including those you might want in an emergency (banking, travel insurance, maps, and travel planners like TripIt or AAA).
- Protect your various login usernames and passwords in a secure online safe, like 1Password.
- Set up your international phone plan according to your destination, time away, and need for connectivity.
- Be sure your phone is set to lock/require passcode immediately, in case of loss or theft.
- Related to all this, you might want to review our notes on [protecting yourself from identity theft](#).

While You are Traveling

- Keep valuables including passport and cash and a back-up credit card in the hotel safe.
- Be especially attentive in overly crowded spaces and transit centers as well as deserted streets.
- If you are lost or in need of looking at your phone, stand off to the side while you figure it out.
- Carry cash in a front pocket, more difficult to access
- Separate cash and credit cards to secure in different places on your person or in secure zipped bags
- Carry packs in front when in busy areas
- Secure your phone as if it were a wad of cash in a zipped pocket or bag.

For more travel tips, sign up for our emails at <https://travelpast50.com/newsletter>