

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL PLANNING CHECKLIST

QUICK REFERENCE TIMELINE

Timeframe	Key Actions
6–8 Weeks Before	Passport & visa review, travel medicine appointment, book travel insurance
4 Weeks Before	Notify banks, order foreign currency, research destination safety & customs
2 Weeks Before	Begin packing, download apps & offline content, arrange home care
1 Week Before	Print documents, confirm reservations, prepare tech & chargers
48–72 Hours Before	Online check-in, final wallet check, charge devices, confirm transport

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Verify passport validity (at least 6 months beyond return date)
- Check visa requirements for destination country
- Apply for or renew visa(s) if needed
- Make photocopies of passport, visa, and ID (keep separate from originals)
- Store digital copies of all documents in a secure cloud folder or app
- Confirm name on tickets matches passport exactly
- Register with your country's embassy or travel advisory program (e.g., U.S. Smart Traveler Enrollment Program — STEP)
- Carry printed copies of hotel confirmations, tour vouchers, and flight itineraries
- Check if an International Driving Permit is required

HEALTH & WELLNESS

- Schedule a visit with a travel medicine clinic (ideally 4–6 weeks before departure)
- Confirm required and recommended vaccinations for your destination
- Pack a personal travel health kit (pain relievers, anti-diarrheal, motion sickness meds, band-aids, antiseptic, prescription medications)
- Carry prescriptions in original labeled containers with a copy of the prescription
- Verify your health insurance covers international travel — consider supplemental travel medical insurance
- Research local emergency numbers and nearest hospitals/clinics at your destination
- Pack insect repellent and sunscreen appropriate for the region
- Bring a refillable water bottle with a built-in filter for destinations with questionable tap water
- Note any food allergy translations in the local language

Many travel medicine clinics book up quickly during peak travel season. Call ahead as soon as your trip is confirmed to secure an appointment within the ideal 4–6 week window.

Questions?

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MONEY & FINANCES

- Notify your bank and credit card companies of travel dates and destinations
- Confirm your debit/credit cards work internationally (chip + PIN preferred)
- Order a small amount of local currency for arrival (airport exchange rates are steep)
- Carry a backup payment method (second card from a different network)
- Check daily ATM withdrawal limits and foreign transaction fees
- Download your bank's mobile app for real-time monitoring
- Understand tipping customs at your destination
- Keep a small amount of USD or EUR as emergency backup currency
- Store emergency contact numbers for your bank (international numbers, not 800 numbers)

TECH & CONNECTIVITY

- Contact your carrier about international plans or purchase a local SIM/eSIM before departure
- Download offline maps for your destination (Google Maps or Maps.me)
- Pack a universal power adapter (and verify your destination's plug type)
- Bring a portable power bank (charged and carry-on only — not allowed in checked luggage)
- Download translation apps with offline language packs
- Save important documents, maps, and confirmation numbers for offline access
- Enable "Find My Device" on all electronics
- Back up your phone before departure
- Bring a small power strip or multi-USB charger for hotel rooms with limited outlets
- Download entertainment (books, podcasts, shows) for flights and transit

PACKING ESSENTIALS

- Check destination weather forecast and cultural dress norms
- Pack versatile, layerable clothing in a neutral color palette
- Bring comfortable walking shoes (broken in, not brand new)
- Pack a lightweight daypack or crossbody bag for excursions
- Use packing cubes to organize clothing and maximize space
- Include a small laundry kit (stain pen, travel detergent, clothesline)
- Bring a reusable shopping/tote bag (useful and eco-friendly)
- Pack a travel umbrella or compact rain jacket
- Include a luggage lock (TSA-approved for checked bags)
- Attach durable luggage tags with contact info (use a business address or email, not home address)
- Carry one change of clothes and essentials in your carry-on in case checked luggage is delayed

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SAFETY & SECURITY

- Research current travel advisories for your destination
- Share your full itinerary with a trusted contact at home
- Save local emergency numbers in your phone (police, ambulance, embassy)
- Carry a photocopy of your passport separately from the original
- Use hotel safes for valuables and backup documents
- Be cautious with public Wi-Fi — use a VPN for sensitive transactions
- Know common local scams and tourist-targeted schemes
- Wear a money belt or anti-theft bag in crowded areas
- Keep a low profile with expensive jewelry and electronics
- Note the location of your country's nearest embassy or consulate
- Purchase comprehensive travel insurance (trip interruption, medical, evacuation)

Travel insurance is one of the most valuable investments you can make. Look for a policy that covers trip cancellation/interruption, emergency medical care, medical evacuation, and lost luggage. I'm happy to recommend providers — just ask.

PRE-DEPARTURE TASKS (48-72 HOURS BEFORE)

- Confirm all flights, hotels, tours, and transfers
- Check in online for your flight and download boarding passes
- Verify passport, visa, and all travel documents are packed and accessible
- Arrange pet care, plant watering, or house-sitting
- Set mail hold or arrange for mail/package pickup
- Notify a neighbor or building manager of your absence
- Set home lights/thermostat on timers for security
- Confirm airport transportation (parking reservation, rideshare, or shuttle)
- Charge all devices and power banks
- Do a final wallet check: IDs, credit cards, insurance cards, emergency cash
- Leave a copy of your itinerary and emergency contacts with someone at home
- Take a photo of your parked car location (if driving to the airport)
- Smile — your adventure is about to begin!

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