

YOUR ULTIMATE GAP YEAR

The Insiders' Guide



400+ tips, hacks, advice, and personal stories from our Nomads to help you plan your big adventure.

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Welcome

Congratulations! You’ve made the decision to pack it all up and head overseas for your first big trip.

Maybe you’re following tradition and planning to see the world and learn a little about yourself before jumping into college/university. Perhaps you’ve always wanted to volunteer and support a community in need with your time and talents. Or maybe, you’re just not that inspired at work and want to recharge your batteries by taking some time off to teach English overseas.

The truth is, there’s no “right” way to take a gap year or a sabbatical. So, where do you start?

Don’t worry, we’re here to help. We’ve asked our best travel writers, partners, and our own nomads from HQ, as well as the Social web, to share all their tips, hacks, and

advice – plus a few embarrassing stories – so you can learn from their triumphs and mistakes.

We cherry-picked over 400 of the best, most useful advice and compiled it into this handy little Insider’s Guide.

Whether it’s planning an itinerary, tips on getting the best travel fares, all the way to dealing with travel burnout (yup, it does happen), we’ll show you how to travel smarter so you can explore your boundaries and create a few stories of your own.

So, let’s dive in and get started! Don’t forget, we’re with you every step of the way, so make sure you share your own questions, advice, and travel pics with us via Social Media!

Why Did You Go on a Gap Year?

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Just travel. Plain and simple. The society we live in causes stagnation, so the only way to ease tension is to travel with or without a companion. Safe travels, just enjoy.



Nicola Mandaracas, via Facebook

“

I didn't do my big trip until I was 31, but I'd done a little bit of travelling prior to that, so I knew I was comfortable going solo. The only motivation you need to take a big trip is itchy feet. Everything else is just saving, saving, saving!



Mark Seldon, World Nomads Group

“

I've always wanted to see flamenco in Seville, eat a Margherita pizza in Napoli and swim in the Mediterranean. So, after finishing university, I worked two jobs and saved up for a year until I had enough to set off on my year-long backpacking adventure. It was life-changing. I didn't want it to end, but the money ran out!



Isaac Entry, World Nomads

“

I took a year off after I finished art school to travel and work in London. I was motivated by a mad passion to explore the world, create photographic artwork, get work experience, and meet new people.



Emily Willis, World Nomads



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I took nine months off after I finished university. I really had no idea what I wanted to do, and was not thrilled with the jobs that my fellow business school mates were getting. In fact, the prospects terrified me. I needed a bit of time and space away from school to experience more of the world, and work out what I was really passionate about.



Alicia Crosariol, World Nomads

“

I was quite late in the game, taking a gap year at 25. The motivation was that I looked at a friend's pictures of her travels, and it looked incredible. At the time, I was at work doing general admin when I came across her pictures, and I suddenly realised that it's what I wanted. So, I took a four-month career break/gap year.



Jess Grey, World Nomads Group

What Did You Do on Your Gap Year?

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I took a gap year as part of my uni degree! My course required seniors to do two-weeks unpaid internship somewhere, and because I worried that it was going to be the last chance for me to have a big adventure, I asked the faculty if I could do it overseas. I found a position in London, and ended up staying for two years while finishing my degree. Two birds, one stone. Thankfully, that wasn't my last adventure!



Martin Hong, World Nomads

“

My childhood goal was to get to know my own backyard before I travel the world. Plus, it's cheaper! So, after six long years working at a company in Sydney, I went back home to Thailand for a year and a half, road-tripping and freelancing my way around in my Mitsubishi Mirage. On the road-trip, I was working online and freelancing, which meant I got the best of both worlds.



Veronica Mercado, World Nomads

“

Having always wanted to go to Australia, it was lucky for me that two things made the decision even easier: First, Australia's work/holiday visa allows twenty-somethings to live and work in Australia for a year. Secondly, probably the most important factor, was having a college friend there to help with the transition!



Kevin Ellis, Lazy Rhino



Mark Whitman

“

I chose to visit an English-speaking country for my gap year. I would have loved to have gone somewhere exotic, but the practicalities of funding my year abroad got the better of me. Going to an English-speaking country meant I could get a proper job, and keep myself afloat.



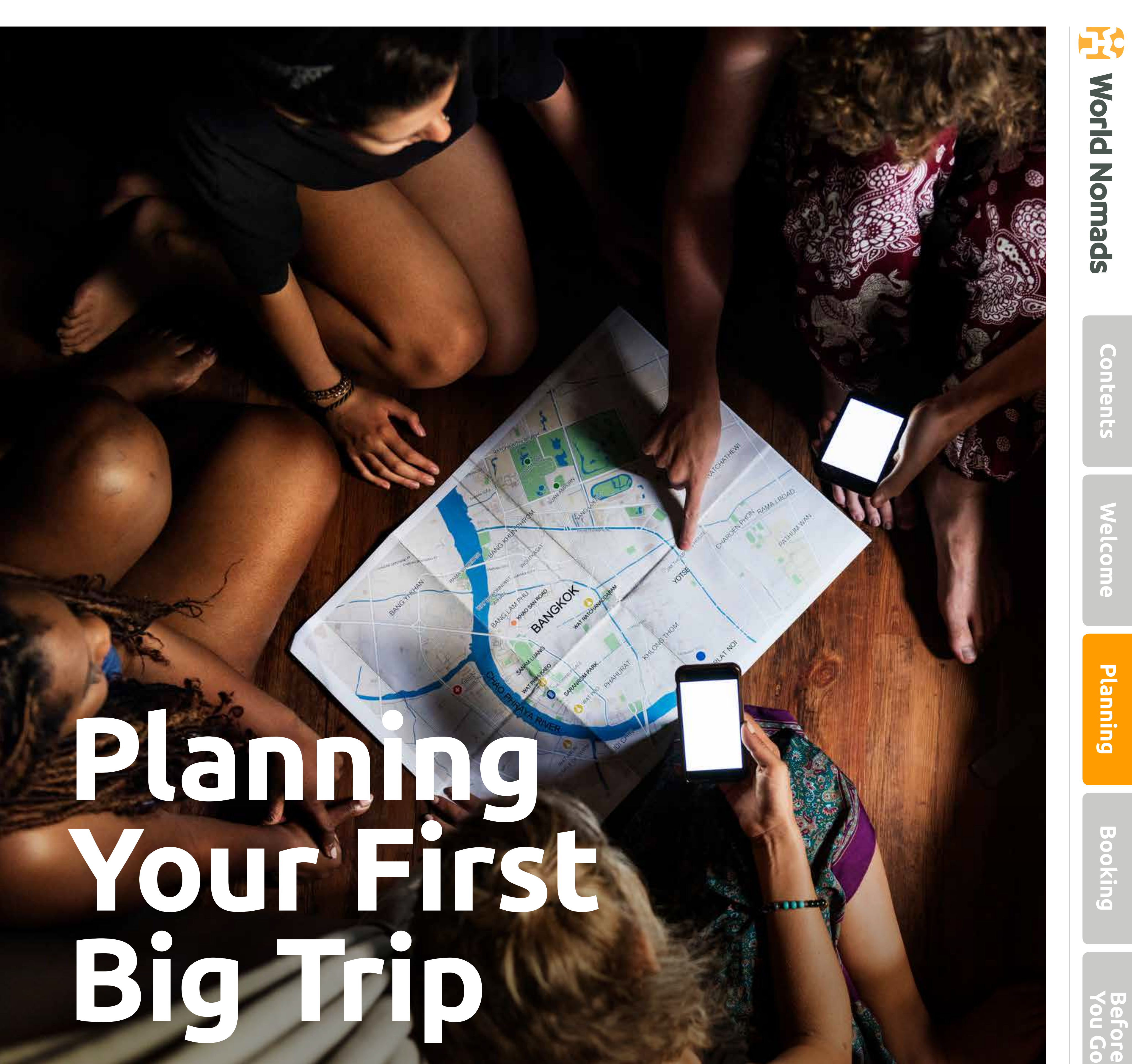
Claire Taylor, World Nomads Group

“

We booked a 10-day stint at a vulture rescue center in Cres, Croatia, which gave us a starting point for our Europe trip. Feeding vultures isn't for everyone, but the volunteer experience was a great way to get to know the area, and we made some lovely friends.



Ellen Hall, World Nomads



Planning Your First Big Trip

“Where should I go?” “How much is it going to cost?” “Am I even qualified to do this?” your head’s probably swimming with a thousand questions – either from you or your family – when you’re thinking about your first Big Trip. Take a breath. It’s meant to be exciting, not overwhelming.

Where to Start When Planning Your Gap Year

While there aren't many things more exciting than jetting off into the unknown with a backpack, planning your big getaway can be challenging. From figuring out flights, destinations, and dates, there's a lot to start planning.

Planning your itinerary

With the whole world at your feet, it's difficult to narrow down your options. Try to prioritize the experiences you've always dreamed of – whether that's being a part of Holi in India, Songkran in Bangkok, diving the Great Barrier Reef, or visiting Machu Picchu in Peru.

Once you can figure out your absolute must-dos, and how long you have to squeeze it all in, it'll be much easier to plan your itinerary and put



together a Round-The-World (RTW) flight package that works for you.

When to go

This is the second-hardest decision to make. While we can hope for the best, it's impossible to plan for perfect weather every step of the way.

Instead, it's worth focusing on the things you want to do most and plan around that.

If you've always wanted to go on a safari in East Africa or trek through the Himalayas, then you've got to go in January–March or October–December.

If you want to visit Machu Picchu or road-trip through New Zealand, the best time to visit is June–August.

To avoid the peak season and make the most of the spring sunshine, check out Europe, North America, and Central Asia from April–May.

Whenever you choose to visit, bear in

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Plan loosely, but have some anchor points to give your itinerary some shape. We booked some stays ahead of time in popular places (like Yellowstone National Park, and Munich for Oktoberfest), but allowed ourselves some spontaneity on the journeys in between.



*Ellen Hall,
World Nomads*



mind that bad weather is definitely not the end of the world – sightseeing can be done rain, hail, or shine.

There are also a lot of perks to visiting out-of-season, when people are friendlier, prices are lower, the landscapes are lush and green, and there are less tourists to get in the way!

What to look for in RTW flight packages

A RTW flight is a great way to give your trip structure, narrow down your destinations, and give you an idea of how long to spend in each place.

It's also the perfect opportunity to add in some interesting overland sectors, like that dream road-trip across the United States, the beautiful train journey from Bangkok to Singapore, a motorbike trip through Southeast Asia, or even a ride on the famed Trans-Siberian railway.

Depending on your route, a lot of airlines and airline alliances offer RTW or multi-stop flights that work out considerably cheaper than booking flights individually.

For example, you can find a RTW flight

that takes you all the way from London to Bangkok, overland to Singapore, a flight to Sydney, Fiji, and LA, overland to New York, and back to London.

Or, you can get a multi-stop flight from London to Nairobi, Johannesburg, Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires, and Melbourne – for a surprisingly reasonable price!

If you want to get well off the beaten track, or if you're trying to squeeze it all into a short time, it's also well worth combining your RTW flight with cheap, low-budget airlines – like AirAsia, Jetstar, and EasyJet.

We all know plans constantly change, especially when you're traveling, so the dates on RTW flights are generally flexible for a small fee.

Just bear in mind all flight changes are subject to availability, and the maximum validity of a RTW flight is normally 12 months. It's also worth noting that if you do happen to miss one sector, the airline will cancel the rest of them. Even if you have to change your dates ten times, make sure you eventually take that flight, or you risk being stranded!

The Best Destinations to Visit During...

January–March

The perfect time to visit East and West Africa, South and Southeast Asia, Central America, southern South America, Australia, and New Zealand. If you're chasing snow, it's also a great time to visit Europe, Japan, and North America.

April–May

Morocco and North Africa, southern Africa, North America, northern South America, Central Asia, East Asia, and Europe are ideal during this time.

June–August

It's monsoon season in South and Southeast Asia, so visit the US, Europe, Northern South America and the Amazon, Indonesia, and South Africa.

October – December

Your best bet is southern South America, Egypt, West Africa, South Africa, and South and Southeast Asia. This is also the perfect time to trek in the Himalayas, with cool temperatures and great visibility.

Go With a Crew or Fly Solo?

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After my friends started ditching my plans, and people turned the trip into a nightmare, I started traveling solo. It's been years and I have never looked back to seek any company. Some of the best experiences I could ever have would only happen being solo. I can tag along with anyone, anytime, and still be me.



Rajesh Singh, via Facebook

“

I enjoy the freedom to decide where to go and when, without needing to compromise or work around others' schedules. It also removes the risk of being let down by others. You're rarely alone for long – and you'll meet some interesting characters along the way!



Nick Harbour, via Facebook

“

Often, you've got no one to share the wonderment you come across, and long journeys can be boring and a little lonely sometimes.



Kate Blanquita, via Facebook

“

After ten months of traveling, I came to really miss sharing experiences with someone and having a confident person close by.



Ly Dia, via Facebook



Brian Rapsey

“

I enjoy a mixture of both. I'm an introvert, so at times I like being around people and doing things, other times I like to be alone and move along at my own pace.



Jodie Branston, via Facebook

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Solo travel is way better. When I'm by myself, people (especially the locals) seem to be curious as to why I'm there alone. They tend to go out of their way to make sure I enjoy my time there. I have also made a lot of genuine connections with the locals on my solo travels, something I don't think would have happened if I was with someone else.



Adrienne, via Facebook

“

When things go wrong, it's easier to solve problems and get past challenges you face if you travel with others.



Everett Tosetti, via Facebook

How Did You Save For Your Gap Year?

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If you want to travel, you need some funds – but with a couple of tips, it's not that difficult to start building your savings. First step is realizing it takes sacrifice. The sooner you wrap your head around this – and realize it will be worth it – the easier it is.

The next step is opening a savings account that's not connected to your card, has a high interest rate, and requires a deposit each month.

Then, you need to work out a rough budget that you refresh every single month to include events, birthday presents, and admin costs.

Add in a good-sized chunk that you can afford to save each payday, and the rest is spending money. Any pennies left over just before payday should go straight into your savings.

Finally, if you're going hard-core, every time you save money using a discount card, such as at the supermarket, deposit that coin into your savings account.



Brooke Hobson, Contributor

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No matter how unhappy you might be in your job, just keep in mind what's ahead. If that means all sleep and work– no play – so be it!



Milly McGrath, World Nomads

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I have a photo of where I want to go in my wallet. I see it each time I think of buying something.



Sandra Robinson, via Twitter



“

Work. Sleep. Work. Sleep. Work. Sleep. Travel. Travel. Travel. Travel. Travel.



Tony Carne, via Twitter

“

Prior-planning prevents blowing your travel budget! Have an idea of where, what, and how you'll get where you want to go before arriving. That'll help avoid blowing your budget on last-minute travel costs.



Alexis Zahner, Contributor

“

Every time I debate buying something or saving it for my next trip, if the buy isn't worth it, I save that amount instead!



Shannon Farhoud, via Twitter

PLANNING

Learning Opportunities

Traveling doesn't have to be about turning your mind off. It can also be a way to kick-start your education, learn on-the-ground knowledge about cultures, traditions, and art from around the world.

Learn a language

Though books are important, real life immersion is the key to learning a new language.

Try to spend time in a place where the language you are learning is the official language – talking and sharing experiences with the native speakers will help you pick up the language, its nuances and colloquialisms, much faster than rote-learning by tapes or apps.

Even if you're not learning the entire language, as a traveler, remembering a few basic pleasantries will go a long way in distinguishing yourself from most other tourists.

Learn an art form

One of the most fascinating aspects of any culture is what UNESCO – the cultural division of the United Nations – defines as “intangible heritage.”

This refers to the living traditions that cultures pass on from generation to generation. In Italy, pizza-making is a UNESCO-recognized tradition! Now, you're not likely to find a thin-crust on display at any of the Vatican museums, but pizza is still an important part of



Italy's gastronomical arts.

Sadly, artisanship is in decline in many places around the world, and traditional livelihoods have fallen way behind.

But the good news is, tourism is a very important way to bolster waning art forms. Try picking up a traditional weaving class in Peru, a cooking class in Malaysia, or a calligraphy course in Japan.

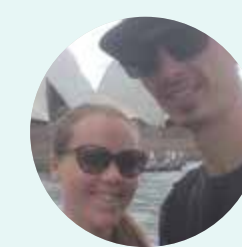
Not only does this encourage the preservation of the local arts, in studying these traditions, the traveler, in turn, experiences one of the most unique and unforgettable entry-points into a culture. It's a win-win!

Learn a skill

Take this “time off” to explore a new hobby – have you always wanted to be a travel photographer, filmmaker, or writer? Take your camera or journal with you on your trip and keep your eyes

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I think a university degree followed by traveling is a great thing to do – although I might be biased. Uni taught me how to be independent and how to work harder than I've ever worked before. It taught me commitment, and determination in work.



*Flipflopnextstop,
via Twitter*

PLANNING

open for inspiration.

Use this opportunity to take your time with the equipment and get to know your gear. Find some personal projects that inspire you on the road and just start shooting! Take your time to learn what inspires you – is it portrait or black and white photography? Are you more drawn to short travel essays or reflective poetry?

As you're just starting out, don't put too much pressure to set out on a trip with the mission of taking good photos. Just focus on having great experiences and the work will come. Photos capture what's in front of the camera, but also reflect whoever is behind the camera.

Before you know it, you'll have a good sample of your work which will form the basis of your portfolio when you get back home.

Student exchange

Embarking on an overseas adventure doesn't necessarily mean burning all your books and shunning everything that is educationally-inclined.

School leavers can sign themselves up to attend a foreign high school and live with a host family. It's a great way to get immersed in a new culture, learn a new language, and make loads of new friends. And you get to live the high school life without the worries of looming final-year exams!

University students also have plenty of opportunities to take their study abroad – many unis have partner universities where students can take classes and transfer credit points.



Another alternative is for you to study with a local university or vocational education provider while overseas, via distance education. There is a range of courses that you can study online, covering every subject area, so it's worth checking out the various options.

Build up your CV with an internship

Another way of racking up international experience in the name of learning is to get involved with an internship in another country. 1-to-1 internship placements run from two to 24 weeks in fields such as health and medicine, marketing, tourism, sports, and media. Some university degrees will require you to have an internship as part of your studies and help you pair up with an approved organization.

Even if yours doesn't, don't let that stop you. Many reputable businesses or larger organizations already have an inbuilt internship program, so don't be afraid to send in your CV (along with a personalized cover letter) and offer your services as an unpaid intern.

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Travelling teaches you about being a human being, and how we are all similar in some way – despite our appearances. It's the ultimate learning.



*Chatlaksh Mi,
via Twitter*

“

Uni can provide fuel for your passion, and traveling afterwards is a chance to live that passion and maybe blow off some steam.



*Jesse James,
via Twitter*

Teaching English Overseas

While teaching English abroad is a great opportunity to escape daily norms and experience life in new cultural surrounds, there are some questions you need to think through first.

Is it right for you?

This is a job that needs to be taken seriously. Most contracts are one year, some six months, and rarely will you find any that are 3-4 months.

It's also hard work. You need to understand that you'll be working mostly, and traveling occasionally – as a benefit.

If that sits well with you, then you'll also need to ask, *why* do you want to teach English?

Your top priorities should be in helping your students, getting to know the place you're living in, and experiencing the culture first-hand.

An ideal set of skills for the job include: organization, patience, confidence, and the ability to think on your feet.

What qualifications would you need?

Almost all placements will require you to have some kind of teaching certification. There are a number to choose from, but the most popular are TEFL, TESOL, and CELTA.

They range in price and difficulty, but they all cover the basics of learning



Brian Rapsey

how to teach English. Some have specializations for teaching children or business learners. It's recommended that you have at least a 100-hour certification, as many countries require this as the minimum.

Where should you go?

The key is knowing what you want to get out of this experience. Is there a language you'd like to learn? Or is there a city you've dreamed of living in?

Pay is also a big factor to consider. Are you okay with just breaking even and enjoying the experience, or do you hope to save? Saving can easily be done in countries such as South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan.

If you have your teaching certificate and a college degree in any subject, you can teach almost anywhere in the world. If you don't have a college degree, your options are more limited – but many are available in countries such as in Cambodia, Spain, and Argentina.

Many countries in Asia and the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, are in need of English teachers the most.

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If you have your teaching certificate and a college degree in any subject, you can teach almost anywhere in the world.

Voluntourism: When Good Intentions Go Bad

The road to volunteering is paved with good intentions, but how do you know you're working with a reputable program?

Look at the project's values

A website can tell you everything about an organization's values.

Do they publish annual impact reports evaluating what they have achieved? Do they employ local staff and avoid giving volunteers jobs that community members could do instead?

If the website doesn't have evidence of this, move on to one that does.

Find reputable projects that match your skillset

Volunteers are most effective when they've got experience in the field.

If a project will allow you to teach when you've never worked with children before, or work in construction when you don't know the difference between a hammer and a handsaw, alarm bells should start ringing. Think about it: if you couldn't do the job back at home, you're not qualified to do it abroad.

Choose a project that provides training

If you've not yet got any professional skills to offer, don't despair. Many



reputable projects give you the tools to be effective, whether showing you how to care for animals in a wildlife sanctuary or helping you study to become a certified TEFL teacher.

By doing this, organizations prove they're investing in both their local communities and their volunteers. Communities get the assistance of trained, capable individuals, while volunteers feel empowered and ready for the challenges – and rewards – of volunteering abroad.

Chat with previous volunteers

Previous volunteers can tell you plenty about how ethical a project really is. [Raleigh International](#) publish volunteer experiences on their site, while databases of opportunities, such as those found on [Go Abroad](#) and [Go Overseas](#) have plenty of honest participant reviews.

What's more, don't be afraid to ask to be put in touch with former volunteers. A brief chat can quickly give you a sense of the project, how valuable the organization's work is, and whether you can truly make a difference by volunteering with them.

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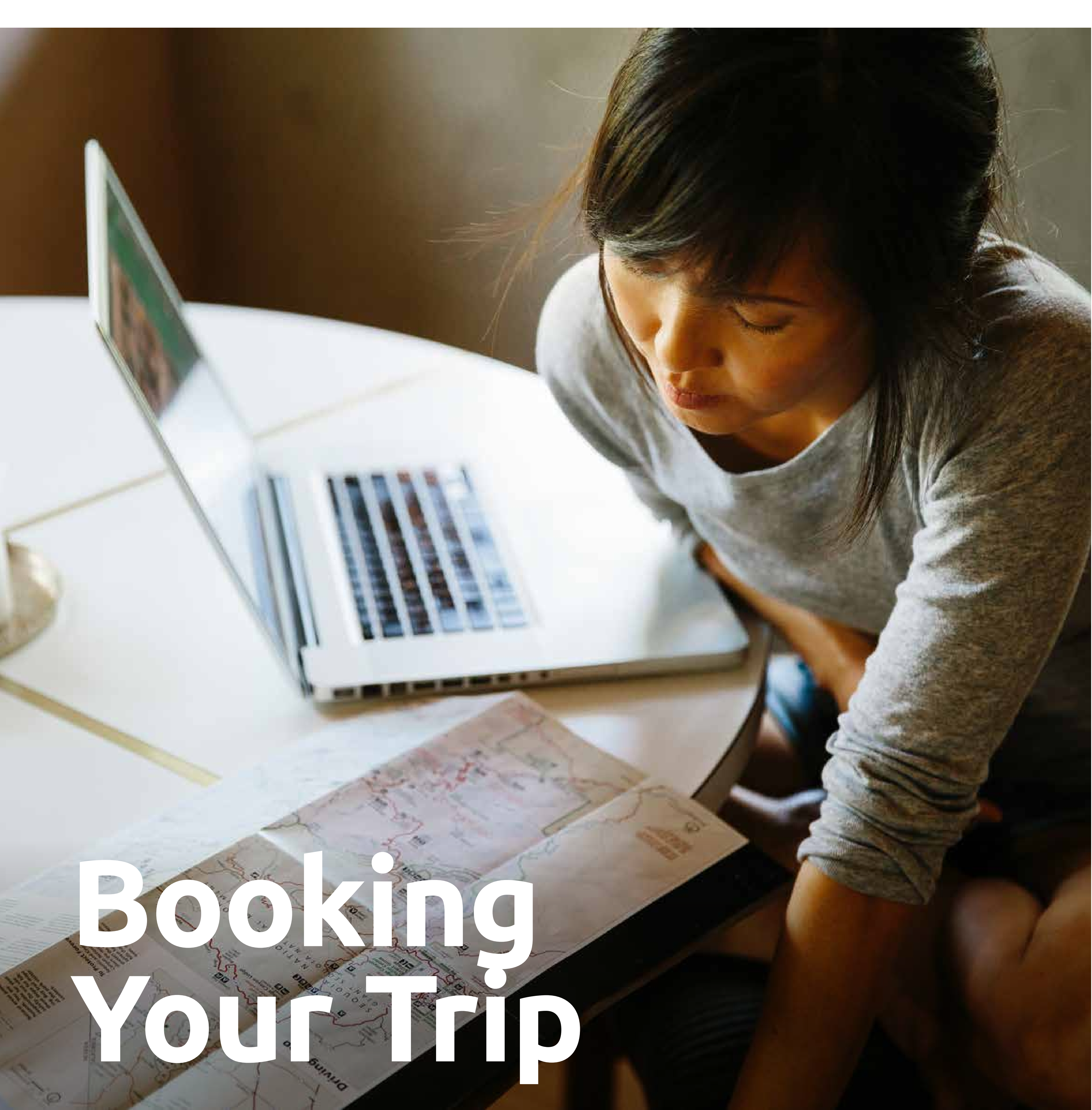
Previous volunteers can tell you plenty about how ethical a project really is.

Where does the money go?

It's normal to pay a fee to cover the costs of your volunteering placement. But, the more transparent the company is about their finances, the better.

Look for agencies that publish reports outlining exactly how volunteers' fees are spent.

If they can't account for how donations are used, walk away.



Booking Your Trip

Now that you know where you're going and what you want to be doing with your Gap Year, it's time to put your plan into action. From when to book to get the best airfare to knowing when it's worth paying a little extra for an experience, here's what you need to know before you start booking.

What to Book Before You Go

Some experiences need to be booked months in advance, but if you're savvy, you might be able to save big by booking last-minute.

Booking ahead vs. cutting it fine

The Inca Trail – South America's most iconic trek – only offers 500 permits a day to hike to the top of Machu Picchu. During the high season, these permits can sell out years in advance. The same goes for cruises to the Galapagos Islands or Antarctica.

However, sometimes if you wait until the last minute, you can score the deal of a lifetime. If you're lucky, you can get an eight-day cruise to Antarctica at 70% of the original price.

If you're heading to Central America and Southeast Asia, it's best to wait until the last minute and shop around for the best prices.

The trick is to research if you'll be there during the high or low season.

Booking for high season

Every destination in the world has a high and low travel season. If you know you'll be traveling during high season, you should consider booking in advance – especially if it's a popular activity like bungee jumping or the Eiffel Tower.

This is especially important if you



have limited time in a destination. If this is the case, make a list of the top three activities you want to do: If the activity is something you know you'll regret not doing once you leave, book it beforehand. If not, wait it out and see if you can book it once you're there.

Booking for low season

This is one of the best times to travel if you're looking to save a few dollars. However, low season might also mean bad weather.

For example, low season in Southeast Asia means heavy rain. If you're heading here, it's best to wait until you arrive to book.

Always be sure to check that the activity or experience you want to do runs during low season. For example, in Myanmar, the hot air balloons over Bagan only run between October–March, and cost a whopping US \$300.

When it comes to booking bungee jumps in New Zealand, you'll need to book ahead during the summer months. During winter, however, it's better if you wait to see the weather forecast a few days prior and then lock it in.

“Always be sure to check that the activity or experience you want to do runs during low season.”

Airfare Hacks: How to Score the Best Flight Deals

Flying has never been cheaper than it is right now, but an airfare can still put a hole in your budget. How do you make sure you're getting the best price, and are there any hacks for saving a few dollars?

The secret to getting a good deal on flights

Obviously, you'll save plenty if you can travel in low season instead of high season – but not everyone has that luxury: We graduate at the same time at the end of the school year, and summer in Europe is in, well, summer.

But, if you check out [Skyscanner's](#) "best time to book" tool, you can save money – though it does vary from destination to destination.

Look for secondary airports

Some destinations have a smaller, secondary airport. As the main airport is usually in higher demand, the second airport can be cheaper – think Gatwick vs Heathrow airport in London.

Use sites such as [skiplagged.com](#) to find hidden airfares. There are two types of hidden airfares.

5th freedom flights

International airlines are allowed to



carry paying passengers between destinations that are not their home country or the final destination of a flight. An example: which airlines would you look at for a Sydney to Auckland flight? Qantas, Jetstar, Air New Zealand, Virgin – right?

Well, Emirates flies from Dubai to Auckland – with a stop in Sydney. They have empty seats after half the people get off in Sydney. You won't find that flight on a booking aggregator, but if you ask Emirates, they will sell you a seat – and because they've got excess capacity, it'll probably be at a discount.

Layover flight

This one's not strictly by the book, but it works well in the US and Europe.

If you want to get from Chicago to New York, have a look for flights that go from Chicago to somewhere else via New York. The fare will sometimes be cheaper than the shorter direct flight.

When the plane lands in New York, simply get off the flight with your carry-on.

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You'll save plenty if you can travel in low season instead of high season – but not everyone has that luxury.

A Few General Rules of Thumb:

- For LA to Bangkok, book 4 months out.
- For London to Sydney, 5 months prior.
- Brisbane to Bali, book 3 months ahead.
- Don't fly on a Friday – the most expensive day. Go Tuesday or Wednesday.

BOOKING

Booking Accommodation

Accommodation is where most travelers spend the bulk of their budget, especially on longer trips. Here's how to book it like a pro.

What to look for in your accommodation

First, ask yourself a couple questions to narrow down your choices.

What type of accommodation do you want? This may vary throughout your trip – party hostels can be great, but so can a boutique hotel for a few nights to recharge and relax.

What's your budget? Be realistic, \$10 per night might go a long way in Honduras, but it won't get you through the front door in London.

Next, read some recent reviews on [Hostelworld](#) and [Tripadvisor](#). Remember that some guests may be complaining because they picked the wrong accommodation for them.

When to book in advance

Sorting your lodgings before you pack your bags has its advantages, like spending more time traveling and less time *booking*. Allocating a few hours per week searching for accommodation online during the lead-up to your trip also helps build the excitement.

Some websites like [Booking.com](#), [Expedia](#), and [Hotels.com](#) allow customers to lock in their fully-refundable rate and reservation without paying a cent until checking

“**Sorting your lodgings before you pack your bags has its advantages, like spending more time traveling and less time booking.**”

in. This puts the power in your hands if the price drops at the same property or another one. Simply cancel the reservation and rebook.

It's worth mentioning that pre-booking your accommodation around popular events and festivals is a must!

Booking on the road

If you're making up your itinerary as you go, booking on the fly might be a better option for you. Getting recommendations from fellow travelers you meet on the road can also lead to some of the best hidden hotels or homestays; word-of-mouth is your best friend, as reviews are fresher than a \$1 beach coconut in Costa Rica.

Not locking in the amount of time you're staying in one destination means your travel plans can stay flexible. If you let the owner of the accommodation know that you're shopping around, this may provide a better deal, a nicer room, or bonuses for staying longer and paying upfront in cash.



BOOKING

Consider what season you're traveling in

Accommodation prices fluctuate with demand, and prices between high and low season can be dramatically different.

One way to save on accommodation is to travel in the shoulder season – that time between the peak and off-peak season. The prices will be lower, but the weather is still favorable, and in popular destinations, you'll get to avoid the crowds.

For Europe, the peak season is July/August, which is the height of summer. But instead, consider going in May or September – you'll avoid the hordes of holidaymakers while still enjoying summer and getting a better deal on your accommodation.

Finding discount codes and offers

At any given time, there can be thousands of promo codes available. Try adding a simple app to your browser like [Honey](#). This cool little money-saver automatically searches and adds the best discount code when you get to the purchase screen on popular sites like Hotels.com and Expedia – plus hundreds of other online shops.

Don't always rely on the web though, if you're planning on staying somewhere for a long time, consider calling the property and asking for a discount to book direct.

Supporting the locals

Getting away from the hostel bubble is important if you want to have an authentic travel experience. In some

“Getting away from the hostel bubble is important if you want to have an authentic travel experience.”



destinations like Vietnam, Nepal, or Colombia, it's also a great way to help funnel tourist dollars into the hands of the local community while having an authentic, cultural experience.

It can be tough to link up with locals, especially if you don't speak the language. Luckily, there are a couple of great ways to do this online. Try [Airbnb](#) or [CouchSurfing](#) to break away from the backpacker trail for a few nights every now and then.

Short term rentals

If you're staying for more than a few days at a place, consider looking at local rental options, too. Especially in developed countries like Europe, USA, or Australia, furnished apartments can be rented on a week-by-week basis.

These apartments can sometimes be cheaper than hotels, but are generally still more expensive than a hostel dorm room. If you're a solo traveler, this could be an expensive option, but if you've made friends on the road or traveling as a group or a couple, you can share your costs, making this a good option to consider.

Travel Insurance: Things to Know

Whether you're going to film wildlife in the Asian Steppe or looking for a barista job in Berlin, choosing the right travel insurance may be the most important thing you'll do to prepare for your gap year.

Why you need travel insurance

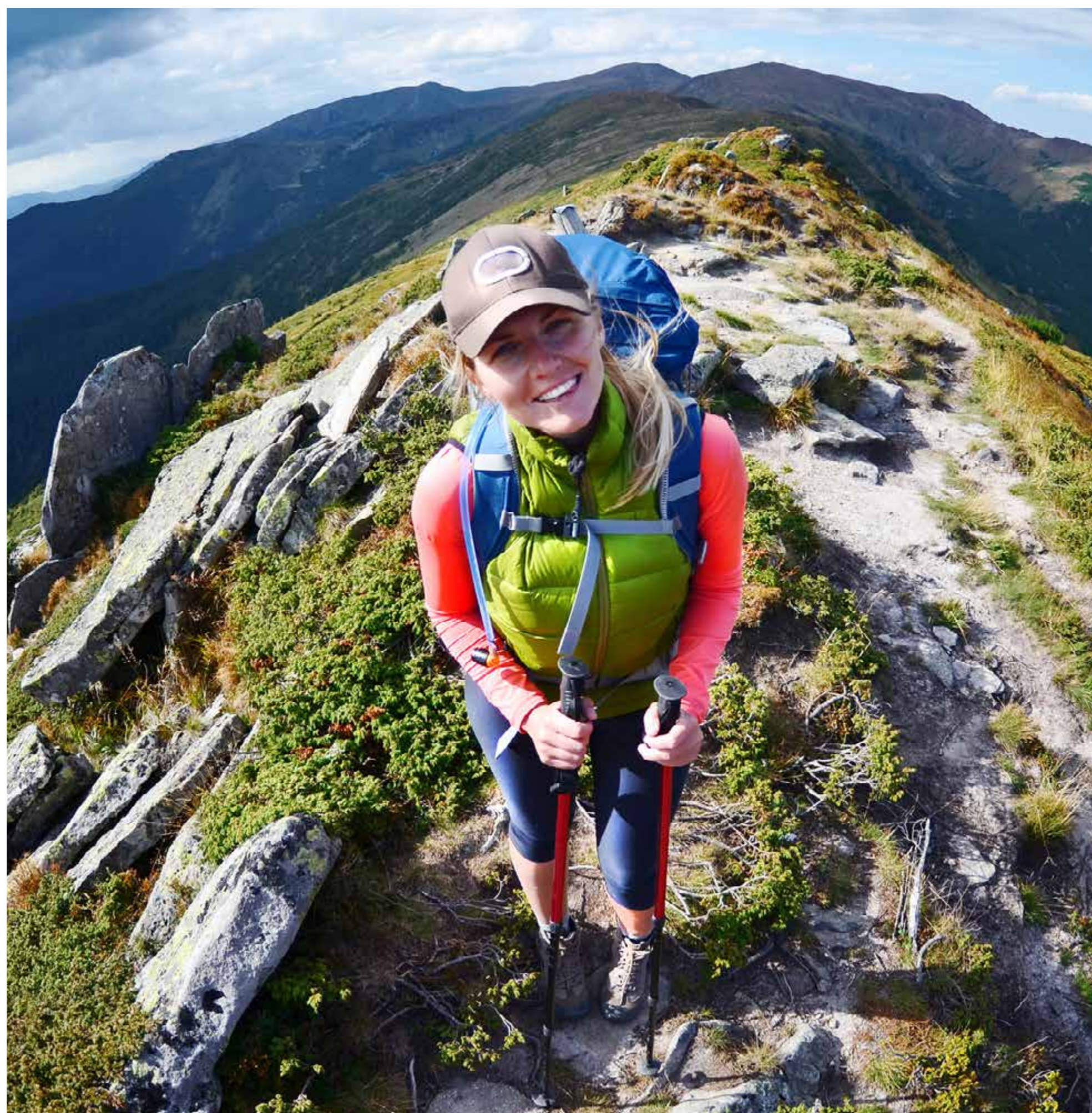
It's true that more often than not, things do go to plan and you'll not need to use your travel insurance. However, we see some pretty hairy claims – motorcycle accidents in South-East Asia, shark attacks, and the occasional sex accident (there are people who think they're pretzels), so we know that your trip can take a turn for the worse when you least expect it.

Travel insurance usually has pages of benefits and how you'll be supported during your trip, but there are three main benefits to look out for.

Emergency medical cover

No-one plans on getting sick, but that's exactly what travel insurance is for – the unexpected. When emergency medical costs kick in, they can be obscenely expensive.

It's not uncommon for a hospital visit to go into the tens of thousands of dollars e.g. if you're unfortunate enough



to get hospitalized in the US, you may need to sell your house to pay back the debt due to the high medical costs.

While policies can cover you for accidents and unforeseen illness, most policies exclude coverage for pre-existing medical conditions.

So, if you're walking down the street in Moscow and slip on some ice and hurt your coccyx, you can be covered; however, if your previously-injured dodgy knee starts to play up while you're overseas, it's unlikely that your claim will be successful. All of our policies may cover you for:

- Hospitalization
- Day surgery and out-patient treatment
- Visits to registered medical practitioners
- Prescribed medicines
- Ambulances
- Extra expenses to get you home, if medically necessary

“
While policies can cover you for accidents and unforeseen illness, most policies exclude coverage for pre-existing medical conditions.”

BOOKING

However, each travel insurance policy will be different. It's a good idea to match up the benefit limits that can be paid out for both your overseas medical costs and medical evacuation with your trip plans and destinations, in case we need to bring you home.

Trip cancellation

Finished paying off your flights and the first couple of weeks' accommodation on your gap year? The trip cancellation benefit can cover your pre-paid flight and accommodation expenses if you're unable to travel for certain reasons. All of our policies may cover you if:

- You're medically unfit to travel
- If your travel partner is medically unfit to travel
- A close relative is hospitalized due to illness or an accident.

However, depending on your country of residence, you may have more coverage (you may need to pay more, so make sure you read the policy terms and conditions before you buy so you get the cover you need). We're well aware that it's often more than illness that can stop you from traveling, so some of our insurance partners can help you there.

Of course, as with overseas Emergency Medical Expenses, most of our policies exclude coverage for pre-existing medical conditions. Plus, there are restrictions on how much you can be covered for, so be sure to read through the policy before you buy.

Baggage

Strangely enough, more people buy travel insurance because they want

their baggage covered rather than worrying about their medical cover. So, we have policies to help cover your baggage for those unexpected and often annoying situations. All of our policies may cover you for:

- Baggage delay
- Damaged baggage while checked-in (excluding electronic & fragile items)
- Bags lost by a carrier in transit

Not all of our policies are the same, and some of our policies may cover you for situations like stolen baggage and stolen passports. But, don't assume, and do your homework on what's covered.

We expect that you take proper precautions with your baggage. So, if you're taking tech or jewelry, don't check it in with the airline – take it as hand luggage. Also, you wouldn't leave your bag or phone unattended in a café while you go to the bathroom at home, so don't do it overseas. If it's snatched, it's unlikely your claim will be paid.

What's not covered?

It's also important to be aware of what's not covered. Insurance is not a license to be reckless. You should act in a way that does not deliberately or unnecessarily expose you – and us – to a claim. And claims that are settled are intended to put you in the financial position you were before the loss happened.

We simply cannot cover recklessness, stupidity, or illegality. If you injure yourself diving into the ocean from a cliff, if you are drunk and fall off a wall, or if you ride a motorcycle you're not licensed to operate, it's unlikely your claim will be paid.

“
If you're taking tech or jewelry, don't check it in with the airline – take it as hand luggage.”

When to Save and When to Splurge

The secret to long-term travel is knowing when to watch your wallet, and when to whip it out. Remember, you're in for a marathon, not a sprint – pace yourself!

When to splurge

Unless you're torn between a one-hour flight or a nine-day jeep ride, long-distance travel isn't the time to bring out the big bucks.

There are usually cheaper and possibly even faster options available. And if not... hey, 30-hour bus trips can still be fun! But when it comes to knowing when to splurge, there are a few guidelines to follow.

Tourists have major purchasing power, especially in developing economies. So, let ethics be your guide.

Pony up for the trekking agency that pays their porters fair wages, rather than the one touting suspiciously low prices. Pay more to stay at an eco-resort, and forget the cheap elephant safaris. Tip when appropriate.

If it seems that you're getting an insanely good deal, then it might just be too good to be true.

Splurge on unforgettable experiences. If you've come all the way to India, don't balk at the entry price to the Taj Mahal. Enjoy a gourmet meal. Take a dance class. Buy an incredible piece of local handicraft to take back home.

Make sure that you're taking time to treat yourself and to savor the

“**Tourists have major purchasing power, especially in developing economies. So, let ethics be your guide.**”



experience of a new place – even if that means shelling out from time to time!

When to skimp on the pennies

In a new place, getting to your next destination is half the fun. So, consider taking local transit. It's cheaper, and guarantees a more immersive experience.

On long rides, walls between passengers come down. A few hours on the road, and people are ready to swap life stories while sharing food across the aisle. Be warned, as a tourist, you'll get your fair share of selfie requests or old ladies inviting you over to meet their grandkids!

Even better, traveling like a local also helps build emerging economies by keeping cash in local circulation. So, try to keep it local when picking food, accommodation, and transport, and support sustainable businesses while also saving precious funds.

Local eateries are a lot more memorable than familiar food chains, and homestays sure beat multinational hotels – even without fancy little soaps and free slippers (they're free, right?).

How Do You Make Friends on the Road?

“

Share your food! Nothing breaks the ice like sharing a simple snack or meal.



William Parker, via Twitter

“

Take a class in something you've always wanted to do, but didn't get a chance back home. It could be a cooking course, salsa lessons, or a local art like Chinese calligraphy. It's a great way to meet locals and you have an instant icebreaker!



Martin Hong, World Nomads

“

Check out the local yoga place! I've done Kundaliniyoga in New York, St Paul, Honolulu, and Värnamo, Sweden.



J Charpentier, via Twitter

“

I always pack a deck of cards. It's a great way to pass the time on long train rides or lonely nights, and a fun way to meet new people. I once played "Go Fish" with an elderly Italian woman on a train from Venice to Budapest. Though we didn't understand one another's language, we managed to find a way to make it work.



Brock Weaver, World Nomads



Brian Rapsey

“

(I) met a woman using Tinder while in the states. She showed me all the best places not mentioned in the tour guide books. Also got a great insight into some of the local history. Highly recommend tinder for travel.



Con Og O Dulchaointigh, via Facebook

“

Hostels are a great way to get to know other travelers.



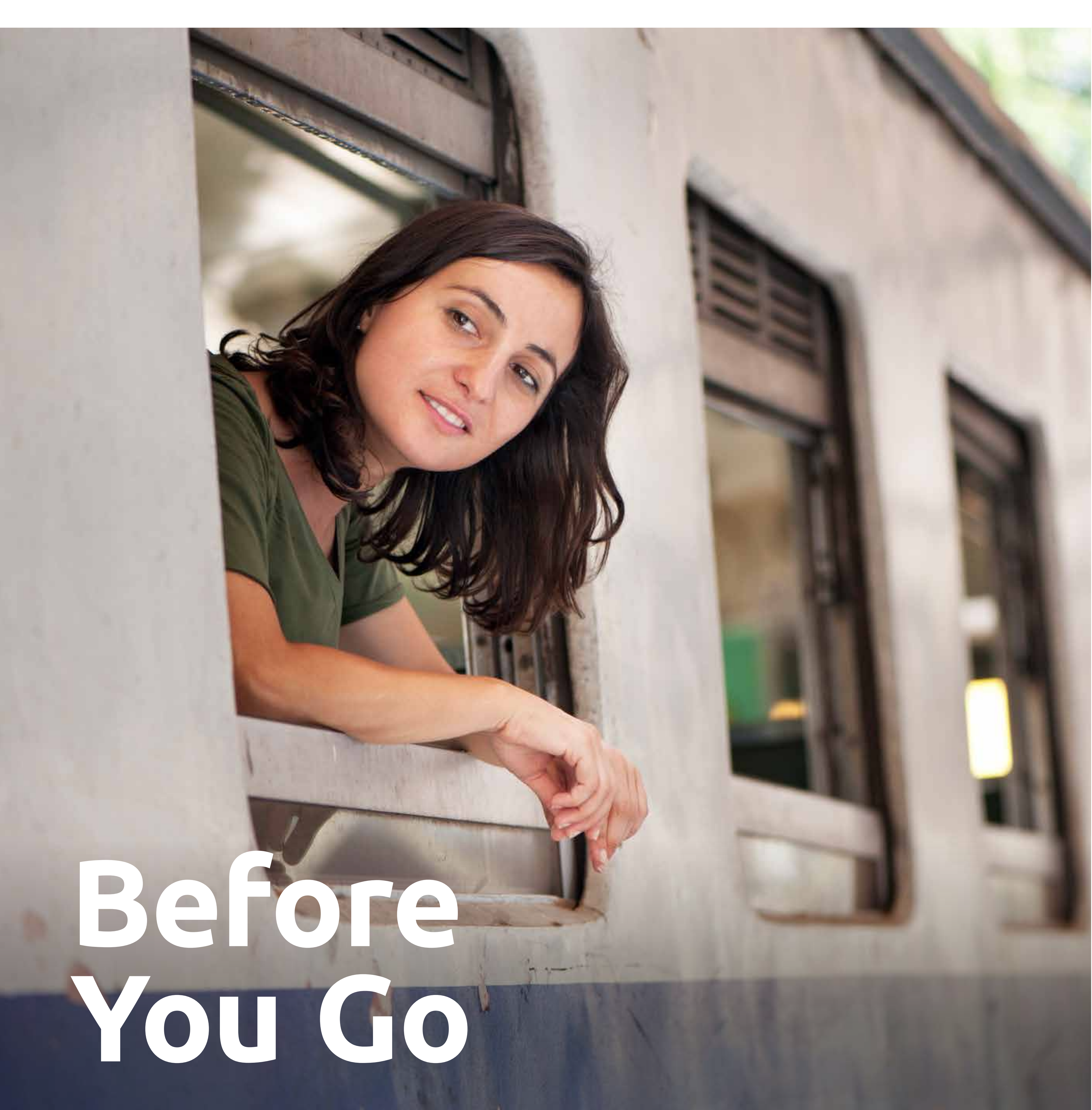
Deepika Garg, via Twitter

“

I used Tinder in Hong Kong to meet people while on a short trip there. Ended up having some great nights in Lang Kwai Fong. Also used it in communist China, where there was a selection of expats and some locals – even though it would appear to be very difficult to get on to the app over there.



Adam Cheesbrough, via Facebook



Before You Go

Allright! Your flights are booked and you've locked in that homestay in Vietnam. It's time to pack your bags and get your vaccinations. Oops, did you check if you needed visas? How many sweaters will you really need for 6 months in Europe? Don't miss a thing with our pro tips and checklists for before you go.

The Ultimate Pre-Travel Checklist

1. Know your location

Do your research on each location at least a month or two before you go. First, understand what visa you need and how soon you need it, as well as what other documents you may need to show. Some places need proof that you will leave the country by your visa expiration date.

Before plotting out your must-sees and must-eats, read up on the essentials: Know how public transport runs, find out how and where to exchange money, read up on seasonal weather patterns, investigate food and water safety...

The list goes on – but, these are ultimately the things that will make or break your trip.

Beyond relying on traditional travel guides and resources, join online groups for travelers and expats. Facebook groups have also proven to be great ways to make connections before you go and staying informed about vital news and events happening in specific locations.

2. Organize your paperwork

Triple-check expiration dates on your passports and visas. Note the address and phone number for each of your accommodations (you'll often need this at customs), as well as emergency contact info, including your country's nearest embassy or consulate.



It's a good idea to email yourself and/or a trusted friend or family member copies of your essential documents, including your passport, visa, and travel insurance.

You can also use a protected cloud service, just be sure to encrypt these files with a password.

3. Check your personal health & safety

Check with a travel doctor at least one to two months before your trip, to obtain all necessary vaccinations and medications. If you're on prescription medications, check with your doctor to see how those prescriptions can be refilled on the road if necessary. It might also be worth checking that you won't have any issues at foreign customs with these medications. Sometimes you'll require a certificate to prove that they are prescribed for you.

“
Read up on the essentials: Know how public transport runs, find out how and where to exchange money, read up on seasonal weather patterns, investigate food and water safety.”

BEFORE YOU GO

Put together a small, packable first-aid kit. The necessities for this kit will vary by your location. It's always a good idea to bring non-refrigerated probiotics for immune and digestive support, and some high-quality unrefined sea salt – which can be used to make an excellent electrolyte solution, alongside a sugar source (like honey), and citrus juice.

4. Get insured

Buying travel insurance is one of the most important ways to prepare for your trip. Make sure you read through the policy wording to see what's covered and what's not so there aren't any surprises.

The key benefits to look for are overseas medical expenses, cancellation, and cover for your tech and bags. Match up your trip with the benefit limits so you can travel confidently.

It's a good idea to buy travel insurance as soon as you start booking your trip, so you can protect yourself against unforeseen situations that the policy covers.

5. Prepare your money & banking

Notify your bank and credit card companies of your travel plans, and note their emergency contact info in case your card is lost or compromised.

Get a card without ATM or international fees, or explore getting a travel money card to save on conversion fees.

Sort out your bills, and cancel or suspend accounts that you won't be using – like internet, cable, phone, and subscription services.

6. Stay connected

Organize your electronics and all accompanying cords in secure compartments that are easily accessible to you, but not to the potential pickpocket. There are various locks you can get to attach to any style of bag. Depending on your level of adventure, you can get waterproof cases for laptops, handheld devices, and camera equipment.

Don't forget adaptors and chargers, and always have a backup – inevitably one will work better than the other on any given outlet.

Make sure your smartphone is unlocked before getting a SIM card in your new destination. For some human connection, set up an account with Skype or WhatsApp to stay in touch with your loved ones.

7. Sort out your luggage

Consider every aspect of your travel, and how you'll feel most secure and comfortable lugging your stuff around. Backpacks are typically better for mobility, while a suitcase allows for tidier organization.

Everyone is different – so do your research to find the right size and specs for you and your adventure!

8. Do a practice run

Try living out of your luggage for one week, and see what you can and can't live without. You'll likely realize your survival is not dependent on that extra pair of shorts. Just bare in mind the climate you're traveling through and decide accordingly.

“

It's a good idea to buy travel insurance as soon as you start booking your trip, so you can protect yourself against unforeseen situations that the policy covers.

Money Matters

Hitting the road on a budget can be really intimidating if you haven't done it before – but trust us, it's 100% possible to travel the world without being rich!

Sticking to a travel budget

There are lots of tricks and hacks you can use to stretch your money further, but it's important to set yourself a rough budget when you travel so that you don't suddenly run out of cash.

Work on a weekly budget rather than a daily budget, as some days are always going to be more expensive than others. Be sure to factor in your three main costs – transportation, accommodation, and food.

If you're hitting the road on the cheap, do yourself a favor and head to a country like Nepal, Nicaragua, Iran, or Bulgaria, where your money is worth so much more than Australia, America, or Western Europe.



Brian Rapsey



One of the best things you can do is to follow the example of the locals: Eat local street food, use local transport, and make use of the sharing economy: Couchsurfing, in particular, is a fantastic way to save your cash, and you get to hang out with a local in their home country.

Cash vs. cards

In some parts of the world, it's much simpler to carry cash on you rather than relying on bank cards. Just be sure to hide your cash extremely well throughout your pack or on your person.

There are some cards out there which are better than others. Travel banking can be a bit of a head-spinner, but with more and more travel cash cards hitting the market, the options for backpackers are improving.

Whatever you do before you hit

“
One of the best things you can do is to follow the example of the locals: Eat local street food, use local transport, and make use of the sharing economy.”

BEFORE YOU GO

the road, be sure to inform your bank you're heading abroad so that they don't cancel your account when they see an unexpected transaction from the frigid mountains of Backpackistan.

Keeping money safe

If you are going to be carrying a lot of cash on you, you need to keep that money safe.

Hide cash in your shoes, in specially-sewn trouser pockets, and or even in between laminated photos of your family.

Carry a dummy wallet with no cards and just a few dollars to hand over if you do find yourself in a dodgy situation – it's a good tactic for keeping yourself safe.

Exchanging money on the road

In general, it makes sense to try and change your money with a bank rather than in an airport.

You might also hear from fellow travelers in the hostel that you can get a much better exchange rate on the black market – for example, apparently in Venezuela, the black market exchange rate is three hundred times (that's not a typo) better than what you can get at a bank.

That said, it's always better to be safe than sorry, as you run the risk of receiving fake currency (what even is a bolívar supposed to look like?), illegitimately-gotten funds, or even harm to your personal safety.

We hate to sound like your parents here, but be warned and stay smart!



Top 4 Tips for Traveling on the Cheap

1. Camp Out or Couchsurf

While hostelling is a fantastic experience, camping allows you to reconnect with nature, disconnect from social media, and learn some handy wilderness tools to boot. When I'm not camping, I often find a local host on Couchsurfing. It's free, and is a fantastic way to land in a new town with a social life. Your host will often be keen to show you around and take you to places many other travelers miss.

2. Hitchhike!

"Hitching a ride with a stranger can be pretty intimidating, but I've had some truly incredible adventures through hitchhiking and saved a ton of money as well. Check out [hitchwiki](#) for plenty of useful intel, and check local laws to make sure it's not illegal where you currently are. As hitchhiking does carry some risk, keep yourself safe by trusting your gut and, where possible, hitchhike with a buddy.

3. Eat Local

Avoid plush tourist restaurants, which are often owned by international corporations, and instead, focus on spending your dollars where they count – with local people. Try to find somewhere that's busy with local people. You can bet that food here will be delicious and safe!

4. Volunteer

If you're traveling long-term, you'll quickly discover that there is actually a lot of job opportunities for backpackers on the road. But an even better way to cut down on your costs, and to give something back, is to pick up a volunteering gig. Just be sure that you're donating your time with a reputable organization.

Will Hatton – BrokeBackpacker.com

What's in My Pack? The Ultimate Backpacking Essentials

“

For my big trip, I left with 8kg of carry-on luggage only. I had a tiny camera, a tiny notebook and the bare minimum in clothing. If you're going for a long time, don't pack everything you need for a year. Pack for the season you're starting in and swap/change/buy clothes as you go along.

Also, forget souvenirs, knick-knacks, keepsakes... Don't keep every ticket for every museum you went to. Sentiment has no place in a carry-on trip.

Never, ever travel with anything you can't afford to lose, and leave your jewellery at home!



Mark Seldon, World Nomads Group

“

I wouldn't leave home without my travel washing line, thongs for the showers, and my sleep sheet for when you're staying in the last room available in town and it's really skanky.



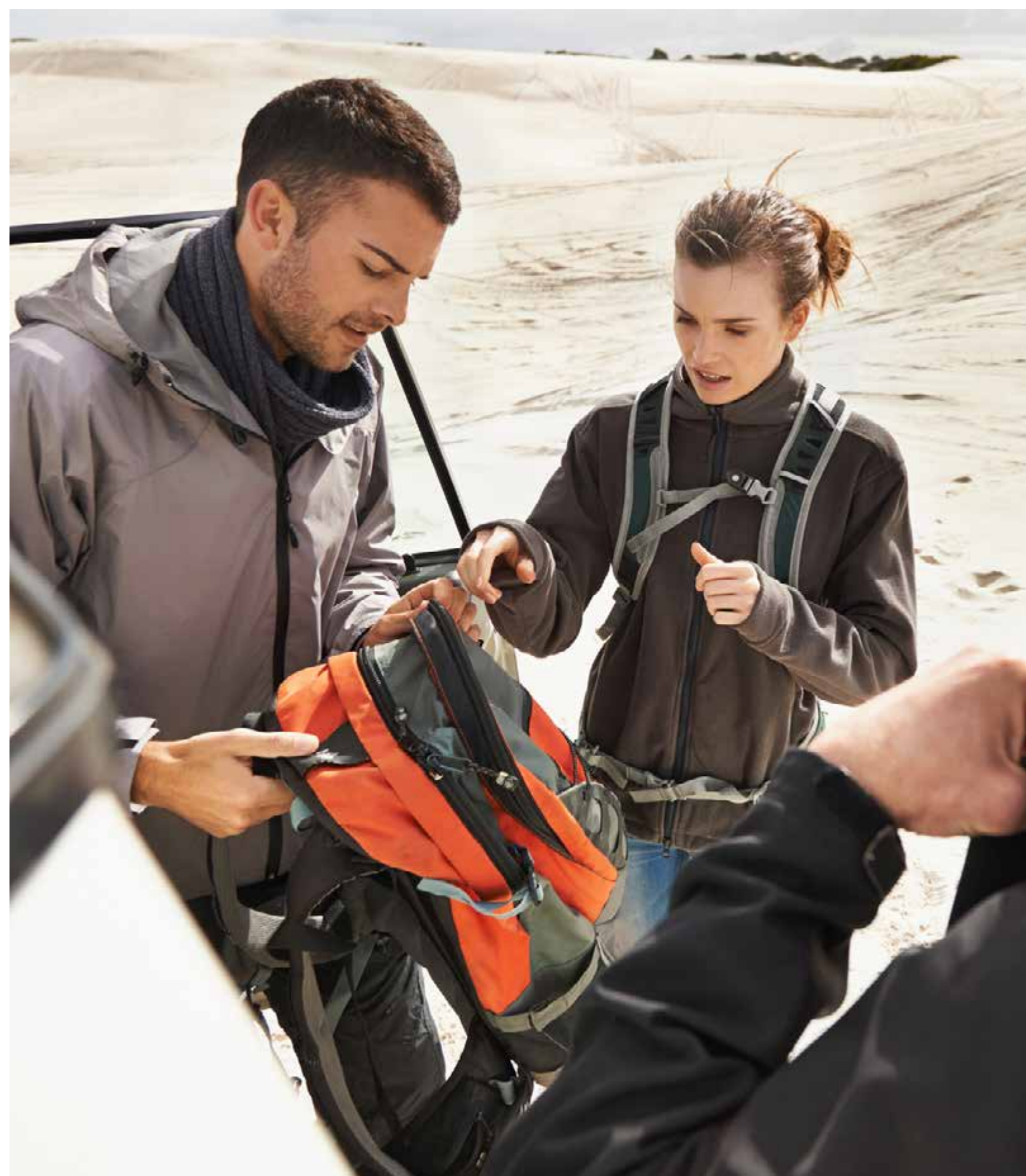
Emily Willis, World Nomads

“

Ear plugs and an eye-mask. Who wants to hear or see what goes on in shared rooms at night?



Christina Tunnah, World Nomads



“

I always take a carry-on – regardless of the duration of the trip – with enough clothes for two weeks. The pieces are carefully selected to make sure they are versatile to be worn with everything – long live basics! – and that they fit the type of activities I'll be doing.

To avoid "just in case items" stick with the 20/20 Rule. It states that anything can be replaced for less than \$20 in less than 20 minutes from my current location. And in all my years of travelling, this has always held true!



Diana Costa, Contributor

“

I always travel with my ENO Hammock! It's small and easy to throw into my carry on - aside from being a great way to relax just about anywhere, it's also instant bed if needed. I have actually used it to sleep in an airport when my flight was cancelled!



Julie Davidson, via Facebook

“

Chopsticks: Not just for trips to Asia, but they double up for propping books on the beach, hanging toiletry bags in shared showers, hair ties, setting up a privacy screen from a bunk bed, passing through bolt holes to lock a door, and whisking eggs on a camp trip.



Christina Tunnah, World Nomads

“

If you're like me, and like to wake up to the news of the world (or news of Facebook) while you're in bed, then pack a 3-meter charging cable. Seriously - it'll change your life.



Martin Hong, World Nomads

“

Always pack spare chargers and memory cards. If you've never left a phone charger or camera charger behind in an airport or hotel room, then you probably haven't travelled enough yet! Always pack spares with universal adapters to avoid flat technology.



Alexis Zahner, Contributor



“

Some kind of light blanket/towel for public transport with air-con – those ferries and buses can get pretty chilly! This can also double as a curtain when it's necessary.



Jess Grey, World Nomads

“

Being an avid hiker, I always bring along zip-lock bags. They serve as a de-facto dry sac, a packing cube, to hold snacks, keep your rubbish in regions without bins, or store leaky waste – and they barely take up any space!



Stefan Chan, World Nomads Group

“

You'll definitely need a neck pillow for long flights and buses. I'd strongly recommend a lock for your bag/locker to keep your belongings safe in hostels and in transit. An eye mask is crucial for hostels – you'll thank yourself when someone stumbles in at 3am using their phone as a torch. A micro-fibre towel doesn't dry humans well, but it dries so quickly that you won't have a sopping wet towel when it comes to packing again.



Jess Grey, World Nomads Group

“

Pyjamas for getting to/from shared bathrooms in hostels. A big coffee cup if you hate tiny hotel ones. A sarong, which will work as a wrap, towel, raincoat, skirt or blanket. Incense for smelly hotel or hostel rooms. Fluffy socks for sore feet after trekking. A poncho. And sporks.



Zoe Shipley, via Facebook

“

A hat, or a bandana to wrap around my head. Sunglasses and sun cream, especially if you get burnt easily. A camera and a good book. I often also carry a notepad to write down my impressions!



Giulia Cipollina, via Facebook

“

Do not forget insect repellent. This comes from someone who is allergic to mosquito bites, and missed a whole night's sleep on the Mekong playing ninja with mosquitoes that got beneath the bug-proof net.



Milly McGrath, World Nomads

“

A battery-powered phone charger. Pens for immigration and customs forms. A first-aid kit, essential oils, and baby wipes.



Lori Lu Green LeRoy, via Facebook

“

Pack a small tactical flashlight for those times when the power goes out, or you close the bar on a dark street in Kathmandu.



Randy Zaddach, via Facebook

“

For shorter trips, you might want to take a big camera (if you know how to use it properly!). But if you do, you'll be checking in luggage.



Mark Seldon, World Nomads Group



“

A lightweight but durable scarf. Aside from serving as a plain old scarf, it can be a shawl when it's cool, a head covering when culturally appropriate, a towel or a pillow in a pinch. If you forget it, you can always pick one up on the road – which also makes a lovely souvenir.



Alicia Crosariol, World Nomads

“

Get smarter with your gear: you don't need a giant DSLR these days to get amazing photos. I've downsized my gear to a mirrorless system which is at least a third of the size. The bonus is you can always carry that with you, so you'll naturally take more photos.



Martin Hong, World Nomads

Tech & Travel: Gear You Need vs What to Leave at Home

Wondering which tech gear to take on your trip, or how to keep it safe? Unsure how to back up your photos, or when to put the phone away? Here's what you need to know about tech and travel.

Do you really need that?

It's common to carry laptops and expensive cameras around the world – but do you really need them?

Typically, no. If you're not working online while traveling, leave the laptop behind. An iPad or tablet still offers everything from research to Facebook, watching movies to Skyping grandma, and it's cheaper, lighter, and has better battery life.



Similarly, unless you're a serious photographer, don't lug a DSLR around. The quality of compact cameras, or even smartphone cameras – especially on high-end devices – is now remarkably good. If you don't need a long zoom-lens, perhaps retire the bulky camera.

Keep it safe

Don't flash your gear around, especially in poorer countries. That's especially true for phones – it takes seconds for thieves to grab smartphones from distracted tourists, and it happens regularly.

Make sure your luggage is lockable, or your accommodation has secure storage, and use it when heading out. Nothing's foolproof against a determined thief, but even minor obstacles push them towards an easier target.

“An iPad or tablet still offers everything from research to Facebook, watching movies to Skyping grandma, and it's cheaper, lighter, and has better battery life.”

BEFORE YOU GO

Backing up memories

Backing up is boring, but losing all your trip memories is devastating. The answer? Make it automatic so you don't have to think about it.

If you're taking photos on your phone, it's easy. Just enable photo backup in iCloud, Dropbox, or Google Photos, and if you've got decent Wi-Fi access fairly often, you're set.

When shooting on a camera, a portable drive with a built-in card reader makes the process almost as simple.

Either way, a little effort up front makes a huge difference. Don't let a corrupt memory card or stolen phone ruin your trip!

Traveling with a drone

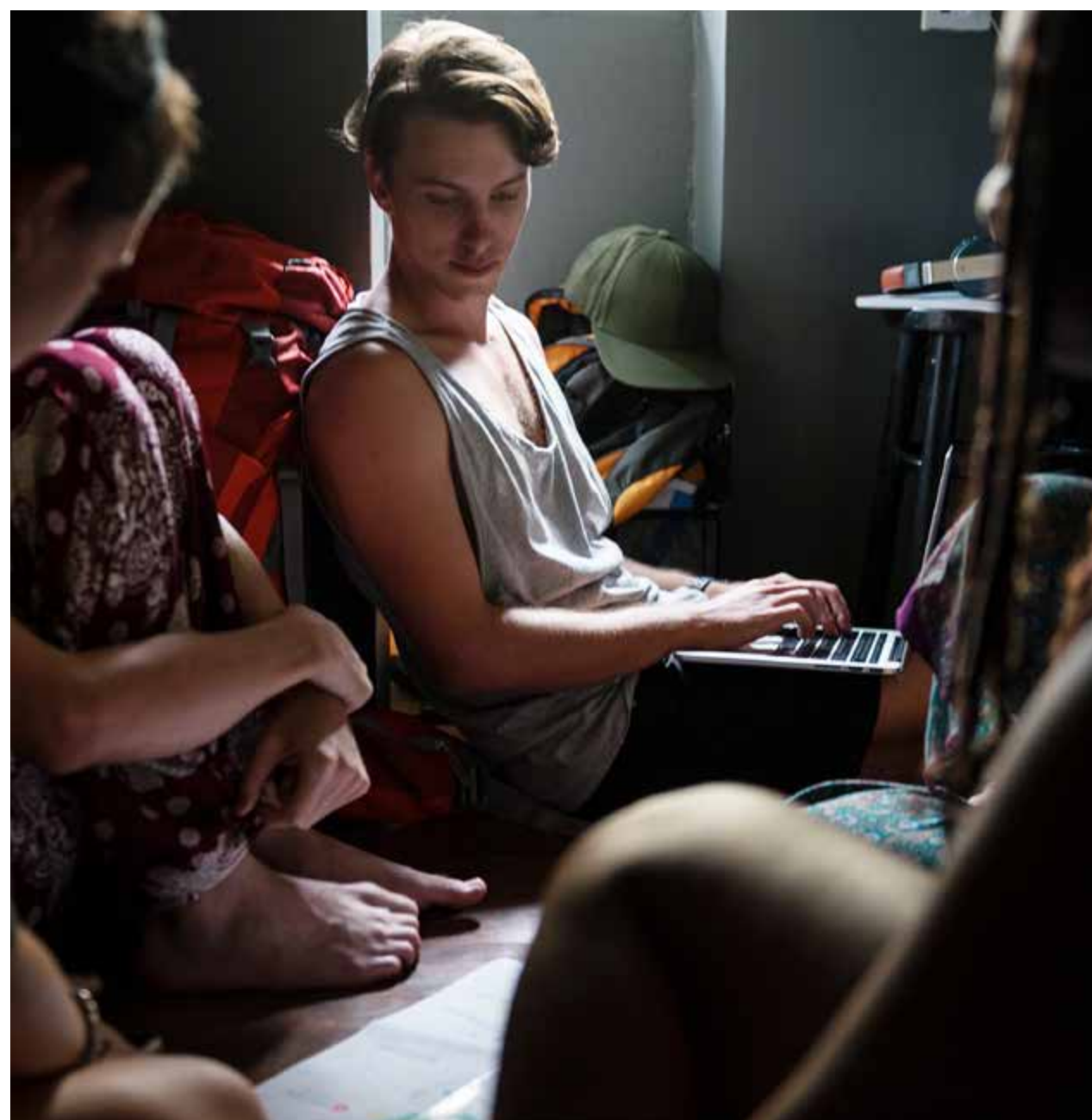
Thanks to their popularity, drone prices have dropped significantly, and are becoming more beginner-friendly in their designs. These days, it's not uncommon for travelers to think of adding one of these to their kit.

If that sounds like you – and they're a great way to take your travel pics to a whole new level – there are a few specific things to know.

First, always take it with you on the plane as carry-on. That way, you can always see it, and you can guarantee it's being handled with care.

Besides, the batteries in most drones are LiPo and contain lithium, which means they cannot be packaged in your checked luggage. They must go on as carry-on.

They should be depleted to about 30% charge and protected from short-



circuiting: place a small amount of tape over the connectors and place each battery inside a zip-seal plastic bag. This is normally more than sufficient.

Most airlines will allow you to take two spare batteries, but always check with your airline.

Finally, security at the airport will almost always pull it to one side for additional checks and often want to see the batteries, so make sure you allow enough time before boarding.

When to put the camera down

There's a place for technology when traveling, but there's also a time to put it away and live in the moment. Don't get hung up on perfect photos or flawless Instagram posts – travel is about more than social media likes.

The conversations with strangers, the streets you accidentally turn down, the memory of a perfect night on the beach with new friends – these are the memories that stick around long after your travels are done. The fewer distractions between you and spontaneity, the more memorable your trip becomes.

The Digital Nomad Tech List

Smartphone – if money's tight, the Moto G series does most things well. For the best photos and performance, choose the latest Apple and Samsung Galaxy models.

Tablet or Kindle – if you love to read, the Kindle Paperwhite has great battery life and a light that won't wake others. Otherwise, pick an iPad or Asus Zenpad 10 with plenty of storage, or use your phone.

Multi-USB Adapter – finding power sockets is always hard, so pack a two or four-way USB wall adapter for multiple devices.

Extra-long Charging Cable – speaking of sockets, since they're never where you need them, an extra-long charging cable makes all the difference.

Noise-isolating Earphones – finally, a pair of good noise-isolating earphones or headphones are invaluable in noisy dorms and on overnight journeys.

Useful Apps to Make Travel Simple & Stay Organized

Downloading the right apps will make travel easier, while the wrong ones just waste space on your phone. With so much on the app store, how do you know which is which?

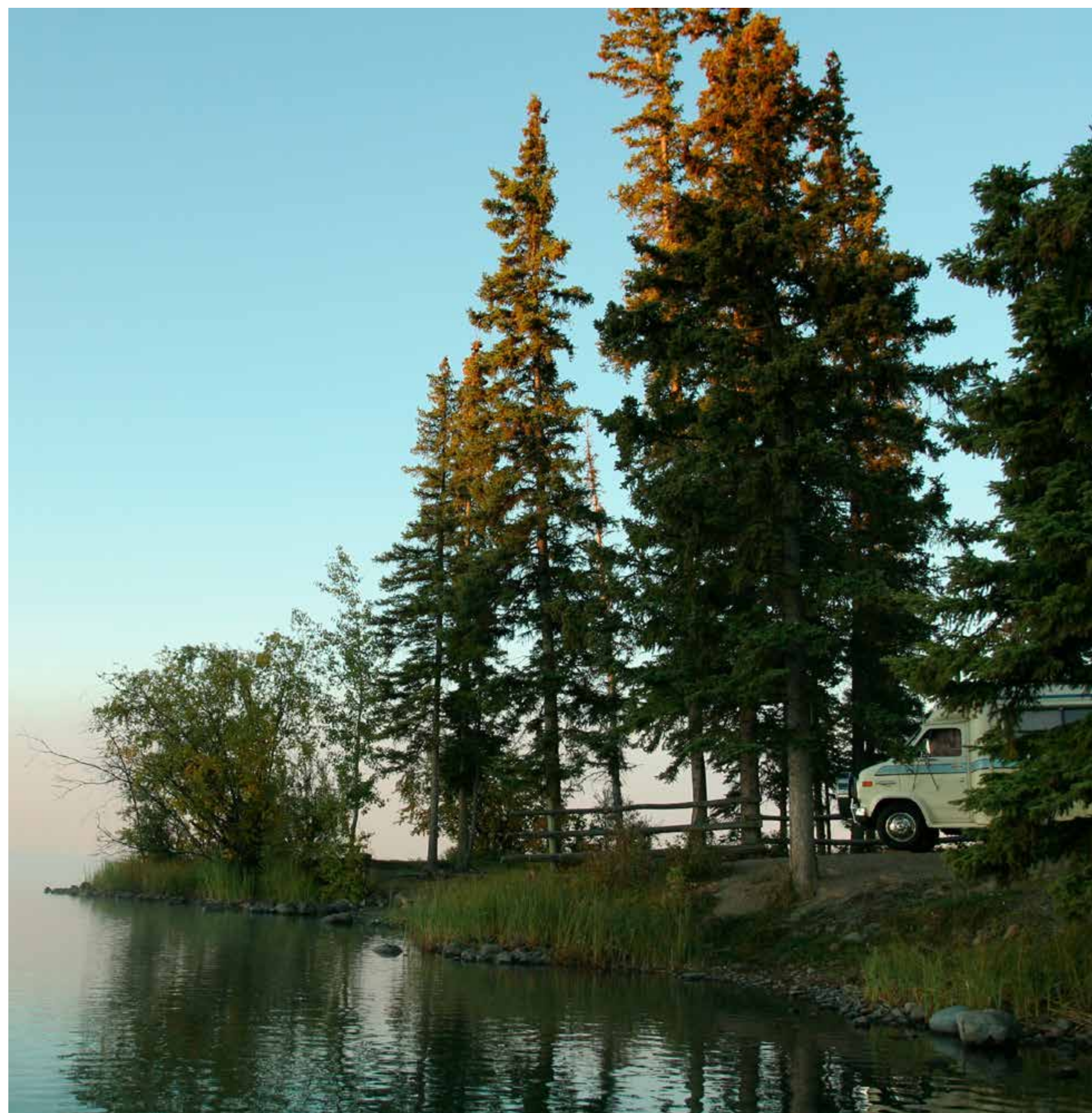
Language apps

Whether you're translating the menu in a tiny restaurant in rural Cambodia or working out how to ask for directions to the Paris metro, [Google Translate](#) has the answer. It's available for most devices, easy to use, and has downloadable language packs so you don't even need an internet connection.

If translating conversations is more your thing, check out [iTranslate Voice](#) (iOS/Android) instead. Just pick a pair of languages, then start talking. The app will translate both sides of the conversation with surprising accuracy. You can also look up phrases using your voice, and save common translations to help jog your memory.

Tracking expenses

Don't know your baht from your bolivars? [XE Currency](#) to the rescue. With simple, automatic translation from one currency into any number of others, It



“
iTranslate Voice will translate both sides of the conversation with surprising accuracy.

saves you from rip-offs and helps with budgeting. It works fully offline, too, updating with the latest exchange rates whenever you reconnect.

When you're traveling on a budget, [Trail Wallet](#) (iOS) is the easiest way to keep tabs on your expenses. It's quick to add and categorize costs in any currency, and you can track daily and long-term progress against your preset budget.

Booking apps

There's an endless number of flight-finding apps, but [Skyscanner](#) remains one of the biggest and best, especially for flexible travelers. Quickly search for flights to "everywhere" from any airport, or find the best deal over an entire month, then get taken straight to the purchase screen.

If you're not really one for planning, [Hotel Tonight](#) (iOS / Android) is a great

BEFORE YOU GO

way of finding deals on last-minute accommodation. Discounted rooms vetted by the company appear in the app up to a week in advance, and you can book with a couple of clicks.

Trip planners

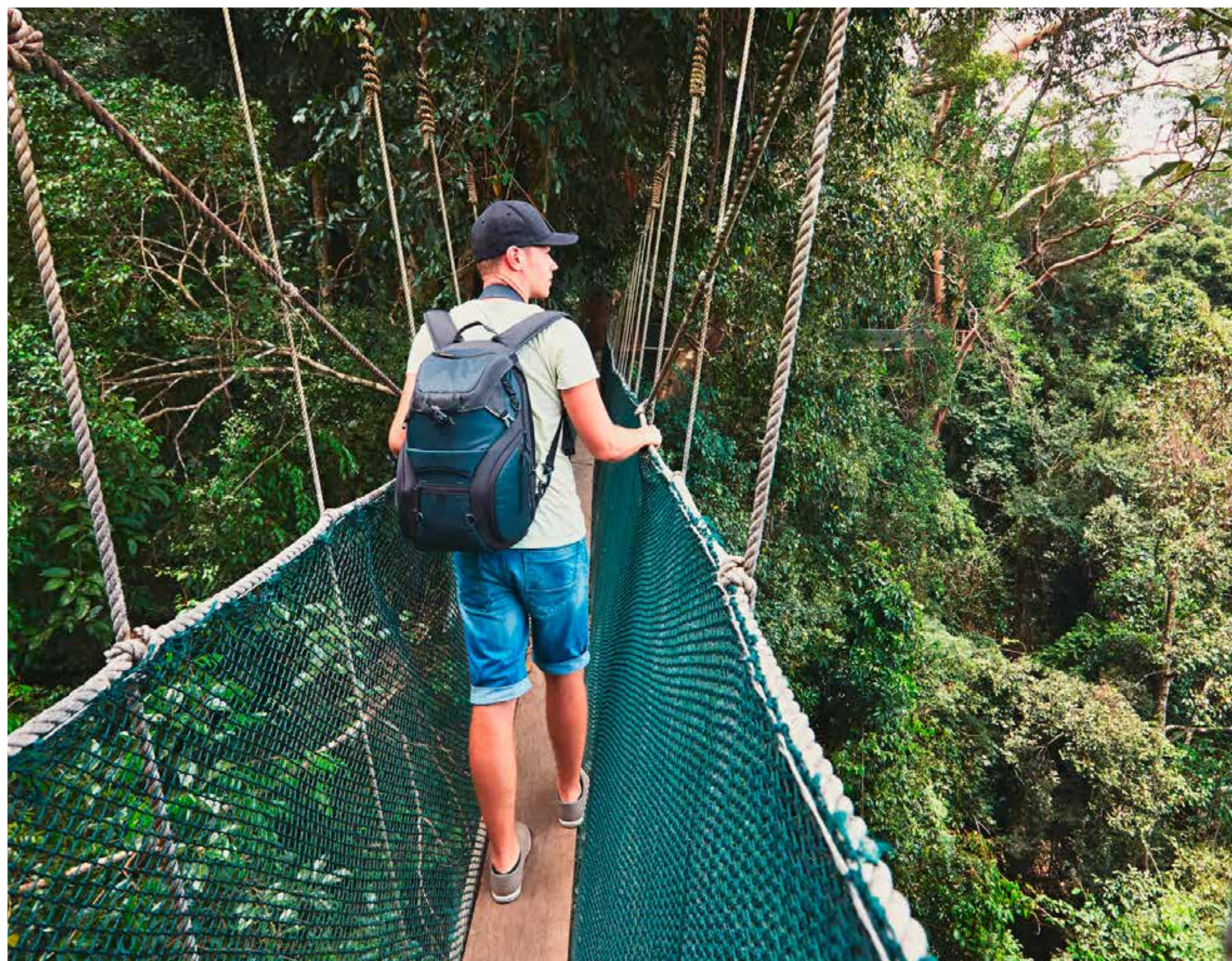
For solid destination advice without lugging ‘round a guidebook, download [Triposo](#). Download the (large) guides for each country before you go, and get a wealth of background information, plus activity, hotel and restaurant recommendations, maps, phrasebooks and more. It’s super-useful, works offline, and is totally free.

Hate carrying paper copies of all your bookings? Download [Tripit](#) instead. Simply forward email confirmations to the service, and it creates an offline itinerary in the mobile app. It recognizes most flights, hotels, trains, car rentals, and more, and you can add your own entries as needed.

Getting around

Active in about 77 countries and 527 cities, [Uber](#) is particularly handy when you’re abroad. You can find a car quickly, and there’s no need for cash. It’s also a great way to chat to locals to get insider tips and advice, and in some cases (especially with the new “Pool” option), it may even be cheaper – and more direct – than local public transport.

Speaking of public transport, [Google Maps](#) is not only one of the best navigation apps around, it’s great for getting to know the public transport options to get from A to B, including



“**Download maps for offline use to help navigate – just make sure you have an extra battery pack to keep your phone charged if you’re using GPS all day.**”

timetable information of when the next bus is leaving. If you have a local sim or access to WiFi, it can even check to see how busy a place is in real time to help you avoid the crowds.

You can also download maps for offline use to help navigate – just make sure you have an extra battery pack to keep your phone charged if you’re using GPS all day.

Time and weather apps

Need to know when to call home to Mom, or to shout at the bank for blocking your card? [World Clock](#) (Android) lets you check the time in any number of countries at once. A world clock is built into iOS, but for more features, check out [World Clock App](#) instead.

Not a fan of the weather app that comes with your phone? Try [1Weather](#) instead. It’s more accurate, with daily, weekly or long-range forecasts for your current location, or anywhere else in the world. It even tells you if it’s going to rain in the next hour.

BEFORE YOU GO

Are you Fit Enough to Travel?

If you've ever been really sick in a strange land, you know that this is one area you should take seriously. So, before you stuff your swimmers or kindle into that backpack, make sure you've also looked after the really important stuff.

Vaccinations

Make sure you're up to date with standard immunizations like tetanus, diphtheria, polio, measles, and rubella. Check with your GP or specialist travelers medical center at least six weeks before departure for any additional vaccinations or medications required for your destination.

Malaria

Find out if you'll be traveling through a malarial area and if you are, take the correct anti-malarial medication for the particular region (this varies according to the destination and the mosquitos' resistance levels).

Prescription medicine

When traveling with prescription medication, carry it in your hand luggage, along with a copy of the prescription and a letter from your doctor.

The letter should include the

name of the medicine, the dosage, how much you need to travel with, and state that the medicine is for your personal use. Also, remember your optical prescription if you wear prescription glasses.

Some drugs, particularly those classified as drugs of addiction (like ones containing codeine or strong painkillers) shouldn't be transported into another country – even if you have a legal prescription for them.

If you take medication that is administered by self-injection, you should also check with the embassy or consulate of the country you are visiting to make sure you can travel with your own needles or syringes and inform your airline.

Dental

Don't forget to get a dental check-up before you leave as well! Depending on where you're going, dental services may be few and far between (and can be very expensive).

Staying healthy on the road

There's nothing worse than being ill far away from home, but if you travel for long enough, it's bound to happen. That doesn't mean you can't stay alert and minimize your chances of getting sick.

Our best tip? Wash your hands frequently, and carry a little bottle of hand sanitizer. The other is to watch what you eat: most travelers don't get enough sleep, eat poorly, and drink a lot. Yes, you're here to have fun, but keep things in moderation.

“There's nothing worse than being ill far away from home, but if you travel for long enough, it's bound to happen. That doesn't mean you can't stay alert and minimize your chances of getting sick.”

BEFORE YOU GO

Travel First Aid Kit

If there's one tip you take away from this guide, it's to always travel with a personal medical kit. Why? Primarily because you need this stuff quickly and readily available – and that's not always possible when you're traveling.

How to plan for what to bring

A good travel first-aid kit contains just enough to deal with potential problems, but still light enough to be carried.

First, think about where you're going and what you'll be doing – knowing the risks of the area and activities will help make sure you pack useful medication.

Next, know how many people you're traveling with, any existing medical problems they may have, and their ages. You'll need to know this for commonly-used items like pain control or anti-diarrhea medicine.

Finally, consider how many days you are traveling so you know exactly how much of everything to bring.

Your first-aid kit essentials

This list can be expanded depending on where you are going and what your doctor advises, but basics should include:

- Antiseptic cream/lotion
- Sunscreen
- Headache tablets
- Band-aids/gauze
- Small scissors/tweezers
- Any antibiotics or prescription drugs

- (with a letter and a copy of the prescription from your doctor)
- Crepe bandage + safety pins or butterfly closures
- Contraceptives (again, take a copy of the prescription from your doctor)
- Latex gloves
- Hand sanitizer... (basic hygiene also goes a long way to ensuring you don't get sick in the first place)

Going off the grid

If you are going off the beaten track or to developing countries, also pack:

- Anti-diarrhoea tablets and laxatives (for changes in diet and water quality)
- Fluid and electrolyte replacement medications (eg. Gastrolyte, a water-soluble powder)
- Water purification tablets
- Malaria tablets - this varies according to the destination and the mosquitos' resistance levels.
- Antihistamines – very useful for savage insect bites

For adventure travelers

Well, you're getting into a whole new league here. Exactly what adventure you're undertaking should dictate what else to pack. It's fair to say, you might need:

- A sling (do you know how many people sprain/break limbs whilst in the snow?)
- Additional wound treatments – the self-adhesive kinds are especially handy to have. Mountain-bikers, take note!
- If you've missed the point above about antibiotics because it means a trip to a doctor to get a prescription... think again.

“

A good travel first-aid kit contains just enough to deal with potential problems, but still light enough to be carried.

How Do You Deal with Pre-Travel Jitters?

“

Don't focus on what you're leaving behind, or the "what-ifs". Immerse yourself in all the cool things you're about to do! Before I leave, I always read up on the latest blogs, download a guide, or get a good-old-fashioned guidebook at the airport bookstore and check out recommendations on what to see/eat/do when I get there. You'll soon get excited about all the cool new experiences you're about to have, and everything else will fall into place.



Martin Hong, World Nomads

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The more people you tell, the more real it becomes. They may also challenge why you're doing what you're doing, and it gives you a chance to really defend your decision. For me, this served to justify my decision and forced me to answer a few questions that I'd put off regarding my trip. In short, face your jitters head on and just go – I don't know anyone who has regretted going traveling. Really, no one.



Alicia Crosariol, World Nomads

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Know that whatever happens, your friends and family are only a flight away if you need to come home. Know that everyone is apprehensive before a big trip, especially if you're going alone.



Jess Grey, World Nomads Group



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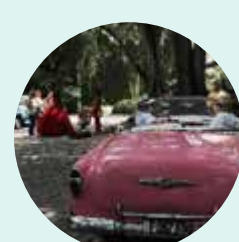
When I quit my first full-time job to go traveling, it was one of the biggest "what the hell am I doing?" moments of my life. The first part of my trip was booked in a comfortable, cheap place, where I stayed for a week to travel slow, get myself used to a new routine, and have more free time. I was then able to make the rest of my trip move faster, only staying in one location for a short period of time. My advice would be to station the first part of your trip (say, a week or two) to adjust in one spot – that way it won't be too daunting.



Veronica Mercado, World Nomads

“

Recognize the reasons you're feeling uneasy, and have a good plan in place to deal with these anxieties before you go. A little bit of research goes a long way! Once you've identified why you're worried or anxious, remind yourself why you chose to travel in the first place – that should balance things out.



PossesstheWorld, via Twitter

“

I like to plan my trips well in advance and pack a week prior. That way, when the day comes to travel there isn't a last-minute scramble to buy equipment or knick-knacks. You can't account for every scenario, but you'll cover most of them.



Stefan Chan, World Nomads Group

“

Practice taking little steps outside of your comfort zone – whether that be a solo hike, an overnight camping trip in the rain, catching public transport to an area you're unfamiliar with, or sampling a cuisine you're unfamiliar with. These little steps will help put you in a better place to deal with a foreign country, and make experiences less overwhelming.



Traveler's Mindset

“

Run your concerns through Google. Chances are, someone has already been in your position, and conquered it. Travel forums also have great advice.



Deepika Garg, via Twitter



“

You don't have to rush on arrival. Sit, get your bearings – it's all about you, and shouldn't feel forced to do anything! Or, totally ignore it. Remember it's totally normal to be worried, and think back to other times you've had that fear, and great things have followed.



Weeze x Christina, via Twitter

“

I always made a point of trying to find one person who was a friend-of-a-friend, and would be open to meeting me for a coffee – or at the very least, offer advice about logistics. Locals have all the knowledge, like, knowing to ignore the taxi touts saying the last bus just left.



Christina Tunnah, World Nomads

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Don't ignore it. Embrace it. Fear and excitement are basically the same things. Take pride in challenging your fear.



Mark Seldon, World Nomads Group



Tips for the Road

You're here! You've landed in chaotic Delhi or Koh Samui and you're not ready for the touts and tuk tuks, and – why didn't anyone tell you about the HEAT? From Hostel 101 to how not to be an insensitive foreigner, we've got some tried and hilariously tested tips ahead.

Overcoming Jetlag

The one part of travel that nobody enjoys. Jetlag – also called desynchronization – can affect anyone. Here’s how the best in the business deal with it.

Take it easy before departure

All the preamble of packing and preparing for a trip is exciting and sometimes stressful. Greg Geronemus, the co-CEO of [smarTours](#), advises his clients to stay relaxed before departure.

“Avoid a hectic last night or a bon-voyage party. Plan as if you’re leaving two days before you really are.”

Sleep on the plane

If you’re traveling overnight, it’s a great idea to skip the movie and try to sleep on the plane. Although you won’t feel as rested as you would if you’d slept a full night in bed, you’ll have more energy than if you stay awake for the whole flight.

Avoid alcohol

When the cart comes down the aisle, nix the wine and order water. Consuming alcohol may make you feel drowsy, but it’ll also increase dehydration – which can exacerbate jet lag.

Heather Sanchez, a crew member of ten-years who’s traveled the world with Hawaiian Airlines, knows the importance of staying hydrated while flying, “The longer the flight, the more

water you should be drinking.” she says.

Get some exercise

Once you arrive at your destination, if it’s too early to head to bed, grab your joggers, pop on some music and get your sweat on. Exercise wastes time and wears you out physically – which might be just what you need to put your head down and catch some restorative z’s.

Soak up the sunshine

As soon you get to your destination and you’ve caught up on some sleep, it’s important to get as much sunshine as possible. [UCLA sleep expert Dr. Alon Avidan](#) says that an absence of light causes a surge in melatonin, which makes us feel sleepy.

When traveling westward: Maximize exposure to bright light in the evening. If you’re heading east, maximize exposure to bright light in the morning.

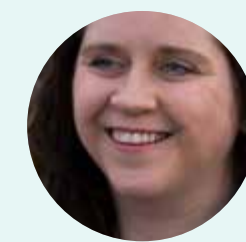
Switch to the new time zone ASAP

Dan Boland, founder of Holidayayers, has been an international airline pilot for over 10 years and has encountered his fair share of groggy days as his internal body clock tried hard to adapt to a new time zone.

He advises travelers to adjust to the time in their new destination and change their watches as soon as they land. If you arrive at bedtime, try to sleep. If you arrive in the morning, try to stay up.

“

My watch automatically adjusts to whatever time zone I’m in, this helps enormously in forgetting what time it is back at home and tricks my brain into adapting to my new locale. Jet lag is a travel hassle, but it’s a small price to pay for the chance to get out and explore.



Fiona Tapp,
via Twitter

What's Your Most Embarrassing Travel Faux Pas?

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While traveling long-distance on a train in Germany, I was sniffing – and I was without tissues. The passenger across the aisle shoved me a pack of tissues. It was weeks later I was told sniffing was a no-no – cue awkwardness, because I told the story as a funny anecdote.



Yvonne Tang-Hauk, via Facebook

“

We had a challenge when we tried to get a sticker to allow us to drive in Munich – we were in a borrowed car, and had to order the sticker, and then have it mailed to Croatia. Not sure if this is still the case, but it's a good idea to check the latest rules and regulations in case what you heard by word-of-mouth is out of date.



Ellen Hall, World Nomads

“

I sat next to a monk on a bus in northern Thailand. A no-no it turns out.

Leaving tips in Japan – very insulting, apparently.

Sitting on a train in Tokyo with legs crossed, such that the bottom of the shoe faces up – boy, did I get the stink eye.



Christina Tunnah, World Nomads



“

When visiting any temples in Asia, make sure your shoulders and knees are covered. If you're sitting in front of a Buddha, your feet must not face the Buddha!



Jess Grey, World Nomads Group

“

As a photographer, my philosophy has always been shoot-first-and-ask-questions-later. But that's actually really rude in places like temples, or where some cultures believe that taking their photo means you're "stealing their spirit", so be careful.

I'll never forget a Chinese local yelling "HEY! DELETE THAT PICTURE!" in my face while I thought I was being an arty, street-photographer in Qing Dao, China.

As I traveled more, I learned that sensitivity is the key.



Martin Hong, World Nomads

“

I've no doubt committed many faux pas, but the most recent one happened in India. I was at a Jain temple in Rajasthan and was wearing what I thought was a modest outfit – skirt below the knee, shirt with cap sleeves. But our guide felt it wasn't enough, so he borrowed a long, sack-like dress from the ticket office – they have them on hand for this very purpose.

In hindsight, a full-length skirt or long pants, and long or ¾ sleeves would have been a wiser choice, or better still, the traditional Indian sari.



Ellen Hall, World Nomads



“

In Myanmar, I was offered a pillow while sitting on a concrete floor, so naturally, I sat on it. Apparently, I was only supposed to lean my back against – Turns out, putting my rear-end where someone would put their head to sleep was a massive no-no.



Catherine Pitt, via Facebook

“

I've accidentally flushed toilet paper in a few places where the toilets aren't built to handle it. I didn't cause any actual plumbing problems (that I know of) but, I didn't stick around long enough to find out!



Mark Seldon, World Nomads Group

“

Not so much a faux pas, more of a learning curve. When I went to Bali a while back we visited the Bali Zoo. We walked through all the enclosures – including the tiger cave. As I walked toward the sedated tiger (after paying a few Indonesian rupees to get through), it dawned on me that I'd literally just funded another few hours of sedatives for that poor animal.

A few years later, I went to Chiang Mai. We'd heard so many good things about the Elephant sanctuary – until we went there to see it for ourselves. We witnessed the *mahout* (elephant trainer) beating the elephant's head with a sharp stick, while we sat – mortified – in the wooden box on its back.

I'm a huge believer that none of us seek these un-ethical experiences on purpose – but unfortunately, for as long as we continue to fund these attractions, they'll stick around. Safe to say, any animal tourism is totally off my radar.



Milly McGrath, World Nomads

Common Travel Scams to Avoid

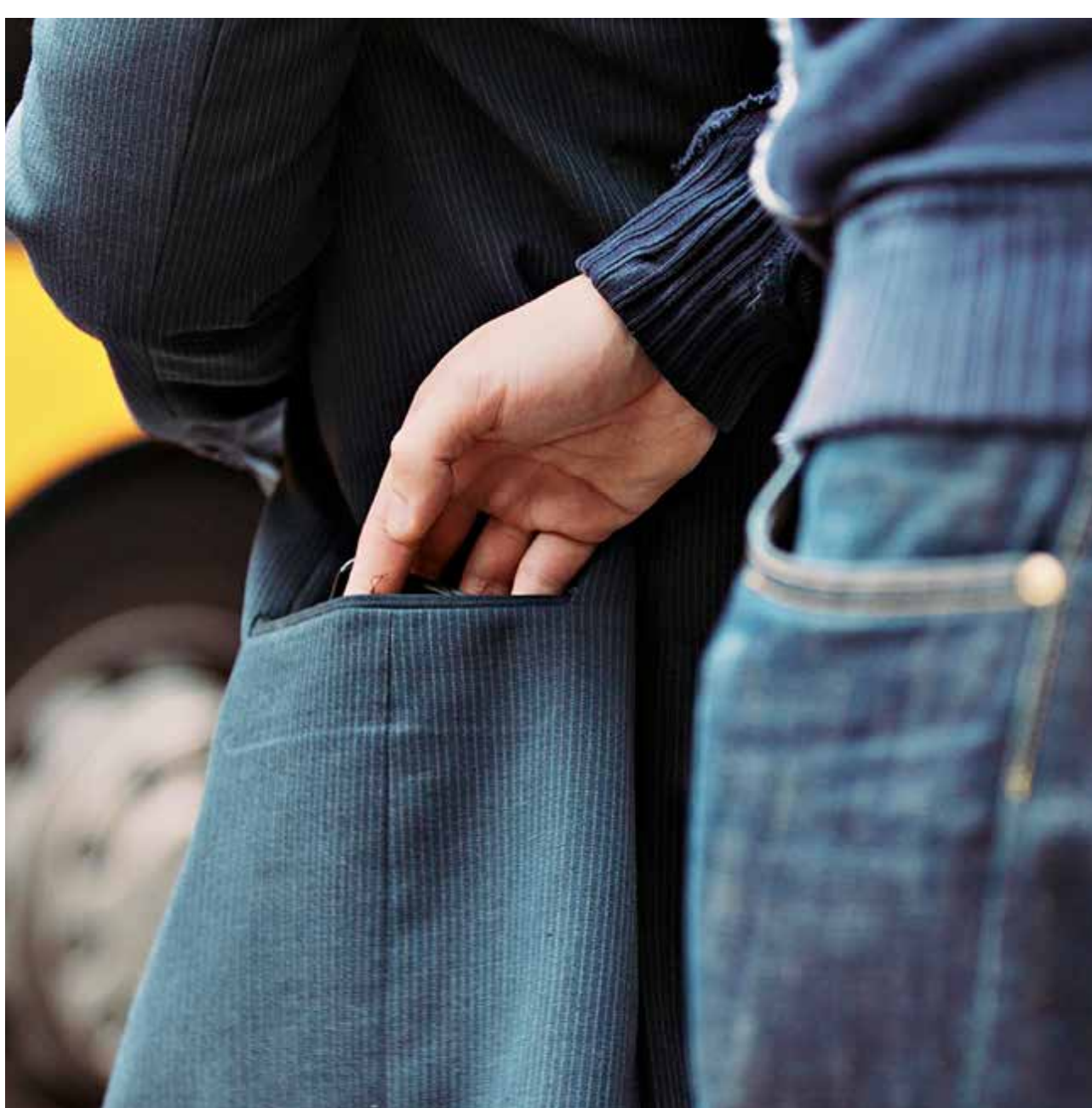
You're sure to meet friendly locals and enjoy warm hospitality on the road – that's the spice of traveling life. However, as at home, not everyone is as genuine as they seem.

Pushy recommendations

Don't take the advice of overly-friendly taxi drivers or local hawkers. If they can encourage you to part with your money, there's often a financial kick-back from their friends at the hotels, shops and ticket offices. If you're just looking for a cheap bed in a hostel for a night, this might be okay... but if you're coughing up thousands to buy precious gems in Bangkok, beware!

Drink spiking

If someone buys you a drink, watch them get it from the bar and deliver



it to you, or better yet, go to the bar with them. It's not unknown for travelers to be drugged unwittingly and end up lost and alone with all their gear gone.

Pickpockets

Petty thievery is more common than you might think, and if you look like an obvious tourist, you may as well have a target on your forehead. Keep your wallet or purse with you at all times, and distribute your money and cards around your body. It's a good idea for men not to keep their wallet in the usual back pants pocket, as that is another easy target.

Confusion tactics

This is a variation on the basic pickpocket scam. Essentially, the method is to divert your attention away from your valuables and onto

“
If someone buys you a drink, watch them get it from the bar and deliver it to you, or better yet, go to the bar with them.”

TIPS FOR THE ROAD

something else. It could be anything from a crowd of kids jostling you, someone falling down, being covered with tomato sauce, flattery from a group of sexy French men, or having a cat thrown at you. The trick here is to treat anything unusually diverting as a pickpocket attempt.

Beggars

The reality is that over a billion people in the world live on less than \$1 a day and truly need your help. Unfortunately, begging is sometimes run as an organized business where kids are used as bait to tug your heartstrings and part with cash... which they'd be lucky to get a small slice of as most of it goes to a ringleader.

While we advocate helping the world's most impoverished people – make sure you're helping, not hindering. Sharing your food or buying some fruit is the best way to make sure the kid's bellies get full.

Check the seals of your drinking water

If you bought bottled water, check that there's a proper seal or that the packaging is intact. Some places have been known to sell recycled bottles that have just been filled up with tap water.

Beware of the black market

If something sounds too good to be true, it usually is. You might be buying souvenirs that are not authentic, and with electronics, DVDs, high fashion or

other consumer goods, they may be bootlegged, knock-off or stolen goods.

Carry your own gear only

Never agree to carry anything back home for anybody. C'mon. You've seen Bridget Jones' Diary. You don't know what you could be carrying with you – like drugs or other prohibited or dangerous material. Be wary of accepting "gifts" that may contain contraband substances, and don't cross borders or go through Customs with strangers.

You get what you pay for

Always travel with a reputable tour company so you know that you'll get what you pay for and your safety will be of primary concern. Traveling with a dodgy operator could see you stranded, injured, sick or taken to places based on commission, not cultural interest.

“Always travel with a reputable tour company so you know that you'll get what you pay for and your safety will be of primary concern.”

“

The worst bag theft situation I've had was in Lima, Peru. I arrived after an overnight bus journey, exhausted having not slept.

My boyfriend at the time left me with his backpack while he went to buy us new bus tickets. I was sitting on two big backpacks, plus my day bag, when suddenly the conductor started screaming, "Someone has stolen your bag!" I had to run with two bags to chase after the one that had been stolen.

The conductor then 'recovered' the stolen bag for me, and asked for a tip.

My advice - always carry small notes in local currency for these situations. I had no small change, so felt obliged and probably gave him too much. You never know whether it's a scam or not, so I gave him the benefit of the doubt.



Emily Willis, World Nomads

Alternative Ways to Get Around

Your gap year is here, you're on the road, and you need to plan a way to get from A to B. For large distances, most people assume the best solution is to hop on a plane – but sometimes, you could be missing out on a whole world of adventure.

Budget transport

Instead of squishing into the middle seat, why not squish between chuckling locals and a squawking chicken or two on one of Central America's famously rainbow chicken buses? The ride can get a bit cramped at times, but when a 10-hour ride only costs a few dollars, it's hard to complain.

Instead of committing yourself to cattle class, try an overnight ride on one of India's legendary trains. Here, you can sip paper cups of steaming, sweet chai for pennies as you watch men laden with boxes of samosas, buckets of chickpeas, and trays filled with knick-knacks roam the train's aisles.

Transport for the adventurous

Even if you're not on the tightest budget, there's no denying it's more adventurous to find an overland route to your next destination. Which story would you want to tell your friends at home?

A. *We took a plane from Bangkok up to*



Chiang Mai. The peanuts were nice.

B. *We overnighted to Chiang Mai on a bus from hell manned by a dude on way too much speed and Red Bull who blasted Thai karaoke at three-in-the-freaking-morning.*

The latter isn't necessarily the safest – or most comfortable – option... but it's something you'll never forget!

Pros and cons

Of course, there's more to choosing transport than seeking out the most adventurous option.

Always consider the environmental impact when finding your way to your next destination. Land-based public transportation, packed to the brim with people, is always your best bet.

That's not to say it's easy to make such a decision. It all sounds well and good until you've been standing on the side of the road with your thumb out for hours, cursing cars that refuse to pick you up.

When your frustration peaks, it's important to remember that it's all part of the experience, and what's miserable now will probably give you a good (if hysterical) laugh in a couple of days.

“

Even if you're not on the tightest budget, there's no denying it's more adventurous to find an overland route to your next destination.

Hostel Tips & Stories

“

If you snore, take a private room. If you really snore, just don't stay in a hostel! Or, look for boutique hostels rather than the mega-bunk places. While you might pay a few extra dollars a night, you'll have far less fear of theft, and probably have a better experience in that city.



Mark Seldon, World Nomads Group

“

Simply put, just don't travel with valuables to minimize that stress. Otherwise, padlock your bag to the frame of a bunk bed or sink plumbing. When it comes to shared fridges, if you can't cope with, or afford, to have your food eaten – don't leave it in there!



Christina Tunnah, World Nomads

“

It's a lot easier to keep your bags safe when you only have one bag, so travel light, and always padlock your bag when in transit.



Emily Willis, World Nomads

“

When someone plays their music for broader listening pleasure (or frustration) of others, put your earplugs on or pipe up and ask them to put on headphones. Don't simmer in irritation – speak up!



Christina Tunnah, World Nomads



“

Bring your flip-flops with you to the shower. It may feel a little weird, but it's better to be safe than itchy.



Martin Hong, World Nomads

“

Never forget to bring your own towel. I hate paying two quid to rent a mangey towel.



Jane Scaife, via Facebook

“

I've heard people say that traveling with spare plastic bags are a great idea to help you store your stuff. No – it's a terrible idea. Plastic bags are noisy and annoying.



Claire Taylor, World Nomads Group

“

If you plan to stay in super-cheap hostels, don't travel with anything you can't afford to lose. Be friendly, respectful, and lock your bags.



Mark Seldon, World Nomads Group

“

Unfortunately, some hostel-dwellers are disrespectful – especially if they're getting up early to catch a flight. If you're sensitive to noise, bring earplugs. If there's a group leaving from your room, they won't care that it's 6am and you're still trying to sleep.



Jess Grey, World Nomads Group

“

I booked a place in Italy that 'forgot to pick me up' with their hostel bus in the middle of the night, after I got off a midnight train. The hostel managers were all stoned when I got there! There were no doors on female toilets or showers which led straight out into reception, and there was a sign on the door that read 'Not to be shut under any circumstances.' Creepy as hell.



Angie Smith, via Facebook

“

I arrived late at a train station in Italy and couldn't find the hostel (found out the next day it was out of town). No one spoke English, my attempt at Italian was poor, and I had no phrase book – this was pre-mobile phone. I eventually found a hotel, where I got a shoebox with no view for the price of five nights at a hostel.



April Bayley, via Facebook

“

Checked into a hostel in a very rural part of Lombok, Indonesia. I was exhausted and didn't think I'd need to put up mosquito netting for the night. Not only did I wake up to mosquitos, but giant spiders were all around me eating those mosquitos!



Kane Molleo, Facebook

“

I was staying in a cheap bungalow on Koh Tao, Thailand with my boyfriend at the time, and little did we know that the bed we slept on was infested with bedbugs. The whole next day I developed a terrible rash all over my body, and we had no idea why. We got home that night, I ripped off the sheets, and saw tons of bed bugs crawling around. It scarred us for the whole rest of our trip, and when we left a negative review of the bungalow, they accused us of bringing the bedbugs.



Amy Stringer, via Facebook



TIPS FOR THE ROAD

Breaking Away from the Hostel Bubble

When it comes to socializing on the road, backpackers tend to stick to their comfort zones. While there's nothing wrong with that, it pays to break out of the hostel bubble and seek out conversations with locals.

Branch out and see the city like a local

Hostel common rooms are perfect for mingling with fellow travelers. But don't let that restrict you to only following them around the sights in a new city.

These days, it's easier than ever to connect with locals and explore through their eyes. While going from one tourist attraction to the other can give you great photos for Instagram, it's the cultural experiences in foreign countries that'll make your travel stories authentic and original.

Everywhere, people are proud of their traditions and heritage, and most locals are happy to welcome tourists into their festivals and celebrations – that's if they get the sense that you're really going to appreciate deeper cultural immersion.

Travel for the introvert

Not everyone is boisterous and comfortable in large groups all the

time. If that's not you, don't worry. Connect how you feel comfortable.

Try approaching locals at the hostel, in cafés, or those that might have been guides on your tour. They're usually warm and friendly when they see that you're just asking for tips and recommendations.

If this still sounds overwhelming, it can be helpful to connect online through Facebook groups, Instagram, or websites and apps like [Your Local Cousin](#) and [Couchsurfing](#) – many cities have groups for travelers, where locals share tips and offer to connect with tourists when they arrive and show them around.

Explore your boundaries

When it comes to exploring new cities, consider doing this through themes like food, history, art, architecture, street art, or music – all of which are more interesting with local expertise.

If you like street art, seek out someone who shares the same passion and is knowledgeable about their city's best local pieces.

If you like food or cooking, find a chef who offers tours of their city, explore food markets, and little hole-in-the-wall places that don't have English menus.

Local companies, and others like [Context Travel](#), [With Locals](#), or Airbnb's new [Experiences](#), help you connect with local experts who give guided tours of their cities, and are packed with historical and cultural context.

“When it comes to exploring new cities, consider doing this through themes like food, history, art, architecture, street art, or music – all of which are more interesting with local expertise.”

Earning Money on the Road

While you can travel the world on a budget, living off dried noodles, at some point that money will run out if nothing is coming in. For the money-savvy traveler, a little bit of ingenuity is all you need.

Writing for the web

If you have a way with words and are good at writing, there are plenty of online travel publishers that will pay for your writing. You can also make money as a copywriter writing articles, press releases and web content. Freelance websites like [People Per Hour](#) or [Freelancer.com](#) are a good place to start looking.

If this is you, you should definitely also check out our [Mojo network](#) – this is where we put up writing, photography or film opportunities for our blogs and [Insiders Guides](#) here at World Nomads!

Start your own travel blog

Blogging is one option to make money online, but it's hard work, and you won't make money overnight. Buy yourself a domain name, set up Wordpress, choose a nice theme, then begin publishing quality articles that people would want to read.

Of course, there's no exact recipe for success, but once you've built traffic, you can make money through google



ads, affiliate schemes, and private advertisers.

Photography

The wonderful thing about travel is that there are so many photo opportunities of landmarks, people, food, and scenery.

If you're a budding photographer and have the ability to capture stunning photos, then you can make money by selling your photos to publications. You can also make money by selling images on stock photography websites, like [istockphoto](#) or [shutterstock](#).

Web design and graphic design

Everybody needs a website these days. You can make money by offering to make websites for bars, restaurants, villa rentals, surf camps... wherever you go, you'll meet people in need of a website or logo. Travel with business cards in

“
Blogging is one option to make money online, but it's hard work, and you won't make money overnight.”

TIPS FOR THE ROAD

your pocket and network with people in the place you're staying. Look at job boards on freelance websites and check out sites like [craigslist](#).

Bar/restaurant jobs

This is probably the easiest option on the list because you can get working holiday visas for countries like Australia, the UK, Canada, and New Zealand and do some bartending or serving.

The best way to get a job like this is by walking into a bar and handing in your CV or chatting to the bar manager.

If you have a European passport, you can work in tons of countries across Europe. Of course, while we're not encouraging this, there are plenty of bars and restaurants that will pay in cash for handing out flyers and bartending.

Many travelers also do seasonal work in hotels and resorts. They follow the snow and do a ski season in the Alps or Canada, then spend the summer working in the Greek Islands. With bar and serving jobs in some countries, you can make more money in tips than from your actual wage.

Teaching English as a second language

This is still one of the most popular ways to make money abroad, particularly if you want to travel to Asian countries like Japan, China, Thailand, Indonesia and South Korea. It can be beneficial to have a university degree and a TEFL or TESOL certificate, but not always compulsory. The best

site to visit is [Dave's ESL Cafe](#) to get you started.

WWOOFING and fruit picking

Fruit picking isn't for the faint-hearted, but there are plenty of fruit picking and packing opportunities, particularly in Australia and New Zealand. You can find work through an agency that will contact you to tell you of the work they have available, through websites like [Anywork Anywhere](#) and [Picking Jobs](#), or by looking locally in hostels and pubs in fruit picking areas.

WWOOFING involves volunteering on organic farms in exchange for accommodation and food and you can search for opportunities on the [WWOOF website](#).

Hostel work

If you're looking for some free accommodation, there are plenty of live-in jobs you can do, including hostel work.

Talk to the hostel owner where you are staying and ask if you can do some work in exchange for free accommodation. You'll probably have to do things like sitting on reception, showing people to their rooms, night shifts, and making beds.

Crew

You can find crew jobs on boats, luxury yachts, and cruise ships by looking at crew sites or paying a visit to the nearest harbor to ask about available work. You could be a deck hand, a steward or stewardess, an engineer, or a chef and you get to sail to some exotic destinations.

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Many travelers also do seasonal work in hotels and resorts. They follow the snow and do a ski season in the Alps or Canada, then spend the summer working in the Greek Islands.

Responsible Travel Habits

From putting your money in the pockets of local businesses to steering clear of unethical tours and activities, there are plenty of ways to switch up your travel habits for the better.

Steer clear of international chains

Travel is all about embracing unique experiences – so ditch the fast food joints and identical hotels in favor of local digs.

By shopping in local markets, dining in hole-in-the-wall restaurants, and staying in accommodation that supports the local community, you're guaranteed a more authentic trip.

What's more, you'll snooze more easily knowing you're supporting the local economy, not lining the pockets of multinational chains.

Are you loving a place to death?

In recent years, there's been a furious backlash against mass-tourism in many tourist hotspots: Venice, a city of just 55,000 residents, sees 60,000 tourists a day; Dubrovnik, made popular by Game of Thrones, have had to limit visitor numbers to 8,000 at a time due to the sheer number destroying the World Heritage-listed city. Santorini, Barcelona, Cinque Terre, and many others are following suit.



Though we're not saying these sights are not worth a visit, it's important to be mindful of your impact. With locals crying out, consider alternative, emerging destinations that could benefit from your tourist dollars – you'll also get a more unique experience than another gondola story from Venice.

Tour locally

It can be tempting to book the majority of your trip upfront via the internet, but organizing tours when you arrive is a far more responsible practice.

Why? By booking directly with a local tour agency, you not only get a cheaper deal – not an inflated internet price – but you cut out the middleman or international tour agency. As a result, you boost the economy and keep local guides in jobs.

“It can be tempting to book the majority of your trip upfront via the internet, but organizing tours when you arrive is a far more responsible practice.”

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Avoid wildlife exploitation

When face-to-face with a fluffy – but ultimately sedated – tiger or caught up in the thrill of anaconda hunting in the Amazon, it can be easy to forget that wild animals shouldn't really be used for our entertainment.

It's reassuring to see wildlife exploitation being condemned by the travel industry, and you can help make it a thing of the past by only visiting sanctuaries run by registered NGOs.

Don't haggle too hard

We all want to get a good deal when traveling on a budget, so it's tempting to haggle souvenirs and tours to rock-bottom prices.

Although this might be standard traveling practice in parts of Southeast Asia and Northern Africa, before you drive a hard bargain, consider the impact of shaving a few dollars from your purchases.

This small sum of money might not mean much to you, but could be significant for the vendor. Always barter with a conscience, and be aware of who's potentially losing out through the deal.

Travel overland and share the load

Taking public transport is one of the best things you can do for the environment when traveling. It means you're not creating any additional carbon emissions from private transport. It will also add to your travel experience, providing you with opportunities to interact with locals.

Also, consider traveling overland instead of a flight. Cutting out just



one five-hour flight and your carbon footprint will be a tonne lighter. You'll get to see more of the countryside too!

Minimize your water impact

Drinking tap water can be a big no-no in many developing countries, but relying on a steady stream of expensive bottled water all-too-often results in a huge environmental footprint. These bottles either end up in landfills or as part of the 13 million tons of plastic that leaks into the oceans each year.

Luckily, a water bottle with a filter that can zap the nasties out of water is a far kinder option – for both your wallet and the planet.

Volunteer and give back

There's nothing quite like the experience of volunteering to get under the skin of a country and allow you to leave a bigger footprint than you can as a tourist.

Finding responsible projects that'll make use of your skills requires research, but it's worth the effort. By supporting an ethical organization that works directly alongside a community, you can help show how tourism can have a sustainable, long-term, and ultimately positive impact.

“
Always barter with a conscience, and be aware of who's potentially losing out through the deal.”

Staying Healthy While on the Road

Being ill at home is miserable, but it's way worse when you're in a country where medical standards are questionable, and you don't speak the language. Here are some tips to follow to help keep you out of trouble.

Make sure the local water is safe to drink

In most developing countries, the tap water is NOT safe to drink. Drink sterilized or bottled water (making sure the seal on the bottle is intact) – even use it to brush your teeth! When in restaurants, ask for drinks without ice.

Check that your food is cooked through

In developing countries, be wary of trying dishes that include uncooked produce (salads, fresh fruit, and vegetables). Fruits that can be peeled (bananas, mangoes etc.) are generally safe to eat.

Beware of frozen foods that may have been thawed and re-frozen, and of undercooked meat, fish, or poultry.

Beware of mosquitos

Mosquito bites are the cause of most tropical diseases, and prevention is better than cure – wear long pants and long sleeves, especially at dusk.

Use mosquito repellent on any exposed skin, and sleep under a mosquito net if one is provided (or travel with your own if you are camping or staying in remote areas).

“Use mosquito repellent on any exposed skin, and sleep under a mosquito net if one is provided (or travel with your own if you are camping or staying in remote areas).”



Be sun-smart

Beware of strong (or even not so strong) sun, especially if you are not used to it – you can burn or get heat stroke before you know it. Carry a hat and sunscreen in your backpack and remember to reapply the lotion after you've been swimming.

Keep your hands clean

Just like your Mom said... Wash your hands before eating, keep your body clean, and eat as healthy a diet as you can.

No glove, no love

Of course, if romance happens along the way, practice safer sex. HIV/AIDs are widespread in many countries. So use a condom – and it's best to bring one from home, so you know it's safe.

Always have a first-aid kit with you

If you skipped that chapter, we'll say it here again. Get a first-aid kit and remember to actually take it with you. There's no point coming off that mountain bike at the top of the hill and realizing the bandages are all the way at the bottom.

S**t Happens

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My most memorable travel mishap was inside an electronic store – which doubled as a bank in Puerto Escondido, Mexico. I needed cash to use in the local market, and since safe ATMs aren't readily available in certain parts of Mexico, I decided to head into the superstore to pull cash out – I'd seen many locals use this type of ATM during my trip.

It was pushing 95°F (35°C) that day, and I was sweaty, anxious, and dehydrated. I pushed my way through washing machines and computers to get in the long line and waited.

Parched, I decided to pull out my water bottle from my pack. It all happened in slow motion. Without acknowledging the bumpy ride my water had taken throughout the day, I opened the bottle and it exploded all over me, and the brand-new computers lined up alongside me.

I stood there in shock, covered in sparkling water, too terrified to look at how many computers I'd just drenched – all while 50 or more customers stared at me.

I was quickly descended upon by store security and retail associates. After a long parlay of broken Spanish on my part, and angry rapid-fire Spanish on the part of the store owner, I agreed to pay 7,500 pesos (roughly US \$350) for a brand-new laptop I could not afford, nor did I need.

After signing my contract, I walked out of the store and burst into anxious, uproariously laughter.



Alexandra Fletcher, Contributor

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I may be a crazy planner, but shit does happen, and you can't control anything that happens outside of your ability. If you miss that bus, take it as an opportunity to explore the area around the bus station a little longer.



Veronica Mercado, World Nomads



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The local people crowded around me while we were boarding the train, and emptied everything in my day bag – which was strapped to my front! I had no idea until I was on the train and the doors had closed. I had to embrace the idea of some alone time, and travel to Florence to stay for a few days while a new passport was issued. In the end, it was an awesome few days, I spent a lot of time alone in my favorite art galleries in Florence – which I could never have done if I was with others.



Emily Willis, World Nomads

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It wouldn't be a backpacking trip of mine if someone's phone wasn't nicked. The tech gods must have it in for me in particular because my phone's vanished twice. My advice is to have a cry and then get over it, it's gone. I learnt the hard way about not backing up your phone, so always make sure it's up-to-date. Try to block it as soon as you can, that way creepers won't have a gander through your photos.

If you want your insurance to have your back, you must provide a copy of a police report. This can be a little tricky when there's a language barrier, but definitely persist – otherwise, you're out of luck when making a claim.



Brooke Hobson, Contributor

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You've just got to accept that things will change. Don't be so rigid in following your itinerary that you either miss out on impulsive experiences or stress yourself out to make sure you're at a certain place at a certain time.

One of the best nights of my life was on the island of Koh Tao, where I left my friends (who wanted to go back to the hostel) and stayed out with the locals who worked in our dive school instead. We hung out at the local bar – away from the raving tourists – and swapped travel stories till dawn.



Martin Hong, World Nomads

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On the second day of a three-week road trip in New Zealand, my friends and I got our campervan stuck in a river. We were afraid this was the end of our trip – but we jumped into action and managed to get out within a couple of hours – with the help of a weak signal and a friendly mechanic. Now we chuckle every time we see that same campervan on the road.



Stefan Chan, World Nomads Group

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Landing at New York to transfer to Lima, only to be accused of not being me, and having stolen my own passport, and being someone else. I made my connection by a couple of minutes and flew to Lima. When I arrived, my backpack was lost for 24 hours, and I caught a taxi to a hotel on the wrong side of town. At 2am, I couldn't handle the screams and arguments any longer, so bailed out back to the airport and slept on the floor until my bag arrived.



Paul Ford, via Facebook

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Keep your wits about you! Don't let the adrenalin or emotion cloud your judgement, or cause others to feel fear or freaked out.

I was grabbed in an underpass in Santiago, followed home at night in Singapore by two men, missed last flights in Manila airport, mugged at gunpoint in Managua, had my passport stolen in Guangzhou, delayed by floods for days in Urumqi. Whenever the situation involved a threat to my personal or physical safety, I tend to really get focused on getting out of the situation.

When it comes to scheduling-type oopsies, just roll with it. Be pleasant with staff, get your options clear, and be decisive about how you want to resolve. The key is to not stay frozen in inactivity.



Christina Tunnah, World Nomads

Dealing with S**t when it happens

1. Learn the basic language of the country you're visiting. It'll benefit you both socially, and in times of trouble.
2. Carry cash on you in foreign countries, depending on ATMs is sometimes risky.
3. Learn your rights in the country you're visiting.
4. Stay calm. Getting angry or overly upset will not help your case when you're the underdog in any given situation overseas. Show humility.
5. Carry ID on you at all times.
6. Learn which banks and ATMs are commonly used among tourists and locals, and learn how far or few they are in regard to where you're staying. This way, you know when and where you should take out money to avoid scrambling.
7. Hydrate, sleep, and take care of your general health while traveling. You're far more likely to let your guard down, have an accident, or be subject to theft or vulnerability the more fatigued you are.
8. Look up hospitals, safe modes of transportation (i.e marked taxis, buses), and the location of your local embassy.
9. Have a sense of humor. Most travel mishaps that seem traumatic in the moment, heightened by foreign language and settings, make for great dinner conversation years and years later.

Avoiding Travel Burnout

As much as traveling will open your mind, it will also unlock some of your deep-seated fears and anxieties – and that’s nothing to be ashamed of. Here are some tips to help you cope.

Lean on a local support system

Craving human connection is universal. That lone person at the café next to you may be feeling your same reservations, or they might be the door to an exciting new adventure.

Whether or not you’re an introvert, it can be tough to strike up a conversation. It’s always easiest to start with a simple question. Ask a fellow traveler or local for directions, a recommendation, or a small piece of advice. No matter where you are in the world, most people are happy to share their wisdom.

Connect, then disconnect

Take full advantage of the abundant information available on social media, but don't get caught up in it. Instagram and Twitter can link you to nearby travelers and businesses, while Facebook has numerous groups for travelers and expats in nearly every corner of the world.

These mediums help travelers connect with both foreigners and locals to find affordable accommodation, hear about local events, and organize meet-ups and



excursions. But once you've connected online, take that socializing to the streets.

Find comforts of home

Embrace your new destination, but don't reject your roots. Travel offers every form of escape, but it will never let you get away from where you come from.

Don't feel bad about enjoying some comforts of home in your new location – maybe that's eating a favorite food, cozying up with a beloved book, or blasting your guiltiest music pleasure (we see you, Taylor Swift fans!).

Read up about your current location

Part of burnout can come from not understanding the culture of where you may end up feeling stuck in. Get to know your current location beyond its biggest attractions. Read up on its history, people, and struggles. This knowledge can quickly shift your perspective on where you are and what your purpose is there. Ask locals about their opinion and experience within their country's current climate, too. They can give you up-to-the-minute insight that no book ever could.

“Craving human connection is universal. That lone person at the café next to you may be feeling your same reservations, or they might be the door to an exciting new adventure.”

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Eat well and exercise

When you're feeling down, the last thing you'll want to do is eat a sensible salad. But filling your body with nourishing ingredients is exactly what it needs to help you out of that funk. Eat as clean, fresh, and local as you can – and avoid alcohol for a few days.

Boost your serotonin production with good old-fashioned exercise. If there's a gym or yoga studio where you are, see if they offer a free trial (most do).

To get in a little sightseeing while you're at it, some major cities even offer running tours. You can also take to YouTube to find channels dedicated to quick, efficient workouts – no matter how limited your time and space.

If that all sounds like a bore, find yourself a dance floor – in your room, at a park, or in a club – and bust a move.

Take a course and explore a new passion

Especially if this is your first time overseas alone after years of structured study, the lack of routine can sometimes leave you feeling a little directionless. Always having to find the next destination or the next adventure can be exhausting.

Try taking a language course, a local crafts workshop, or even a short calligraphy or design course; it's a great way to meet new people, and take the pressure off you – even for a few days – to have to plan your own itinerary. It might also be the perfect excuse for you to try your hand at a skill or hobby you wouldn't normally do at home, such as photography, in a pressure-free

environment; who knows – it could lead to a whole new hobby or even career.

Get some fresh air!

Loneliness can make us want to retreat even more, but the simple act of leaving your room can be a complete energy-changer.

Get outside. Rent a bike, go for a hike, read at a park, bum at the beach, run, walk, kayak, swim, ski. And even if it's the dead of winter, a slap of brisk wind on the face can be a welcome relief to nursing your woes cooped up inside.

Take time off

It's tempting to want to take full advantage of every minute you have in a location, but don't force it – that's a sure-fire way to burnout.

If possible, schedule in a relaxation day or two in each place you plan to visit. A good rule of thumb is to take at least two down-days for every two-weeks you're on the road. Or, if you can, plant yourself in one location for a few weeks to experience even the slightest sense of stability and familiarity.



“Loneliness can make us want to retreat even more, but the simple act of leaving your room can be a complete energy-changer.”



Returning Home: What's Next?

The adventure was epic, the friends are unforgettable, you've learned some new skills (and the parties along the way were pretty great too), but now it's time to head back to "real life". Or is it?

Keeping the Dream Alive

So, you've just returned home from the trip-of-a-lifetime, and you can already feel life slipping back into that boring routine. Here's how to keep your adventurous spirit alive after an extended time overseas.

Treat your hometown like a travel destination

Curiosity resides in your mind, not on the road. We often get a bit complacent at home, which means we can easily gloss over a lot of its charms.

Treat your own city with fresh, new eyes – just like you did in every destination you explored. Pick up a book or a travel guide and research your own city and its surrounding areas. Check local events calendars. Make a list of must-dos and grab your camera.

You most likely missed a few hidden gems in your very own backyard. Who knows, you may even be inspired to put together a better travel guide of your own.

Get around like a tourist

If you have a car, ditch it... at least for a bit. Remember that ingenious way you saved some serious dough by figuring out an elaborate plane-train-ferry-bus journey? Try it at home. Take public transportation. Rent a bike.



Walk. Get around like you never did before.

Share your travel stories

Put your travel experiences to paper (or screen). Write out the smallest sensory details you remember alongside your biggest revelations and disappointments.

Relive the sights, smells, sounds, and tastes through your own words. This can help you fully digest what you did, what you went through, and the complete mind-shift that probably occurred during your travels.

This can also help you sort out what you really loved and/or hated about a place, your perspectives on the world, and your own relationship with your current location and situation.

Become a tour guide

Renew your sense of excitement for

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You most likely missed a few hidden gems in your very own backyard. Who knows, you may even be inspired to put together a better travel guide of your own.

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your hood by becoming a local tour guide. Not only do you get to meet people from all over the world, it could be a great part-time job too and lead to a whole new career. Companies like UrbanAdventures are always looking for local guides, and AirBnB has a new “experiences” arm that you can check out.

If you’ve picked up a new hobby on the road like photography or world cuisines, why not try setting up a little photo-tour or restaurant-hopping walking tour of your own?

Help friends and family plan their trip

Part of post-travel blues comes with the feeling that no one around you can quite understand what you’re going through. But your travel adventures have likely inspired many of your friends and family members.

Helping your loved ones plan their own trips will help you better connect with them. Heck, you may even discover your next dream destination in the process.

Recreate your favorite travel moments at home

This is really a no-brainer, and should definitely start with the taste buds. Seek out your favorite foods and drinks from your travels – or better yet, visit specialty food markets to gather the ingredients to concoct them yourself.

Discover what makes your hometown unique. Visit small museums and galleries, quirky

bookshops and boutiques, and local farms, restaurants, and breweries.

Take a mini break

All that effort and planning you put into your adventure abroad can be channeled just as enthusiastically into a variety of mini-holidays.

Use your weekends wisely: go hiking, camping, cycling, or road-tripping – but also take advantage of your vacation time.

Did you know that over half of Americans don’t take all their vacation days? Take a few days off here-and-there for mini mid-week getaways, when crowds and prices shrink. This’ll keep you invigorated, and help you save up for your next big voyage.

Take a moment to reassess

This may seem drastic, but if you find yourself truly unhappy and unfulfilled when you’re back at home, maybe you’re not just missing your vacation. Big trips like a gap year or sabbatical help you break out of a rut, but if you’re miserable at work or at home even after a period of adjustment, there might be bigger things at play.

Don’t rush into any big life changes, but do use this time to reflect on what’s making you unhappy with fresh eyes. Think about whether you feel challenged or appreciated at your current job; do you feel “at home” in your current apartment, house or neighborhood? Talk to your close friends and family, and don’t be afraid to discuss these feelings with your doctor.

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Helping your loved ones plan their own trips will help you better connect with them. Heck, you may even discover your next dream destination in the process.

A Digital Nomad for Life

For many, the idea of getting paid to travel the world sounds too good to be true. But with a little hard work, it's possible. We chat to our partners *Goats on the Road* to find out what life is REALLY like for a digital nomad.

Expectations vs reality

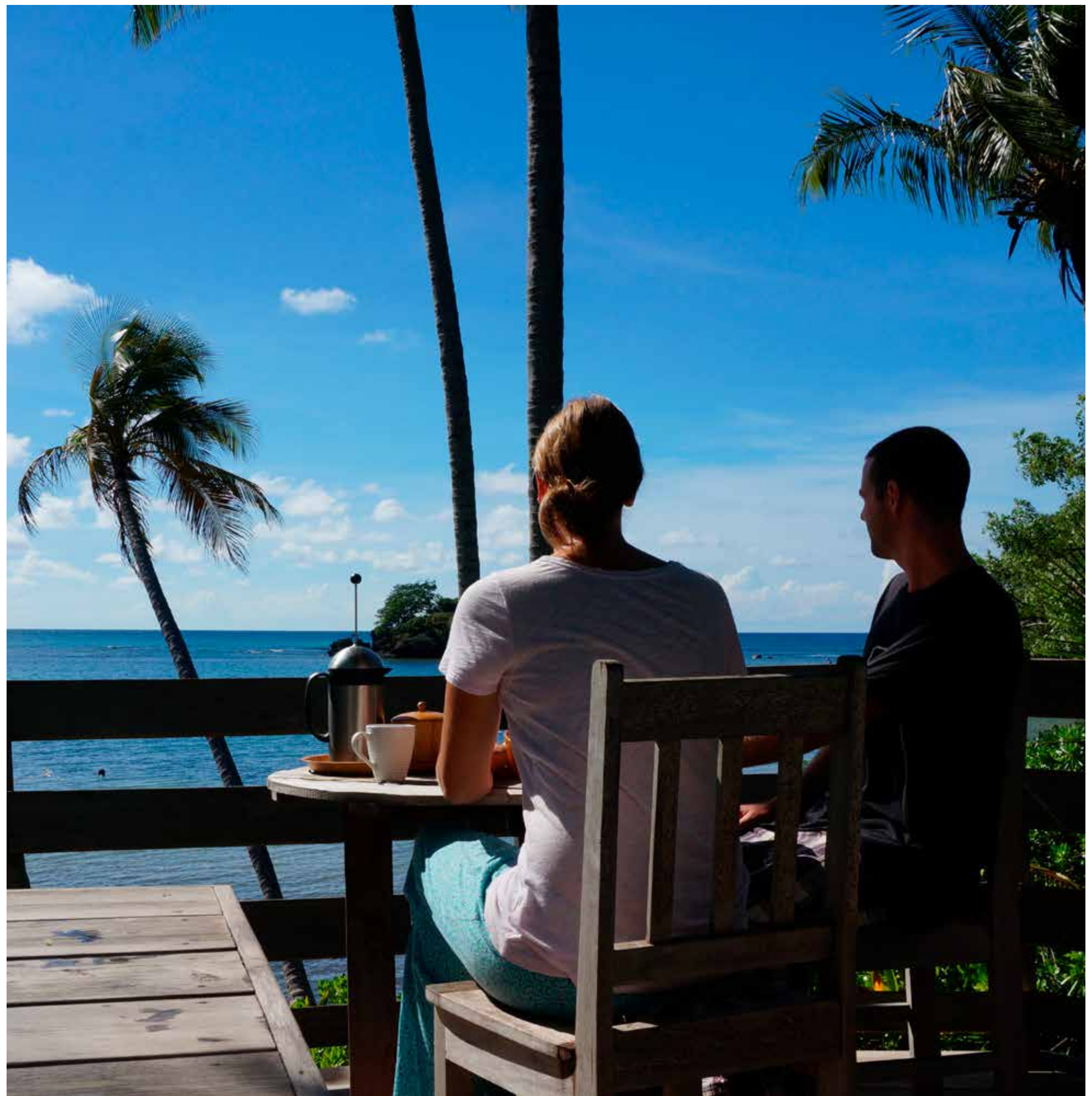
The luxurious photos of travel influencers being flown around the world, to take photos and share their adventures paint a pretty utopian picture. You might think a) the job is easy, or b) there's no truth to the life those images portray.

The truth is that there's a lot of work that goes into growing an online business. The photos and videos are just the tip of the iceberg, and the majority of the hard work lies beneath the surface.

Many online influencers have come out saying they work 80 hours per week, feel exhausted from travel, and aren't as happy as they show in their photos.

My wife and I built [Goats On The Road](#) as a passive income model. This means that we worked hard at first to set up affiliate articles, products, and freelance networks, and now that they're set up, we can earn money in our sleep.

Affiliate marketing has been around



Goats on the Road

since the beginning of the internet, and it's brilliant. We recommend products and services we've used and love (like World Nomads Travel Insurance), and if our readers click on those links and purchase through them, we receive a commission.

This means we literally earn money while we're sleeping. On average, affiliate commissions amount to about US \$4,000 on [our blog](#).

We truly are as happy as the pictures and videos we portray – and we're not working ourselves to the bone.

If you're thinking of becoming a digital nomad, do it with the idea that your life comes first. No matter how much faster you may grow by working 12 hours a day, don't do it! Enjoy your life as much as possible. Your travel lifestyle should be a byproduct of your business, and not the other way around.

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If you're thinking of becoming a digital nomad, do it with the idea that your life comes first.”

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How to get started

Starting a travel blog, building an audience, and earning money online is by no means a get-rich-quick scheme. It takes time! It took us over a year to start earning money from our blog – and that year felt like an eternity.

At first, it will feel like your traffic isn't growing at all, you don't know what to write, and every question you have is followed by 10 more. It feels like you take one step forward and two steps back.

The trick is to find your niche – your voice and point of view – and be consistent. Be authentic and don't try to copy someone else. Publish regularly, and connect with your audience regularly. With a bit of patience and elbow grease, you'll soon build a loyal audience.

How digital nomads earn money

The term "digital nomad" applies to anyone who earns money from electronic devices while traveling around the world and working remotely.

So, whether you're a travel blogger or a business consultant, you can call yourself a digital nomad so long as you're working remotely and living a location-independent lifestyle.

Here, I'll touch on a few that I know from my business, many of which can be transferable to other digital nomad jobs and mediums.

Direct advertising

This is when you have advertisers

contact you via email or social media and ask you to promote their product or service. On blogs, this type of advertising can range from US \$50-\$750 per link, banner or article – while in social media it is about the same (of course different blogs earn different money, it's within reason for the travel industry).

Press trips

This is when a tourism board, hotel or tour operator flies you to their destination to promote their hotel or service. These trips are often paid on top of receiving free travel.

Product sales and affiliate marketing

I've already touched briefly on Affiliate Marketing, but product sales are another great form of passive or deferred income. You basically create a

“**The trick is to find your niche – your voice and point of view – and be consistent. Be authentic and don't try to copy someone else.**”



Coats on the Road

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product (like an eBook or a course) and sell it to your audience.

Freelance

Your blog can work as a great portfolio as you reach out to larger publications to try to land paid writing gigs. Most blogs online pay between US \$50-\$500/article, often on a per-word basis.

Finding opportunities

If you're a new blogger or you're considering starting a travel blog, then this will be one of your first challenges.

At first, before you've grown an audience, the truth is you won't be getting many opportunities – and that's okay. You should be spending the first few months of your digital nomad career on growing a following, and sharing the best content you possibly can.

Then, down the road, when your blog starts to see 10,000+ unique visitors per month or you've grown to more than 10,000 followers on a single social media platform (there is no real cut-and-dry number so these



figures can vary depending on your niche), then you should start looking for opportunities.

By that point, the opportunities should be coming to you, but if not, you can start reaching out by email to try to find people to work with you.

For direct advertising, try to join Facebook groups with lots of other bloggers and ask some of the bloggers who you already have a relationship with if they know of any advertisers looking to advertise.

For affiliate marketing and product sales opportunities, it's all about producing epic content. Write great articles, build up credibility, and people will purchase things from your website. Always be honest and only recommend products and services that you have used or that you would definitely use.

And lastly, to find opportunities for freelance writing, look around and start sending off emails with detailed article pitches to editors. Try to ask for a continued staff writing position so that you can have a set number of paid articles per month.

Know your worth

When you first start your blog, don't expect free travel – you need to build an audience first. It's important that you still travel on your own dime from time-to-time, and that you create a business that's ethical, and your partnerships are in line with the brand you've built.

Once you have an audience, you can then start earning advertising money, and you'll start to get paid

“**For direct advertising, try to join Facebook groups with lots of other bloggers and ask some of the bloggers who you already have a relationship with if they know of any advertisers looking to advertise.**”

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to travel. It's as simple as that. But don't expect a hotel to give you a free room just because you have a travel blog – and don't give up on traveling independently just because you know that someone else might pay for it if you pitch them.

Your readers will start to lose faith in your writing and photography, and you'll be far less relatable to the average traveler.

Working around the world

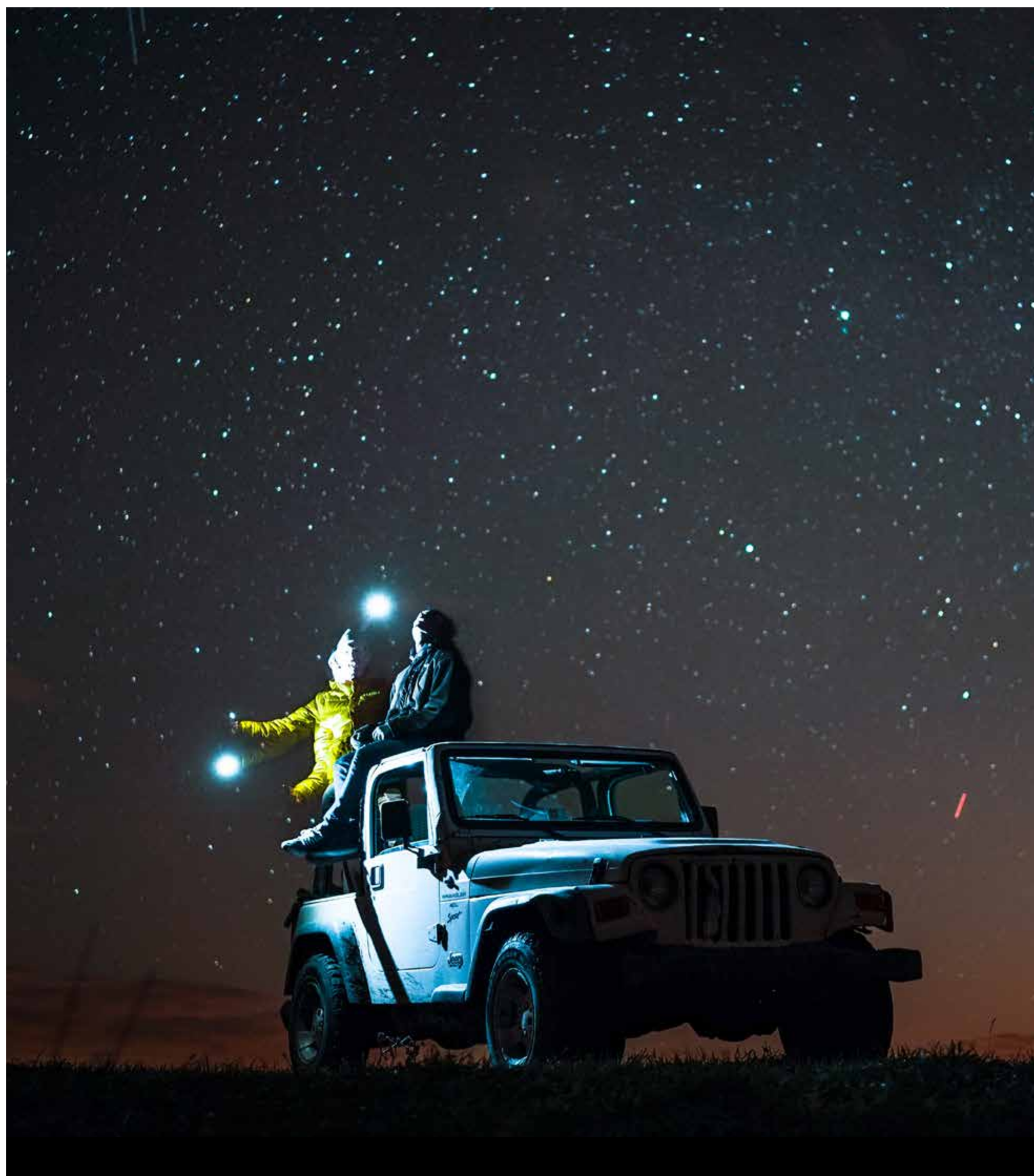
One of the great joys of being a digital nomad is that your office can be anywhere. I'm writing this article from a beautiful yoga retreat in Koh Samui. My office today is a healthy restaurant, overlooking the waters of the Gulf of Thailand.

There are also co-working spaces all around the world, where digital nomads meet, chat, and get some work done on fast Wi-Fi. These spaces are typically in an office-like setting, but with a funky twist – like beanbag chairs, lounge tables, an onsite bar, and cool music.

For us, we prefer to work in our pajamas or in a swimsuit at the beach.

Best digital nomad places around the world

There are plenty of amazing places to work when you're a digital nomad, but keep in mind that the best digital nomad hot spots in the world also have to have great Wi-Fi, good accommodation options, good restaurants and cafes, and well-stocked supermarkets.



Some of our favorites include Split in Croatia, Lake Atitlan in Guatemala, the Caribbean island of Grenada, Koh Samui in Thailand, and Bali in Indonesia.

Is it for you?

Being a digital nomad isn't for everyone. If you don't enjoy traveling from place to place, being away from home or sacrificing some of the amenities you're used to at home, maybe this job isn't for you.

But if you're tired of getting stuck in traffic driving to work to pay for the car you're stuck in. If you want to explore the world and have new experiences every day. If you love trying new foods, meeting new people and you want to work from wherever you choose – then maybe it's time to become a digital nomad!

“
One of the great joys of being a digital nomad is that your office can be anywhere. I'm writing this article from a beautiful yoga retreat in Koh Samui.”

What My Gap Year Did for Me

Still tossing up between university, work, or travel? Here are a few testimonials from travelers that were once thinking the same thing.

“

It opens my mind to different people and cultures. It's easy to think that your way of viewing things is the right way or the only way, but once you spend any amount of time with other people and cultures, you begin to appreciate more differences around the world. This perspective gained through travel has helped me in my personal and business relationships, to be more understanding and accommodating as I interact with people each day.



Brock Weaver, World Nomads

“

Don't worry that you'll be behind in the career hunt or the college path. During your gap year you will learn so much about yourself and the world, much more than you can learn in a classroom. Ignore the naysayers, and do it now.



Terry Ward, Contributor

“

My gap year turned into 8 years of working abroad with lots of travel. All the skills I gained travelling and meeting different people. I learnt a lot more in my travels than my time at uni. But, you have to take into consideration that my first "real" job was travelling.



Chrissy Nicole, Twitter

“

I combined my gap year with an unpaid internship. It grew from a two-week stint emptying the rubbish, to a three-month opportunity working on the brand catalogue, to a two-year role as the Press Officer – which included organising the new season launch shows and being a part of London Fashion Week.

I don't think any of it would have happened if the role wasn't away from home. When I'm traveling, I always have a more open mind, and am more willing to try new experiences.

It was this mentality that made me open to learn new skills and grow as the role developed. Today I've moved away from PR, but those early years in London taught me to never be afraid to learn on the job, which helped me get where I am today, and will always be a driving force in my career.



Martin Hong, World Nomads

“

On my travels, I made friends in all different parts of the world. I recently went to Japan and visited an old friend, who introduced us to tiny cars, and his son taught us how to play robot laser tag – I wouldn't have ever been able to try this, because you can't test them out in toy stores!

My travels have taught me to have no fear in asking questions, or talking to strangers. Even after teaching for 6 years, it was travel that made me feel comfortable striking up a conversation with a stranger.



Veronica Mercado, World Nomads

So, if you've got the urge to travel, we say do it! The only regret you'll have is if you don't go.



Thanks to our contributors:

[Alexandra Reynolds](#)

[Ariel Sophia Bardi](#)

[Cassie Wilkins](#)

[Dave Dean](#)

[Matt Castell](#)

[Natasha Amar](#)

[Nick Wharton](#)

[Katelyn Michaud](#)

[Stephanie Dyson](#)

[Stephanie Garr](#)

[Taylor Lorenz](#)

[Will Hatton](#)

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