Tips for the Overseas Traveler

By John B. Goldhamer, www.JohnGoldhamer.com, Glen Allen, Virginia

Being an "Experienced World Traveler," *I launched, lived, and learned many travel suggestions.*

TIPS FOR THE OVERSEAS TRAVELER – CHECKLIST

- **Voter ID Registration Card** - Issued by County or City proves U.S. Citizenship if Passport stolen
- **Personal Travel Code** - Travelers should set up a code using their birth date to stop scammers.
- **Immunizations and Vaccines** - Immunizations are one of the most effective ways to prevent diseases among travelers. U.S. Centers for Disease Control http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list. Physicians and Pharmacists recommend Twinrix a *three dose vaccine against Hepatitis A & B.*
- **Travel Visas** - Before buying Airline Ticket check travel country requirements http://visacenter.com
- **Purchase Before Trip** - Liquids, gels and aerosols packed in carry-on must be 3.4 ounces or less per container and in a 1 quart size, clear, plastic, zip top bag (all liquids must fit in bag).
  - *Lubricating Eye Drops* or Contact Lens Rewetting Solutions,
  - *Saline Nasal Spray,*
  - *Lip Balm, with Moisturizer,*
  - Mild *"Melatonin"* Over-the-counter Pills- Helps sleep on the plane and time zone changes,
  - *Flashlight* for seeing in a dark hotel room if the lights go out and read street signs at night,
  - *Adapter-Converter* - Changes overseas 220 Volts to 110V for electrical devices- *Cell Phone*
  - Collapsible 17 oz. *Foldable Water Bottle*, the TSA will allow a carry-on *"Empty"* water bottle,
  - *Inflatable* Neck Pillow to support your neck and get comfortable on the plane,
  - *Sleep Mask* for sleeping on the plane and hotel rooms,
  - *Plastic Clothespins* or *small Binder Clips*, four to six to clamp drapes closed during daylight.
  - *Pen* for Custom Declaration Forms *U.S. Customs & Border Protection Declaration Form 6059B*
  - *Travel Size Personal Care Products* may be purchased at Bed Bath & Beyond & Minimus.biz
- **Medications and Medical Insurance** Quart Zip-Lock Bags for carry-on, large bottles- luggage:
  - Medications *in Original Pharmacy Labeled Containers* with Pharmacy Printed Product Info,
  - Extra Glasses or Contacts Lens along with *enough cleaning supplies for the entire trip,*
  - Medicare and some U.S. medical insurance are not valid internationally. Buy travel insurance.
- **Packing a Suitcase**:
  - Weeks before your travel, *use up about half of the contents of your Personal Care Products,* so that by the time of your trip they are half-full or half-empty; depending on if it is a fancy trip.
  - Products without screw tops should be placed in *Zip-Lock Bags* so that they will not leak.
  - Rolling clothes when packing your suitcase or travel bag can save space.
  - Spread out contents of your suitcase on your bed and take a *Date and Time Stamp Photo.*
- **Color Photocopy of Passport** - Place inside your suitcase, on top of your clothes, so that it can be seen when opened by TSA Inspectors and it helps to identify your luggage if it is lost.
- **Email Yourself Your Travel Itinerary as a .pdf** - A .pdf of a document is harder for scammers to search. Attach it to an email to friends, relatives, and yourself, but in email body don't say trip.
- **Printout Google Map** - Hotel name, address and map and carry it with you to show Taxis.
- **Travel Advisory** - U.S. State Department has **Four Color Travel Advisory Levels**.

  You can check out the globe at a glance on the World Color-Coded Map.

  https://travelmaps.state.gov/TSGMap/?extent=-0.879381859,47.401628436,20.397707357,54.42135931
- **Printout U.S. Embassies Local Physical Address & Telephone Numbers** - U.S. Embassies and Consulates available 24 hours, 7 days a week for *Any Emergency.* **www.usembassy.gov**
- **STEP (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program) https://step.state.gov** - Helps a U.S. Embassy contact you in an emergency whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency.
- **TSA (Transportation Security Administration) www.tsa.gov** - The TSA website provides a "Travel Checklist" and answers: "What Can I Bring?"

John B. Goldhamer TM www.JohnGoldhamer.com

TIPS FOR THE OVERSEAS TRAVELER – CHECKLIST (Continued)

- ☐ **International Driving Permit (IDP)** - IDP is an identity document that allows the holder to drive a private motor vehicle in any of the 150 countries. 163 countries and territories use RHT (U.S.) and 76 countries and territories use LHT, so it might be confusing.
  AAA (American Automobile Club) (*Membership not required)* is one of only two entities in the U.S. authorized by the U.S. Department of State to issue an IDP. You will need to provide:
  - ☐ Download and fill out an application, and bring it to your nearest AAA branch office.
  - ☐ Two original passport pictures (also available at AAA branch offices).
  - ☐ A valid U.S. driver's license.
  - ☐ Pay $20 USD permit fee http://www.aaa.com/vacation/idpf.html
- ☐ **Finance**
  - ☐ Credit Cards - International Exchange Fees - Check your credit card *Terms and Conditions Statement* for *International Exchange or Translation Fees*, which can be from 0% up to 3%.
  - ☐ Some American Credit Union Credit Cards have Zero *"International Exchange Fees."*
  - ☐ Credit Cards - Bank's Service Icons- Discover which Bank Service icons your credit card does business with and if they participate in your destination country.
  - ☐ U.S. Dollar Bills - Before you leave, withdrawal from your bank 100, $1 U.S. Dollar Bills and place them in an unmarked envelope in your carry-on, not your checked luggage.
  - ☐ Smart Phone, Currency Converter APP - You can key in a Taxi amount, such as €46 (Euros), and convert it to U.S. Dollars at that hour's rate. For example, for my last trip, the exchange rate was $1.11 U.S. per €1 (Euro), so the Taxi was about $50 U.S. Show the Taxi driver the APP on you Smart Phone and ask him if he will take this amount in American or U.S. Dollars.
- ☐ **Currency Exchange**:
  - ☐ Currency Exchange Kiosks advertising no fees, hide their fees in their Exchange Rates.
  - ☐ It is best to charge in the Local Currency and let the banks translate the charge, which will always be based on the Official Currency Exchange Rate, *"At the exact time of purchase."*
- ☐ **Purchase At the Airport** - Past Security, purchase Bottle of Water to drink on the flight and refill.
- ☐ **Purchase at Hotel or Local Store** - Once at your hotel, fill up the Collapsible Foldable Water Bottle or purchase a six pack of Bottled Water and each day drink more water than usual.
  If you are flying to Europe, most locations do not have drinking fountains.
- ☐ **Airplane Exercises** - Behance.net/Airplane-Exercises, Place printout in your carry-on.
  To prevent Leg Cramps, walk about the cabin every 3 hours or after each movie and while in your seat, regularly perform Ankle Circles, Foot Lifts, and Knee Raises.
- ☐ **Language** - Try to learn how to ask in their language, *"Do you speak English?"* Remember you are a Foreigner in their land. "Native Inhabitants" will be more likely to help you when you start off speaking in their language.
- ☐ **Local Laws and Customs** - In the U.S. when a buyer buys a product or service it comes with an "Implied Warranty of Merchantability" that it works. This legal theory is established in *Common Law.* In some *countries that do Not Follow Common Law,* if a merchant sells something, there is *Not* any Implied Warranty of Merchantability that it works. *Don't argue! Their law is on their side!* Bus Drivers, Conductors and Drivers are not careful, because if someone gets hurt, *"It's their fault."*

John B. Goldhamer
www.JohnGoldhamer.com