



HOW TO BE A SAVVY TRAVELER

Whether this is your first time traveling outside the United States/California, or you consider yourself a world traveler, being a SAVVY traveler requires a lot of experience and listening to other travelers' adventures and recommendations. It is essential to have a balance of preparedness and embracing ambiguity in order to have a successful journey—this is great advice to keep in mind during your travels and life in general.



Airport Advice

- Read this website to prepare:
<https://www.tsa.gov/travel>
- Weight restrictions, what time to arrive at airport, security process and restrictions, liquid rules, COVID 19 protocol, etc.
- Clothing:
 - Wear layers - *air conditioning/heating is unpredictable and you can save room in your luggage*
 - Be prepared for weather in your destination
 - Slip-on shoes make it easy to move through the TSA check and slide them off in-flight
- Carry-on baggage:
 - Should be light and manageable
 - Neck pillows, earplugs and/or headphones might be useful when trying to rest
 - It's possible your luggage won't arrive when you do—bring a change of clothes and basic toiletries (*i.e. toothbrush, face wash & small towel*)
 - Airport food is expensive—bring snacks and an empty water bottle for long layovers

Plane Advice

- Avoid caffeine & alcohol (creates lethargy & physical stress)
- Know the time zone you're going to and plan your sleep accordingly
- Eat well—don't arrive hungry in the host country
- Get up & walk around the plane from time-to-time
- "Must haves": headphones, a book, journal, socks, sweater, snacks, phone charger

Upon Arrival

- Avoid tight connections if you can (causes stress)
- Listen to instructions on the plane upon arrival
 - Which carousel will your luggage be on?
 - Listen for transfer info—especially because signs are different
- Expect **ambiguity**—Things can & will go wrong
 - Have the address of the host institution and phone number of the RD at hand/accessible
 - Have a few hostel options in your area, just in case
 - Pre-Map out the city & metro or taxi system – know the route before you get there.
Don't count on figuring it out on your phone on arrival
 - Lost Luggage: Report it – don't leave it!
 - Don't panic

How to Avoid Pick-Pocketing

- Keep your wallet in your front pocket, and keep purses and backpacks in front of you in crowded areas
- Don't carry all credit cards with you – take out cash if needed
- Safer to leave most stuff you cherish at home & travel light
- Don't carry passport with you – bring a photocopy
- Try not to look like you're "hiding" your things—this draws attention
- Don't advertise the fact that you're a tourist—do as the locals do, and dress like a local
- Don't be LOUD when speaking in English
- Keep your wits about you in unfamiliar locations (don't be "too" anything—hungry, tired, or intoxicated)
- Use common sense—if something seems too good to be true, it probably is

Avoid "Ugly American" Behavior

- Dress appropriately, as per the customs of the host country
- Attempt to speak at least a few words in the host language—challenge yourself to improve and enjoy connecting with locals
- Use body language with people who don't speak English—avoid the temptation of speaking English more loudly or slowly
- Avoid pushy and aggressive behavior in order to get your needs met
- Avoid getting too intoxicated—this can be seen as very disrespectful and can risk unfortunate situations

General Advice

- Show your appreciation with smiles and thank you's (*in host language*)
- Keep your voice down in public places
- Ask more questions about your hosts, and talk less about yourself
- Expect and embrace ambiguity! Inevitably, things can and will go wrong at least some of the time, and that is part of the experience
- Don't be afraid to make mistakes and get lost from time-to-time—that's how you learn and grow
- Keep a spirit of adventure, step outside your comfort zone and get off the beaten track
- Keep a city map on you at all times for the first month or so

Notes