

Flight Checklist

By Bianca Hendriks

- Planning your flight**
 - Tickets** Shop early and look for deals on tickets online or through an agent. Make sure your agent books you to the correct location!
 - Airline** You'll probably want to choose an airline operating out of an airport nearest you. Certain airlines have the most direct routes between specific destinations, so shop around.
 - Holidays** Be flexible You can save enormous amounts of money by celebrating holidays a little early or late to avoid high priced tickets on holiday weekends.
 - Redeye flights** Traveling late at night or in the wee hours of the morning can also garner you good deals.
 - Upgrades** Once you are at the airport, you may be able to sweet talk your way into an upgrade - or if the flight is overfull, many airlines offer a bump in class if you agree to take a later flight.
 - Air miles** Combine your miles with timely deals to get the best pricing. Don't forget to factor in fees not covered by miles.
 - Transportation** Plan how you will get around once you arrive at your destination.
 - Lodging** Book well in advance for the best rooms. Some discounts may apply to all inclusive airfare / lodging / auto rental packages
- Packing**
 - Divide** Never pack all the most important stuff in one bag. Certain items have to be in checked luggage, but aim to have at least one full set of clothes plus shoes and a jacket in your carry-on.
 - Carry-on luggage** Make sure your carryon fits within the airline's approved parameters.
 - Checked baggage.** Double check the tags before surrendering your luggage - an improperly typed country code can leave your suitcases stranded in a totally different location!
 - Children** Remember that kids will need to be entertained on the flight, so pack accordingly.
- Pre-flight**
 - Allow time for travel** You may find it easier and less stressful to employ a taxi service to drop you at the correct gate.
 - Allow time for security** You may be able to get an approximate time from the airport about when you should arrive.
 - Security checks** Pack your bags with an eye to security - if you get tagged for a heavier security check, you want the contents to be transparent.
 - Food** If a meal is served in flight, you may need to check ahead of times if you have religious or medical food restrictions or allergies.
 - Seating.** You can always try for a better seat, but be extra polite to airline staff - honey works better than vinegar!
 - Paperwork** Ensure that you have your tickets, boarding passes and passport (if needed) in order.

- Clothing** Dress comfortably, in clothes that won't rumple and shoes you can kick off if needed during a long flight.
- Fanny pack** All personal stuff you usually carry in your pockets can go in a fanny pack. This eliminates delay caused by extra metal (such as change and keys) at checkpoints.
- During your flight**
 - Relax** You can't control weather or how much sleep the pilot got the night before, so don't stress. Meditate, read, or listen to music. Sleep if you can.
 - Medicate** If you are really freaking out, popping a doctor prescribed sedative or anti-nausea pill might be just what you need.
 - Power up** If you can reach a headphone jack, odds are you can juice your gadgets while in route.
- Arrival**
 - Retrieve your luggage** Your carryon should be simple to reclaim, and your checked baggage should be at the carousel.
 - Get your transportation** You may need a cab, or have rented a car.
 - Check your accommodations** Call the hotel and let them know you are on your way. If you don't have transportation, they may offer free shuttle service.