

Travel tips to help you spend less on your next holiday

It's that time of year again when it feels as though everyone you know is escaping winter to head off across the world on a fabulous holiday (and sharing many photos to prove it).

Whether you're about to head off on a travelling adventure yourself, or your planning is still in the dreaming stage, take note of these tips to ensure your hard earned break is as stress free as possible.

Be strategic about when you book

People generally set aside more time for their holiday planning on the weekends, however travel companies know this and tend to hike up the price. Generally prices start to climb on Fridays and can be the highest over the weekend. Try to lock in time for some weeknight research and ensure you check prices over a few days, as some sites (such as booking.com) have daily deals. You may just check one day to find your dream hotel is 30% off.

Are you being tracked?

While we're on the topic of re-checking prices, be aware that some travel sites track the time you spend on their site by installing cookies on your browser, then raise prices if it's clear you're a repeat visitor. Be sure to enable private browsing on your web browser and clear cookies before you book. Alternatively, search on a friend's computer to check you aren't being overcharged.

Price match

Found a great deal online, but feeling a little uneasy about booking online? Some travel agents including Flight Centre and their affiliated brands, will price match if you bring in evidence of a cheaper fare. That way you get the best rate possible, as well as the peace of mind that if anything goes wrong, you have a personal travel consultant you can contact for assistance.

Make copies of important documents

It's everyone's biggest fear that they will lose their passport while overseas. While it's a huge hassle in any situation, it's 10 times better if you have photocopies to refer to. Better yet, email it to yourself so there's no possible way the copy can be lost. The same goes for other important documents including travel insurance details, credit cards and secondary ID. You don't want to get stuck in a situation where you could lose your bookings or even worse, miss a flight because you simply misplaced something.

To cash or card?

Firstly, ensure you always tell your bank when you're going to be using a card overseas – the last thing you want is your bank placing a hold on your credit card and having to sacrifice precious holiday time to sort it all out.

It's smart to exchange at least some of your foreign currency before you go – this way you can research the best exchange rate prior and avoid costly airport fees or being ripped off at your destination. Using your normal banking cards overseas can result in a whole lot of extra fees that you don't need to be paying. Consider using a credit card designed for overseas travel, such as the 28 Degrees card that has no international transaction fees or currency conversion fees. Alternatively, purchase a pre-paid travel money card to withdraw cash or make purchases with, where you can lock in your exchange rate before you leave so there will be no surprises. A mix of cards and cash will ensure you always have a backup option.

Many of us have strict budgets to stick to on holidays, so why not try to save a little bit here and there where you can. You never know, you could come in under budget and treat yourself to that extra massage.

Source: Capstone.

