

SMART International Travel Checklist

NO-NONSENSE, ONLY ESSENTIALS!

THINGS EVERYONE NEEDS:



Passport – check validity and renew in time. Make a copy or photo of the first page with your phone and store on the cloud. Better safe than sorry in an emergency.



Visa – Gather information if the country provides a visa on arrival or if you need to apply for a visa in advance. Certain countries have a less than clear way of explaining how to apply or to track the process. In that case approach an agency to help you along the way.



Unlocked Sim Smart Phone or [international sim card](#) – Make sure your mobile phone is unlocked to work with international sim cards or get an international sim card. A mobile can save you in almost any situation and not being able to go online can keep you in the dark in certain situations. For example, you can check a location without getting screwed over by some shady locals or check for transportation without falling into a tourist trap. Tip: Take a look at mini local wireless sim card routers. Those are usually inexpensive, come with a sim card and that way you can connect to the internet with multiple devices.



Travel insurance – This little detail can make or break your life, not just your holiday. Some countries list a travel insurance as a must have for the visa application. Anything can happen anytime. For example, my father had sudden horrible pain during a trip to Asia, turns out it was a kidney stone and his travel insurance took care of all the costs. You might never see your money again without a travel insurance if you had to cancel your room booking a day before the trip. So, get a travel insurance! I highly recommend the [World Nomads travel insurance](#). I have been using them for years! They are great for young travellers because they cover high risk sports and are suited for all those who constantly travel the world (like me).



A list of emergency numbers – Make a list of emergency numbers which you can save on your cloud and print out. The list should contain the hotlines to your countries embassy in the destination country, your bank, credit/debit card theft hotline, travel agency if any, your doctor and similar.

TRAVEL AND PAY:



Cash – You can always need cash, besides everyone loves cash! Some places accept cards but not for a bill below 40€ and that's when you need cash! OR what if all the ATM machines nearby are empty for weeks (this happened in India in 2016 and countless foreigners were stranded). Split up your cash don't keep it all in one place. Also make

sure to check how much cash you are allowed to take along with you when you pass the airport customs, too much might be a bad idea. Some countries do not allow their currency to leave the country and if found on you while traveling out of the country, you could get fined. USD, EUR and POUND are usually always accepted everywhere in the world and you can exchange those easily with the local currency. Keep track of the current exchange rate, you will never get the rate that google shows you. To get fair exchange rates, use a [real-time service like TransferWise](#) (I use only that).



Debit/Credit Card – When traveling abroad it is advisable to use a credit card. Also, you can always call your credit card company to cancel or block a transaction. Debit Cards can add costs when used in various bank ATMS around the world. So usually debit cards are taken along but only used in case of an emergency.



Online Wallets and Money accounts – Services like PayPal, TransferWise, Amazon Pay, Apple Pay can come very handy. Each of those has a purpose. PayPal is global, and you can instantly send money via an email address from A to B. [TransferWise has a borderless account](#) (they provide a debit card too!) where you can exchange money for in your wallet in real time and it can act as a local bank account for you. Amazon Pay, Apple Pay are rather new, but I don't doubt that these services are going to be useful when traveling abroad in the future. Another reason why you need to have your mobile phone with a working sim

card in place to use those services without having to access other unknown devices.

THINGS YOU MIGHT NEED IN CERTAIN PLACES AND SITUATIONS:



International Driver's Licence – Your licence might not be valid in another country. If you plan on hiring a car or even a scooter or motorbike, you will need to make sure that you have all your papers ready. If a cop would stop you in a corrupt country on a scooter, you would be better off having the proper international licence ready. We don't want to invite trouble, right?



Card location block - Check with your bank if you have a geo location block enabled for your cards and let them know that you will be traveling. A geo location card block is supposed to protect you if somebody tries to access your country from a dubious place. The bank can unlock this for places which are frequently marked as dubious such as places in Asia, Africa, East Europe and South America. That way you can use the ATM there without falling in trouble.



Vaccines – Now this is a hot topic. It depends where you are going to. Please consult your doctor. Take your vaccine card along with you. Tip: Keep that in your wallet, and also take along your blood group card.



A refill for your medicine – For example, if you suffer from Asthma, you need to bring your inhalers along. Take prescriptions along from your doctor, in case you need to buy a refill abroad. Also, some medicines might not be available under the same name and company in the destination country. Consult your doctor and inform yourself further online before you start your travel. I have put together a [nifty first aid travel kit](#) post.



[Global Travel Adapter with Voltage Converter](#) – This is a must if you travel a lot! I can't tell you the times I thought I was well equipped when I realized the adapters had different pins and I couldn't charge my mobile. I think Switzerland surprised me the most, their pins are nothing like the neighboring countries. This item should actually be listed in the top things to have for travellers. Btw, don't forget to bring your mobile charger along.



[Light Luggage scale](#) – I don't travel without that and it's the most asked gadget in hotels when travellers realize their luggage might be overweight. Unfortunately, I don't think many hotels keep this. You should have your own because 30 kgs happen quickly!

These are the basics that cover most things. You don't necessarily need a heavy guide book and other bulky things. The lighter you travel the easier.

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