



## International Travel Checklist 2026

The definitive international travel preparation guide — 130+ items organized by category

Full guide: <https://yopki.com/guides/international-travel-checklist>

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### TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Valid passport (must not expire within 6 months of return date)
- Visa(s) for destination country and any transit countries
- ETIAS authorization (required for US citizens visiting EU/Schengen from 2025)
- ETA for UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Kenya if applicable
- Printed AND digital copies of passport photo page
- Printed AND digital copies of visa(s)
- Travel insurance policy document with claim phone number
- Flight confirmation/e-tickets (printed backup + phone)
- Hotel/accommodation confirmations (printed + phone)
- Rental car reservation confirmation
- Tour and activity booking confirmations
- International Driving Permit (IDP) if planning to drive
- Student ID / ISIC card (for discounts)
- Global Entry / TSA PreCheck / NEXUS card
- Vaccination certificate / Yellow Card (WHO International Certificate)
- COVID vaccination card (still required in some countries)
- Travel itinerary shared with emergency contact at home
- Embassy/consulate address and phone number at destination
- Register with your country's embassy (US: STEP program at [step.state.gov](https://step.state.gov))
- Emergency contact card in local language
- Customs declaration form (sometimes distributed on plane)

### HEALTH & MEDICAL

#### Before You Go

- Visit a travel clinic 6-8 weeks before departure
- Routine vaccinations up to date (Tdap, MMR, flu, COVID)
- Destination-specific vaccines (Yellow Fever, Typhoid, Hep A/B, Japanese Encephalitis, Rabies)
- Malaria prophylaxis medication if visiting malaria zones
- Altitude sickness medication (Acetazolamide/Diamox) if visiting high elevations
- Motion sickness medication or patches
- Get a doctor's letter for all prescription medications (generic names + dosages)
- Research if your medications are legal at your destination (some countries ban common OTC drugs)

- Extra supply of all prescription medications (at least 1 extra week)
- Backup pair of prescription glasses or contacts
- Dental checkup (avoid dental emergencies abroad)

### Pack in Your Carry-On

- All prescription medications in original labeled containers
- Doctor's letter for controlled substances
- Basic first aid kit (bandages, antiseptic, blister pads, tweezers)
- Pain relievers (ibuprofen, acetaminophen)
- Antihistamine (Benadryl, Zyrtec) for allergies or bites
- Anti-diarrheal (Imodium) — traveler's stomach is real
- Oral rehydration salts (ORS packets)
- Insect repellent with DEET (20-30%)
- Sunscreen SPF 50+
- Medical allergy card translated into local language(s)
- Epi-pen if you have severe allergies
- Hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes
- Water purification tablets (for developing countries)

## MONEY & FINANCIAL PREPARATION

- Notify ALL banks and credit card companies of travel dates + destinations
- Get a no-foreign-transaction-fee credit card (Chase Sapphire, Capital One Venture, etc.)
- Confirm debit card works internationally and check daily ATM withdrawal limit
- Order foreign currency from your bank (2-3 days processing, better rate than airport)
- Carry \$100-200 USD as universal emergency cash (accepted worldwide)
- Bring at least 2 different credit/debit cards (Visa AND Mastercard for coverage)
- Keep backup card separate from main wallet (different bag or hotel safe)
- Set up mobile payment if used at destination (Apple Pay, Google Pay, WeChat, Grab, Paytm)
- Download a currency converter app (XE Currency)
- Research tipping customs at your destination
- Research whether destination is primarily cash or card-based
- Know the current exchange rate (avoid getting ripped off at exchanges)
- Bring a small amount of local currency for immediate needs at arrival (taxi, tips, water)
- Photograph front and back of all cards (store encrypted in cloud)
- Know how to freeze/lock your cards remotely via your banking app
- Save bank's international collect-call number (not the 800 number — those don't work abroad)

Tipping Region	Restaurants	Taxis	Hotels
USA / Canada	18-22%	15-20%	\$2-5/night
Europe (Western)	5-10% or round up	Round up	€1-2/night
UK	10-12.5%	Round up	£1-2/night
Japan	No tip (offensive)	No tip	No tip
Southeast Asia	Not expected, 10% appreciated	Round up	\$1/night
Middle East	10-15%	10%	\$2-3/night

Australia / NZ	Not expected, 10% for great service	Round up	Not expected
Latin America	10-15%	10%	\$1-2/night

## TECHNOLOGY & CONNECTIVITY

- Purchase eSIM or international SIM card (Airallo, Holafly, or local carrier)
- Activate international roaming plan as backup (check rates!)
- Download offline Google Maps for ALL destinations (including transit stops)
- Download offline Google Translate language packs for destination languages
- Install a VPN app (NordVPN, ExpressVPN) — essential in China, UAE, and for public WiFi
- Download airline app(s) with boarding passes
- Download transit apps for destination (Citymapper, Moovit, local metro apps)
- Download ride-hail app for destination (Uber, Grab, Bolt, DiDi, Careem, InDrive)
- Download restaurant/food apps (Google Maps, TripAdvisor, local apps like Tabelog for Japan)
- Research correct power plug type and voltage for destination
- Pack universal power adapter (or destination-specific adapter)
- Pack portable charger/power bank (must be in carry-on, not checked bag)
- Verify power bank is under 100Wh (airline limit) — most 20,000mAh banks are fine
- Pack charging cables for all devices (phone, watch, tablet, camera, headphones)
- Back up phone data before departure
- Enable Find My Phone / Find My Device
- Set up emergency SOS features on your phone
- Download entertainment: movies, shows, podcasts, ebooks, music playlists
- Save important info offline: hotel address, emergency numbers, embassy address

Region	Plug Type	Voltage	Adapter Needed (from US)?
USA / Canada / Mexico	A, B	120V	No
Europe (most)	C, F	230V	Yes
UK / Ireland / Singapore	G	230V	Yes
Australia / NZ / China	I	230V	Yes
Japan	A, B	100V	No (voltage may differ)
India	C, D, M	230V	Yes
Brazil	N	127/220V	Yes
South Africa	M, N	230V	Yes

## DESTINATION RESEARCH & CULTURAL PREP

- Know local emergency numbers (police, ambulance, fire)
- Research common tourist scams at your destination (forewarned is forearmed)
- Learn basic local phrases: hello, thank you, please, excuse me, how much, where is...
- Research dress codes (religious sites, upscale restaurants, beach rules)
- Research photography laws (some countries restrict photos of government buildings, military, people)
- Research alcohol laws (dry countries, purchase age, public drinking rules)
- Research drug laws (many countries have severe penalties, including for marijuana)

- Know local customs around greetings (bowing, handshakes, cheek kisses)
- Research LGBTQ+ safety at your destination
- Research women's safety considerations if applicable
- Research local food safety (tap water safe? ice safe? street food guidelines)
- Know the local religion(s) and any related rules visitors should follow
- Research public transportation etiquette (quiet cars, eating rules, standing on escalators)
- Research bargaining customs (expected in markets vs fixed-price shops)
- Check if any items are prohibited for import (food, medicine, cultural items)
- Research customs duty-free allowances for your return home

## UPON ARRIVAL AT YOUR DESTINATION

- Activate eSIM or insert local SIM card
- Connect to airport WiFi to load maps and confirm transportation
- Withdraw local currency from airport ATM (use bank ATMs, avoid Euronet/Travelex)
- Find your pre-arranged transportation or research options (train, bus, taxi, ride-hail)
- Keep your passport and valuables secure in a zipped inner pocket or money belt
- Check in to accommodation — inspect room, test key, locate emergency exits
- Store passport and backup cards in hotel room safe
- Save hotel address in your maps app and as a screenshot
- Ask front desk for a hotel business card (invaluable for taxis)
- Identify the nearest pharmacy, hospital, and ATM
- Take a photo of your hotel room number (you'll forget it)
- Set up a local transit card if available (Oyster, Suica, T-money, etc.)
- Walk the immediate neighborhood to get oriented
- Adjust to local time: if daytime, stay awake until at least 9pm local time

## RETURNING HOME — DAY OF DEPARTURE

- Do a thorough room sweep — check drawers, safe, bathroom, under bed, behind door
- Check out and settle any hotel incidentals
- Keep passport, boarding pass, and essential items easily accessible
- Organize receipts for tax-free / VAT refund claims
- Visit VAT refund counter at airport before security (if applicable)
- Fill out customs declaration form on the plane (usually distributed inflight)
- Declare items over duty-free allowance at customs (be honest, penalties are harsh)
- Collect checked luggage and proceed through customs
- Re-entry: have passport and customs form ready for immigration