

General Travel Tips and Information

Here are some travel tips that can help you make sure your vacation is a wonderful experience. Be sure to ask Michelle if you have any questions!

- Check in is **2 to 3 hours** prior to your flight time, check your travel documents for more information on where, phone number to verify, ect.
- **Please make sure not to forget your passport- keep with you-not in checked luggage!**
- **KEEP YOUR TOURIST CARD - you get this upon arrival to turn in when you leave and can be charged a fee for losing it!!**
- Be sure to attend any orientation that the resort may have to learn about all the activities, restaurants, and to get other helpful information about the resort.
- Many resorts will be "cashless" and you charge everything to your room, then pay at the end of the trip. They usually require a credit card when you check in, so if you don't have one, check with Michelle on your resort's policy.
- You are under the local laws and penalties when traveling outside the USA, so check with the local consulate if you have questions about local laws.
- Use the safe that is in your room to keep your money, jewelry, and travel documents safe, or lock in your suitcase. Don't bring anything expensive or anything you can't easily replace, just in case.
- Use your common sense - **don't go out at night by yourself, carry large amounts of cash, wear flashy jewelry, or leave anything of value unattended.**
- Each piece of checked luggage must have a nametag that matches the name on your ticket. Also put a sticker inside your luggage with your name and address in case your tag gets removed. Make your luggage appear differently. Use large colored tape, place stickers on all sides, tie brightly colored yarn around the handles, etc.
- Travel with shoes that come off easily in case security requests a shoe inspection.
- Limit your carry-on to two pieces. Airline personnel are very strict about this. See your documents for the size restrictions. Most airlines charge for checked bags now, so check with the airline or Michelle if you have any questions!
- **Lock your checked bags** - Use TSA approved locks on your luggage, or your lock may get cut off if your bag needs to get inspected. **Always use a lock!**
- **Carry on anything that you can not live without or that is hard/expensive to replace- such as medication, cameras, a change of clothes, swimsuit, ect.**
- **Check www.tsa.gov for current carry on restrictions with medications and liquids - the restrictions on liquids and gels changes all the time.**
- **If you have medical problems, be sure to take all medication and information a Dr. may need to have available if there is a problem**
- While the dress code is casual, some restaurants may require more dressy attire such as slacks and collared shirt for men and summer dresses for women. Closed toe shoes may also be required for men. Some restaurants do require reservations. For more detail, check the resort website.

- Reps from your tour operator have hours at the resort and will have a short meeting - usually on the 1st or 2nd day. Be sure to attend to get important information about your return airport transfers. They are also there to help you if you have any problems.
- When shopping, don't tell anyone in the shops where you are staying at. They often times base the price of what you buy on how much money they think you have. Ask your guide or contact at your destination for tips on where to shop and how to "haggle".
- You don't need to get local currency to shop. The US dollar is accepted at most stores and craft markets. Sometimes you do get a better deal when dealing in local currency.
- PLEASE - Stay hydrated and drink plenty of water!! Dinking alcoholic beverages while in the sun can make you VERY SICK!! Try alternating drinks and have 1 glass of water or juice between anything with alcohol in it.
- Wear sunscreen and re-apply every few hours... the sun is quite strong there and it's easy to get burned. A bad burn can ruin the rest of your trip and can cause skin cancer! Drink LOTS of water!
- You should make a copy of your passport and leave it with someone at home that could fax a copy to you, should you lose yours while traveling. This makes it easier to replace at the local consulate.
- Do not pack film in your checked luggage unless you place it in one of the specialty approved pouches available at most camera stores. Checked luggage is being scanned with x-ray equipment which can fog your vacation pictures.
- **TIPPING-** while not required at an all-inclusive, a dollar or two will go a long way! If you get good service, give a tip. Also, treat hotel staff how you want to be treated and you will find that most people are quite friendly and happy to help you! (Some resorts have a no-tipping policy, ask if you are unsure)!
- Bring bug repellent - the mosquitoes can be bad at night.
- You might want to bring your own snorkel and mask... you don't know if they will have any available when you are ready to go out snorkeling. You may want to bring your own inflatable raft/noodle for the pool and bring water shoes if you plan to get in the ocean, just in case an area you are in is rocky.
- If you want to be able to be contacted while traveling, check with your cell phone plan (text messages are usually the cheapest way to stay in contact), or when you arrive, ask about calling cards to use in the local payphones upon arrival. It may be cheaper to do that then make calls from the hotel/room.
- You may want to bring a sack lunch or snack with you for the plane.
- After you get off the plane, you will go thru Immigration. They will usually give you the forms when you are on the plane. It's good to bring a pen with you to fill out the forms. After clearing immigration, you will get your checked luggage and then go thru Customs.
- Avoid the time share people that are outside customs in many airports (and sometimes in the hotel lobby and in town when shopping).... just keep going until you are outside ☺ Whatever they offer you is NOT worth it! Trust me!

Check travel advisories and information at the websites listed below for more tips on your specific destination.

For more travel tips and information go to
<http://travel.state.gov> and www.tsa.gov