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# Fifteen First Time Travel Tips and Tricks

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Everyone remembers their first time travel experiences, whether it's travelling for the first time ever, visiting a new destination for the first time, trying a new experience or staying in a new type of accommodation.

To get the most out of visiting a brand new destination for the first time, [Booking.com](https://www.booking.com), the global leader in connecting travellers with the widest choice of awesome places to stay, has curated a list of top tips for first time travellers following global research\* from the most authoritative source around – travellers who have been there, done that and have the passport stamp to prove it.

1. **Don't just book the holiday you think you *should* be going on.** You are never too old or too young to visit a new city, go backpacking or venture out alone. It is never as challenging as you think it will be – do what you want to do.
2. **Make sure you dive into the local culture and try not to just keep to the well beaten tourist tracks.** A great way to soak up the local atmosphere is to head to a restaurant away from the main drag, hot spots and ask the waiter to recommend their most popular dishes. Almost a third (29%) of first time travellers revealed that trying the local food was one of their favourite tips to give to friends / family.\*
3. **Check if you require a VISA well ahead of departing.** Some VISAs require more effort and money than others so make sure to check the relevant Government website. Same applies for passports. Check your passport's expiration date before you travel –

certain countries require at least 6 months validity in order to enter. Booking.com research found that 24% of travellers would even recommend carrying your passport with you for the entire trip.\*

4. **Take pictures of your passports, VISAs and travel insurance** and email them to yourself, in case you lose them.
5. **Always stash away THB 10,000 or a spare debit or credit card** in case you lose your wallet. Hide it away in a money belt, pocket in your bag or share it around if you're travelling in a group. Over one in ten (13%) travellers cited a secret stash of cash as one of the most important tips for those planning their first trip according to Booking.com research.\*
6. If you don't speak the local language, a helpful trick is to **download Google Translate to your mobile phone**. It will take away the pain of wild gestures and raised voices. You might also want to consider learning a few key phrases before you head out, especially words to help navigate travel, bookings and menus.
7. **Always pack less than you think you will need** – according to Booking.com research, 18% of travellers regret packing too much when they leave the country.\* At least two days before you go, lay everything out on the bed that you think you will need, then put away 30% and pack a travel bottle of washing detergent instead. Pack layers and put comfort first, especially when it comes to shoes!
8. **Check the luggage allowance before you fly** and, if necessary, pack heavier items (like chargers) in your hand luggage. If you're heading somewhere hot, it's worth packing a light sarong. It can be used for anything from a pillow on a long bus journey, something to cover your shoulders with when visiting a religious site, to blankets in the evening and a towel at the beach.
9. If travelling with friends or family, **share some of your clothes out amongst your bags**. That way if a bag is lost, you'll still have some items to wear.
10. **Research local scams to watch out for**, whether it's particular tour companies to avoid or how to get a reputable taxi from the airport. Booking.com research reveals that 21% of first time travellers feel researching local safety advice is an important part of any holiday prep.\* If you get into real trouble, the international emergency number is 112 – even if the phone is locked or it's not showing any service provider.
11. If you're travelling on your own, **don't be afraid to start up conversations with a stranger**. Stay at a bigger hostel, guest house or bed & breakfast if you want to meet up with other people with similar interests and make sure you head out to the communal areas. It might feel daunting at first, but travelling for the first time is all about exhilaration and pushing your boundaries.
12. **Trust your gut, be open minded and don't expect to experience anything in particular**. If you're heading somewhere for the first time, you'll never really know what's in store but go with the flow and enjoy. When asked about the tips travellers wish they had been given themselves, 40% wish they'd been told to just relax and enjoy every single minute.\*
13. **Be flexible and don't overdo it**. You never know what kind of experiences will come that will take your fancy, if the weather will take a sudden turn or who you might meet.

14. **Look up!** At the sights, the architecture, the sky and perhaps most importantly, at the signs in the airport.
15. Don't just tell your Facebook friends that you're about to jet off – **remember to let your bank and mobile provider you're heading abroad** too to avoid any card cancellations or surprise bills. According to Booking.com research 20% of holiday makers cited checking in with their bank and mobile provider as one of the most important tips to hand out ahead of a trip abroad.\*

*\*Research carried out by Booking.com between 11<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> January, surveying 15,077 travellers across 20 markets worldwide*

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