

**Title:**

Travel To South America: How To Start

**Word Count:**

832

**Summary:**

You set your mind and you're ready to travel to South America, a magical place of immense beauty where myth and legend continue to walk hand in hand. I've traveled 18 months in South America and can give you some tips on how to prepare yourself for an unforgettable adventure.

**Common Sense**

We all hear the unpleasant stories and South America has a fame of being dangerous. I traveled thousands of miles traversing cities, jungles, islands and mountains. I survived 6 weeks...

**Keywords:**

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**Article Body:**

You set your mind and you're ready to travel to South America, a magical place of immense beauty where myth and legend continue to walk hand in hand. I've traveled 18 months in South America and can give you some tips on how to prepare yourself for an unforgettable adventure.

**Common Sense**

We all hear the unpleasant stories and South America has a fame of being dangerous. I traveled thousands of miles traversing cities, jungles, islands and mountains. I survived 6 weeks in a street child care center in the favelas of Salvador da Bahia (Brazil) and had the party of a lifetime during carnival. Nothing, I repeat, nothing happened. Use your common sense. Avoid badly lit streets at night and if your sixth sense is giving you the "something is wrong" sign then take a taxi to your destination.

**Travel Guide Book**

The first thing that you will need is a travel guide book. It will be your best

companion in your search for adventure. I can highly recommend Lonely Planet's South America on a Shoestring to get you started. The book covers all you need to know to get the most out of your trip and is ideal to plan your journey ahead. I've used the guide extensively during my 18 month adventure. They offer excellent separate travel guides of all the countries (besides using the Lonely Planet Shoestring I've used their separate travel guides of Peru and Brazil). Their guides are the most popular among backpackers.

Other popular guides are The Rough Guide to South America and the South American Handbook. Ideal, but not practical because you want to travel light, would be to enjoy the adventure with a Lonely Planet and either the Rough Guide or the Handbook.

### Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese

The most rewarding thing for me was the fact that you can travel in a huge continent like South America with only 2 languages. Spanish and Portuguese. If you plan to travel just for a few weeks you can invest in a Spanish and/or Brazilian Portuguese Phrase Book. English is not widely spoken and even a basic knowledge of Spanish and/or Portuguese makes the trip so much more rewarding (they're extremely willing to help you, so don't worry, be happy).

If on the other hand you're planning to travel for a few months I can highly recommend taking a language course. Ideal would be in a school in South America (I took lessons in Quito, Ecuador, and had a private teacher for \$2.50/h).

### Walking Shoes

South America's nature is overwhelming. You'll walk for many hours day after day. It would be a shame to walk in the footsteps of the Incas with blisters on your feet. My biggest recommendation is to invest in high quality walking shoes with Gore-Tex.

### Health Vaccinations

Yellow Fever (if you plan to go to the Amazon Basin), Typhoid (consists of two injections taken 4 weeks apart), Diphtheria-Tetanus, Polio, Cholera (only when necessary), Smallpox

### Medical Kit:

Depending on what you plan to do you can include the following:

Antiseptic cream, aspirin, lomotil for diarrhea, antibiotics, throat lozenges, ear and eye drops, antacid tablets, motion sickness medication, alcohol swabs, water purifier, lip salve, foot and groin powder, thermometer (in a case), surgical tape, assorted sticky plasters, gauze, bandages, butterfly closures, scissors and last but not least, first-aid booklet

Note: malaria pills are required in the amazon basin, please be aware that those pills are very b and you should check with your doctor before departure

## Traveling Gear

### Backpack:

Obviously a high quality backpack is a must. Choose the type that has different compartments that can be opened separately. Very handy if you need something quickly. Travel as light as possible. A heavy backpack is destined to undermine your traveling pleasure.

### Clothing:

Depends on where you go. If it's the mountains and the jungle, get some quality clothing from home. If it's the beach, buy your t-shirts there (cheap).

### Camping and Climbing Gear:

You can rent camping and climbing material in South America but the quality may be questionable. Always check the material. Bring your own gear if possible. I traveled 18 months with my own tent and various camping utensils.

### Photography

Pictures are something personal. Some people just want some snap shots, others want to publish in the National Geographic. All my pictures were taken with a cheap Nikon F50 camera. Have a look at some amazing photographs at [www.travel-amazing-southamerica.com](http://www.travel-amazing-southamerica.com).

I had two zoom lenses, a 35-80 mm. and a 70-210mm. I also dragged a tripod and an excellent flash with me. I used FUJI slides (100 ASA) but you definitely need 200 to 400 ASA if you plan to go to the jungle. A polarize filter enhances the colours tremendously on sunny days.

## Conclusion

South America will embrace you with open arms. It's nature, people and history

are overwhelming. With the right preparation and set of mind you're ready for an unforgettable adventure.