



The Canadian Institute of Travel Counsellors lists all the Certified Travel Counsellors and Managers in Canada on the National Directory of Certified Travel Professionals  
[www.citc.ca/en/directory](http://www.citc.ca/en/directory)

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Recommended by Members of the Canadian Institute of Travel Counsellors

## Top Travel Tips

- Use a Certified Travel Counsellor to book your vacations. Speak with someone who is familiar with the destination.
- Make sure your Passport is up to date
- Always make sure you leave a photocopy of your passport at home when you travel...along with an itinerary with contact info in case of emergency
- Don't forget to purchase travel insurance. Your travel counsellor can explain the best insurance options to suit your needs.
- When traveling with another person, give them all your carry-on stuff and wait while you proceed through security at the airport. Then when you are completely through security and waiting by the belt, the other traveler puts the carry-on, on the belt and goes through security. This prevents theft of your stuff while you are being searched and wanded
- Always take a photocopy of the photo page of your passport with you in case the original is lost or stolen. It will expedite the replacement time.
- Review your destination before you go. Be familiar with local traditions, food, holidays, festivals, political events, whether conditions etc. A travel guide book can be the best investment in your vacation. The Internet is a wealth of knowledge. Your travel counsellor will advise you about different conditions and standards at your destination but it is always good to do some research on your own.
- Take a city orientation tour at the very beginning of their trip to become familiar with the sights and services and the proximity/distance of attractions to their accommodations. Grayling Sightseeing Tours International is my favorite company offering historical and cultural commentary and great sightseeing often on unique double-decker buses, trolleys or busses. You are then ready to go explore the city with greater purpose.
- Take different modes of local transportation: subways, city busses, trolleys, cable cars. These methods are less expensive than taxis and limos and you get the opportunity to meet the locals and see areas of the city not always covered on tours.
- I always research the local food, drink, beverage that is recommended and try and taste test for myself. Always an adventure.
- Eat where the locals eat and get to know them and their traditions. Sometimes they will even invite you back for an authentic meal with them at their home.
- Bring good walking/running shoes. The best way to explore a city is by foot!
- Visit the city by day and night (when appropriate and safe). Both offer a different perspective. (Paris, New York, San Antonio)
- Always arrive early for flights, tours, departures. You will be more relaxed and maybe even have a better seat selection.
- Never panic. Take a minute to collect your thoughts. That missing wallet or passport may very well be in another compartment in your backpack or purse or carry-on. Relax.

- Always be courteous and polite when traveling through airports. Security is there for your protection too.
- Research your destination in advance to get the most out of your trip
- If you are planning to use your debit card to withdraw from an ATM machine at a destination, ensure that you have a PIB that works in the country (Europe, Mexico only allow 4 digits)
- Consider having various forms of payment on hand (local currency, travellers' cheques, credit cards, bank cards.
- Your mind...don't leave home without it. Many times travellers get into difficult situations for the most basic of reasons—they don't think. Wise travellers take the time to consider what to do in any destination and what is safe and not safe. A bit of common sense goes a long way in reducing problems while on your vacation.
- pen and paper in camera bag. (record the location of the picture)
- Liquid Band-Aid...helps with the sea salt and you still can play in the water with those nasty blisters.
- Toilet Paper. Believe it or not, this is a magic solution to preventing glass and other delicate items from breaking while in your suitcase. Just wrap them—like a mummy—in toilet paper.
- When in Rome, do as the Romans do. Don't expect your destination to be as your own home.
- Make sure you travel with a Canada Direct card so you can charge any phone calls you make to your home telephone number no matter where you are – hotel, call box, visiting friends and family. It's easy, reasonably priced and all you need is your phone number and PIN.
- If you are travelling out of the country notify your credit card company where you will be before you go. This way if you have a large purchase there is not so much hassle because the CC company knows where you are.
- Make a list of experiences that you want to live in this lifetime, and make them happen, now! Life is short!
- In this day and age of baggage getting LOST... I recommend taking a digital picture of what your suitcase looks like, so when you are making the claim.... SHOW the picture to the agent, it cuts down, trying to remember what it looked like!
- Drink as much water as you can when traveling by air to keep hydrated
- Be proud to say you're Canadian.....travel with an open mind.....respect the culture you're visiting.....don't complain.....try the food, even if it looks unusual
- Don't lock your luggage - if customs and immigration have to, they will cut it open, and you may get to your destination and discover your belongings inside a shredded suitcase held together with duct tape!
- If your airline has this service, pre-print your boarding pass before you leave home for the airport—it will save you from lining up to check-in –just go to the Web Check-in counter. On the return, some hotels will print your boarding pass for you; some hotels have a special set-up where you can print your own Boarding pass for free (Marriott Chateau Champlain in Montreal). Otherwise, go to an internet café and print it there.
- Learn just one word and use it, in the language of the country that you will be visiting - "Thank you"
- Ask the airline, if they can make your baggage a "priority". (It never hurts to ask...all they can do is say no) This saves waiting for baggage at the carousel at your destination because Priority Baggage always comes off the plane first.
- For frequent travels to the US make sure to apply and get a Nexus/GOES card before you travel – it saves a LOT of time. I saved over 45 minutes – no lining up at immigration

- Live your entire life in a moment—which is similar to the expression “Carpe Diem (literally, ‘pluck the flower of the day’) meaning—get the most out of every moment of your travels. Bring an open mind, arrive with realistic expectations of culture, and of the concept of time, relax. Chuckle to yourself when you hear other travellers complain about how things are so different than they are at home—but don’t fall into that trap yourself—or you will never climb out.
- Be very organized...know where all your travel docs are...and actually read them prior to departure ...the small print on the e-ticket, insurance policy, hotel or excursion vouchers etc. in case you have to get help while in destination. Keep your eyes open and your smarts about you at all times...if it doesn’t feel right, don’t do it/go there etc.
- Be sure to leave a photo copy of all your credit cards and ID with someone at home, and a copy in your suitcase....
- Always look like you know where you are going...especially in turnstiles at transit stations!
- Travel with Travel insurance and keep policy on hand with meds and other essentials ...not packed away in luggage
- Have some local currency in small denominations when you first arrive in the destination. Use a money belt
- Create a holiday packing list so you won’t forget things
- Use travel guides to research your destination prior to departure so you can plan your visit. Use a guide that fits your style as there are major differences between Rick, Steve’s, Fodor’s, Let’s Go, etc.
- Just don’t visit the major cities in a country. Frequently the most treasured experiences can be found in the countryside and smaller towns
- Check with the tourist office or on the internet to see if there are any festivals or special events during your visit
- Travel to your destination during the “shoulder periods” as prices may be cheaper, crowds smaller and the weather is usually still good
- Be sure to stop home newspaper delivery, arrange for mail pickup or have your mail ‘held’ at the Post Office.
- When my husband and I travel together and when we go to get the luggage I wait for the luggage and my husband goes over to the car rental desk and gets the papers in order etc and then comes back to help with the luggage//if you wait till you get your luggage then there is a long line up for car rentals and we just proceed to get our car and saves a lot of time plus frustration
- Treat the locals with respect no matter what, and remember you are a guest in their country. No, things are not done like at home, that’s why you are travelling to experience other people’s ways.
- Smile ! Next time you travel, look at the tourists and spot the ones smiling - surprisingly not many...
- When flying, I always read the "safety pamphlet", as each aircraft is different, and it may have been awhile since I was on a 737 vs. a 767 aircraft. Count the seatback rows in front (or behind) to the nearest and secondary emergency exit. You may know which row you are sitting in, and the emergency row number, but in a panic, and no lighting, counting the seatbacks on your way
- will help you if in an emergency situation.
- Sit in the aisle seat, easier for moving about the aircraft, without disturbing your seatmates.
- Longer flights (3+hrs or more, routinely walk about the aircraft, and do stretches, many long haul flights you will see not just passengers, but flight attendants doing stretches at the back of the aircraft)
- Wear natural-fibre clothing when traveling (nylons for example, will burn through your skin, natural cotton clothing not so fast)

- Throw a day or week of volunteering into your travel plans. I recently joined the Jimmy Carter Habitat for Humanity in New Orleans (May 2008), and spent 5-days volunteering on a couple of house blitzes. As an experienced travel agent, I was not sure that my skill-set would be of any use, but I quickly learned terms, and tools, and could easily put in windows/shims/siding/doors etc. and while I was helping out a family, I was also experiencing the New Orleans atmosphere in the evenings! Many local community websites provide info on volunteering in ANY capacity, check them out before you go...
- Digital Camera Tips #1: Keep memory cards separate from any camera/laptop/game that you are using them in - electronic items are one of the biggest targets of theft and memory cards may contain valuable information or irreplaceable photos you have not backed up yet.....one client lost photos of a wedding and christening because she carried a half full memory card from home and it was stolen along with the camera. Another client lost a memory card with 800+ photos from their Cook Islands vacation because it was left in an airline seat pocket with the camera.....oh well - good excuse to have to do the trip again!
- Digital Camera Tips #2: Get emails of friends you meet on your trip....comes in handy like in the above scenario that if you lose your memory card and photos - you have someone to email who just did the same trip and may be willing to forward the generic scenery/major trip shots so you at least have some vacation memories!
- Bring an extra book, you never know if you will be delayed or for how long. On that note, you can bring your own mini-home entertainment centre. Many models of ipods (or similar) have the capacity to include movies and audio books. Visit a site, such as [www.earthwormslearning.com](http://www.earthwormslearning.com) and download language lessons right into your itunes (or similar). It is a great and practical way to use your extra vacation time wisely—and if the movie or book or language that you uploaded, directly relates to your holiday destination then it serves to maintain that level of excitement at what you are about to experience!
- I like having lots of time to make connections. There is nothing more stressful than fretting over whether you will make the flight or train or ferry or cruise. Even breaking the journey by arriving early and staying overnight, is better than travelling all day and being exhausted.
- Wear loose clothes during a flight and move around a little like turning your ankles in circles and doing a few arm circles. Look after your comfort and don't be intimidated by what you think the person next to you is thinking! I was on a flight one time when the airline attendant had everyone on the plane doing little movements with arms and legs. It was great and you felt better.
- Do not travel with expensive jewellery and carry along only costume jewellery and then you will never have to worry about protecting your precious belongings.
- If you are travelling to remote areas in a foreign country, let the Canadian Embassy know you are there and where to find you. If there is no Canadian Embassy, find out what other country's Embassy is there who may help you if needed. Visit [www.voyage.gc.ca](http://www.voyage.gc.ca) for information on specific countries.
- Do not attempt to do what you have never been able to do, or take risks that you normally would not take. There are many people injured on holiday when they decide to rent a motorcycle or motor scooter—for the first time in their life!
- Never purchase local medication unless you are familiar with the same. Some countries will mix other ingredients into the medication. (Sulpha is popular—and you may not know that you have an allergy to sulpha)
- Upon check-in at the hotel or resort, immediately ask for a brochure or business card that you can keep with you. That way if you have difficulty communicating the name and address of the hotel to a taxi driver, you can simply show him/her the hotel's business card. If for some reason the hotel does not have a card, ask them to write out the name and address in the local language—and carry this with you.
- Carry one of those thermos coffee mugs and ask the airline to fill 'er up! Both a green thing and also you get lots of coffee and or water.

- BE NICE to all security staff, especially at customs. (I got pulled aside for "randomly selected special screening" because I rolled my eyes at somebody.)
- ALWAYS carry ear plugs with you. Spongy earplugs are great for wearing not only at night time, if you have a roommate/spouse that snores, but onboard an aircraft in which you wish to reduce the noise around you in order to get some sleep and/or not hear your neighbour. Also good for wearing in airports to help reduce surrounding noises.
- Travel to destinations on off-peak times. Not only might there be fewer tourists, but prices may be more budget-friendly.

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