Quick Travel Tips

Before you leave:

Passports
- Passports need to be valid **for at least six months** after you return from your trip.
- You should have a copy of all documents on your phone and/or paper and/or digitally.

Packing:
- Weather can vary as you travel so, plan accordingly.
- Wear layers to shed as needed. Usually a shirt or two, a sweatshirt and some kind of jacket.
- Planes can be cool, so plan on adjusting to match the conditions.
- Other things to pack in the suitcase along with the usual clothes:
  1. Light jacket for the evenings or rainy days.
  2. Good walking shoes (sneakers).
  3. Hat(s) & gloves.
  4. Swimsuit (in case you want to swim).
  5. Suntan lotion (a reef friendly type.)
  6. Umbrella (if there is a chance of rain).

- Finally, check local restrictions about smoking, vaping, and CBD products. Things that may be legal at home may not be legal in different destinations.

Money:
- We take local currency to pay for things like souvenirs and meals. You may be able to get some of the local currency through your bank.
- Exchange rates at currency exchange shops and the airport are generally very poor.
- Notify your credit card company that you will be traveling.
- Limit the cards you use to one or maybe two; it's easier to track and verify your spending.
- Get receipts or make notes (date, place, amount) about all purchases to check at home.
- Not all credit cards will work in foreign countries, and some will have a foreign transaction fees.

Cell Phones
- Verify with your phone carrier what your plan covers and doesn't cover. You would hate to return from a trip and have a huge phone bill the next month.
- Some phones just won't work in other countries because they run on different frequencies.
- Don't charge you phones or tablets on the free charging stations because of hackers.

Power
- Most countries in the Americas use 110/120 volts but not all plug-in patterns will be the same. We take a non-grounded plug adapter.
- European voltage is 220/240. You will need a voltage converter if your devices aren't dual voltage. You will also need plug adapters; different countries in Europe may have patterns.

Internet
- Don't connect to any Internet Wi-Fi or hotspot without running some kind of a VPN. You should download, install, and pay for a VPN at home, so you aren't entering credit card info over an unsecured connection.

Preparing for travel
- Download and install the apps for your airlines, cruises, transfers, excursions, VPNs, currency conversion, translation, etc. at home before you leave.
- Some apps need the Internet to work so watch your phone bill!!
- Check-in for your flights on your app 24 hours prior to departure - both ways.

- DO NOT PACK ANY LITHIUM BATTERY DEVICES IN YOUR CHECKED LUGGAGE!
- For international flights, they will want to see your passport at the airport as you are checking your bag before you can get a printed boarding pass. You will also have to show your passport at the gate before boarding the plane so keep it handy.
- Most international flights will not accept digital boarding passes and for those flights you need to have a printed boarding pass that you get from the ticket counter at check-in. (Also some countries, too.)
- TSA Pre may get you through security faster, but it rarely works in foreign airports.
- To speed up your entry back into the US, you may want to download the Mobile Passport app to your phone before you leave, this is for immigration back into the US. If you have time and travel internationally a lot, you may want to get Global Entry.

Arriving at the airport in a foreign country:
- If you have not traveled internationally before, this is the basic process of entering a foreign country:

Arrive at airport -> **Go through immigration** -> **Pick up bags** -> **Go through customs** -> **Enter country**.

Some airports combine some of these steps, so this is just a basic overview.

- As you exit customs in some airports, you may encounter what we call the gauntlet. There may be a number of people trying to sell you something – anything it may seem. To be fair, these people are just trying to earn a living. We ignore all of them and walk straight through the gauntlet out of the airport to our transportation without making eye contact. If we say anything, it's limited to "*No thank you.*"

Returning home:
Even though you are having a great time on your trip, the time will come to return home. Here are some ideas and tips to have less trouble getting back to the US.
- Make sure you check in for your flight 24 hours before your departure.
- Charge up your phone, iPad, tablet, earbuds, etc. (Remember about lithium devices!)
- Double check that your passports and any other documents you may need easily accessible.
- Check your room and the room safe one more time. If you leave anything, you won't get it back!
- You will need to check in at the ticket counter even if you aren't checking any bags because this will be an international flight.
- Make sure you lock your luggage before turning it in at the ticket counter.
- Be patient getting through security! Very few foreign airports have TSA Pre or any of the other programs that can speed you through security.
- Once you are through security, check the monitors to verify departure times and gates.
- While you are waiting at the airport, if you're using Mobile Passport, this would be a good time to enter your information into the app.
- When you get back to the US, you will go through a similar process to what you went through when entering a foreign country. One difference may be if you have Global Entry, it will speed up the process.

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- Look for different lines if you have ways to speed up entry to US (Global Entry, etc.)
- Unless you have arrived at your final destination city, you will have to return your luggage back to your airline and go through TSA before getting onto your next flight.