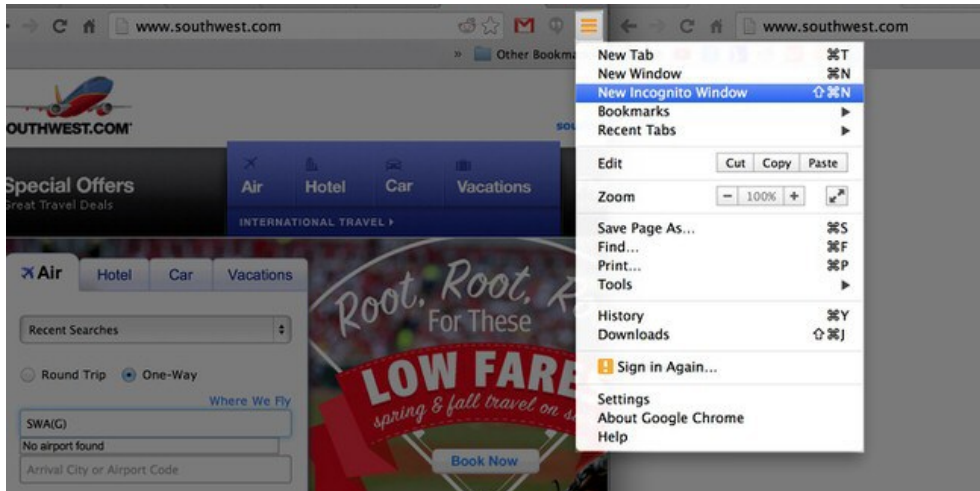


# 40 Must-See Travel Tips That Will Change Your Life Forever

**#1. Use a private or incognito window when booking flights and hotels online.**



Travel sites often track your visits and will raise the price simply because you've visited before.

**#2. Keep loose chargers and cables organized with a glasses case.**



**#3. Use straws to carry travel-size amounts of skin care products.**



**#4. Put a dryer sheet at the bottom of a suitcase to keep your clothes smelling fresh.**



[diaryofasocialgal.com](http://diaryofasocialgal.com)

**#5. Use a spring from an old pen to protect chargers from bending and breaking.**



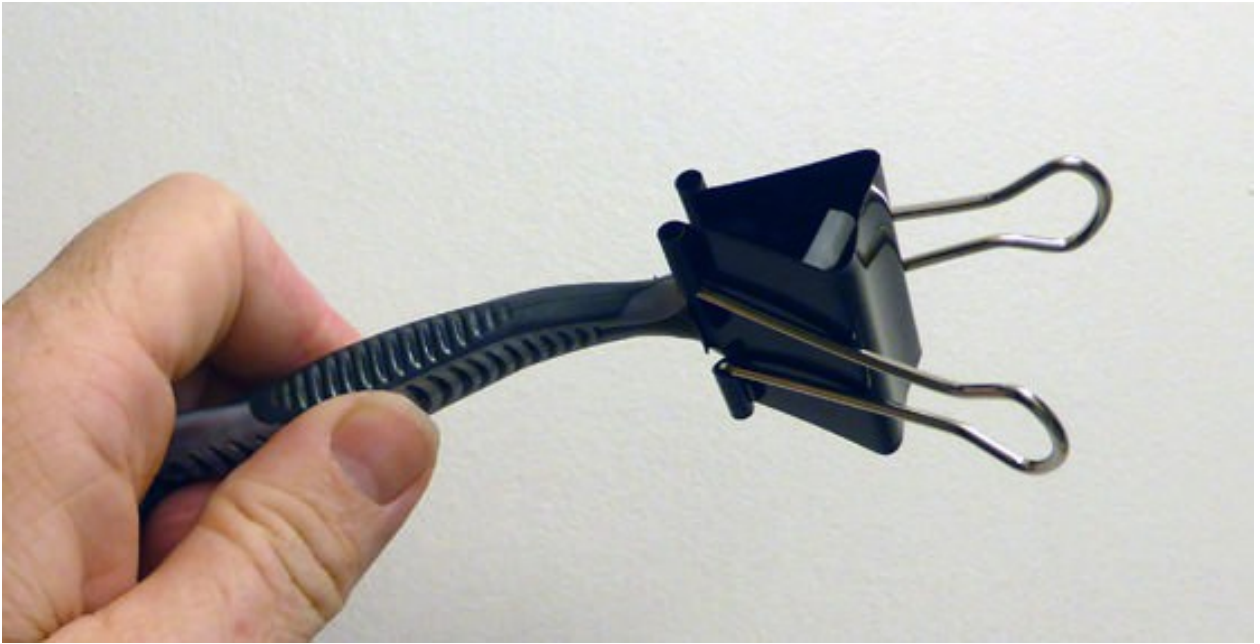
**#6. Skip the long lines for airport bathrooms.**



It may seem like common logic, but the first bathroom in the terminal is the most crowded one. Use the next one to skip the long waits and save precious time.



**#7. Use a binder clip to protect the head of shaving razors.**



**#8. If you forget your wall plug, charge devices through the USB slot on a TV.**



**#9. Roll clothes, instead of folding, to save tons of baggage space.**

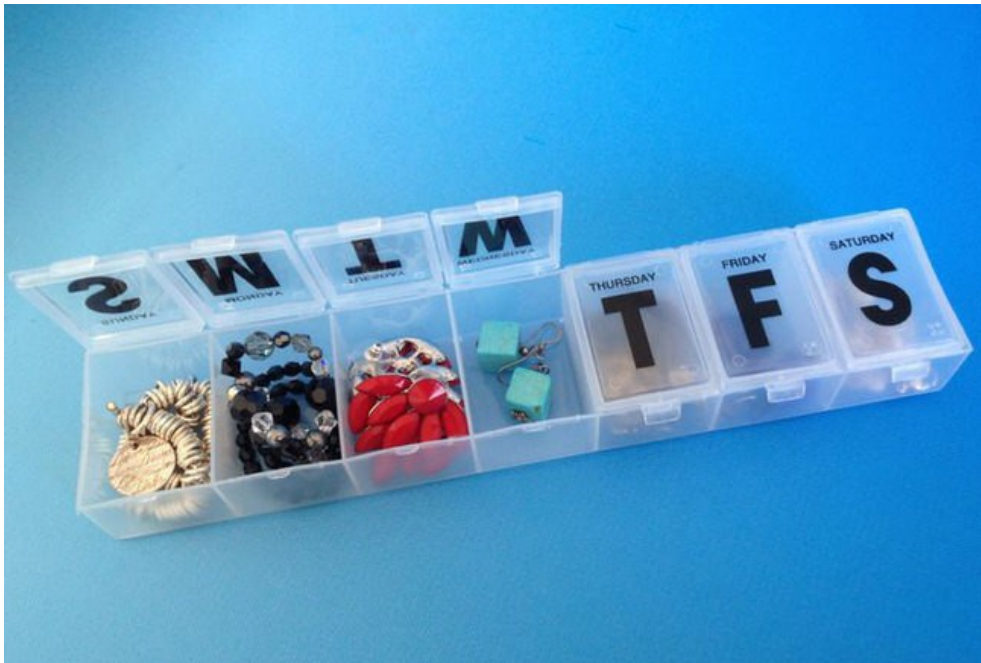


[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

**#10. If you have clothes that need to be folded, use tissue paper to keep them from wrinkling.**



**#11. Use a pill container to keep jewelry organized and untangled.**



**#12. Scan important documents before leaving for your trip.**



[lifehack.org](http://lifehack.org)

In the event of theft or misplacement, it comes in really handy to have extra copies of your passport, identification cards and flight itineraries that you can easily access on your smartphone or tablet.

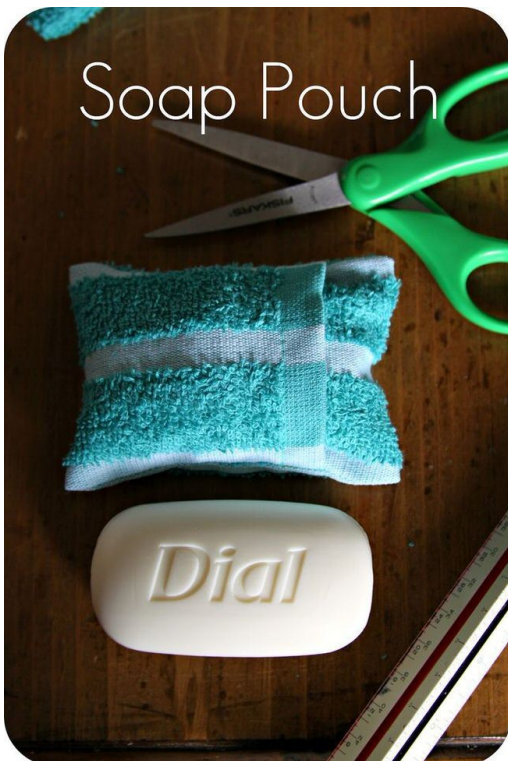


### #13. Speed Up Going Through Security



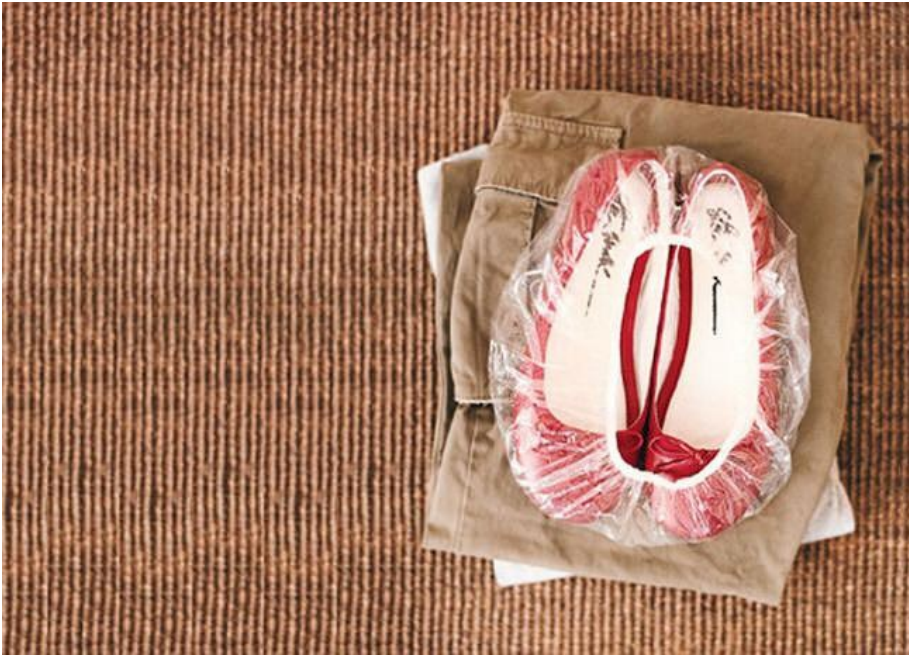
When going through security, stuff your small belongings like wallets, keys and phones into your bag before placing it on the conveyor belt. It eliminates the need for separate bins and saves you time.

### #14. Tuck your soap and wash cloth together with this easy-to-fold pouch.



[Nikki Mans](#)

**#15. A shower cap is an easy way to cover the bottoms of shoes.**



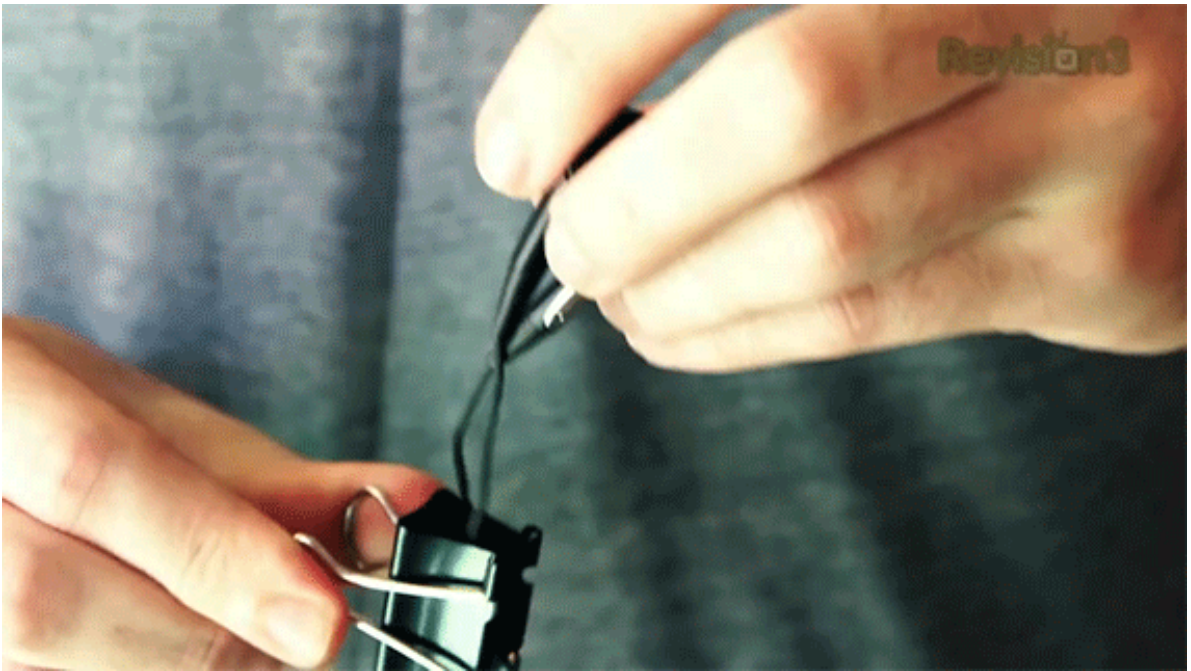
[forblabla.com](http://forblabla.com)

**#16. Put smartphones in airplane mode to save battery and charge faster.**





**#17. Keep your headphones from tangling by winding them around a binder clip.**



**#18. Keep hair clips tidy with an empty Tic Tac container.**



**#19. When packing, line collars with a belt to keep them crispy.**



[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

**#20. Sit in the seats near the wing of the plane for the least turbulence.**



[complex.com](https://www.complex.com)

The seats along the wings of a plane usually have the least amount of bounce when flying because it has more structural support.

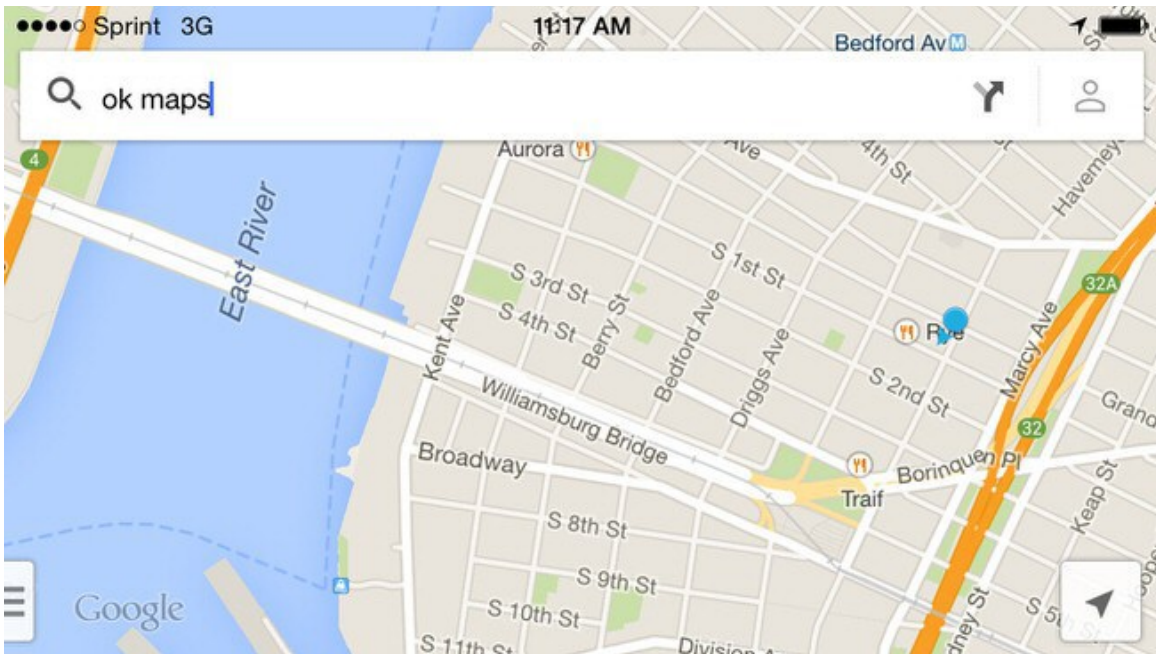


**#21. Keep your travel-size containers and refill them, instead of buying new each time.**



[lifehacker.com](http://lifehacker.com)

**#22. To use Google Maps offline, type “OK Maps,” and the visible area will save for future access.**



[wired.com](http://wired.com)



**#23. Cram the most into your carry on.**



Vacuum sealed bags can save you a ridiculous amount of space in your carry on. Makes the need for checking a bag obsolete.

**#24. Instead of buying water at the airport, bring an empty bottle along and fill it up after passing security.**



**#25. When reserving airline seats for 2 people, get the aisle and window.**



If no one takes the middle seat you get a full row, and if someone does, just ask to switch so you can sit next to your travel partner.

**#26. Pack your suit coats inside out to keep them clean and avoid creasing.**



[davehax](https://davehax.com)



**#27. Wait to buy airline tickets until 3 p.m. on Tuesdays.**



Typically this is when the big Airlines reduce their fares in order to compete with the discount airlines like Southwest and JetBlue. If you're looking to save some money, this is the time to buy.

**#28. Prevent messy spills in your luggage.**



Just unscrew the lids and place a simple patch of saran wrap on the top and screw them back on. This will prevent any liquids from ruining your trip.



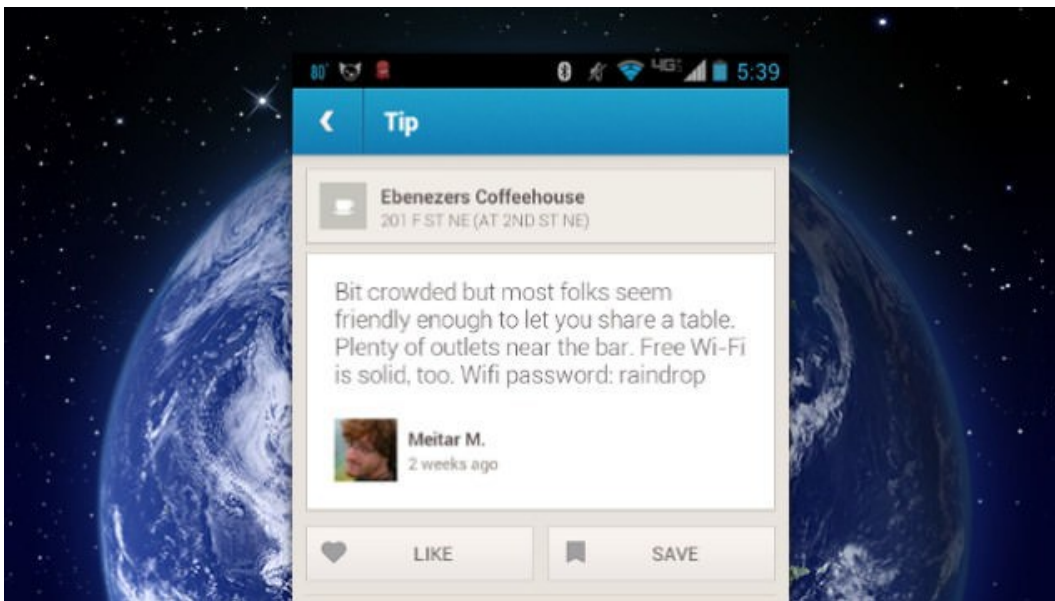
**#29. Certain times are better for using the airplane bathroom.**



[quora.com](http://quora.com)

Since most airlines don't let you stand in line for the restrooms, the best times to use it are right after the plane has leveled off and 15-20 minutes before landing.

**#30. Get the WiFi password for many establishments by checking the comments section of FourSquare.**



[lifehacker.com](http://lifehacker.com)

**#31. Use your GPS when traveling abroad.**



If you're traveling abroad without an international plan, turn on airplane mode and turn off data to use the GPS without connecting to the internet. Simply load the Google map of the area before heading out the hotel, and you've got a fully functional map to navigate the area.

**#32. Get a free cell phone charger if you forgot yours at home.**



[quora.com](http://quora.com)

Forget your charger? Often times hotel front desk's will have a box full of chargers left by previous guests.

### #33. Skip the wait at the baggage claim.

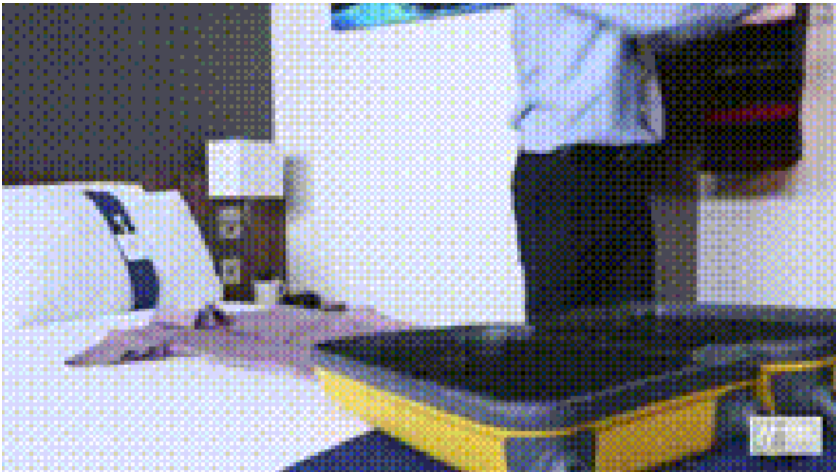


[lifehack.org](http://lifehack.org)

Even if it's not, marking your bag with a fragile label leads to gentler handling by airport staff. Also, they're often loaded on the top of the other luggage meaning it's one of the first to come out at the baggage claim.

### #34. Save time packing on the go.

**Use a hanging shoe organizer to pack clothes in. Remove from hang bar and put in suitcase, take from hang bar to put in hotel closet. Remove again and back in suitcase. All clothes stay in the folding shoe organizer or sweater organizer.**



[davehax](http://davehax)

Hanging organizers can be packed ahead of time making it really simple to slide into your suitcase and leave in a hurry.



**#35. Remove other tourist from your vacation photos.**

## **Delete tourists from your travel photos**

- 1: Set your camera on a tripod.
- 2: Take a picture about every 10 seconds until you have about 15 shots
- 3: Open all the images in Photoshop by going to File > Scripts > Statistics. Choose "median" and select the files you took.
- 4: Photoshop finds what is different in the photos and simply removes it!

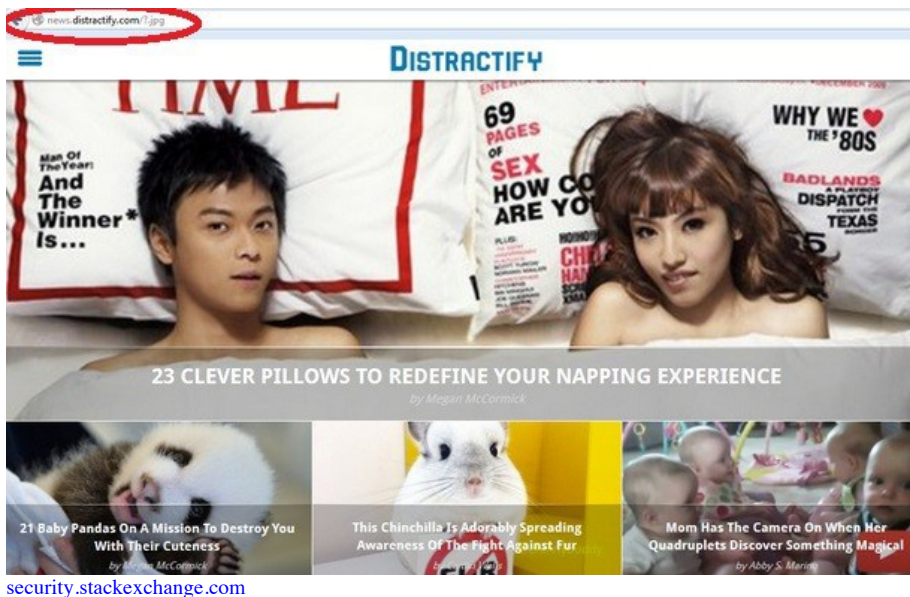


### #36. Use ATMs instead of airport currency exchanges to save money.



Many ATMs will offer much lower rates than what you can get from the airport currency exchanges.

### #37. Get free WiFi at airports



When you're at the airport, add "?jpg" to the end of any URL to get around the ludicrously expensive WiFi. Alternatively, you can sit right outside an airport club lounge: Wi-Fi signals often glide through the walls.



**#38. For bonus points, travel with a power strip and be the airport hero.**



**#39. As a treat to yourself, send yourself a postcard from each day of your travels**



It'll be a nice treat to come home to and make the transition back to reality easier.



**#40. On your last day in a foreign country, collect all your loose money and give it to the homeless.**



### **Avoiding Theft**

If you exercise adequate discretion, stay aware of your belongings, and avoid putting yourself into risky situations (such as unlit, deserted areas at night), your travels should be about as dangerous as hometown grocery shopping. Don't travel fearfully — travel carefully.

Here's some advice given to me by a thief who won the lotto.

**Wear a [money belt](#).** A money belt is a small, zippered fabric pouch on an elastic strap that fastens around your waist, under your pants or skirt. I never travel without one — it's where I put anything I really, really don't want to lose.

**Leave your valuables in your hotel room.** Expensive gear, such as your laptop, is much safer in your room than with you in a day bag on the streets. While hotels often have safes in the room (or at the front desk), I've never bothered to use one, though many find them a source of great comfort. Theft happens, of course, but it's relatively rare — hoteliers are quick to squelch a pattern of theft. That said, don't tempt sticky-fingered staff by leaving a camera or tablet in plain view; tuck your enticing things well out of sight.

**Establish a “don't lose it” discipline.** Travelers are more likely to inadvertently lose their bags than to have them stolen. I've heard of people leaving passports under pillows, bags on the overhead rack on the bus, and cameras in the taxi. Always take a look behind you before leaving any place or form of transport. At hotels, stick to an unpacking routine, and don't put things in odd places in the room. Run through a mental checklist every time you pack up again: money belt, passport, phone, electronic gear, charging cords, toiletries, laundry, and so on. Before leaving a hotel room for good, conduct a quick overall search — under the bed, under the pillows and bedspread, behind the bathroom door, in a wall socket...

When you're out and about, never idly set down any small valuable item, such as a camera, ereader, wallet, or rail pass. Either hold it in your hand or keep it tucked away. At cafés, don't place your phone on the tabletop where it will be easy to snatch — leave it in your front pocket (then return it to a safer place before you leave). Make it a habit to be careful with your things; it'll become second nature.

**Secure your bag.** Thieves want to quickly and unobtrusively separate you from your valuables, so even a minor obstacle can be an effective deterrent. If you're sitting down to eat or rest, loop a strap of your daypack around your arm, leg, or chair leg. If you plan to sleep on a train (or at an airport, or anywhere in public), clip or fasten your pack or suitcase to the seat, luggage rack, or yourself. Even the slight inconvenience of undoing a clip deters most thieves. While I don't lock the zippers on my bag, most zippers are lockable, and even a twist-tie, paper clip, or key ring is helpful to keep your bag zipped up tight — the point isn't to make your bag impenetrable, but harder to get into than the next guy's.

**Stay vigilant in crowds and steer clear of commotions.** Go on instant alert anytime there's a commotion; it's likely a [smokescreen for theft](#). Imaginative artful-dodger thief teams create a disturbance — a fight, a messy spill, or a jostle or stumble — to distract their victims.

Crowds anywhere, but especially on public transit and at flea markets, provide bad guys with plenty of targets, opportunities, and easy escape routes.

Be on guard in train stations, especially upon arrival, when you may be overburdened by luggage and overwhelmed by a new location. Take turns watching the bags with your travel partner. Don't absentmindedly set down a bag while you wait in line; always be in physical contact with your stuff. If you check your luggage, keep the claim ticket or locker key in your money belt; thieves know just where to go if they snare one of these. On the train, be hyper-alert at stops, when thieves can dash on and off — with your bag.

City buses that cover tourist sights (such as Rome's notorious #64) are happy hunting grounds. Be careful on packed buses or subways; to keep from being easy pickings, some travelers wear their day bag against their chest (looping a strap around one shoulder). Some thieves lurk near subway turnstiles; as you go through, a thief might come right behind you, pick your pocket and then run off, leaving you stuck behind the turnstile and unable to follow. By mentioning these scenarios, I don't want you to be paranoid...just prepared. If you keep alert, you'll keep your valuables, too.

## **Tips to live by while traveling for the best experience:**

### **1. Patience Is Important**

Don't sweat the stuff you can't control. Life is much too short to be angry & annoyed all the time. Did you miss your bus? No worries, there will be another one. ATMs out of money? Great! Take an unplanned road trip over to the next town and explore. Sometimes freakouts happen regardless. Just take a deep breath and remind yourself that it could be worse.

### **2. Wake Up Early**

Rise at sunrise to have the best attractions all to yourself while avoiding crowds. It's also a magical time for photos due to soft diffused light, and usually easier to interact with locals. Sketchy areas are less dangerous in the morning too. Honest hardworking people wake up early; touts, scammers, and criminals sleep in.

### **3. Laugh At Yourself**

You will definitely look like a fool many times when traveling to new places. Rather than get embarrassed, laugh at yourself. Don't be afraid to screw up, and don't take life so seriously. Once a whole bus full of Guatemalans laughed with glee when I forced our driver to stop so I could urgently pee on the side of the road. Returning to the bus and laughing with them gave me new friends for the remainder of the journey.

### **4. Stash Extra Cash**

Cash is king around the world. To cover your ass in an emergency, make sure to stash some in a few different places. I recommend at least a couple hundred dollars worth. If you lose your wallet, your card stops working, or the ATMs run out of money, you'll be glad you did. Some of my favorite stash spots include socks, under shoe inserts, a toiletry bag, around the frame of a backpack, even sewn behind a patch on your bag.

## **5. Meet Local People**

Make it a point to avoid other travelers from time to time and start conversations with local people. Basic English is spoken widely all over the world, so it's easier to communicate with them than you might think, especially when you combine hand gestures and body language. Learn from those who live in the country you're visiting. People enrich your travels more than sights do.

## **6. Pack A Scarf**

I happen to use a [Shemagh](#), but [sarongs](#) work great too. This simple piece of cotton cloth is one of my most useful travel accessories with many different practical applications. It's great for sun protection, a makeshift towel, carrying stuff around, an eye mask, and much more.

## **7. Observe Daily Life**

If you really want to get a feel for the pulse of a place, I recommend spending a few hours sitting in a park or on a busy street corner by yourself just watching day to day life happen in front of you. Slow down your thoughts and pay close attention to the details around you. The smells, the colors, human interactions, and sounds. It's a kind of meditation — and you'll see stuff you never noticed before.

## **8. Back Everything Up**

When my [laptop computer was stolen in Panama](#), having most of my important documents and photos backed up saved my ass. Keep both digital and physical copies of your passport, visas, driver's license, birth certificate, health insurance card, serial numbers, and important phone numbers ready to go in case of an emergency. Backup your files & photos on an external hard drive as well as online with software like [Backblaze](#).

## **9. Take Lots Of Photos**

You may only see these places & meet these people once in your lifetime. Remember them forever with plenty of photos. Don't worry about looking like a "tourist". Are you traveling to look cool? No one cares. Great photos are the ultimate souvenir. They don't cost anything, they're easy to share with others, and they don't take up space in your luggage. Just remember once you have your shot to get out from behind the lens and [enjoy the view](#).

## **10. There's Always A Way**

Nothing is impossible. If you are having trouble going somewhere or doing something, don't give up. You just haven't found the best solution or met the right person yet. Don't listen to those who say it can't be done. Perseverance pays off. I can't tell you how many times I've been told what I want isn't possible, only to prove it wrong later when I don't listen to the advice and try anyway.

## **11. Smile & Say Hello**



Having trouble interacting with locals? Do people seem unfriendly? Maybe it's your body language. One of my best travel tips is to make eye contact and smile as you walk by. If they smile back, say hello in the local language too. This is a fast way to make new friends. You can't expect everyone to just walk around with a big stupid grin on their face. That's your job. Usually all it takes is for you to initiate contact and they'll open up.

## **12. Splurge A Bit**

I'm a huge fan of budget travel, as it lets you travel longer and actually experience more of the fascinating world we live in rather than waste money on stuff you don't need. You can [travel many places for \\$30 a day](#) with no problems. That said, living on a shoestring gets old after a while. It's nice (and healthy) to go over your budget occasionally. Book a few days at a nice hotel, eat out at a fancy restaurant, or spend a wild night on the town.

## **13. Keep An Open Mind**

Don't judge the lifestyles of others if [different from your own](#). Listen to opinions you don't agree with. It's arrogant to assume your views are correct and other people are wrong. Practice empathy and put yourself in someone else's shoes. Embrace different possibilities, opportunities, people, suggestions and interests. Ask questions. You don't have to agree, but you may be surprised what you'll learn.

## **14. Try Being a Local**

See what they are doing and blend in.

## **15. Volunteer Occasionally**

Make it a point to [volunteer some of your time](#) for worthwhile projects when traveling. Not only is it a very rewarding experience, but you'll often learn more about the country and its people while also making new friends. There's a great site called [Grassroots Volunteering](#) where you can search for highly recommended volunteer opportunities around the world.

## **16. Pack Ear Plugs**

This should actually be #1 on the list. I love my earplugs! Muffle the sounds of crying babies, drunk Australians, barking dogs, honking horns, dormitory sex, natural gas salesmen, and more. A traveler's best friend. [These are my favorite earplugs](#) for comfort & effectiveness.

## **17. Don't Be Afraid**

The world is not nearly as dangerous as the media makes it out to be. Keep an eye out for sketchy situations but don't let that be the focus of your whole trip. Use common sense and you'll be ok. Most people are friendly, trustworthy, generous, and willing to help you out.

## **18. Get Lost On Purpose**

If you want to see the parts of town where real people live & work, you need to go visit them. The best way to do this is on foot — without knowing where you're going. Write down the name of your hotel so you can catch a taxi back if needed, then just pick a direction and start walking. Don't worry too much about stumbling into dangerous neighborhoods either, as locals will generally warn you before you get that far.

## 19. Eat Local Food

Think you already know what Mexican food tastes like? [You're probably wrong](#). Taste a bit of everything when you travel, especially if you don't know what it is. Ask local people for recommendations. Eat street food from vendors with big lines out front. I've been very sick only twice in my travels. Don't be scared of the food.

## 20. Say Yes Often

Be impulsive and say yes when someone randomly invites you to meet their family, try a new activity, or explore a place you didn't know existed. It's these unexpected and unplanned situations that add spice to your travels and always turn into the best stories later. Accept the kindness of strangers when you travel — you'll have plenty of opportunities to do so.

## 21. Slow Down

Please don't try to cram 6 countries into 6 weeks of travel. All the good stuff happens when you really take the time to explore. You'll learn about activities that aren't in your guidebook and meet people who are eager to show you around. I can honestly say that NONE of my [best travel experiences](#) happened within the first few days of arriving somewhere. Spend more time in fewer places for maximum enjoyment.

## 22. Keep Good Notes

My memory for details sucks. When I first started traveling the world 4 years ago, I didn't keep a good journal, and now I'm regretting it. Information like the names of people I met, conversations I had, feelings about a new experience, or what a particular town smelled like. If you ever want to write about your travels, these details are handy.

## 23. Break Out Of Your Comfort Zone

Challenge yourself to [try things that normally give you anxiety](#). The more you do this, the more that anxiety will fade away. Not a hiker? Go on more hikes. Have trouble talking to strangers? Talk to everyone. Scared of weird food? Eat the weirdest thing you can find. The reason this works so well while traveling is because everything is already so different, what's one more new/uncomfortable experience?

## 24. Don't Plan Too Much

I cringe when readers ask how many days they should spend in a particular country or city. The truth is I have no idea what you'll enjoy or who you'll meet. I thought I'd rocket through Nicaragua in a week or two, but ended up living there for 4 months. My advice is to pick a starting point, 1 or 2 must-do activities, and an ending point (or not). Then just [let the universe determine the rest](#).

## 25. Pack Less Stuff

You don't need 1/2 the gear you think you do to travel anywhere. We've all done it. It's a right of passage for travelers to slowly become better at packing less. My first backpack was 70 liters packed full, my current bag is only 38 liters. As a full-time vagabond, [everything I own fits on my back](#). If you're not sure about packing something, you don't need it. It's also possible to buy most things at your destination country if you discover you need them.

## 26. Listen To Podcasts

Podcasts are awesome. It's like creating your own personal radio station and filling it with shows and music you always want to listen to. I never thought I'd actually look forward to a 10 hour bus ride. But with podcasts, it's possible (well, as long as the seats are comfortable). Time will fly by as you listen to incredible storytelling, fun music, or interviews with experts. Here are some of my favorites: [This American Life](#), [The Moth](#), [RISK!](#), [Radiolab](#), [Smart Passive Income](#), and [Electro-Swing](#).

## 27. Treat Your Body Well

Travel can throw your body out of whack. When you're moving from place to place it's difficult to maintain a workout routine, and many of us slack off. Or we don't sleep enough. Or we [eat too many cupcakes](#). I'm guilty of not flossing my teeth. Remember to be nice to your body. Get enough sleep, stay hydrated, eat healthy, use sunscreen, and exercise often ([check out this bodyweight routine](#), no gym required!). And, yes, flossing too I guess.

## 28. Stay In Touch

Remember to call your family & friends from time to time. Maybe surprise them and go old-school by sending a postcard (it's in the mail, Mom!). Travel isn't lonely, far from it. You constantly meet other people. But many of those relationships are fleeting. So maintaining a strong connection with the people who know you best is important.

## 29. Get Off The Beaten Path

I know it's cliché, but you should still attempt it. Seek out [interesting and unusual places](#) that don't see much tourism. Many memorable travel experiences have happened to me in areas that are not easy to visit. By all means travel to popular sites, but don't rule out other locations just because they're not on the tourist trail. Although please realize that just because an area is remote or dangerous doesn't necessarily mean you'll have a life-changing experience.

## 30. Travel More

If there's one thing I've noticed over the past 4 years, it's that many people back home love to tell me how lucky I am while making excuses why they can't travel. It's too expensive. They can't get time off work. Who will feed their pets? When I suggest solutions to these "problems", they still don't take action. Why? Because they're often hiding behind the true reason: they're scared.

**Most people who wait to travel the world never do.** You don't need to sell all your worldly possessions and become a homeless vagabond like me. Just get out there more than you do now. Start with a weekend in a different state. Then maybe try a week in the country next door.

The new car, remodeling project, and iPhone can wait. If you truly want to travel more, you can make it happen. Career breaks are possible. You have friends who would love to watch your pets. It's a big, beautiful, exciting, and fascinating world out there. Explore some of it now, rather than later.