

98 BEST

TRAVEL TIPS



A GUIDE
FOR TRAVEL
JUNKIES ON A
BUDGET WITH
KIDS



CHRIS A. BAIRD

PowerLists™ book 5

98 Best Travel Tips:

A Guide For Travel Junkies on a Budget with Kids

By Chris A. Baird

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A Free E-Book for You

As a token of my appreciation for your purchasing this book, I want to offer you a free E-book: “*You’ve Got (Too Much) Mail! 38 Do’s and Don’ts To Tame Your Inbox*” (free 5K word PDF) This 5,000 word report offers 38 of the best practices for handling e-mails I have learned over the years.

[>>>Tap Here to Grab Your Free E-Book <<<¹](#)



¹ <http://www.powerlists.org/s9si>

Introduction

“We travel not to escape life but for life not to escape us.” – Anonymous

This book is the fifth book in the bestselling PowerLists™ book series. Each PowerList™ book is designed to help you get more out of life.

Why did I write this book?

I wrote this book because far too many people don't travel. There are many reasons to travel and plenty of excuses why people don't travel more often. I want to explore the advantages and barriers of traveling.

If you are new to traveling, this book will get you started on the right foot. If you are an experienced traveler, I hope this book will give you tips to make your traveling more rewarding and less stressful. We are all travelers together and I want to share what I have learned.

How To Use This Book

It is impossible for anyone to implement all of the suggestions I have in this book. However, if my tips help you travel more and also get more out of your trips, I will have succeeded in the purpose of this book. Try out the different tips and see what does or doesn't work for you.

98 Best Travel Tips Guide Cheat Sheet

I created a three-page pdf - *98 Best Travel Tips Cheat Sheet* [here¹](#) to make it easy for you to follow along as you work through this book. It shows you all 98 steps and will serve as a checklist or refresher on the different methods explored in the book.

¹ <http://www.powerlists.org/383w>

1 - What Is Travel

“Travel: to go on a trip or journey: to go to a place and especially one that is far away.” [Travel](#)¹ - *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*.

You can see by the definition that traveling is all about going somewhere that is distant from where you are. Distance can be relative. It could mean going to a museum or park in your city that you haven't been to previously. Distance may also refer to physical distance from where you live and work.

Traveling covers the exploration of the new. While traveling can include going to places you visited before, I will focus on the unknown. The ideas and tips I offer in this book also apply if you are traveling to the same place you traveled to many times in the past. I want to encourage you to think beyond the familiar; I will explore the reasons for this later in the book.

¹ <http://www.powerlists.org/jxv7>

2 - Why Should You Travel

There are many reasons you should travel more. Below you will find a comprehensive list of reasons.

Expand Your Tastes

When you travel to other regions of the country or world, you try foods you wouldn't normally try. We naturally eat the same foods again and again. Those foods don't taste as good over time because we adjust to them. A key to breaking out of this cycle is to try new foods.

The expanded diet opens our taste buds like nothing our normal diet can do. We may find foods we like less or others we like better. Whatever the case, our bodies are built in such a way that newer tastes have a greater impact than older ones.

It is possible to prepare these foods ourselves from recipes. However, tasting ethnic food from their home country or city is no comparison to what we can try in our own kitchen. In addition, the atmosphere around the food we eat will impact how these foods taste.

Better Connect to References in Movies, Books, and Conversations

The media refer to locations like Paris, London, Cairo, or Los Angeles. Having visited these different locations means you are better able to appreciate the comments people make about them. The same goes for conversations. When people discuss a place they have been to or want to travel to, having traveled there creates a connection point.

Discover Yourself

“To travel is to take a journey into yourself.” - Danny Kaye

Although a cliché, discovering yourself has been a classic answer to why a person postpones college and backpacks across Europe for a year instead. It is stated like:

“I want to travel around the world after high school to find myself or discover who I am.”

Although I wouldn't recommend giving up your education for travel, I can agree that traveling helps us figure out who we are. This is amplified when exposing ourselves to people and cultures that differ greatly from our own.

We reflect more upon life when exposed to the unfamiliar which can be both positive and negative events that push us to *think*. It is in the familiar and the routine that we quit asking questions and just do.

Help Your Children to Develop

Traveling is different for children. They are still in their formative years. That means that the sights, sounds, and experiences they are exposed to through travel will shape who they become.

Unlike reading about history, they will:

- Experience history firsthand when visiting ancient ruins.
- Understand that people are different around the world.
- Appreciate the things they have at home and see how people live in different places.
- Retain the idea of traveling for later in life.

If they grow up traveling, children will most likely continue to do so when they become adults. This assumes their travel experiences are positive ones. That is a point I will touch on later in this book.

I remember during our trip to the ruins of Knossos on Crete that one of my sons found the ruins less than interesting. We were in the first of the ancient world labyrinths where the word “labyrinth” itself originates. It was the place where the legendary story of the Minotaur took place.

Since my son was most interested in reading about Donald Duck, we didn't force him to enjoy the site but rather gave him choices. Years later when he read mythology, he was excited to head to Athens alone with me on a trip to see the sites and everything was much more exciting. He also remembered his visit to the temple of Jupiter in Split, Croatia when it was mentioned in one of his books.

All children experience periods where the trips may be more or less interesting. However, by creating an environment where we travel and visit different sites, we open the possibility of children's enjoying the sites without being forced.

New Stories to Tell

At parties and social events, do you sometimes find that you have nothing to discuss? Perhaps your life is a monotonous series of repetitive actions. Traveling gives you stories and experiences to share.

It is difficult to take a trip to a foreign or new place without returning with stories from the trip. This transforms you into a more interesting person. Interesting people do interesting things and tell others about their experiences. It is difficult to be interesting if you never push your limits or experience new things.

Better Appreciation for What You Have

“All travel has its advantages. If the passenger visits better countries, he may learn to improve his own. And if fortune carries him to worse, he may learn to enjoy it.” – Samuel Johnson

When you travel you experience very different environments. Some of them may be worse than what you are used to at home. This contrast teaches you to appreciate what you have.

I felt this most when going on a cultural excursion in Turkey. We visited the house of a farmer who had almond trees in her yard. The temperature was 113F (45C) and we were drenched in sweat. We entered her house and sat down on her couch. The side wall had a huge hole covered with transparent plastic. The lady who owned the house came around and gave us warm cola and sold jewelry to us.

I grew up in Florida in a world with air conditioning. It's amazing to see the contrast between what I was accustomed to and how people live in other parts of the world. The woman was very hospitable and seemed happy. If I hadn't gone on this trip, I might never have experienced the contrast.

My point isn't to say one is better than the other. Rather, people have different lives in different locations and you never know how much you appreciate air conditioning until you don't have it. At the same time, people who have never had air conditioning teach you that you don't require it to be happy.

Change Yourself as a Person

“Nobody comes back from a journey the way they started it.” - Unknown

You are not the things you own, even though they shape you. It is through experiences that we become who we are. As children, the world was new to us and new experiences were everywhere to be found. As we moved into adulthood, we stopped experiencing new things and thus we froze who we were

as people. Traveling breaks one out of this rut and allows one to continue to evolve as a person.

Increased Ability to Work in a Global Environment

A person who travels is exposed to people very different from himself. Travelers adapt to that environment and add this skill to the set of skills they bring to the table. The world grows smaller with the increased scope of the Internet and the global market. In your work life, it is important that you adapt to this environment.

When you travel, you are building the skills you will need when adapting to this global environment. It is harder to learn this skill under the pressure of making a sale or finding new suppliers. It is better to learn it when traveling and expanding your skills through sightseeing and eating out in a foreign country.

You Won't Get Any Younger

Putting off traveling can be a risky decision. Many negative things can happen in life that can make traveling more difficult. These may include your financial situation, your relationships, or your health. As you get older, the health and lack of energy can pose a challenge to traveling. However, even if you are older, that is no excuse for not traveling.

Rather, you should see what resources you have now and decide that now is the best time to travel. You are the youngest you will be from this point onward. Instead of delaying until some future point in time, you ought to consider changing your priorities.

The World Is Better Off With Travelers

This is a point that is often overlooked. Traveling isn't just about you. It is about

the future you. Traveling changes who you are as a person and changes the way you see the world. The world would be a better place if everyone was traveling and meeting people from different backgrounds. I am amazed when traveling at how positive everyone is. There may be exceptions to the rule.

Traveling gives you a much more positive view of the world, a better understanding, and more empathetic perspective. The people around you also experience this positivity and reap the benefits. This is why it is so important to recognize that traveling will have an impact beyond ourselves. In this way, traveling has a way of making the world a better place.

Learn To Accept People Different Than Yourself

Mark Twain commented that, “Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts.”

Twain is pointing out an important consequence of traveling. When we travel we expose ourselves to different people and cultures. A great deal of prejudice is grounded in isolation from other people. Often, getting to know other people breaks down the barriers between “us” and “them.” We learn that people in other places in the world are unique and perhaps more like us than we thought.

Giving Us Direction in Life

Traveling exposes us to the myriad of other options available and paths we haven't taken. It wakes us out of the stupor of seeing possibilities that others around us explore. When we visit new places, we realize that there are many options in life we may not have considered. Travel creates a perfect environment to consider new life goals. I explore this further in my book [*Achieve Your Goals Now with PowerLists™*](#)¹.

Cheap

You may think that traveling is expensive. However, this isn't the case. It has never been cheaper to travel. With a host of apps and websites helping us find the cheapest tickets and lodging, the costs are low for what we get in exchange.

The temptation is to look at what we can purchase if we forgo traveling. However, as we will explore later, there is no comparison between the long term value of an experience compared to the value of *things* we could buy with the same money. This seems counterintuitive, but the research on this issue is crystal clear about what brings greatest fulfillment between the two.

Expanding Our View of the World

Saint Augustine stated, "The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only one page."

We assume what we consider "the world" is the set of things we experience. The smaller the area of intake, the more likely we are to think of the world as a small place.

Traveling breaks through this misconception. It informs us at a core level that the world is much bigger than we think. It is essential to have a correct view of the world that isn't jaded by the small microcosm that is our lives in our home town.

Slowing Down Time

Often, we become blind to certain experiences. If we eat the same food every day or drive to work on the same route daily, we soon repeat these activities without even having to think about them. As I explore in my book on habits, [*Habit Ignition: 41 Steps To Unlocking The Secret Power of Habits and Rituals²*](#), our lives can pass us by without our even realizing it.

This is why traveling is so important. It slows down time by giving our brain new challenges to figure out. You can't travel on autopilot to a location you have never visited.

Building Memories With Family and Friends

Nothing builds closer bonds with those close to us than shared experiences. Working through the challenges of traveling together is an excellent way to grow closer. This is one reason the military puts groups of soldiers under as much stress as possible and then has them work together to overcome obstacles. Teamwork is key to building cohesion and closeness.

Increasing Our Resourcefulness

Traveling to new places requires us to navigate roads and language barriers to make the trip successful. These barriers make us more aware of the environment and the experience. They push us to think in new ways to overcome these challenges. With time and practice, we experience less stress when adapting to these different environments.

After I moved to Norway, my first trip to another European country was to London. I was amazed at how stressful it was going to a different country and not knowing how everything worked. I look back on that experience now and realize that it was a good idea to start with London. Being an English speaking nation, it was relatively easy to adjust to the new environment.

Deepening Knowledge of History and Culture

Visiting new places provides an excellent opportunity to read how people live and have lived in those locations. We gain a much greater appreciation for history and culture when we study them in the context of location.

Helping Us to Unplug

The business of our daily lives makes it easy to get tangled up in thoughts and issues we are bombarded with. Traveling pulls us out of our daily environment and gives us space to think through the issues of life. We can escape much of the chaos of our lives and give our brains a rest from the ins and outs of daily life.

¹ <http://www.powerlists.org/xt4x>

² <http://www.powerlists.org/03k6>

3 - Why We Don't Travel

Not Willing To Use Vacation Time

The average American worker is entitled to 16 days of paid vacation annually. However, only 25% of those workers take all of their vacation. A whopping 15% of Americans report they take no vacation. This isn't a problem in Norway. Although it is a major problem in the United States, the first rule in Norway is to remember that vacation is a form of compensation. You are paid with money, time off, and other perks of your job.

When you don't use all of your time off, you are telling your boss you don't need all of your salary and that you will work for free. Although you may feel important and indispensable in your job, it is important to remember that graveyards are filled with people who were indispensable. You need to use your vacation time and your company's benefits when you have them.

Don't Have Enough Vacation Time

Regardless of how much vacation time you receive, there is no such thing as no time for *vacation*. It is tempting to think that unless we take a month off, we won't be able to travel. This is false. Traveling need not be to a distant country. It could be trying something new where you already live.

When I lived in Montana, there was a water park at the end of road. We never visited the park until a few weeks before we moved from Montana to Norway. The park was amazing. It was then that I realized how we are all surrounded by many interesting places to visit; we may not discover this fact until it is too late. I vowed to never again live in a city and not try everything the city offered.

You don't even need vacation time to take advantage of this form of traveling.

You need a day off and enough money to cover the entrance fees. If you choose free days for admission, you may not have to pay anything.

We found museums that we had never visited in the cities where we lived. We had waited until we had guests before we considered visiting them. This made for a great common experience, but why wait for guests to come for a visit before traveling to the exciting places in our own cities. This practice also helps ensure you don't take your guests to low quality attractions.

Using Vacation Time to Visit Family

Many people live far away from their families. If you are married, you may live far from both your families. This means when you use your vacation time, you end up either having family visit you, or you travel to visit family. This approach means that once your total vacation days are used up, you may not have traveled at all.

I want to clarify. I am looking at travel as experiencing new sights and sounds and not just getting on a plane or train to visit the same place over and over. Visiting family may be cozy and fun. However, the real benefit of travel is in seeing new places.

There are options you ought to consider. You need to know that even if you are limited to vacations in your own city, you still can:

- Visit museums
- Go on hikes
- Take boat trips

There are always new opportunities popping up in many areas of the world. It is a matter of taking advantage of them.

There is something else that you may not have considered. Instead of meeting your family in your city or theirs, why not meet in a third location? While costs can be an issue, we will explore later in this book ways of keeping costs so low so that this choice becomes reasonable. It is a great way to build family and friend bonds through a new shared experience.

It Costs Too Much

The idea that traveling is expensive is simply not true. There are many tricks to traveling on a budget. Costs can be cut in:

- Transportation
- Housing
- Dining

Sometimes these savings may exceed what it costs to stay in your own town.

Things Last Longer Than Experiences

A person might say, “A new sofa will last longer than a week in a new country.” However, the relative value of happiness doesn’t come close. When adapting to a new environment, the brain is better at adapting to positive—not negative--experiences.

Some people assume that when they win the lottery the level of happiness experienced will be permanent. However, it fades fast. The same is true for buying a new car or TV. We enjoy the newness. Then, this wears off, and we are left with a thing that feels no better than the one we possessed before. It also met a need.

I remember this in the area of TVs. I had a friend in North Dakota who had a black and white TV that had a 3 inch screen. I remember watching a movie on his TV in his apartment and being amazed at how my brain adjusted to it. Since then I have purchased a 47 inch HD TV. My brain doesn’t see it differently than the smaller one. It is better when sitting farther away since I need not be so close to read text on the screen. However, the larger size feels no different than the 3-inch TV my friend had.

Things bring short term pleasure. The experience of traveling is something we remember and even experience more positively as time passes. If we have photos and videos from the trip, we can experience the trip long after it is complete and we are home again. Finally, if the trip was with family and friends, we experience a bonding that far exceeds the value of a new sofa or computer.

Traveling is Dangerous

Traveling to new places can seem dangerous, especially when traveling among people who are different from ourselves. We feel it isn't safe to travel among them. In addition, the more years we go without being exposed to other people and cultures, the more likely it is that we will feel threatened.

This is true for the elderly. People think that when they retire they will travel and see the world. However, when they get older, things seem frightening and unsafe. They haven't practiced the skill of traveling and growing old makes it even harder to start something new. There is always some danger in traveling. However, there is also a danger anywhere you live. The goal is to choose a location that doesn't cross the threshold of too much danger.

My family has a rule: we don't travel to a country that has had a war or an epidemic of communicable diseases in the past five years. That resolves all of the major risks with traveling. By the way, we have experienced nothing during our travels more than pick-pocketing.

On a side note, we saw protests in places from London to Paris, although none of them became violent. The closest we came to actual violence was when traveling to Turkey when the police chief attempted a coup by trying to get the military generals to join. The military heads turned the chief of police in and the trip was stable.

Getting Lost

There is nothing worse than being in a foreign city with a foreign language and not being able to figure out where you are. I will address this issue later on and which apps work best when using your smart phone maps offline.

If worse comes to worst, you can buy a paper map to find your location. You also can choose populated areas for your trips where it will be easy to find street maps or ask for help.

When I moved to Norway, I remember how frustrating it was driving around with many roads not labeled. There was even an entire island full of houses with no addresses. The postal worker remembered where people lived.

Recently, this situation has changed since it is a safety factor when police and emergency health workers need to find a house without an address. With GPS this entire issue is no longer relevant since I can now quickly find an exact spot on a map with my cell phone.

You're Too Old

This is a classic excuse for not traveling. You may feel you haven't traveled your entire life and are now too old to travel. Traveling is for younger people with more energy. The problem is that when you are older you have more money but less energy. Traveling increases your energy levels if you do it right.

Why does becoming old mean you must be set in your ways? I recommend against allowing your entire life to fly by because of repeating activities and rituals over and over. I explore this problem in depth in my book [*Habit Ignition: 41 Steps to Unlocking the Secret Power of Habits and Rituals*](#)¹.

You're Too Young

Perhaps you feel you are too young. You already have enough adventure in your life and you are set to enter college or the workforce. That shouldn't be a reason to avoid traveling. I am not saying that you should skip a year of college to travel. I think it is better to travel during school breaks.

You need to think of travel as an education in its own right; you learn things about the world and yourself when traveling that you won't learn in a classroom or from reading a book.

No One to Travel With

While I can agree that traveling alone is far less fun than traveling with a companion, this is still a terrible excuse for not traveling. While traveling with a friend creates a bonding experience, traveling alone is the best way to learn about yourself. In addition, there are hidden benefits to traveling alone. You can decide all of the logistics of where you will stay and when. You also can build the entire agenda for the trip.

Traveling to new places alone may allow you to meet a new traveling companion. The more comfortable you are with traveling, the easier it is to invite someone next time. When I first traveled the world, my wife was much more comfortable with it than I was.

Sickness

In many countries you can't drink the water due to microorganisms. In addition, there are bacteria and viruses your body isn't used to. One option is to avoid places with these issues.

Another choice is to drink bottled water and eat food that is cooked. This can be tricky if ice is served in drinks or if salads are exposed to water during food preparation. However, it is possible to avoid many of these problems if you are careful about what you eat and drink.

Children

People often don't travel because of their children. This excuse can come in different forms. Travel is safe when standard precautions are taken. It is just as safe for your children as it is for you. Children should be a reason to travel and not the opposite.

Some people delay travel until the children are old enough to remember and savor the trip. However, in order for this to happen, it is necessary for the child to be older. The problem is that traveling is something that people adjust to. We learn how to relax and enjoy each additional trip.

Children do much of their learning at early ages. If we wait until they are teenagers, we risk their being too busy for traveling. In addition, they may be less open to new experiences with their parents.

So, neither of these barriers is a good reason to avoid traveling with children. I remember bringing a newborn baby on an overnight trip in Montana. The baby cried all night long, and I decided it was best not to spend a second night.

I understand not traveling with a newborn; however, toddlers can fully enjoy a good trip. You will need to arrange the itinerary to make it enjoyable for them. It is worth the price and they will get much more out of the trip than you might imagine.

An Unknown Language

It can be frustrating trying to communicate with someone who doesn't speak your language. However, in all of my traveling that hasn't been a problem. The people living in most places I have traveled spoke English. Also, you are looking to spend money. That means that even if the cultures you are visiting aren't friendly, they still will be helpful if they know you are interested in helping their businesses.

You also can learn a few key phrases in the language that will help. Although this has been unnecessary in the 25 countries I visited, most communication revolves around a transaction. When shopping, the prices are listed and pointing and putting money on the counter solves any miscommunication.

Too Much Paperwork

I can sympathize with this issue. It is extremely painful filling out forms to acquire a passport or insurance. However, it has never been easier than today. For adults, once you get a passport, it need not be renewed for at least 10 years if you are an American citizen. Many countries have easier passport systems to navigate.

Getting travel insurance and health insurance are essential and applying doesn't require that much. Once you have filled out the paperwork the first time, you won't have to do it again. Thus, too much paperwork isn't a reasonable excuse to avoid travel.

Don't Want To Travel

This is a fine reason. Some people have no desire to travel. There is no obligation in life to try new experiences. Perhaps you are plenty happy at home with a book or TV. Why should you travel if you don't feel like it? There are many reasons, although traveling because of pressure is not a good reason.

A better way to look at it is that you shouldn't travel if you have tried it and didn't like it. However, if you didn't enjoy it, I hope to help you figure out why you didn't like it and to let you know what you can do to make traveling spectacular.

¹ <http://www.powerlists.org/03k6>

4 - Where to Start

The best thing to do when you decide to travel is to make a plan. There are several things that need to be put in place to maximize your traveling experience.

(1) Find Available Dates

For most people, the biggest problem with traveling is finding a time that works. You should start small. We need not plan a multi-month trip if we are new to traveling. Start by seeing if you can break free from work and other obligations for a week.

You can also do a vacation over a long weekend. However, for most people it takes more than a couple of days to unwind. It takes more days if your work, school or family life is regularly stressful. The goal is to unplug and forget about your daily stressors.

I hope you have found a week you can take off from work. The next step is to make sure that your boss and other commitments won't be an issue if you disappear for a week. Get the approval in writing. This will decrease the possibility that when the time comes people will talk you out of taking the trip or change their mind about your taking off.

We want to make sure that everything is taken care of during your time away. Choose a date that will create the least amount of conflict. Take time to plan the trip. The last thing you want is to have to cancel the trip because you overlooked something.

(2) Set a Budget

Even if you have a decent amount of money available, you will still want to set a

budget for the trip. How much money do you plan to spend? A positive experience is one where you aren't stressed about the cost of a meal or hotel. Instead, you have decided already how much the entire trip will cost and you are staying within your means.

Don't use debt to fund your trip. That will create added stress, which isn't worth the price. Instead, save the money you need for the trip if you don't already have it. That may also affect the date when you can go on your vacation. However, you will be much happier when you know that you have saved for your travels and that you are using the allocated money for the trip.

Your budget should cover your costs for hotel, transportation, food, and entertainment. There may be additional expenses depending upon where you are heading. These may include visas, cell phone costs, Internet, vaccines, and travel gear.

Once you know how much money you have to spend, you can figure out where you will travel to and for how long. Later on I will explore best practices for cutting costs.

(3) Choose Your Location

There are many issues to consider when choosing a location to visit. This book includes tips to help you decide where you should travel based on cost and safety. You should try to:

- Head to a place you haven't visited before.
- Keep in mind the time you have available.
- Ensure it is within your budget.

After researching a destination, you may change your mind. This is why you want to start this process long before the travel date.

(4) Be Careful Who You Travel With

For many people, this is an easy decision. If you already have a core family, then they will be your primary travel partners. However, if you are single or if you wish to break away from your family, you will have to choose.

The worst thing you can do is travel with someone who has different interests or ideas about traveling. However, this situation is acceptable if both people compromise.

When I traveled to Rome I wanted to use every second of the day to see famous ruins, museums, and churches. Some of the people we traveled with wanted to start the day with a slow breakfast and then move to the city around lunch time.

That was just fine since everyone was flexible and fine with splitting up. However, if you are traveling with one or two other people, this solution won't work since there is an expectation you will stay together. A good way to make sure things work out with your travel partners is to ask basic questions ahead of time about what everyone wants to do including the following:

- Shopping
- Hiking
- Sight Seeing
- Beaches
- Nightclubs
- Museums
- Guided Tours

If a traveler values pastimes you can't stand, it may be wise to find a different

partner. They may, however, have ideas you haven't considered.

Another issue finding a partner on a similar budget. This will impact what type of trip you take. You need to be clear about what you can afford. There is no end to what you can spend when traveling. You don't want to hold your travel partner back because they want to go to fancier restaurants and do things beyond your budget.

(5) Book the Trip Early

Many trips require you to book well in advance to ensure the desired hotel or apartment isn't overbooked. This might mean booking your hotel and flight in October if you are traveling the next summer. To avoid disappointments, plan well ahead of time.

We discovered this the hard way several years in a row when trying to book trips to the Canary Islands and Turkey. The resort hotels fill up in October for the following summer. By booking them early, we got great rates and made sure rooms were available. Keep in mind that many hotels have different types of rooms and if you are traveling on a budget, the cheaper rooms may all be taken early.

The other major advantage of booking early is that you have more time to plan outings and to read about your destination. Planning allows more time to savor the experience.

5 - Safety and Security First

Traveling to many countries or cities is safe, although you should always know the risks associated with the country or city you plan to visit.

(6) Check if the Destination is a High-Risk Location

It is one thing to travel to a country that has been at war or is recovering from disease. It is a different thing to travel to a high-risk country without reading up on the risks associated with that country.

One time, we were heading to Cyprus for 11 days and I wanted to take a 19-hour excursion to Egypt to see the pyramids. However, this was during the change of power in Egypt and things were unstable. The company stopped all tours to Egypt, but I had already decided not to take this trip anyway. We didn't plan to expose ourselves to the risks.

My rule of thumb is to avoid locations where there has been war or disease outbreak within the past five years. However, to know the status of a country, you will need to research the location you're interested in. A great way to do this is with [Google News](#)¹. You can type in a country or city, and you will see what recent articles say about the situation there.

This step will provide everything you need to know about recent political unrest or disease in that country. The goal of traveling is to explore new cultures and experience life fully and not to be scared of getting a disease or dying in a foreign country. There are plenty of safe countries to choose from. So, this shouldn't be a problem.

(7) Check to See If Visiting the Country Will Hurt the Locals

Some countries oppress their poor. You don't want to contribute to this. It is always a good idea to see what the human rights track record is for a country. You can find more information at [Human Rights Watch²](#) or other organizations that track human rights. Keep in mind that the poor in the country may also enjoy your tourism money. So, even in the most ruthless of countries, you may help the poor by visiting.

(8) Verify That Your Home Country Allows You to Visit

Many countries have rules about which countries citizens are permitted to visit. You don't want to discover after having booked the trip it is illegal to visit that destination. Even worse is being notified by the authorities upon your attempt to enter the country.

These sanctions are put in place for reasons and there is no need to ruin your vacation by violating a sanction. Check for your home country's sanctioned destination before making travel plans.

(9) Carry Multiple Forms of Money

Upon arrival in Berlin, Germany, I found a cash machine after picking up the luggage. We were ready for an exciting trip. Now we needed to take out money. I inserted my debit card into the system, typed my code and never saw the money nor my card again.

While losing your card in an ATM isn't common, it is possible. This is why it is important for each adult to carry:

- Two credit/debit cards (Visa and MasterCard)

- At least \$100 or 100€ in cash

Not having multiple forms of money could have been pricey for me. Since I wasn't the only one traveling, I still had a Visa debit card. I used a different cash machine and everything worked out fine, even though we wasted half an hour talking to the people at the airport and calling our bank to monitor the card.

In Barcelona, I was shocked by how many places didn't take credit cards. Following my own advice, I took out enough money to cover a day at the amusement park, Tibidabo, on a mountain overlooking the city. We had been there before and knew they had one ATM.

The previous time we took a chance. We had no money until we arrived, but fortunately we managed to withdraw money. This time, the ATM was broken, but we had enough money for the day. If we hadn't taken out cash prior to our trip, we would have needed to walk many miles to the nearest cash machine, assuming one was open.

(10) Avoid Hospitals and Clinics if Possible

Some destinations have an issue with their medications being outdated or fake. It depends upon the country, but even in the hospitals and drug stores, you may not be able to tell if the drugs are fake. In addition, some hospitals may have high levels of bacteria or viruses on site. It is best to stay away from these places, if possible.

My one-year-old son experienced problems breathing in the Canary Islands. This necessitated our taking an ambulance from the hotel to the capital city's hospital. He only had a cold, so it was nothing serious. Taking him to the hospital was the right move, but it's best to wait until you get home if you can.

(11) Watch Out For Pickpockets

This is an issue in most major cities. It's best to take precautions to avoid having your money stolen. Several tricks will ensure that this isn't a problem. Most important of all is to keep your money deep in your bag.

I like to travel with a small backpack around the city. This makes it difficult to steal from me since the bag goes over both shoulders. If someone wanted to tear it from me, they would need to get it off both of my shoulders. In addition, all my valuables are deep in the bag and all zippers are slid to the side. The challenge of getting to my money involves having to open a zipper from the side and getting their hand to the bottom of the bag without my noticing.

I remember having pickpockets follow closely behind me when I was visiting Rome. I was at one of the most famous markets, which also was known for pickpockets. Even if they distracted me somehow, I had no money in my shorts or jacket. Everything of value was buried deep in my bag.

The worst place you can keep your wallet is in your back pocket; it's easy to steal from there. Another problem is carrying a purse or bag over one shoulder. There are two ways of stealing it from there. The first is just grabbing it off your shoulder and dragging you if necessary. The second method is using a knife to cut the strap and running off with the bag.

(12) Don't Carry All of Your Money

Don't carry all of your money when traveling. Sometimes I have to put my backpack in a locker when going into a museum. That means my money is easier to steal. If I lose my money, I don't want to lose all of it. So, it is best to spread it out.

You need to carry enough money for one day at a time with you. If you have your credit card with you, it is easy to withdraw money if you go beyond that day's budget. The one exception to this is if the country you are visiting is

having a financial crisis and the ATMs are empty of cash. This happened in 2015 in Greece. All tourists were advised to carry enough money each day to cover the expenses for the remainder of their visit.

(13) Lock Your Passport and Unnecessary Money in the Hotel Safe

When leaving your hotel always have a copy of your passport. Leave extra money in the hotel safe. If you are staying at an apartment, you can hide your money in a place that is not obvious. A trip can be ruined if your money is stolen; this can be avoided with a little diligence.

¹ <http://www.powerlists.org/107k>

² <http://www.powerlists.org/zgm3>

6 - Keeping Costs Low

While it is easy to spend large amounts of money traveling, that isn't the focus of this book. If you want to spend money and do a minimum amount of planning, you can always find a package charter trip. There, everything is covered and little planning or preparation is needed. I will tell you how to travel on a tight budget by cutting all costs as low as they can be within reason.

(14) Google “Cost per Day” to Find Your Destination

You need to know how much to budget for food on your trip. A simple Google search of “cost per day” for your destination will give you a great idea of what you should budget for each day. You can refine your search to look at posts in the past year to make sure the figures are current.

The global backpacking community understands the need to budget when traveling to different cities. Any city or country you visit will yield search results. I did a quick search on Barcelona and within seconds had an overview of costs for this city [here](#)¹.

Many sites like this do a great job of breaking down costs. In addition, they give you a picture of what to expect depending upon how frugally you will travel.

Although these sites also budget for the cost of tours and activities, this can require more detailed planning on your part; we will cover this in the next chapter. The main goal at this point is to have a good idea, based upon your budget, of how many days you can stay in your city of choice.

You may need to change your destination if you find you have money to cover only 2-3 days. The goal is to cover 1-2 weeks excluding the travel days. That is enough time to adjust to the culture and unplug from your normal life.

(15) Choose a Slower-Paced Vacation

When traveling with children for the first time, you will want to choose a slower-paced vacation. It is hard to know how a busy trip will affect them. A beach or camping vacation is great. Once they are used to traveling, you can pick up the tempo with a more compressed schedule of things to do.

After years of traveling with the kids, we keep the schedule packed with action. However, we have implemented other tricks (discussed in this book) to handle issues when the children get bored, tired, hungry or thirsty.

(16) Use the Internet/Apps to Find the Cheapest Flights

While there are plenty of Internet sites describing deals on trips, I want to focus on two in particular that are outstanding. The first one is the blog [Lifehacker's](#)² top pick; it is called [Google Flights](#)³. The beauty of the design is that it is simple to use.

It makes it possible for you to save money by showing not only the primary airport but other nearby airports. In addition, it describes how you can save money if you are flexible and can shift the day you depart or come home.

My favorite way of finding the cheapest rates is by using the iOS app, [Hopper](#)⁴. It does the same thing that Google does and it continues to give suggestions until you find the cheapest flight by switching:

- Dates
- Airports
- Length of layovers

- Number of stops

I have found no online service that can beat Hopper, although the best sites are often changing. This is one reason I recommend following the latest comparisons from sites like [Lifehacker](#)⁵.

(17) Use *Airbnb* for Cheapest Places to Stay

While the cost of flights may be high, the cost of lodging can be even higher, depending upon the number of days you will stay. If you stay at a hotel, you will pay a higher price than when going with a service like [Airbnb](#)⁶.

Airbnb makes it possible for people in 190+ countries to rent out their rooms, houses, or apartments to anyone who wants to pay to stay there. Airbnb connects people with available rooms to people looking for a place to stay. The site takes care of all payments and conflicts that might arise. You choose a city and dates and you will see all places that can be rented during the period in that location.

Although I haven't tested out this site, it is possible through the website Couchsurfing to stay in different locations for free. Paying for your lodging at Airbnb is better since Airbnb will jump in if issues come up. Also, the places you are staying at will be nicer and better equipped since they are receiving money from you.

When testing out Airbnb, I looked at all of the options around Barcelona, Spain. I set a baseline of choosing someone with at least an average rating of 4.5-5 stars. In addition, I wanted them to have at least 50 ratings. This ensured that my first experience would be a positive one.

The first thing I noticed was that the price even with these restrictions was half of what I would pay to stay at a reasonable hotel. The trip went well and the owner of the apartment was friendly. I decided I would use Airbnb for all of my

accommodations from then on.

(18) Google Child Friendly Activities

If you are traveling with children, you will want to make sure that the city is child-friendly. It only takes a few seconds to see which activities are available for the kids. I did a search on “Barcelona with kids” and I got three sites:

- [Barcelona with kids - Tripadvisor⁷](#)
- [Barcelona for kids: family guide⁸](#)
- [Kids' activities - Time Out, and Barcelona with children⁹](#)

Now I have an excellent overview of what will be fun for the kids, although you can also reverse the search and start the entire destination hunt by Googling “Child Friendly Cities.” Let Google do the heavy lifting for you in recommending places. From my experiences in over 25 countries, all cities are child friendly regardless of what they say. You have to be creative.

When traveling to Rome I noticed that no one else there had kids with them. I thought it was strange seeing a major city in summer time without children playing outside. My kids enjoyed getting ice cream and pizza throughout the city and I enjoyed drinking cappuccinos.

The art work was fantastic and as long as you pay attention to art that the kids can touch and talk about, everything will work out just fine. The ruins were less popular with the children compared to the thousands of fancy playgrounds of Berlin. Adaptation is the key to making the trip fun for everyone.

(19) Ensure Data Roaming is Turned Off on Your Phone

Traveling can be expensive if your phone is using the mobile data network when you are traveling. Make sure it is turned off. I will turn it on to check e-mail or to look up something. However, your phone is trying to access the Internet and if it is on, you will find a much larger bill for your monthly phone service.

¹ <http://www.powerlists.org/jvce>

² <http://www.powerlists.org/h4ra>

³ <http://www.powerlists.org/qcps>

⁴ <http://www.powerlists.org/ublu>

⁵ <http://www.powerlists.org/tj7l>

⁶ <http://www.powerlists.org/0idg>

⁷ <http://www.powerlists.org/2jk9>

⁸ <http://www.powerlists.org/cmbg>

⁹ <http://www.powerlists.org/m3ih>

7 - Additional Details

Now we know where we are going and the cost; it is time to do detailed planning. There is a time and place for spontaneity. However, in order to stay within your budget, you need to know how much money you will spend per day. That can be difficult if you don't know what you are doing daily.

(20) Update Your Passport

If you are traveling out of the country, make sure your passport is updated. Some countries won't allow you to enter if your passport is expiring in the next six months. That can create huge problems. Officials are concerned that your passport will expire while you are in their country. My personal rule is to treat the date six months prior to the expiration date as the actual expiration date.

(21) Check with Your Doctor About Required Immunizations

You want to avoid contracting a virus during your trip. I don't recommend traveling to countries that have these sorts of problems. It is wise to check with your doctor regarding any vaccines required for the location you are traveling to. This should be done well before the actual trip so you have time to meet with the doctor, get the vaccine, and wait a few days for it to take effect.

(22) Update Your Travel Insurance

When traveling to a different country, you should have travel insurance. It comes in handy if you get sick and need medical attention or if your luggage is lost. Our insurance covers delays in the arrival of luggage. Traveling shouldn't be a stressful experience and having insurance ensures that if things go poorly, the

costs of these issues are covered.

(23) Check Country-Specific Visa Rules

This is one of the best tips. Countries' requirements vary greatly for entering and staying in their country. Some countries give you a visa upon arrival. Others need you to apply for a visa long before entry into the country. In addition, a country like Turkey has a high price of 70€ that must be paid upon entry. Make sure you check the visa rules so you aren't denied entry or, worse yet, you could get kicked out of the country after a violation.

(24) Research Customs for Your Destination

When traveling to a foreign destination, it is important to research the rules and customs of that culture. For example, if you travel to Norway, you might be surprised to find it is considered unacceptable to walk around your house barefoot or with shoes on. Both are considered unclean. It took me a while to adjust to wearing only socks indoors.

I grew up in Florida where it was common to go barefoot outside during the day. So, if you wanted to keep the floor inside the house clean, you would put your shoes on, although wearing only socks was something I hadn't seen done.

If you traveled to Norway and did either of these, you would find yourself in a tough situation. Your host would either tell you to wear socks or allow you to violate a cultural norm.

All countries have their rules of etiquette. In some countries you don't tip people and in others it is expected that you will tip. It is best to go along with the local culture. Making a stand against a cultural norm is a bad idea. You will only give tourists a bad name and bring upon yourself the scorn of the people in that location.

If you are visiting the United States, you should tip 15%. You are free to tip more, but tipping below 15% will create a problem for you. I am not aiming to exceed the cultural expectations, but rather follow that given culture. This allows you to fit in better. The locals will appreciate you for your willingness to respect their local customs and traditions.

When you are researching the customs and traditions of your destination, you can Google “Customs and Traditions of China” or wherever you are traveling. Then, attempt as well as you can to follow those customs. This will make your trip much more pleasant for you and the people you meet.

This principle doesn't just apply to traveling to a different country. If you are traveling to a different region of your own country, they may also do things differently. For example, if you are visiting someone, is it expected that you will bring a gift? This is easy to find out by Googling it and following the rules for that location.

(25) Make a Detailed Day Plan

Spontaneity needs to have a place when traveling. However, not having a detailed day-by-day plan comes at a greater price. The biggest cost comes in the area of time, money, and the experiences themselves.

The reason for these costs is that many activities require booking in advance. If you haven't already booked the activity, all spots will be taken up by the time you arrive.

Another cost is that of the difficulty in researching opening hours and holidays if you wait until you are already on the trip. Sometimes the websites are out of date or don't exist for certain tourist attractions. This means you need to contact the people in charge of the attraction to make sure they are open when you go.

The last thing you want to do when visiting a new city or country is to have to

research activities on the spot. This can be pricey if you are using your cell phone. Internet may not be available at all your destinations.

Another reason to work these issues out in advance is because of the ability to find the best deals on excursions and sites. Sometimes you can get special deals if you know where to look. By doing this research on forums beforehand, other travelers can give you great tips on how to maximize your travel time.

This research is part of the fun of traveling and is best done before you travel; you don't want to use your travel time. Thus, you may be tempted to just pay the full price once you have arrived at your destination as opposed to doing the research during your trip.

Research allows you to know required travel times between locations. A site you want to visit may be closed or booked to capacity during your visit. Knowing their hours of operation does not guarantee that you will be admitted. It's always wise to make arrangements ahead of time.

Do yourself a favor and have a detailed daily plan. You can deviate from it once the trip begins. If your goal is to get a full experience out of your travels, you will want to figure out what you will see. You also must ensure your budget matches your plan.

(26) Book As Much As Possible before the Trip

There are many things that can be researched and booked before traveling. These include:

- Hotel/Apartment
- Tours
- Museum Entry Fees

- Transportation

As mentioned earlier, some attractions can be filled up prior to your arrival. You don't want to waste a day traveling somewhere and discover you can't enter. A perfect example of this is Disney World in Florida, USA. I have been there when they hit maximum capacity. At that point, they won't admit additional people.

Another example from Florida is when they were opening Legoland. They had a website with prices and pictures and videos of people on the rides. We drove to the park and discovered they weren't opening the park for eight more months. We took the kids to the park and experienced frustration. After reviewing the website, we noticed a small text commenting that the park would open in the fall. By calling ahead, we might have avoided this issue.

In Barcelona, the line for getting into the Sacred Family Cathedral was several hours. We purchased our tickets a week prior and walked right in. There is an exception to this rule. Sometimes you can find discounts at the hotel or hostel where you are staying. These discount books can pay for themselves.

(27) Use *TripAdvisor* to Find Fun Places and Restaurants

There have been accusations that some of the reviews are not legitimate. However, we have never been disappointed visiting places that are recommended by [TripAdvisor](#)¹. It makes choosing what to do simple. You can log into the site and see what the top activities are for the location you are traveling to and see if people have had challenges there.

One thing to look for is consensus among the negative comments. We used TripAdvisor when planning a trip to Bulgaria. However, we noticed the hotel we were looking at was highly rated except everyone commented that the pool had

swarming wasps around it all of the time. For us, this was a deal breaker. Agreement among comments is a good way to judge.

(28) Get a *Lonely Planet Travel Guide*

We always check out the latest *Lonely Planet Travel Guide* from the library for whatever city we are visiting. Be careful it isn't too far out of date. However, it provides a feel of the location you are visiting and helps you decide what you want to do.

(29) Pay Close Attention to Changes in Your Flight Information

We nearly got burned on this issue during our last trip. Normally, when there are flight changes you receive an e-mail notification asking you to check the new itinerary and report back on any issues. Here, they set the connection flight departure time prior to our arrival time of the first flight. We had negative ten minutes to make our connection flight. This was impossible, but that was the change to the schedule.

Usually, we don't check so closely since we assume they wouldn't be such a mistake. We learned that you shouldn't assume anything when notified of a change. So, make sure that the airports are still OK and all connections are possible. When we called to get the tickets corrected, they informed us we should have reported it months before. Fortunately, they were willing to make the change anyway.

(30) Watch *YouTube* Travel Videos for the Destination

This is something I always prioritize. I search YouTube for travel videos about

our destination. This is important. The kids also watch the videos so they can give their input on what seems like fun. Another benefit is that when you arrive, things seem familiar right from the start.

Any experience is much richer when you have a certain level of recognition of where you are and what is significant about the sights. If you are too familiar with an area, you will lose the benefit of exploring a city for the first time. However, this isn't a problem when you are watching a few videos on YouTube. In addition, this builds anticipation for the trip.

(31) Maximize the Experience by Controlling the Phases of Travel

There are three main phases of any travel experience:

- Pre-travel
- Travel
- Post-travel

You can maximize enjoyment of a trip by optimizing each of these phases, although you have to plan. The pre-travel phase is where you make planning choices that will maximize the fun and build anticipation.

The travel itself, when properly planned, will go smoothly and give your mind something to think about. The post-travel phase is all about remembering what you experienced through photos and your memories and purchases. Purchases need to be considered early on so that each phase will maximize the potential experience.

I think of it as getting the best bang for your buck. You can maximize how far the money goes by making deliberate decisions to increase excitement before

and after the trip. We will come back to this aspect throughout this book.

¹ <http://www.powerlists.org/ec1z>

8 - Packing for the Trip

While packing is one of the most boring things about a trip, it is also most important. This is especially true when traveling on a tight budget. Failure to pack properly means you will need to buy things when you arrive at your destination.

What's worse is that sometimes your destination won't have the things you need. In addition, you may have to pay more for the items you are missing. You should determine whether your destination is a tourist center and whether the items you need are more expensive than in your home country.

(32) Make a Checklist

I have three checklists:

- Overnight: My personal items
- Overnight: My children's items
- Overnight: My general items

The reason for the individual lists is that I may or may not be traveling with the kids. Following a checklist can be tedious when it has hundreds of items. However, if I am in a rush, I will at least skim the checklist to see if I forgot anything.

Our standard rule is we only mark an item off the list when it is packed or added to the calendar with a reminder to be packed. This ensures that it is impossible to forget something.

In addition, whenever I am on a trip and realize I am missing something, I will e-mail a notice to myself about the item and add it to my master checklist. This

ensures that I won't forget it next time. For example, a night camping trip without bug spray is a mistake I will only make once. Traveling to the beach without sunscreen or enough drinks is another mistake I only made once.

My checklists are also broken into day trips versus overnight trips. This approach prevents my having to look through hundreds of items when we are heading to a local museum for the day.

(33) Learn What Luggage You Can Take With You

It is important to make sure you know how much luggage you may take. In addition, you need to know the size and weight of the luggage allowed. Making a mistake can be pricey. There is nothing worse than getting to the airport to find out you are over the limit on weight or that you have to pay for additional luggage.

(34) Bring Washing Detergent to Minimize Clothes Needed

An easy trick to decrease the amount of clothes you need to pack is to wash them on your trip. You don't even need a washing machine. Small packets of washing detergent are available, allowing you to wash your clothes in your sink or bathtub at the hotel. You should check to see if packets can be purchased at your destination.

Washing clothes during your trip means you will save space in your luggage. If you go with Airbnb as discussed in this book, you will more than likely have a washing machine in the apartment you rent. This is yet another huge advantage of renting an apartment over using a hotel where washing services can be extremely pricey.

(35) Envision the Entire Trip in Your Mind

A great way to ensure that you remember everything is to review the trip in your head from the beginning to the end. As you visualize each part of the trip, you may discover something you forgot to book or bring. The beauty of this method is that you haven't started the trip, so it isn't too late.

(36) Share Your Trip Information With Family and Friends

Although you most likely will be just fine during your trip, you never know. This is why sharing your itinerary with family and friends can save you and them a great deal of pain if something goes wrong. I take time to consider where I might go missing or what if there is a plane crash around the same time as my flight.

In the old days, I would forward the itinerary to my close family members. The problem was that I had to forward it again and again with each change. So, I found a powerful app to solve this issue. It is called [TripCase¹](#). It allows you to register 100% of your trip information including airlines, trains, boats, hotels, restaurant, amusement parks and museum plans.

The flight information is the best part since it updates in real time with any gate or schedule changes. Then you can share each itinerary with your family and friends. They can use their cell phones or computers to log in and see where you are on your trip. This approach also ensures you are up to date on your flight information and the app will e-mail you when any changes occur.

(37) Bring Your Account Passwords With You

When traveling, you may need to check your bank accounts or other social media accounts. The problem is that you need to have the passwords available.

We always bring our bank key code generator with us; all of our mobile devices have a password management app called [Dashlane²](#). This gives us a secure way to carry all our passwords and account ID on all of our devices. The devices are synchronized automatically.

By using such an app, it is easy to get your most current password from any of your devices. There are plenty of password management tools available to choose from, no matter which devices you use. You can also bring a sheet of paper with the passwords. However, that also comes with risks if someone were to steal your account information. It is better to go with software that has military level security and is installed on multiple devices.

(38) Scan All of Your Documents and Passports

Having a copy of all your documents and passports can save you a great deal of trouble when traveling. Fortunately, with your cell phone, you can scan the documents with a huge number of programs designed to scan straight to PDF (portable document file) documents. Those can then be saved to your cell phone or e-mailed to yourself. This makes it simple to find them if you misplace any documents during your trip.

The program I like best for this is the iPhone app [FineScanner³](#). This allows you to adjust the photos and combine them into a single PDF which can be e-mailed from the program to yourself or saved in *DropBox*. If you lose a passport or can't find your tickets, you can quickly go to your inbox. In addition, you may forward some of these documents to family members for safe keeping in case something happens while you are away.

(39) Save Luggage Space/Weight for Items Purchased

If you will shop while traveling, make sure you have space and weight in your

luggage to carry these additional items. This includes gifts for friends and family and things you buy for yourself. You will end up paying for an extra bag if you are already hitting your limit for space and weight when you leave for your destination. It is better to save space for these items.

When we travel to a beach area on trips, the kids always pack floating rafts or other water toys for the beach. Leaving them behind would be a huge problem. Our solution is to carry large cloth bags that weigh very little and can be packed quickly. This method assumes that you aren't carrying your max in checked luggage.

(40) Bring a Good Pair of Walking Shoes

After traveling a long weekend in Prague wearing dress shoes, my feet swelled and my ankles were hurting. We were walking 10-15 miles per day. The pain in my feet lasted a year later even after wearing better shoes. The lesson I learned was that you should never underestimate the importance of wearing proper footwear for long days of walking.

I like to wear running shoes when walking around the city. They are built to handle the pounding force of the concrete on your feet and body.

This is even more important when packing for the kids. If they get injured or complain about walking, you want to ensure it isn't because you gave them poor walking shoes for the trip. This is an easy problem that can be avoided with proper planning.

(41) Bring Sunglasses and Hats

When traveling to a warm climate, sunglasses and hats are a must-have. Exposing yourself to the sun and heat without cover is a terrible idea. This is more important when traveling with children.

This is why we always bring hats and sunglasses for everyone. They take up almost no space and can add hours of walking time in the heat. The top goal is to ensure that everyone is comfortable when the sun is shining and the temperatures outside are boiling.

(42) Roll Your Clothes

This is the most space and wrinkle preventing way of packing your clothes. You can look at this video on [Youtube⁴](#) for a detailed step-by-step demonstration. When rolled, your clothes don't get wrinkled. Roll tightly to make sure you use your space as effectively as possible.

(43) Create Permopacks

Permopacks are permanently packed bags that are already packed with everything you will need for a trip. In the Air Force, they called them mob bags, which is short for mobilization bags. If you were called in the middle of the night for deployment, you would have everything already packed and ready. This saves time and speeds up packing.

I have a permopack for day trips and one for overnight. This means that I only need to pack clothes. Everything else is already included. I will also bring my iPads, Kindles, and iPhones. They can't be packed ahead of time since items are used daily, but packing can be completed for a weeklong trip in 5-10 minutes when the permopacks are ready.

(44) Always Have Thermals and Rain Gear

It is impossible to know what to expect from the weather when traveling. You will not want to be forced to buy something you already have. I always carry wool thermal underwear and a rain jacket. They can be rolled up and use little

space. You should have a basic idea of what the weather will be. However, rain and cold can create an issue that is resolved by always planning for it.

(45) Download an Offline Map for Your Smart Phone

This is one of the best and most under-used tips in the entire book. My favorite map program is [Sygic](#)⁵. You can buy the rights to all maps for all countries for well under \$100. Then, you get free updates on the maps forever. The best part is that you can install or uninstall maps for the country or state you will travel to and conserve space on your phone.

This program also allows you to type in the GPS coordinates for a location and it will navigate you there offline without using the Internet. I also enjoy using [CityMaps2Go](#)⁶ and [OffMaps2](#)⁷. I use all three apps since one may include travel sites that are omitted from the others. This approach also prevents your having to buy a map when you arrive at your destination. When traveling to a hotel, I can track whether the taxi driver is taking the shortest route or not.

(46) Travel Using Only One Passport

Some countries want you to use the passport for their country. This is the case with the United States. When traveling into the country, you should use your US passport. Since my family has passports for Norway and the US because of dual citizenship, we use only our US passports.

However, if you are traveling from your home country, make sure you bring all of your passports. We had issues when trying to leave the European Union and being stopped in the Netherlands because we didn't have the stamp showing entry into the European Union. However, the stamp would not have been required if we had had our Norwegian passports with us.

The solution is easy. Use only one passport for all legs of a round trip. Also,

bring all of your passports with you on every trip. That works for all possible scenarios.

¹ <http://www.powerlists.org/zdru>

² <http://www.powerlists.org/8tk0>

³ <http://www.powerlists.org/w99r>

⁴ <http://www.powerlists.org/gc9q>

⁵ <http://www.powerlists.org/evle>

⁶ <http://www.powerlists.org/zxl8>

⁷ <http://www.powerlists.org/du9j>

9 - Kicking Off the Trip

(47) Go to the Airport Three Hours Before International Flights

When traveling from Norway to the US, we discovered a boarding pass was missing. We later found it in a deep pocket where we carry all of our documents. However, it created a panic. With multiple hours to spare, we were able to work something out with the airport. However, without the extra time, we would not have been able to recover from this challenge.

The lesson is that if you have extra time, everyone's stress level will be much lower. The worst thing that can happen is that you fly through the security lines and have several hours on your hands in the airport for reading or shopping. That is a far better place to be than running through an airport with high stress and your heart thumping with fear of missing your flight.

(48) Take a Picture of All Tickets and Luggage

Take a picture of all of your carry-on and stored luggage and travel documents. When something gets lost, you can show the airport what was lost. If your luggage is damaged, you have a photo of what it looked like before as proof that the damage was done by the airport.

Finally, if you live in the EU, laws govern delays in flights and acceptable reasons for those delays. If you wait many hours due to mistakes made by the airlines, you may be eligible for compensation, although this only works if you have a copy of the tickets and boarding passes. Having a photo of these documents solves this problem.

(49) Start with a Hop-On Hop-Off Bus Tour

(49) Start with a Hop On Hop Off Bus Tour

In most major cities, tour busses circle the city. Tourists can listen to audio recordings that tell you what you are seeing. The beauty of these trips is that they give you an outstanding way to see all of the major sites early in your trip.

I like to take them as the absolute first activity after checking into our hotel. We never use the hop off part of the deal. The intention is that if you see something interesting, you can hop off and then afterwards hop back onto the bus. The problem with this plan is that you may have to wait for the bus and there may be a line.

Instead, we like to see the entire city first. Then, we make plans to see the best sights later. You have a limited amount of time in any city. You don't want to visit a major city without seeing the major sites. This tour bus is key to ensuring that you don't miss anything.

We used this service on a boat trip in Paris. However, instead of having headphones where you could dial in your language, they decided everyone would get the same channel. They repeated all information four times in four different languages. This meant that the total amount of information was diminished. It pays to check in advance what they will give and look at [TripAdvisor¹](#) to see negative comments.

(50) Try Smart Phone GPS Offline Map Tours

Since all smart phones contain a GPS, it is easy to download and pay small amounts of money for GPS tours. We have had huge success with these tours. There are two varieties of tours. One is where you follow the guide and read the text when you arrive at each destination.

My favorite in this category is [City Maps and Walks²](#). You could just use your

travel guide as you go, but thematic walks are more fun than reading a paragraph on every random building in the city. Guide books tend to ramble about the different areas with little focus on themes that group the sights based upon themes.

(51) Try Smart Phone GPS Audio Tours

If you want to have an audio-guided GPS tour, you can try [*PocketGuide Audio Travel Guide with Offline Maps*](#)³. This service allows you to pay for a tour and then follow the audio instructions for where to walk and where to look as you walk. This is my favorite audio guided tour type.

The best part is that you can pause the tour if you want a break. Since the price is a few dollars for a pack of tours for a city, you get your money's worth even for half of a tour. In my experience these guided tours are better than actual guided tours and the price is less than 5% of a normal guided tour.

(52) Rise Early

This is tough to stomach for many people on vacation. There is a natural desire to sleep in each day. However, that comes at the price of having less time to spend at different attractions. By rising early, you make sure you arrive at an attraction before others and you avoid the crowds. In addition, if you are traveling to a warm location, you will avoid the heat of mid-day when many tourists leave their hotels.

(53) Go With the Flow

Being too rigid when you travel will make you miserable. If you book a restaurant or lose a ticket, you need to relax and go along with it. You will only spoil the trip for yourself when you take negative events too seriously. You also

will destroy the atmosphere for the other people with whom you are traveling.

This is true in life in general. Taking a more positive approach to the trip will make you and the surrounding people much happier and you'll end up with a better experience. It is possible to have a negative experience, but focus on the positive aspects and learn something. The alternative of getting into a negative mood and thinking about the negatives will take the joy out of the rest of the trip.

(54) Splurge

While you are doing your best to follow a budget, it is important to realize that your trip is something worth investing in. It will change you and give you all of the benefits we mentioned earlier.

We are looking for the best deals in our daily lives and weighing whether something is worth the cost. However, when we travel, we reverse this. We are still looking for the best deal on our trips. However, we aren't looking to skip attractions or events because we want to save money.

Spending money has a bigger impact on you when you use it on trips versus your everyday life. If you buy fancy coffee every day at home, it loses value over time. However, if you haven't been drinking fancy coffee, it tastes much better than at home. This is because new sights and sounds register much more for us. So, don't save money on your vacation if it means missing out on things you know you would enjoy.

(55) Take Pictures of Interesting Things

Now that we have digital cameras on our phones, taking photos has never been easier. There are multiple layers of value in taking photos. The first thing is that taking pictures changes the way we look at everything and everyone. We consider whether a moment has value and is worth remembering. If not, we

adjust the moment until it is.

When I started taking pictures, I noticed that I was always on the lookout for new things I hadn't seen. This may include signs or artwork. Sometimes strange things happen. My first response is to get my camera to take a picture or a video.

One such example of this was waiting in Sweden for our plane to depart. We saw the plane next to ours being given daily maintenance. This involved emptying the waste from the plane. The person responsible for this didn't properly attach the hose to the bottom of the plane. This resulted in the plane dumping raw human waste out of the underside onto the flight line.

The guy holding the hose tried to reconnect the hose, but by that point, it was too late. Everything was covered. As you might imagine, this makes an interesting photo and a video as to what happens next. The flight line was covered in piles of human waste from the plane.

The poor maintenance worker came back with small plastic bags and a shovel. That experience was something we would remember from that trip, but having a video changes everything and seals it forever in our memories.

It is possible to go too far with the photos. I am not arguing for taking pictures every 10 seconds. I am arguing for taking a picture or two every hour when you are traveling and when you see something worth remembering. It is this act of looking for the interesting that causes us to remember the moment.

¹ <http://www.powerlists.org/ec1z>

² <http://www.powerlists.org/ug1j>

³ <http://www.powerlists.org/zepq>

10 - Tips for Children on Trips

(56) Take the Kids to the Beach

Most of our trips center on places with a beach. In Barcelona, we chose an apartment that wasn't too far from the beach. Since the temperature of the trip was so high, the kids tired of seeing yet another church. So, we decided that every other day would be a beach day.

(57) Use Incentives to Motivate the Children to Endure Activities

Giving incentives can help out. You could offer an ice cream for every museum they visit without complaining. The kids have something to look forward to and we can enjoy the museum. It is a win-win situation.

This approach can have a down side if children expect a reward for doing any activity aimed for adults. However, if they complain and are miserable the whole time, it might be a wise choice to consider all of your options. We have also found that having an iPad and giving added screen time works when we are in a bind.

There is nothing worse than looking at famous artwork and being rushed or having to shush your children. With a drawing program on your iPad, you might even get them to draw what they see. This approach expands the experience beyond one more boring painting.

(58) Freeze Bottles Overnight When in a Hot Climate

This single tip is one of the best tricks I have learned over the years. When you

are traveling to an area that is scalding, it pays to fill bottles with water and freeze them overnight. You can then drink them as they thaw the next day. The best part is that if you pack them next to cokes, they will keep the cokes cold in your bag even when the outside temperature is scorching.

I learned this trick from men selling frozen bottles of water in Athens. They were selling the bottles for 1€ each. The temperature during our trip hit 95F (35C). When walking around the Parthenon at that temperature, the ancient Greek stone ruins reflect the heat they have absorbed all day. The bottles melt and you have an unending supply of ice cold water until they are empty.

If the temperature isn't too cold, freeze the bottles halfway full. When you start the day, add water to the top of the bottle and bring it. Thus, you ensure you still have ice cold water, but you don't have to wait for it to melt. The trip needs to be fun for the kids. If they aren't happy, you won't be either. If they are hot and dehydrated, you will end up having a lousy trip.

(59) Don't Force Fun

Fun is something that happens naturally. A friend took his child to Legoland, and all the kid wanted to do was play with the Legos. The parent was concerned that the Legos at Legoland were the same as the child had at home. What's the point of going to Legoland if you aren't doing anything different than you would do at home?

The problem is that we think like adults. From the child's perspective, playing with Legos at Legoland is very different and more exciting than doing it at home. There is a connection and bonding experience that might seem from an adult's perspective like a waste of time and money. Unlike adults, children have a way of enjoying the moment.

For a child, the trip is full of adventure and mystery in minor details. They also

may find excitement in the larger attractions. Forcing the child to stop playing with the details can drain the magic from the experience for them. This is why it is so important to allow children to explore the sights and sounds of the trip. Don't rush them into having fun. You may find you are actually taking away the fun you want them to experience.

(60) Involve the Kids in the Planning

The best way to make the trip as fun as possible for the children is to let them decide what you will see and do. Help them understand you have a limited budget. Also, let them be part of the decision making of how that money can be divided between the different options for your trip.

This has three major benefits:

- They learn how money and opportunity cost works.
- They feel ownership regarding where you travel and what you do.
- They develop an adventurer's spirit when involved in the details.

(61) Give the Kids Money to Buy a Souvenir

To this day, I am reminded of visiting different places by the trinkets I purchased there. There is something about buying things when traveling that has a way of drawing you closer to the place.

I am not arguing for giving the kids piles of cash to spend. Rather, the ability to buy something that costs a few dollars and is special to that location can help build memories and remind them of the trip many years later.

(62) Review Each Day

It is important to keep a pulse of how a trip is going with the kids. At the end of each day ask them what they liked and didn't like. Ask them for advice on what could be better for the next day.

The worst thing you can do is to wait until the end of a trip to find out if the children were miserable during the trip. Sometimes, the requests and desires of the kids are cheap and easy to meet, but they don't know how to ask for what they want. So, they are unhappy and you are puzzled why the trip isn't going as planned.

(63) Use the Kids Club for Adults Only Nights

Just because you are traveling with children doesn't mean you have to spend 24 hours a day with them. It can be healthy to take a night out with just the adults. However, you need to make sure the kids will be cared for while you are out. This means you need to ensure that at least one child is old enough to watch the others in the hotel room.

In addition, we tried kids clubs at some of the hotels we visited. They have deals where there are adults who supervise the activities of your children while you are away. These are popular with the kids and allow the adults to have an evening with dinner or a show without the children.

The goal of the trip is bonding as a family. However, that doesn't mean the family has to be together every second of the trip. So, take time for adult alone time. This will also maximize the memories from the trip and will expand bonding among the adults.

(64) Establish a Routine

Younger children are happiest when they have a routine. The world is full of learning in even the simplest of activities around them. Everything is new and

they are continually exploring the world. They develop a feeling of safety around the routines of their normal lives and have a sense of security in these routines.

Traveling will, by its very nature, break that routine. When traveling it is important to maintain the daily cycle as close to normal as possible. That means:

- Getting up at the same time.
- Going to bed at the same time.
- Eating meals at the same time.
- Eating the same foods, if possible.

For the older children and adults, the whole point is to break routines to better experience life. Younger children and babies are already getting a high level of exposure to new things. They will be happiest when you hold to the normal routines.

(65) Bring an iPad

If you are waiting in a long line or a boring patch in your trip, there is no reason your child should be bored. Instead, have an iPad or similar tablet they can play games on, draw, or read. You don't want them to remember the trip as being boring and hot with long lines. This outcome can be avoided and using screen time is perfect for addressing such problems.

I am not arguing that you should use TV or digital devices to entertain your children. From time to time they can come in handy when facing a slow point on your trip. The alternative is having your children complain about the trip. You may try using books and educational games on your devices.

(66) Pay Attention to Changes in Mood During the

Trip

It is easy for us to assume that our children are having a great time on a trip when we are enjoying ourselves. However, that isn't always the case.

I remember when one of our sons was three years old and we were visiting Disneyworld. We started with a few rides, hit the haunted mansion and then traveled on the jungle cruise. At the end of the ride, my son asked if we were going home soon. Without paying much attention, we hadn't noticed that these rides and shows were too scary for him. Our son hadn't been able to express what he was feeling and we had crossed a limit.

This is important to keep in mind when traveling. In Norway, parents take their kids to Syden (any vacation around the Mediterranean Sea). The problem is that, unlike Norway, alcohol here is cheap. Consequently, some Norwegians get drunk every day of their vacation. They don't notice the impact this has on their children.

This is another good reason to pay close attention to how your choices affect your children when traveling. I consider it a great idea to ask the children if they are having a good time during the trip or if they would rather be doing other things.

Keeping things flexible gives children permission to let you know if they aren't OK with something. If the kids aren't having a good time, I am not having a good time. I may wish to see a few more cathedrals. However, if the kids are too hot, it may be time to hit the beach instead.

(67) Bring Sunscreen

Getting sunburned can make the trip miserable for the kids. It is always better to apply too much sunscreen than to hope for the best and allow the kids to get

sunburned. When they are sunburned, it drops the desire to do anything. They feel the pain of the sunburn and are more sensitive to the sun and warm temperatures for the remainder of the trip. Sunscreen is a cheap price to pay to avoid all of the problems that come with sunburn.

(68) Bring Bug Spray

If you will be in the forest or near a forest, you will want to bring bug spray. Like sunscreen, bugs can make the experience miserable. I have been in a situation where everyone is getting eaten alive by mosquitoes or other blood sucking creatures. A little bug spray goes a long way toward avoiding misery.

(69) Everyone Carries a Backpack

This is one of my favorite tips. If each person has their own backpack, we can keep drinks and winter clothes separate. If a person gets hot or cold they can take off layers and put them in their own bag.

In addition, everyone has their own drinks and food in their bags. If they wish to bring along a stuffed animal or toy, they can carry it in their sack. This trick also works great if someone buys something. We use this method to divide the common items we need to bring along.

This means that no one ends up having to carry much weight since it is all distributed. It also means that if someone needs one of their items, they have it on their back. The final advantage is that the backpacks, if padded, can be used as a seat. This is important if you need to sit on:

- The ground
- Something wet
- The snow

(70) Use Public Transportation

Although I use public transportation anyway, it is important for the children. They enjoy looking out the window and being on a bus or train as they move around the city. This is exciting for the kids and much more than mere transportation. It is part of the adventure. So, when visiting a new place with the kids, take a bus, train or boat to make the adventure more exciting.

(71) Have the Kids Take Pictures

Kids love to take pictures. They don't need an expensive camera and it creates an activity that requires nothing other than a subject for the photos. They focus on taking the best picture they can of that location. Even the most boring of places can become exciting and new.

I include the best pictures taken by the children in our photo gallery. This gives even more incentive for them to take pictures while traveling. The more activities and options they have during any trip, the easier it is to get them to try things.

(72) Use Arm Bracelets With Contact Information

A common fear is losing your child in a foreign city. Investing in an armband that has your contact information can make it much easier to find your child if you should be separated. You can also write your phone number on their arm with a permanent marker if you don't have an arm band available. Another option is using a thick hair band and writing your contact information on it.

We tell the children to go into a store and ask them to make a call to the police or us if they get lost. If the children are older, they may have cell phones with them that ensure they are in touch in case of emergency. The most important

thing is for them to stay put when separated.

(73) Bring a Stroller for Small Children

This one can never be overstated. If your children are six years old and younger, having a stroller will keep them from getting bored and having nowhere to sit. In addition, if they get exhausted from walking or the sun, you can put them in the stroller and give them coverage. The trip doesn't have to stop just because they are tired. You can push them in the stroller.

We like umbrella strollers. However, if you have space for a jogging stroller, they can be even better since they provide room for luggage. This is very handy when you don't want to carry backpacks. You can just put them in the jogging stroller and use the stroller to move everything.

(74) Choose a Meeting Place in Case of Separation

Even if you are being careful to keep track of everyone, it is possible to forget someone. In a busy shopping area, someone may see something interesting. They walk over to it and the rest of the group moves to a different direction. Within seconds, you are separated and can't see or hear the other people in the group.

No matter where you are, establishing a designated meeting spot eliminates the time wasted trying to find each other. While this doesn't work well with small children, it does with older children. There should always be a designated meeting area. In the worst case scenario, the hotel itself should be the meeting spot. I have never lost any children while traveling abroad.

Even though I like to hold their hands and keep a close eye on them as we travel around the city, I still establish a designated meeting area regardless of where we are. In addition, I change that designated area as we move around the town. That

way, we can meet somewhere close like the doors of a church or a large statue.

(75) Put Name and Number Labels on All Bags and Gear

Losing luggage or mobile phones during a trip can be painful. One trick that helps avoid this problem is using labels with your contact information. Many companies sell these labels and you should place them on all your belongings. If something is stolen, you may not see it again. However, if you misplace something, the label could be the difference between losing it and getting it back.

(76) Consider Splitting up the Group From Time to Time

Not all activities will work for everyone in the group. This is where it is useful to split up the group to ensure that age differences won't stop you from enjoying certain activities. I like guided tours but they are boring for small children.

So, this is a perfect example of when I split off from the others and take the child who enjoys them. The same goes for eating at fancy restaurants. Some of the children don't like strange food. By splitting up the group, it is a win for everyone. The children who like the exotic food get just that and the others enjoy eating at the hotel.

(77) Have the Kids Make a Journal

Another trick for keeping the kids engaged is having them keep a journal. This is something they always keep in their backpack. Whenever we have downtime, they can pull it out and write.

There are plenty of things this journal can be used for:

- Drawing pictures of the buildings you see.
- Writing your thoughts on the food.
- Writing what you like the most or least.
- Writing all of the things that are most interesting in the city.

The key is that this is something they can take with them and review later. Writing a journal is an excellent way to help you verbalize what you are thinking or feeling. Often, our thoughts fly by without reflection.

Journaling is a way to slow down those thoughts and absorb them a different way. It also makes it easier to remember the events later. We want to maximize every possible experience from the trip and journaling is a sure fire way to make that happen.

(78) Let the Kids Choose a Magnet or Postcard for Each Trip

Souvenirs are a great way to remember a trip. It is even better if the kids can choose which souvenir to take home. We like refrigerator magnets from the different places we visit, although other people like buying spoons or key chains or postcards.

All of these tokens will help the kids remember the trip and maximize the bang for the buck you get out of the trip. Allowing them to make choices gives them the feeling it is their trip and not just the adults pulling them along.

(79) Meet the Locals

Traveling is about growing and expanding who we are as people. Your children

should be exposed to the different people in the cities you visit. It is important for them to understand that people live differently. This helps them break out of the assumptions that:

- We only like people who are like us.
- There is something wrong with people who aren't like us.

Rather, by embracing the differences, we become more open and better suited to live as a citizen of the world. It also helps us to appreciate the things we have more when we see the contrast with the locals.

(80) Bring Motion Sickness Pills

Motion sickness pills are a life saver for us. There is nothing fun about going on a boat trip or long car ride while feeling sick. It is easy to get these pills over the counter. The best part is that they don't even have to work. They only need to cut the intensity of the sickness to make the trip bearable. We have found that for the kids they drop the sick feeling by 50%, which means they are able to make it.

(81) Be Careful Buying Drugs in Other Countries

In many parts of the world, some drugs purchased over the counter or by prescription are not real. To save money, the medicine is replaced with harmless alternatives. So, you need to know that you may not get what you think you are paying for when getting drugs elsewhere. It is best to take your medication with you, although you should buy medication if it can't wait until you get home.

(82) Avoid Going to Foreign Hospitals

The problem with hospitals is that they are often packed with diseases you may not have been exposed to before. This is true in countries that already have

diseases different than those in your home country.

While we have been to clinics in the past with the children, you ought not go unless you have an issue that must be addressed. Otherwise, you may expose yourself and your children to much worse problems. So, it is best to wait until you get home and avoid the risk.

(83) Weigh Your Kids' Bags

Your children shouldn't be carrying more than 10% of their own weight in their backpacks. This means you need to control what they are carrying with them on the trip. The tendency can be for them to over pack. However, you need to set clear guidelines for what they can take. One option is to provide a small bag that would be hard to over-pack.

It is also important for them to know that if they buy things during the trip they will need space. Things in backpacks can get broken. So, they shouldn't take items that can be easily broken.

(84) Bring Eye Blinders

Some areas where we travel are bright even at night. In particular, as you move closer to the Arctic Circle in summer, the light can make it difficult to sleep. By having light blocking eye blinders, your children will sleep much easier no matter how much light is in the room.

(85) Carry a Roll of Toilet Paper

This is a great idea for multiple reasons. One obvious reason is that when you need to use the toilet and are in the forest or a location that has no toilets, you will have toilet paper. The next reason is that if you spill something or make a mess, you can clean it up if you have toilet paper. We also use toilet paper when

lighting campfires. It takes up little space and makes a huge difference when you need it.

(86) Bring a Roll of Plastic Bread Bags

This is an uncommon tip that is useful. Bread bags take up little space and are versatile. We use the 6-liter size bags made of thick plastic. They make great trash bags when you aren't near the trash can. In addition, they are excellent when you buy crackers or fruit or anything that will make a mess in your bag.

When your shoes or boots get wet, bags can be placed around your feet and keep your feet dry and warm. If you cut them open, you can sit on them to stay dry or use them as a plate. You can also put them around your books or maps to keep them dry when out in rainy weather.

I also put my technological gadgets in them if the weather is bad. I can't even recall the original reason we used them, but they are an integral part of our travels now.

(87) Go Geocaching

[Geocaching¹](#) is a fantastic activity to do with the kids or alone. There are millions of plastic boxes filled with toys hidden all around the world. With your smartphone, you can download an app that will show you on a map where these are near you.

Then, you download the map or use live data and try to find the box. Some caches are as big as buckets and others are small magnets. Either way, they will take you to interesting places you might not have hit otherwise. In addition, when you find one in a different city or country, it will put a pin in your map. This gives you a way to remember trips later.

The kids like the ones that have toys in them. The only rule is that if you take something out of the box, you need to put something back in. You can buy cheap toys for swapping. We always have a box of toys with us when traveling. If the kids get restless, we are only a few clicks from a game that can get them real toys.

You can also try a similar app that is a real life video game called [Ingress²](#) for iPhone and Android phones. It involves going on “missions” to capture portals. The key is that it gets you out walking and hiking to reach the different destinations as you go through different levels competing against another team and other players.

(88) Make Sure Their Backpacks Fit

With most backpacks, it is easy to tighten the straps to ensure they fit nice and snug on the backs of your children. The problem is that many times a child won't complain even if the backpack isn't sitting properly. That is why it is important for you to adjust the backpack.

The consequences of the backpack fitting improperly include back pain and irritability. When your kids are happy and comfortable, you will be the same. This problem is easy to fix and will save you and them pain.

(89) Make Sure All Backpack Zippers are Zipped

This tip may seem obvious. However, after years of experience I can say it isn't obvious at all. The kids get things out of their backpacks and then don't zip them up afterwards. This has resulted in lost items. The other trick is to make sure that even empty pockets are zipped.

We almost lost items from a small pocket where a cell phone was stored. The child thought the pocket was empty and didn't zip it up. So, the best rule is for

all zippers to be zipped.

One final note is that the zippers should be placed on the side and not be located on the top. When the zippers are slid to the side, it is harder for a pickpocket to get into the backpack. If the zippers meet at the middle, backpacks can open themselves when the weight of their contents open the zippers. This isn't a possibility when the dual zippers are on the side.

(90) Bring Layers of Clothes

You can avoid children's complaints about being hot or cold by bringing layers of clothing. If they get hot, you remove layers and if they feel cold you can add layers. I sometimes take my layers and add them to kids who have all of their layers on. Layering is the key to proper thermal control. Remember that kids don't always tell you how they feel.

I recall one of my children sweating with a sweater on and not saying anything for hours. This is easy to fix and you should check if they feel OK even if they aren't complaining. Children who aren't hot or cold are also children who are happy.

(91) Make a Game Out of the Trip

Traveling is an adventure. There are many ways you can make a game out of your trip with your kids. Teach them words and phrases in the language of the country you are visiting.

Buy a coloring book or craft kit from that city so they get to know the buildings and then visit the famous sites. Recognition of the sites before the visit will make the trip more educational and fun for them. Keep in mind it is a fantastic opportunity for family bonding if done right.

(92) Bring Nalgene Bottles for Everyone

One of the most useful things we have in each person's backpack is a Nalgene bottle filled with water. We use the [Oasis³](#) model. It is lightweight and breaks only if thrown. We freeze them overnight when traveling to hot regions. In addition, you can use it as a hot water bottle for warming yourself.

No one should get thirsty during your days away from the hotel. The top reason I like these bottles is that they:

- Are dishwasher-safe.
- Never leave a plastic taste in your mouth.
- Never leak.

I have never found a bottle of the same level of quality with all the features found in these bottles.

(93) Always Have Snacks and Drinks Just in Case

This also can be an issue if the kids aren't getting enough food or water. I recall a long hike in the high mountains of Norway where we were heading to a cabin that served food. The problem was that we had run out of food, but we were pressing on with our six-year-old son.

He was just fine with hiking. However, when he got hungry he became an emotional wreck. Once he ate at the cabin, everything calmed down. It was then we realized that there was an energy crash going on and we weren't hiking with enough food.

On a different hike, when we ran out of food, I gave raw sugar to the same child to prevent that from happening. This was the best choice, even though we normally control sugar. Since that time, I always have extra food in my

backpack to cover emergency hunger.

¹ <http://www.powerlists.org/nmlf>

² <http://www.powerlists.org/esmc>

³ <http://www.powerlists.org/hp7y>

11 - Heading Home

(94) Check Your Bank Accounts for Fraud

Whenever you are using your credit card, you risk someone stealing your number. It is a great idea to review your bank accounts to make sure that no one has used your bank cards. Someone who stole your cards will use them at once and not wait to take advantage of the situation.

(95) Sort and View Your Photos

If you are trying to maximize the best bang for your buck, you will want to go through your photos from the trip. Many people take pictures and never sort them. That is OK since the process of taking the photos alone makes you more observant. The value of the photos from our many trips cannot be overemphasized.

It is a pain to sort photos. We have a folder on the computer with each year, and then another level of folder for months. Then, the photos are renamed with the dates they were taken included in the name. This makes it possible to have all of your pictures well organized. You can use a screen saver program that randomizes the photos on your screen. There are programs that will randomize the desktop picture itself, such as gPhotoShow. It is a lot of fun and embeds the photos in our memories forever as we watch them cycle randomly.

Videos are also a key to remembering the trip. I sometimes find I am better able to explore the city later when I am not in the middle of the place we are visiting. A little time and distance gives me time to digest all of the sights and sounds of the trip.

12 - Ready for a New Adventure?

(96) Review What You Liked and Disliked From Your Last Trip

When deciding to plan your next trip, it is a great idea to look at your previous trips to help with the decision. Here are some helpful questions:

- What did you like or dislike from your previous trip?
- What did you forget to bring; what do you need to add to your checklist?
- Was the city you visited too crowded?
- Were there enough activities for the kids?

In answering these questions you will discover what you value. You should learn from your experiences and see what you can change on your next trip to make it even better.

(97) Choose a Different Location

You may have had a great time in the city you visited. Your temptation might be to go back again and again. That would be a mistake. It is in exploring new places that you expand who you are.

When you have already adapted to a location, you stop learning and experiences fade and blend with each other. The best option is to try a new place and push yourself as you start the travel experience all over again.

(98) Save Every Month for the Next Trip

The cost of going on another trip may be high for you. The easiest method we have found is to have a certain amount of money set aside every month to cover the costs for our next trip. In fact, before we have finished any trip, we have already begun saving for the next one.

13 - Final Thoughts

I hope this book will help motivate you to travel if you don't already. If you already travel, I hope the tips will make your trips:

- More rewarding.
- More economical.
- Easier with kids.
- More frequent.

If you know other tricks, please let me know. I am always updating my books to make sure they are as comprehensive as possible. We are all in this life together and it makes sense to help each other live it better.

Remember to pick up your 98 Best Travel Tips Cheat Sheet [here](http://www.powerlists.org/b05-tlm-98-best-travel-tips-cheat-sheet/)¹ if you haven't already downloaded it. It is a three-page refresher of the contents of this book and is great as a checklist to see which tricks you have tried.

¹ <http://www.powerlists.org/b05-tlm-98-best-travel-tips-cheat-sheet/>

Thank You

As we reach the end of this book, I want to say thanks for reading this book.

Please do me a favor and leave a review [here](#)¹. It only takes a few minutes and makes it possible for others to find this book as well.

If you enjoyed this book, please join my [mailing list](#)² so I can tell you about new releases, giveaways, and special promotions. I always send out all deals to my subscribers first.

¹ <http://www.powerlists.org/zgfc> ² <http://www.powerlists.org/s891>

About the Author

Chris is the author of the bestselling PowerLists™ book series. Each PowerList™ book is designed to help you get more out of life.

As an Expert Data Analyst living in Norway, he researches proven methods for living life more effectively spanning:

- Goal Setting
- Habit Building/Breaking
- Exercise
- Travel
- Sleep
- Diet
- E-mail management

With decades of experience dealing with complex, simultaneous projects spanning military service as well as management, database development, and analysis in the oil and gas industry, Chris, has a way of breaking down complex research and best practices into simple lists.

Each of the PowerLists™ books cover specific topics in a list format that is simple to apply to your life immediately.

He earned a Bachelor of Science from the United States Air Force Academy and advanced degrees in Information Resource Management and Human Resource Administration.

Chris has a passion for finding productivity tricks and exploring better ways of

working towards goals.

In his spare time, Chris travels around Europe, takes photos, reads, and hikes around Norway with his wife and three children.

Chris writes because he is excited about helping people make their goals a reality; he has seen far too many people frittering away their time and money because of unclear goals.

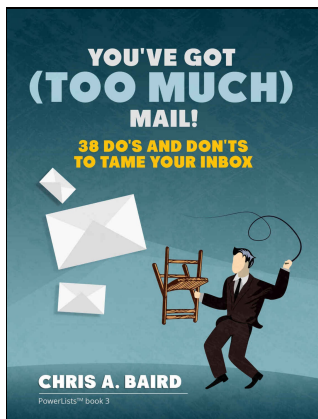
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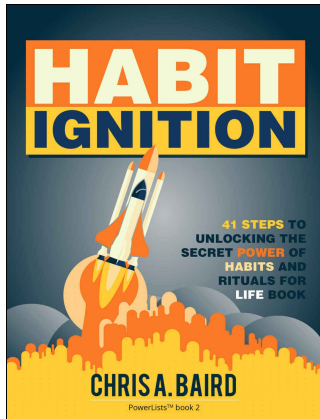
[98 Best Travel Tips: For Travel Junkies On A Budget With Kids¹](#)



[Easy Sleep Solutions: 74 Best Tips for Better Sleep Health: How to Deal With Sleep Deprivation Issues Without Drugs Book²](#)



[You've Got \(Too Much\) Mail! 38 Do's and Don'ts to Tame Your Inbox³](#)



[Habit Ignition: 41 Steps to Unlocking the Secret Power of Habits and Rituals for Life Book⁴](#)



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¹ <http://www.powerlists.org/zgfc> ² <http://www.powerlists.org/e080>

³ <http://www.powerlists.org/apff> ⁴ <http://www.powerlists.org/03k6>

⁵ <http://www.powerlists.org/xt4x>

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¹ <mailto:chrisabaird@powerlists.org> ² <http://www.powerlists.org/stef> ³ <http://www.powerlists.org/hpor> ⁴ <http://www.powerlists.org/dj5a> ⁵ <http://www.powerlists.org/ttyj> ⁶ <http://www.powerlists.org/ic43>
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