

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a long, flowing dress with a vibrant red, blue, and white floral pattern, stands on a stone ledge overlooking a swimming pool. The pool's edge is visible in the foreground, and the water reflects the bright sunlight. The background shows a clear blue sky and a portion of a building with a yellow dome.

BON VOYAGE

All ready for your summer holiday? Follow these 10 terrific travel tips from globetrotting travel writer Olivia Greenway and avoid having a holiday horror story

1 Health comes first

Plan for a healthy holiday but prepare for problems. If you need vaccinations or malaria tablets, arrange these in plenty of time. Don't be tempted not to bother taking precautions – even if mosquitoes or insects don't usually bite you, they can be deadly. Invest in a good – but compact – travel first aid kit.

2 Prepare the paperwork

Photocopy your passport and travel insurance documents and keep them in your cabin bag. Annual travel cover is usually more cost-effective than getting cover for individual trips. Make sure you are medically insured, even if you are holidaying in the UK. Transfer important information from your phone to somewhere else in case you lose it or it won't work. Finally, don't have luggage labels on the outside of your suitcase – you're just advertising the fact that your home will be empty.

3 Be money smart
Get your foreign currency from the Post Office or buy online – never at the airport. Plan to pay for everything you can with a credit card in the currency of the place you are visiting. Always let your bank know you are going away, and take two cards in case one is refused.

4 Start packing
Don't try to cram everything into a case that is too small. Pack a large case and leave some room, as you'll come back with more than you took. Unless you enjoy standing around the carousel, try not to have a black suitcase. If you do, put a bright ribbon around the handle for easier identification.

Leave all valuable non-essentials at home. Expensive jewellery, designer handbags and iPads are magnets for thieves. Be very strict about shoes – sorry, ladies – as they make up the bulk and weight.

Don't take anything that creases easily. Do you really want to iron on holiday? Choose wonderful crushable fabrics for your holiday wardrobe, and mix a lot of neutrals with a few pops of colour so that everything mixes and matches. Roll your clothes and put heavy items at the bottom, and use drawstring bags for underwear, socks and small items so you can find them easily.

Paint a cross in bright nail polish on your travel adaptor plug so you are less likely to leave it behind. Flip-flops can double as slippers and are useful for visits to the spa and swimming pool. Slip a cotton shopping bag into your suitcase just before you close it, so you can head out as soon as you arrive: throw a guidebook, sunglasses and water bottle in there, and off you go.

5 Savvy shopping list
Next, your washbag! Buy solid shampoo, a deodorant stick and block foundation, so you can keep messy liquids to a minimum. If you must pack liquids, wrap in a plastic

bag. And forget the supermarket for zip-lock sandwich bags: you can find them cheaper in most pound shops.

6 Sort out your communications
Before you go, check with your provider for European and overseas mobile call deals. Consider taking a cheap phone and buying a SIM at the airport on arrival, for use in that country. Choose a hotel with free Wi-Fi if you think you will need it. Both Skype and WhatsApp are free.



7 Hanging around at the airport
If you have a long wait, do consider paying for a lounge. There are plenty of seats, complimentary food and drink, showers, Wi-Fi, newspapers and magazines and even PlayStations and games. The pre-booked adult rate is around £19-25, depending on the lounge, and children pay a reduced rate. Both terminals at Gatwick have free play areas for children.

Travelling within the EU? You can buy items at the airport for collection on your return, using the free Shop and Collect

service. This is particularly useful for items you don't want to struggle onto the plane with or don't need on holiday.

8 Short haul tips
Don't upgrade. For short flights, economy is perfectly acceptable on most airlines. Many budget airlines charge for drinks and food but you are entitled to a free glass of tap water, so just ask.

9 ...and long haul tips
If you can afford it, and the plane has four classes, fly one up from economy. Those extra inches make all the difference and the cabin is generally quieter. Booking several months ahead with British Airways may get you a premium economy seat cheaper than an economy seat booked a week before the flight. If you have a choice, always try to fly overnight on a long haul, and sleep. Set your watch to the destination time as soon as you take off. Even though it's free on long haul flights, try to avoid drinking too much alcohol: it makes the jet lag worse.

Prioritise comfort: an inflatable neck pillow is a good investment. Take off your shoes and ask for socks if they are not provided (no one wants to walk barefoot in aircraft toilets). Ordering a special meal – kosher, vegan, coeliac – means you get to eat before everyone else.

10 Car hire insider
Always shop around online for the best deals. Pick the car up from the airport to save the taxi fare to your hotel, and return the car with a full tank. Make sure you take out insurance to cover the whole collision waiver excess. This avoids huge withdrawals against your credit card, even if you have a tiny shunt. Regular travellers should get annual collision waiver insurance, which is only around £50.

Take your satnav with you and download your maps before you go. It's usually cheaper than paying for satnav from the car hire company.