



PRE-TRIP CHECKLIST: WHAT TO DO THE DAY BEFORE YOU TRAVEL

The day before a big trip, one can begin to stress out trying to make sure you think of everything you need to do and take before the trip. Washing clothes, running to the store, searching for headphones and straightening piles of mail. Sound familiar?

Here's a better way. Use our pre-trip checklist to make sure everything gets done the day before you travel.

Pre-Travel Checklist: Your House

1. **Water your houseplants/garden plants.** If you have a house sitter or neighbor coming to check on them, leave them clear instructions.
2. **Clear the fridge.** Eat or toss leftovers and perishables. If you're going on a long trip, you may want to clean and unplug the fridge to save energy.
3. **Check the pantry, too.** Rotting potatoes smell unbelievably gross. If onions, potatoes, garlic or other items have been sitting around too long, toss or compost them before you leave.
4. **Take care of your pets.** If your pets are staying in the house while you're gone, make sure they have fresh food and water, as well as clean litterboxes or cages. Scan the house to make sure they can't get into anything dangerous. Leave detailed instructions for your pet sitter.
5. **Contact your alarm company.** If you have a security system, let them know the dates you'll be gone.
6. **Set a timer for your lights.** Another burglar deterrent is a [Fake TV](#), which is a little plug-in device that simulates the flicker of a television.
7. **Notify your credit card companies of your travel plans.** Otherwise, they may mistakenly flag your card for fraud if they see it being used in another country.
8. **Wash, dry and fold laundry.** Don't forget that last peek into the washing machine.

9. **Share your travel plans and a house key with a trusted neighbor or friend.** You never know what might happen while you're gone, so it's wise to give at least one person access to your house.
10. **Program your thermostat.** Set the heat to at least 50 degrees (to prevent pipes from freezing) and the air conditioning to 85°.
11. **Unplug appliances**, such as your toaster and coffeemaker.
12. **Close the blinds or curtains.** This makes your house more secure and helps regulate the inside temperature.

Pre-Travel Checklist: Trip Essentials

1. **Check your prescriptions.** Do you have enough prescription medication to last for your entire trip (plus a little extra, just in case)? If not, call the pharmacy ASAP.
2. **Mail-hold.** Set up a mail hold or arrange for someone to collect your mail.
3. **Double-check your boarding passes and itinerary.** I once stood in an airport check-in line behind a distraught family that had purchased their tickets for the wrong day: June 12 (6-12) instead of December 6 (12-6). Don't let this happen to you!
4. **Check travel requirements for your destination.** If your destination country requires certain vaccinations, visas, an arrival tax or a specific number of free pages in your passport, you want to know that *before* you leave.
5. **Put your passport in a safe place.** Make sure your passport is valid for at least six months beyond your trip. You don't want to be frantically hunting for it right before your departure. You may want to put it in the same place as your other last-minute essentials: sunglasses, phone charger, etc.
6. **Print all of your travel info/documents.** Don't rely solely on your phone or other device for directions, reservations and other crucial information! Batteries die, and electronics get stolen.
7. **Scan or photograph your passport, driver's license and credit cards.** This can help you get replacements more quickly, should you lose the originals.
8. **Read your travel insurance documents.** We know it's not exactly thrilling, but it's so important to read through your policy so you know what's covered and you understand what you have to do to file a claim.
9. **Purchase travel insurance, if you haven't already.** Even if you're leaving the next day, it might not be too late to protect yourself and your trip! You can purchase travel insurance any time before the date of your departure, although your plan choice may be limited if you wait until the last minute. If you want a plan that includes valuable trip cancellation and trip interruption benefits, as well as benefits for existing medical conditions, you'll want to purchase travel insurance as far in advance as possible.
10. **In Country Currency:** If traveling internationally, make sure you have currency for the country you are visiting.
11. **Withdraw some cash.** Small bills are useful for tipping.

12. **Check your bank balances.** Make sure your bank account and credit limits are prepared to handle your vacation spending.
13. **Schedule a ride to the airport, if necessary.** Cab and ride-sharing services will often let you arrange a pickup in advance.
14. **Check in for your flight.** If your airline allows you to check in online, go ahead and do it. You can also pre-pay for checked bags.
15. **Charge all of your electronics.** No one wants to stand elbow-to-elbow with strangers at the airport charging station.
16. **Download useful travel apps.** Netflix app to watch movies, airline app for inflight entertainment, hotel app, etc.

Pre-Travel Checklist: Your Baggage

Need help deciding what to pack? Read this: [Travel Checklists for Every Vacation](#). Once you've gotten everything stowed in your bags, do these eight things.

1. **Photograph the contents.** This makes it easier to file a baggage loss/delay claim, if anything happens to your items.
2. **Check your luggage tag and identifiers.** Are your bags marked with the right info? Are they easy to spot on the baggage carousel?
3. **Inspect luggage for problems.** I recently experienced a double zipper failure as I was packing to fly home from Portland. The not-so-elegant solution: wrapping the suitcase in pink duct tape.
4. **Check all the pockets.** If there's a forgotten pocketknife or even a corkscrew in your suitcase, you could get delayed by a TSA inspection.
5. **Weigh your checked bag.** If it's more than 50 pounds, you may be charged an extra fee.
6. **Take it for a spin.** Can you lift your suitcase and lug it upstairs? Find out now, before it's too late.
7. **Measure your carry-on.** Airlines are strict about size. Check the carry-on requirements first.
8. **Take a deep breath.** If you tend to get a little anxious about packing, just remember that you can replace almost anything you forget. As long as you have money, identification, travel documents and travel insurance, you'll be fine. Bon voyage!

Finally, remember to set an alarm to remind you to check-in for your flight the day before departure. Remember, International travel plan your arrival 3-hours in advance, domestic flights 2- hours.