

# Pre Travel Checklist

Finally released from the shackles of confinement, Australians can at last begin planning their next Interstate/Overseas escape!

It's fair to say that anticipating every contingency is even a more of a challenge than it has ever been, which is why it pays to be organized and prepared.

I have therefor compiled an in-depth checklist for travellers, including considerations on the domestic front as well as those inevitable rules and regulations incumbent in getting from A to B.

Is it 100% conclusive? Probably not, (everyone is unique) however it does incorporate a wide range of recommendations, from the bleeding obvious to rules of which you may not be aware.

Many of these recommendations fall squarely on the travellers shoulders, however there are also many policies and procedures that your Travel Agent can take care of for you, saving you the time, worry and effort better allocated towards packing, shopping and bragging to your friends and relatives.

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# Home

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1. **Water your houseplants/garden plants.** If you have a house sitter or neighbor coming to check on them, leave them clear instructions.
2. **Inspect your yard.** Is everything locked/put away? You don't want to extend an invitation to thieves by leaving a ladder or tools in plain view.
3. **Clear the fridge.** Eat leftovers and perishables or throw them out. If you're going on a long trip, clean and unplug the fridge to save energy.
4. **Check the pantry** 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.
5. **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.
6. **Contact your security company.** If you have a security system, let them know the dates you'll be gone, as well as the name and number of a house sitter or neighbor.
7. **Set a timer for your lights.** Make it look like someone is home, lights turning on/off at appropriate times and maybe leaving a radio on somewhere in the house is a great idea.
8. **Notify your credit card company of your travel plans (Very Important!).** Otherwise, they may flag your card for fraud if they see it being used in another country.
9. **Wash, dry and fold laundry.** Don't forget that last peek into the washing machine.
10. **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. *Ask your Travel Agent for a condensed itinerary so they can follow your progress and contact you if necessary.*
11. **Program your thermostat.** Depending on the time of year. Remember your pets need to be comfortable too!
12. **Turn off your hot water system, or set it to the minimum temperature.** If you're a morning-shower person, you can do this just before you leave.
13. **Unplug appliances,** such as your toaster and coffeemaker.
14. **Close the blinds or curtains.** This makes your house more secure and helps regulate the inside temperature.

# Trip Essentials

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15. **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.  
**Take your prescriptions with you** (Consider arriving in Bolivia or Saudi Arabia with a bunch of unexplained pills/drugs etc)
  
16. **Double-check your boarding passes and itinerary.** The USA for example use their date formatting in the reverse order to Australia. It's more common than you think, with many tales of distraught travellers turning up at airports on 11<sup>th</sup> July instead of 7<sup>th</sup> November (11/7 instead of 7/11) Don't let this happen to you! ***If in doubt, Confirm with your Travel Professional.***
  
17. **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. ***(This is where you really need a Travel Professional)***.
  
18. **Put your passport in a safe place.** 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, or in your ticket wallet.
  
19. **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. I once skipped a queue numbering in the hundreds at Los Angeles because I was the only one who had a printed copy of my ESTA clearance at a time when all of LAX's system had gone offline. ***Ask your travel professional to supply hard copies of everything you need in your ticket wallet.***
  
20. **Scan or photograph your passport, driver's license and credit cards.** This can help you get replacements more quickly, should you lose the originals.

21. **Read your travel insurance documents.** It's not exactly thrilling, but it's so important to read through your policy so you know what's covered. Policy wording may range from confusing to misleading, in a Covid world. If you want a plan that includes trip cancellation and interruption benefits, as well as benefits for existing medical conditions, you'll want to purchase travel insurance as far in advance as possible. ***Talk to your Travel Professional about suitable policies.***
22. **Withdraw some local currency.** Small bills are useful for tipping, especially in the USA. Most Australian ATM cards are accepted overseas, but check with your bank first.
23. **Check your bank balances.** Make sure your bank account and credit limits are prepared to handle your holiday spending.
24. **Schedule a ride to the airport.** Vline to Sunbury and the #479 Bus can sometimes be an economical option (from Bendigo). Most regional towns offer shuttle services several times per day.
25. **Sign up for Smart Traveller.** You can register your plans with [Smart Traveller](#) along with any emergency contacts you may wish to nominate. ***Your Travel Professional can help you with this.***
26. **Check in for your flight.** Many airlines allow you to check in online, You can also pre-pay for checked bags. ***Your Travel Professional can help you with this.***
27. **Charge all of your electronics.** No one wants to stand elbow-to-elbow with strangers at the airport charging station.
28. **Download useful travel apps.** Many ***Travel Professionals*** (Looking at you Holiday Roads!) can supply an electronic version of your itinerary which you can access via a smartphone app. This enables you to recover and even print out any documents should you lose them along the way. (Ask your hotel reception and they will usually let you print form their inhouse printer).

# Baggage

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1. **Photograph the contents.** This makes it easier to file a baggage loss/delay claim, if anything happens to your stuff.
2. **Check your luggage tag and identifiers.** Are your bags marked with the right info? Are they easy to spot on the baggage carousel? (Holiday Roads can provide quality personalized tags at very reasonable prices!)
3. **Inspect luggage for problems.** A double zipper failure can lead to solutions like wrapping the suitcase in 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 an embarrassing security inspection.
5. **Weigh your checked bag.** If it's more than 25kg, you may be charged an excess baggage 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. *(Your Travel Professional can provide the appropriate information)*
8. **Don't Overpack.** Usual rule is pack half of what you think you will need, then remove 1/3 of what's left and you will probably still take too much. Wouldn't you hate to pass up that great bargain leather coat/shoes/porcelain elephant etc because you didn't leave enough room in your bag when you packed?
9. **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 *(Just remember to take your Travel Professionals email/phone number with you!).*

**Bon voyage!**