

TRIP PLANNING CHECKLIST

Marco Men's Club Travel Discussion Group

May 1, 2024 – Revised July 1, 2024

In planning for a trip, we have all had an “Oops, I should have packed or planned for this!” The purpose of this document, therefore, is to ease the planning and travel process to provide a more enjoyable trip. This checklist, prepared by the Marco Men's Club Travel Discussion Group, has focused on **Planning, Pre-Tour Research, Luggage, Packing, Travel, and Security.**

Planning

- Make sure that passports are current and will be when traveling internationally. Often, a requirement of travel companies is that passports cannot expire less than six months from the travel period.
- Make pre-trip notifications if you are traveling outside of the country:
 - Alert the phone company as to usage terms.
 - Alert credit card companies as to terms for fees.
 - Verify availability of Internet access, if required.
- Tell the police that you are leaving. They can drive past your property while you are away.
- Tell family and trusted neighbors that you are leaving. Provide them with a copy of your itinerary and contact information.
- Verify that your TSA and Global Entry documentation is current and identified on boarding passes.
- Go to ETIAS Visa website to verify if a visa is required for any of the 30 European countries being visited.
- If driving internationally, verify if an international driver's license is required?
- Decide on mail delivery:
 - Have mail held at the post office.
 - Have neighbor(s) or family collect mail daily.
 - Have mail re-directed to another location.
- Depending upon the day you leave, ask a neighbor to take in your garbage cans.
- Pre-pay any bills needed to be paid while traveling (or auto-pay).
- Organize and make copies (hard copies and/or electronic) of all travel documents and passports.
- Pack a copy of your COVID Immunization cards in case evidence of immunization is required by the tour operator or others.
- Decide on travel insurance ahead of time.
- Prepare a packing list ahead of time and check off items when packed.
- Decide on access to funds while traveling:
 - U.S. dollars.
 - Currency of country(ies) traveling to and through.
 - ATM card. Verify rates.
- Each traveler should carry a different credit card for an emergency if one gets lost or stolen.

- Airplane flight selection:
 - Select a direct flight if possible, eliminating the confusion in changing planes while racing through the airport; as well as decreasing the potential of lost luggage.
- Seat Selection:
 - Seating by the window for better views outside the plane, as well as being able to lean against the window to take a nap.
 - Seating by the aisle where you can extend your legs, as well as have easier access to the toilets.
- Decide ahead of time how you are getting to the airport.

Research Background on Tour Destinations

- Research the historical, cultural, architectural background, customs, menu choices and wardrobe relative to the destinations visiting. Do not dress like a patriotic American.
- Plan ahead, identifying things you want to see and do.
- If on a tour or cruise, think about planning your free time for sightseeing (or just relaxing) when not on an organized excursion.
- Learn key language phrases if traveling to a foreign country.
- If taking an excursion, get requirements ahead of time for various sites to avoid surprises.
 - Head covering and/or appropriate clothing in religious institutions.
 - Are backpacks allowed?
 - Is flash photography allowed?
- If you are planning to visit a popular site, verify if you can get tickets ahead of time to avoid long lines or surprises:
 - Find out when lines are the shortest.
 - Is there a line for pre-paid tickets?
 - Get feedback from friends who have already taken your trip or a similar trip (tips, sights, etc.)

Luggage

- Verify ahead of time allowable weights and dimensions of stowed luggage and carry-ons.
- Check your luggage prior to packing to make sure that you have not accidentally left something in a bag which is not allowed and might be confiscated at TSA checkpoints or cause you to be arrested.
- Verify if your carry-on bag fits beneath your seat or if it must go in the overhead bin.

Packing

- Pack items recommended by travel company.
- Consider comfortable clothing for travel:

- The airplane temperature and car travel temperature may differ.
- Clothing with secure pockets.
- Extra glasses or contacts.
- Sunglasses.
- Hat and/or visor
- Provide Identification tags for all luggage. Also have identification inside of bags.
- Consider luggage tags that have flaps to cover your information.
- Addresses if sending post cards.
- In carry-on:
 - Medical and insurance cards.
 - Duplicate copies of passports, airline tickets, tour/excursion information, pre-paid tickets, driver's license, insurance, etc.
 - Contact information.
 - Change of clothes in case your luggage is lost.
 - Prescriptions, important toiletries, medical devices. Consider carrying doctors' scripts to verify your prescriptions are not illegal drugs.
 - Camera, power cord, camera/phone/watch chargers, external power source, voltage converter (if applicable), and other electronics.
 - Non-surge protector power strip. Verify with cruise ship/tour operator if they are allowed.
 - Put Apple air tags or Android Tiles in carry-on and stowed luggage.
 - Available currency in country (ies) traveling to and through.
 - Refillable water bottle.
 - Headphones, air pods (if desirable).
 - Noise canceling earphones, if desirable.
 - Kindle, books, movies, crossword puzzles, or other on-plane entertainment
 - CPAP machine and power source
- Get colorful straps and/or obvious identification for carry-on and stowed luggage.
- Pack a day bag for excursions and sightseeing.
- Make sure that all electronics are fully charged.
- Consider compression socks for long travel.
- Pack travel money in various denominations.
- Pack plastic bags to separate dirty and clean clothes or pack for daily wardrobe.

Day of Travel

- Lock doors at home and disconnect garage door. Coordinate with garbage can replacement on garbage pickup day.
- Getting to the airport if you are driving your car:
 - Keep your Sun Pass in the car for an airport long-term parking discount.
 - Take the ticket stub given by the remote parking van driver identifying your parking space. Put it in a safe place and remember where you put it.
 - Take a picture of your car with your I-phone, showing your parking space location.
 - Put air tag in car.

- Turn off water and refrigerator ice maker.
- Getting to the airport if you are having a friend, UBER, or limo take you to the airport:
 - Verify ahead of time when you are to be picked up, allowing extra time for traffic, and getting through TSA security lines.
 - If traveling internationally, consider arriving early to avoid travel delays.

When Traveling

- Security
 - Verify that tickets, identification, and money will be safe.
 - Consider putting valuables in front pockets, zippered pockets, zipped/strapped purse, money belt, pouch around neck or diagonally across chest.
 - Use safe in hotel or safe on-board ship when traveling.
 - Avoid traveling alone.
- Keep receipts handy when returning through customs.
- If buying large or many items, ship back to the U.S. rather than pack in suitcases.
- Be aware of pickpockets.
- If you rent a car, take pictures of the car's condition before you leave the rental agency.
- When you arrive at your final destination, stay awake and adjust to the local time. Go to bed based upon local time, not the time back home. This should help to reduce jet lag.