

OUR VACATION IS BOOKED.... NOW WHAT?

Everyone loves booking their vacations and getting excited about being able to go out of town and relax. Leave your work, your daily life, your everyday events behind, in search of a new experience, a new adventure, a new destination or to reconnect with friends and loved ones! Part of the fun of taking a vacation is the anticipation of a vacation, counting down the time and getting excited as the days grow closer and closer!

But what about the pre-planning before going on vacation? Have you ever thought about what you need to do to make sure you are prepared to go on vacation? Other than requesting the time off of work, what else do you need to do?

Here is a list of things “to do” before you leave for your vacation, as a friendly reminder and some suggestions on what you can do before your next vacation!

Take pictures of everything you need later- Take a photo record of everything. It is easier when you need quick access to everything, so take pictures of important items you may remotely need while you’re on vacation. Those things could include:

- Passports or other IDs
- Prescription medicine bottles
- Immunization records
- Tour or Hotel vouchers
 - Credit cards
 - Checked luggage
 - Jewelry

Know your phone plan- Unexpected fees on your next phone plan after vacation is NEVER a good experience, whether they are roaming fees, data fees, texting fees, all fees add up. Check with your phone provider BEFORE you leave (especially out of the country), and check on what kind of fees you could expect or if there is an international plan for you while you’re gone. Most cell phone companies have an international plans for a month, based on data usage or long distance calls.

Make sure that people who may need you, will know how to get ahold of you- Have the phone numbers of where you can be reached available for any loved ones, friends or family that may need to get ahold of you if they cannot get ahold of you on your cell phone or social media.

Phone numbers YOU may need while you’re traveling include:

- Hotels and Airlines

- Transportation companies
 - Your travel agent (Pioneer Travel)
- Emergency Contacts and services at home such as veterinarian, emergency plumber, a neighbor who may have a key to your house

Make sure all your electronic devices are charged- Make sure your cell phone, i-pad, laptop computer or any other electronic device that you may use. Bring a portable charger with you in case you aren't near a place where you can charge your devices. If you're traveling internationally, check and see if you need an adaptor for their outlets. Not all countries have the same outlets as we have in the United States.

Download any apps that you may want to use on your travels-

- XE- Currency Conversion app to help you with conversion rates
- DuoLingo- Language learning app to help you learn basics of a language while you travel
- Bank Apps- The apps give you quick access to your credit card or bank information
 - Airline app for the airline you are traveling on

Money Preparation-

Notify your credit card company about your travels. Most credit card companies have fraud alerts when your card is used unexpectedly. Call the number on the back of your card to advise your bank that you will be traveling and for how long to avoid any hiccups with using your card on vacation.

Know if your credit card has foreign transaction fees. No one wants surprise fees when you get home from vacation.

Check the exchange rate of where you are going. This will allow you to know generally how much things cost in USD so you have a general idea of what you are paying in local currency.

Go to a bank or ATM in the country you are visiting. Currency conversion booths at the airport will almost always offer terrible exchange rates. Visiting an ATM will give you the exchange rate of the day and any applicable fee the bank charges which will still be better than the currency conversion stores.

Carry a small amount of cash with you. Having cash on hand makes many transactions easier.

Pay bills- Arrange so you have your bills scheduled as to avoid any unpleasant late payment surprises when you come home.

Travel Insurance- Make sure you have travel insurance. Everyone thinks nothing can go wrong when you're on vacation, but when you're thousands of miles away from home, do you really want to leave everything to chance? Many countries don't accept your health coverage and expect payment up front before treating you. Travel insurance will help avoid that. Knowing what phone number to call and the proper protocol is important. If you don't have insurance, it is most likely NOT too late to purchase it. Call your travel agent.

One week before you travel-

Arrange for someone to check up on your house while you are gone. Have a family member or friend stop by to make sure everything is alright. You can also contact your local police department to arrange vacation watch on your house.

Put a hold on daily/weekly deliveries. Take a note of your items you routinely have delivered to you and put a hold on them. Items most commonly delivered are:

- Mail
- Newspaper
- Any packages that you may have ordered and forgotten about

Arrange for care of pets and plants. Set up a kennel or pet sitter for your dogs and cats. Set up automatic watering system (or have a friend or family member come over) and water your plants.

Let friends and family know about your itinerary. This helps them know when to contact you and when they can expect a reply.

48 Hours Before Travel-

Do your laundry. Make sure nothing is sitting in the washing machine while you are gone. Wash your bed sheets prior to leaving, so when you come home, you will have fresh linen sheets on your bed. Coming home to take a nice shower and climb into your own bed with fresh sheets, is a very underrated pleasure!

Sometimes it's nice to have a separate travel kit to keep all your travel toiletries in. This keeps you from forgetting something while you're traveling, like contact solution, nail trimmers/tweezers, toothpaste and tooth brush, a hair brush, deodorant, and have a note/checklist in there for any medications, vitamins or prescriptions. Check your travel kit to make sure you have everything you need and if you need to replace something, you can still add it before you leave.

Day of Travel-

Check-in for your flight. Most airlines have a 24-hour policy before your flight. Often times new seats open up at this time, so it's very important to check-in right after the 24-hour mark.

Turn on auto email response- A simple message letting others know why you are not responding to them may be helpful.

Remove everything you won't need from your purse/wallet. Take inventory of exactly what cards and ID's you have in your purse/wallet before you go so it will be easier to replace if anything should be lost while traveling.

Unplug electronics- Appliances and electronics that are plugged in use electricity even when they are turned off. Unplug items such as toasters, televisions, computers, etc.

- Take out the garbage.
 - Do the dishes.
- Throw away food that might spoil.
- Close blinds and curtains and turn on a light.

If you have social media that is available for everyone to see, DO NOT post pictures of your vacation while you are traveling. You are simply advertising that your house is empty and no one is living there at the moment. Wait until you get home to post all your pictures.

HAVE A GREAT TIME!!!