



## FAMILYTRIPSTER.COM'S COUNTDOWN CHECKLIST

*Last updated: March 2008*

### 6 Months Before You Go:

- Purchase \_" three ring binder or sealable folder to hold all your documents
- Checked your passport expiration date? Need a new passport? Apply now! For US citizens, go to <http://travel.state.gov/>
- Getting new passports? Purchase extra photos to pack along, in case you lose your passport or it's stolen.
- Need special immunizations for this region? Find out at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel>
- Need special visas for this region? Find out at <http://travel.state.gov/>
- Purchase a good guide book to begin outlining your itinerary (see our FamilyTripstore!)
- Research the Net for good rental houses, villas, apartments or hotels
- Airline deals? Able to buy tickets now?
  - Seat assignments cannot always be obtained from third-party reservation agents, such as Orbitz or Travelocity. Go to the airline's web site to get the best deal *and* get seats all together!
  - Register with [www.Yapta.com](http://www.Yapta.com) and buy your tickets with peace of mind—if the fare goes down, you get a refund!

### 3-4 Months Before You Go:

- Passports arrived? If not, check on them!
- Airline deals? Probably should buy tickets now, if you haven't already.
- Find out about the type of plane you'll be flying on; is there a changing table in the restroom? Can you ask for bulkhead seats? Some airlines have cribs that attach to the bulkhead area for overnight flights. Check out [www.SeatGuru.com](http://www.SeatGuru.com) for more information.
- Review tour and activity options along with budget
- Purchase walking shoes and begin breaking them in
- Shop for at least one complete outfit per family member that can be washed in a hotel sink and dried on a hangar. Ideally, each member would have three of these so you can pack more lightly.

### 1-2 Months Before You Go:

- International Cell phones: with some plans/phones, you can add service to your current phone. Otherwise, check out [www.Mobal.com](http://www.Mobal.com) for rentals and time cards. Practice using it before you leave home.
- If traveling with children 18 and younger, take a laminated ID tag for each child; you'll want to fasten this card in the pocket of young children in case

- you get separated; older children can carry theirs. ID tag should have “Please help me; I’ve gotten separated from my parents” in local language; your names, International Cell phone #, list of hotels where you’re staying (and dates), and an emergency contact at home. Include drug allergies on the card.
- Consider investing in a set of quality, two-way walkie talkies. Often, families are close enough to use these for communication.
  - Find out your health insurance policy when out of the state or country. What is covered and what is not?
  - Some insurance companies will develop an individualized plan, based on your specific itinerary, with ideas to help you stay healthy while you travel. They may even call in precautionary prescriptions, determine if you need vaccinations, and schedule your vaccination appointments. Give ‘em a ring!
  - Make an appointment to see your family doctor and obtain “precautionary prescriptions” from them to pack in your first-aid kit. Common prescriptions that would be good to have on hand/ask about (be sure to get a dosage appropriate for adults and/or children, or separate prescriptions; also jot down common symptoms that would help you self-diagnose):
    - Antibiotics for common infection: Ex. amoxicillin or zithromax
    - Bacterial diarrhea and severe infection: Ex. ciprofloxacin
    - Amoebic dysentery: Ex. tinidazole
    - See our complete Family First Aid Kit packing list under TIPS
  - Train transportation in-country? Rail pass or point-to-point tickets? Consider obtaining tickets now.
  - Renting a car? Many countries require an international driver’s license. Obtain one at your local AAA office.
  - Can you rent a car with GPS installed? Or does your GPS system have the software to cover the region you’re going to? If taking your own GPS, input all the addresses you have for sites you want to visit, hotels, restaurants, before you leave home.
  - Have you arranged for pet care? House-sitting?
  - Schedule all tours and activities, if you haven’t already (on a cruise, see if you can book your shore excursions or when the earliest opportunity will be)
  - Purchase an extra memory card and batteries for your camera; at least two people should have cameras so you can have a backup in case of malfunction or it is stolen—you don’t want to lose all your Kodak moments!
    - Tip: Download your photos periodically at a cyber-café to a photo sharing site like Snapfish.com; serves as backup!

### **1-2 Weeks Before You Go:**

- Pack your bag with everything you want to take with you and then carry it around with you all day.
  - Have everyone in your family do this
  - Possible to cut back some? Pack light!

- See FamilyTripster's Complete Packing Tips document under TIPS above
- Confirm tours, hotel reservations and transportation
- Request a Mail Hold with your local carrier, and a delivery date, if possible
- Bills all paid? All those coming due during your absence covered?
- Credit cards paid off? Know your limits before you go; in some countries, you can be arrested if you go over limit!
- Call credit card companies and ask them to note on your account that you'll be traveling overseas, and give them the dates. You don't want them to put a hold on your card for "suspicious activity"
- Register your trip with the State Department (U.S. Citizens):
  - <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui>
    - Consulate can contact you in case of a true emergency back home, or if there's a foreign crisis or evacuation
    - Consulate can contact your family/contact names in case you encounter something dire—illness, arrest or death
- Review <http://travel.state.gov> site for current travel warnings and alerts
- Send international telephone information to your neighbors and family members—also State Department travel registration # if you've registered
- Send hotel itinerary/schedule to family member/neighbor/other contact
- Create a security file to be placed in a second carry-on. Include:
  - Extra passport photos and information from your passports, including #, address, etc.
  - Copies of all reservations—hotel, airline, tours, car rental, train
  - Consulate phone numbers and locations
  - Credit card info (last 4 digits) and phone number (toll free usually doesn't work—get regular line phone # for international calls)
  - Itinerary
  - Prescription names and generic name equivalents; prescriptions must be in original bottles

**Have a great trip!**