

BIG FIVE
TOURS & EXPEDITIONS

Enriching Lives Through Distinctive Journeys



Singapore

Travel Guide

The following general outline offers practical information, suggestions, and answers to some of the most frequently asked questions. It is not intended to be the definitive guide for your trip. Be sure to check the selected reading list for more information.



“Americans have always been eager for travel, that being how they got to the New World in the first place”.
Otto Friedrich

CLIMATE

Warm and fairly humid summer temperatures throughout the year (approximately 30°C/86°F during the day and 23°C/74°F in the evening). There is no distinct wet/dry season. Most rain falls during the northeast monsoon (November to January) and showers are usually sudden and heavy.

Required clothing: Lightweight cottons and linens.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Area: 659.9 sq km (254.8 sq miles).

Population: 4,131,200 (official estimate 2001).

Capital: Singapore City. **Population:** 3,163,500 (1998).

Government: Republic. Gained full independence from the UK in 1965. *Head of State:* President Sellapan Ramanathan since 1999. *Head of Government:* Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong since 1990.

Language: The four official languages are Malay (the national language), English, Chinese (Mandarin) and Tamil. Most Singaporeans are bilingual and speak English, which is used for business and administration.

Religion: Taoist, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu and Muslim.

Time: GMT + 8.

Electricity: 220/240 volts AC, 50Hz. Plug fittings of the three-pin square type are in use. Many hotels have 110-volt outlets.

COMMUNICATIONS

Telephone: Full IDD is available. Country code: 65. Outgoing international code: 001. International calls can be made from public pay phones using a credit card or a phone card (S\$2-50) available from Telecom centers and retail outlets. IDD calls made from hotels are free of surcharge.

Mobile telephone: GSM 900/1800. Network operators include MobileOne (Asia) Pte (website: www.m1.com.sg), Singapore Telecom (website: www.singtel.com) and StarHub Pte (website: www.starhub.com).

Fax: There are services at many major hotels and at the Telecoms buildings in Robinson Road and Exeter Road.

Internet: Internet cafes throughout Singapore provide public access to Internet and e-mail services. Main ISPs include Cyberway Pte (website: www.starhub.com) and Singnet (website: www.singnet.com).

Post: Airmail to Europe takes up to 1 week. There are limited postal facilities at many hotels. *Post office hours:* Mon-Fri 0830-1700, Sat 0830-1300. The airport and Orchard Point branches are open daily 0700-1900. The General Post Office on Fullerton Road (near the river) and the Comcentre near Orchard Road are open 24 hours.

PASSPORT / VISA

Passports: For international travel, you must have a U.S. passport valid for at least six months from date of departure, and containing **at least** two blank pages is necessary.

Visas: U.S. and Canadian citizens do not require visas in advance. Citizens from other countries need to consult the nearest consulate.

Important: Please check your passport prior to travel to insure that:

1) Your passport is valid for at least six months after the date of travel.

2) You have sufficient blank pages for visa stamps that will be added as you travel in and out of various countries.

Please note: Pages reserved for amendments and endorsements cannot be used for visas.

MONEY

Currency: Singapore Dollar (S\$) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of S\$10,000, 1000, 500, 100, 50, 20, 10, 5 and 2. Coins are in denominations of S\$1, and 50, 20, 10, 5 and 1 cents. The currency of Brunei is also legal tender; 1 Brunei Dollar = 1 Singapore Dollar.

Currency exchange: Foreign currencies, travelers checks and checks can be changed at most banks and licensed money changers. ATMs are also in operation.

Credit & debit cards: American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted. Check with your credit or debit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other facilities which may be available.

Travelers checks: To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travelers are advised to take travelers checks in Pounds Sterling.

Currency restrictions: There is no restriction on the import and export of local or foreign currency.

Banking hours: Mon-Fri 0930-1500, Sat 0930-1300. Branches of certain major banks on Orchard Road open Sun 0930-1500.

DUTY FREE

The following goods may be imported into Singapore by passengers of 18 years or older without incurring customs duty: 1l of spirits, 1l of wine and 1l of beer; for bona fide tourists, gifts and food items up to the value of S\$150 if away from Singapore less than 48 hours and S\$300 if away from Singapore for 48 hours or more. *Note:* These allowances do not apply if arriving from Malaysia.

Restricted items: Chewing gum and tobacco products must be declared upon arrival.

Prohibited items: Firearms, non-prescribed drugs, all pornographic films and literature. Export permits are required for arms, ammunition, explosives, animals, telecommunications equipment, film and video tapes and disks, precious metals and stones, drugs and poisons.

Meat and meat products are all strictly forbidden. Duty-free cigarettes are prohibited. The penalties for possession of narcotics are severe and visitors not complying with drug regulations do so at the risk of death.

US CUSTOMS

Returning U.S. residents are allowed to bring back \$800 worth of merchandise duty-free. There are limits on some items. Regulations frequently change, however, so check with your nearest customs office for a list of limited and exempt items, or write the U.S. Customs Service, Box 7407, Washington, DC 20044. Or, visit their web site www.customs.ustreas.gov.

HEALTH

Yellow Fever: A certificate of vaccination is required from persons over 1 year of age who have been in or passed through any country classified either partly or wholly as a yellow fever endemic zone within the previous 6 days. The countries formerly classified as endemic zones are considered by the Singapore authorities to be still infected.

Other risks: Hepatitis A and E are widespread; hepatitis B is hyperendemic. Rabies is present. For those at high risk, vaccination before arrival should be considered. If you are bitten, seek medical advice without delay.

Health care: Singapore General Hospital receives emergency cases and health care is exceptionally good. There is a large private sector. Health insurance is recommended, as there is no reciprocal health agreement with the UK.

SOCIAL PROFILE

Food & Drink: Singapore is a gourmet's paradise, ranging from humble street stalls to 5-star restaurants. There are over 30 different cooking styles, including various regional styles of Chinese cuisine, American, English, French, Indian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Malay, Russian and Swiss. Malay cuisine is a favorite, famed for its use of spices and coconut milk. Satay (skewers of marinated meat cooked over charcoal) served with peanut sauce, cucumber, onion and rice is popular. Hot, spicy or sweet Indonesian cuisine includes beef rendang (coconut milk beef curry), chicken sambal and gado gado (a fruit and vegetable salad in peanut sauce). One of the best ways to eat in Singapore is in the open, at one of the ubiquitous street food stalls. Some are quiet and casual while others are in areas bustling with activity. All have a vast selection of cheap, mouthwatering food. Newton Circus and La Pau Sat are food centers where all types of Asian food can be sampled cheaply. Although there are many self-service establishments, waiter service is more common in restaurants. Bars/cocktail lounges often have table and counter service. There are no licensing hours. 'Happy hours' are usually from 1700-1900.

Shopping: The vast range of available goods and competitive prices have led to Singapore rightly being known as a shopper's paradise. Special purchases include Balinese, Chinese, Filipino, Indian and Malay antiques;

batiks; cameras; Chinese, Indian and Persian carpets; imported or tailored clothing; jewelry and specialized items made of reptile and snake skins, including shoes, briefcases, handbags and wallets. Silks, perfumes, silverware and wigs are other favorite buys. The herding of shop owners from 'Chinatown' into multi-storey complexes lost some of the exciting shopping atmosphere, although these huge centers do provide an air conditioned environment. Orchard Road is the main shopping street, although many of the large hotel complexes, such as Marina Square, have shopping centers attached. Although most outlets operate Western-style fixed pricing, bargains can still be made in some places but generally only after good research and shrewd negotiating. Electrical equipment of all types can be bought at Sungei Road, but caution is advised as there are many imitation products around. For more information on shopping in Singapore, see the Singapore Shopping brochure published by the Singapore Tourism Board. *Shopping hours:* Mon-Fri 1000-2100, Sat 1000-2200.

Note: A 3 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) is levied on most goods and services purchased from taxable retailers. Tourists whose purchases total S\$300 or more from a single retailer participating in the Tourist Refund Scheme are eligible for a refund of the GST paid on goods not consumed in Singapore. Refunds may be received at the airport, prior to departure flights

Social Conventions: Handshaking is the usual form of greeting, regardless of race. Social courtesies are often fairly formal. When invited to a private home or entering a temple or mosque, remove your shoes. Most first-class restaurants and some hotel dining rooms expect men to wear a jacket and tie in the evenings. Evening dress for local men and women is unusual. Each of the diverse racial groups in Singapore has retained its own cultural and religious identity while developing as an integral part of the Singapore community. Over 50 per cent of the population is under 20 years of age. Laws relating to jaywalking, littering and chewing gum are strictly enforced in urban areas. Smoking is widely discouraged and illegal in enclosed public places (including restaurants). Dropping a cigarette end in the street or smoking illegally can lead to an immediate fine of up to S\$500.

Tippling: Officially discouraged in restaurants, hotels and the airport. A 10 per cent service charge is included in restaurant bills.

ECONOMY

Singapore's economy relies on entrepôt trade, shipbuilding and repairing, oil refining, electronics and information technology, banking and finance and, to a lesser extent, tourism. From the late 70s, the Government promoted export-oriented and service industries with the intention of making Singapore a regional economic hub. Singapore also derived some benefit from the decision of some companies to relocate following the reversion of Hong Kong to Chinese administration in 97. High-technology manufacturing, particularly telecommunications and computer equipment, and financial services, mainly banking and insurance, form the kernel of the economy.

There is also an important oil-refining industry. The newest addition to the economic portfolio is pharmaceuticals: on top of that, the government is promoting Singapore as a centre for biotechnology, especially for stem cell research which has proved so controversial elsewhere. The importance of trade to the economy cannot be overstated: the total value of Singapore's trade is almost three times its GDP (compared with 17 per cent of GDP in the case of Japan). Vibrant economic activity more than compensates for Singapore's lack of natural resources. There is a little agriculture, with the cultivation of plants and vegetables, and some fishing; however, most foodstuffs and raw materials have to be imported. Singapore's only significant natural resource is its superb natural harbor, which is the busiest in the world after Rotterdam. This accounts in part for the high level of Singapore's re-export trade, which accounts for almost half of all trade.

Singapore was less affected than many of its neighbors by the 1997 Asian financial crisis, owing to sound financial management, high savings and investment rates, and massive foreign exchange reserves. However, shortly afterwards the territory was plunged into its worst economic recession for 30 years, largely because of a sudden collapse of international demand in key industries, especially electronics. At the lowest point, Singapore's economy was contracting at an unprecedented rate of 6 per cent per annum. Industrial production fell by over 20 per cent during 2001. A slow recovery has been underway since then: GDP growth was a paltry 0.8 per cent in 2003, but that figure is expected to rise to between 4 and 5 per cent in 2004/05. Current inflation is under 1 per cent. Singapore's principal trading partners are Japan, Thailand, the USA and Malaysia. Singapore is a member of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and of the Asian Pacific Economic Forum (APEC).

HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

History: For centuries before Sir Stamford Raffles acquired it from the Sultan of Johor in 1819, Singapore had been virtually abandoned. However, within decades of the change of ownership, in a historical echo of its role today, Singapore had become the main commercial and strategic centre for the region. In 1867, it became a British Crown Colony and housed one of the UK's most important naval bases. This status remained unchanged until 1942 when the Japanese army swept down through Malaya and occupied the colony. 3.5 years later the Japanese surrendered in Singapore and the colony assumed its previous status.

With the dissolution of the British Empire, Singapore was granted internal self-government in 1959. In 1963, Singapore joined the Federation of Malaysia, but in 1965 broke away from the collapsing federation to become fully independent. Two years later, Singapore was expelled when Lee Kuan Yew, first elected Prime Minister in 1959 and re-elected eight times thereafter, refused to implement a federal edict granting Malays a privileged economic position (to the disadvantage of the ethnic Chinese population). The initial outlook was unpromising: Singapore is tiny and has no natural resources apart from a good harbor. However, Lee managed to galvanize the population into building a strong, export-led manufacturing

and service economy. Lee Kuan Yew and his political vehicle, the People's Action Party (PAP), enjoyed a virtual monopoly of political power from 1972 until Lee's announcement in 1988 that he would not complete his eighth term nor seek subsequent office.

In October 1990, he formally handed over the premiership to a long-standing colleague, Goh Chok Tong, remaining as Senior Minister in the Prime Minister's office and Secretary-General of the PAP. Some Singaporeans believed that Goh was merely a transitional figure between Lee Kuan Yew and his son Lee Hsien Loong, who entered politics after a glittering academic and military career before taking up the post of deputy prime minister. In November 1992, Goh was proposed and endorsed to take over the PAP Secretary-General's post. In both the most recent general elections, held in January 97 and Sept 01, opposition parties decided to contest only a small proportion of the 83 seats. Not surprisingly, the PAP won both polls comfortably. Goh, who is now on his fourth term as Singapore's premier, is widely expected to stand down in favor of Lee Junior in 2005.

In the last few years there has been some pressure, to which the Government has responded in part, for a relaxation of Singapore's numerous laws which have given it a reputation as a prosperous but rather antiseptic and pettily repressive city-state. More seriously, Singapore has the highest per capita rate of judicial execution in the world, and the government is still highly intolerant of internal dissent. Abroad, Singapore has taken a more active role in regional affairs, mainly through the Association of South East Nations (ASEAN), the former anti-Communist bloc which is now adopting a more wide-ranging role in diplomatic, economic and – since the Bali bomb attacks – security affairs. There has been some improvement in relations between Singapore and Malaysia, between whom there are myriad disputes about matters such as access to air space, water resources and territorial boundaries.

Government: The parliament is unicameral; executive power nominally rests with the President, but is effectively wielded by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet: the presidency is a largely ceremonial post whose incumbent is elected by parliament to serve a 6-year term. The 93-member Parliament is elected for a 5-year term; apart from nine presidential appointees, its members are elected under a constituency system.

GEOGRAPHY

The island of Singapore is situated off the southern extremity of the Malay Peninsula, to which it is joined by a causeway carrying a road, railway and water pipe. The Johor Strait between the island and the mainland is about 1km (0.8 miles) wide. The Republic of Singapore includes some 64 islets. It is a mainly flat country with low hills, the highest being Bukit Timah at 163m (545ft). In the northeast of the island, large areas have been reclaimed, and much of the original jungle and swamp covering the low-lying areas has been cleared.

Singapore is truly cosmopolitan, a fascinating mixture of people and culture: officially Chinese, Indian and Malay, but also with a huge foreign resident and

transit population of Americans, Burmese, Europeans, Indonesians, Japanese and fellow Asians, making it one of the most diverse centres in Asia. The Singapore Tourism Board publishes a wide range of brochures and booklets giving information on every aspect of the country. This guide lists some of the main attractions in Singapore City itself, including several parks and gardens, and descriptions of the most popular outlying islands.

SINGAPORE CITY

Singapore City was founded in 1819 by Sir Stamford Raffles of the British East India Company, who recommended that different areas of the town be set aside for the various ethnic groups. There are still fascinating pockets where more traditionally exclusive enclaves exist, principally in Chinatown, Arab Street, Serangoon Road (focus of the Indian community) and Padang Square with its very strong colonial associations. The best way to experience the remarkable diversity of the city is on foot: the traditional architecture, customs and cuisine of the various ethnic areas are in fascinating contrast to the lavish luxury shopping arcades of Orchard Road and Raffles City.

Orchard Road is the 'Fifth Avenue' or 'Oxford Street' of Singapore, and just as bustling, with its vast luxury malls, shops ranging from mega stores to vendors of souvenir tat, as well as cafes and restaurants. The corner bar of the Singapore Marriott Hotel, itself a landmark, is the prime spot to watch the world go by.

Arab Street is the centre of the Arabian quarter of Singapore, and a great place for shopping. Other streets with excellent shopping opportunities are Baghdad Street and Bussorah Street, while Sultan Plaza is a centre for cloth traders. The golden domes of the Sultan Mosque, Singapore's chief Muslim place of worship, dominate the area; nearby are two historic Muslim burial grounds.

Chinatown, though somewhat overwhelmed by the growth of the Financial District, is a bustling and colorful area with shops, teahouses and restaurants, and also several temples such as the Fuk Tak Ch'i in Telok Ayer Street and the Temple of the Calm Sea. Ancient crafts of calligraphy, papermaking and fortune-telling are practiced, and traditional goods and foodstuffs can be bought. The characteristic domestic architecture of Singapore – the shop-house with a molded front, shuttered upper floor and an arcaded street front – is much in evidence.

Serangoon Road is the center of Little India, the Indian quarter stretching from Rochar Canal to Lavender Street. The Zhu Jiao Centre, at the southern end of Serangoon Road, is a particularly vibrant example of Little India. Other attractions in the area include the Sri Veeramakalimman Temple, the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Hall in Race Course Lane and Farrer Park.

No trip to Singapore would be complete without a visit to the Raffles Hotel, one of the most famous hotels in the world. A 'Singapore Sling' in the Long Bar is almost de rigueur; alternatively, drop into the Writers' Bar which provided inspiration for, amongst others, Noel Coward, Somerset Maugham and Joseph Conrad. The CHIJMES complex near the Raffles Hotel was developed out of the former Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus, whose Gothic shell is the basis for a series of plazas housing chic shops,

restaurants and bars. A statue of Sir Stamford Raffles has been erected on the banks of the Singapore River on the spot where he is believed to have first set foot in Singapore. Nearby is Parliament House, the oldest government building in the country, the core of which dates back to the 1820s. Boat Quay and North Boat Quay, flanking the river on both banks near the Raffles statue, has now become one of Singapore's most popular bar and recreation areas, with traditional shop-houses converted into restaurants and clubs. Clarke Quay forms a triangle defined by a bend in the Singapore River. It is a complex of colonial 'godowns' (eastern term for warehouses) converted into a maze of bars, outdoor eating places, clubs, souvenir shops and mobile stalls that present the 'Old Singapore' tourist experience at its most concentrated, if occasionally tacky. Riverside Walk, on the opposite riverbank, extends the zone further, and the whole area is a must-see for visitors. Mohammed Sultan Road, west of Clarke Quay, is Singapore's classiest bar and club strip.

The Botanic Gardens, over 47 hectares (116 acres) of landscaped parkland and primary jungle, are situated to the west of the city (Napier/Cluny roads), and are home to a wide range of animal and plant life. Within the gardens you will find the National Orchid Garden which has the largest collection in the world. Opening hours are Mon-Fri 0500-2300 and until 0000 at weekends and public holidays. Admission is free.

The Bukit Timah Reserve, established in 1883 and located northwest of the Botanic Gardens on Bukit Timah Road, contains Singapore's last stretches of original and immaculately manicured rain forest. The nature reserve also consists of tropical vegetation with clearly marked trails which lead up to Bukit Timah, the highest hill in Singapore. Admission is free.

Fort Canning Park, on Fort Canning Rise, was once an ancient fort of the Malay kings covering 2.8 hectares (7 acres). Colonial ruins of the British citadel can still be viewed, as can a 19th-century Christian cemetery. The Battle Box in the park is the old command bunker of the World War II defense of Singapore, now a museum open Tues-Sun 1000-1800, with a small admission fee charged.

The Mandai Orchid Garden is a commercial orchid farm enshrining Singapore's characteristic horticultural export, with a hillside of exotic orchid species and a spectacular water garden. Opening hours: daily 0900-1730. An admission fee is charged.

The Kranji War Cemetery and Memorial, northwest of the Mandai Orchid Garden, commemorates the death of all those who fell in the catastrophic campaigns in the defense of Singapore during World War II. The cemetery and landscaped grounds are open daily; no flowers are allowed on the graves.

The Singapore Zoological Gardens, towards the north of the island of Singapore, are largely an open zoo, using natural barriers rather than iron bars. Over 170 animals live here, including many rare or endangered species, such as orangutans, Sumatran tigers, Komodo dragons and clouded leopards. Daily attractions include 'wild breakfast' or 'afternoon tea' and 'Animal Showtime'. One special and much publicized attraction is the Night

Safari; a combination walking and tram tour of predominantly nocturnal species. The zoo is open daily 0830-1800 and the Night Safari daily 1930-2400.

Buddhist and Hindu temples, mosques and Anglican and Catholic cathedrals are all likely to be encountered during a comparatively brief walk around some of the central areas of Singapore. St Andrew's Cathedral, the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd, the Al-Abrar Mosque, the vast and florid Kong Meng Sang Phor Kark See Temple Complex, the Chettiar Hindu Temple and the Sri Mariamman Temple are only a few of these.

Other interesting attractions in Singapore City include the Singapore Art Museum, the Asian Civilisation Museum; the National Museum & Art Gallery; Merlion Park; the Thong Chai Medical Institution; the Singapore Mint Coin Gallery; the Singapore Crocodile House (feeding time at 1100, crocodile wrestling at 1315 and 1615); and the Fort Cannings Aquarium in River Valley Road, with over 6000 species of freshwater and marine animals. Also not to be missed is Singapore's performing arts center.

JURONG

Jurong Town is the economic and industrial hub of Singapore, but offers visitors some unusual yet fascinating attractions.

The Singapore Science Centre, open Tues-Sun 1000-1800, is a remarkable complex which includes hundreds of interactive exhibits, the Aviation Gallery which traces the history of flight, and the Omnitheatre, a cinema with a planetarium-like screen.

Haw Par Villa (formerly The Tiger Balm Gardens) in Pasir Panjang Road is a surreal 'Disneyesque' statue park of Chinese mythological and historical figures, created by the Tiger Balm ointment dynasty. The Gardens are open daily 0800-1800.

The Chinese and Japanese Gardens are west of the centre by Jurong Lake. The two are linked by a 65m (200ft) ornamental bridge, and are fine examples of the skills of oriental landscape gardeners. The gardens are open daily 0900-1800. An admission fee is charged.

The Jurong Bird Park on Jurong Hill (near the Chinese and Japanese Gardens) covers more than 49.4 acres (20 hectares) and is home to Southeast Asia's largest collection of birds. There is also the world's largest walk-in aviary, a nocturnal house and several spectacular bird shows. The park is open Mon-Fri 0900-1800, Sat-Sun 0800-1800. An admission fee is charged.

THE ISLANDS

Sentosa: The largest and best known of Singapore's offshore islands is also one of the closest to the mainland. Sentosa is a multi-million dollar pleasure resort girdled by a monorail and offering a wide range of activities and attractions. These include the Underwater World and Dolphin Lagoon, Images of Singapore, the recently upgraded Musical Fountain Show, The Merlion, the Butterfly Park & Insect Kingdom Museum, Sijori WonderGolf and the Carlsberg Sky Tower. Lovely gardens, beautiful beaches and a plethora of restaurants and eating places all contribute to the island's popularity with tourists and locals alike. Many prefer to skip the

theme park attractions and head straight for Sentosa's beaches – Palawan, Siloso and Tanjong – where a wide range of watersports is available. These were built with imported white sand and are often crowded, especially at weekends.

There are bus, monorail and tram services linking Sentosa to the city center, and the causeway bridge is open to foot traffic. An admission fee for entry to the island is charged and composite tickets can also be bought which give admission to some of the attractions; enquire locally for details. Resort hotels, camping and other accommodation are available on the island.

Other Islands: St John's Island is large, hilly and tree-shaded with several excellent beaches. There are also several walking trails. There is a regular ferry service from the HarbourFront Centre that takes about 40 minutes.

Kusu Island is noted for two landmarks: the Keramat (a Muslim shrine) and the Chinese Tua Pekong Temple. There is a regular ferry service from the World Trade Centre that takes about 30 minutes.

Pulau Hantu, Lazarus Island and the Sisters Islands (the latter being part of the group of Southern Islands) are ideal for fishing, snorkeling and swimming enthusiasts. There are no regular ferry services but boats can be chartered; enquire locally for information.

LUGGAGE

Traveling light is always the first and best rule! We recommend passengers limit their luggage to one medium-sized soft bag per person or two small duffle bags. In this security conscious era, airline luggage restrictions may change without notice. Also, luggage limits vary depending on ticket class, plane size, destinations, etc. It is always best to confirm with airlines for specific limitations.

Generally speaking, from the US, economy class passengers are allowed to check in two (2) normal size pieces of luggage (each piece measuring no more than about 62 linear inches, which means length plus width plus height), and not exceeding 70 pounds per bag.

Scheduled flights from other countries and within foreign countries generally limit luggage to 44 pounds total, plus one carry-on personal item. Further restrictions apply for charter flights. We will advise you of those restrictions in your final documents.

Most airlines now allow only one carry-on bag in addition to one personal item such as a laptop or handbag. Most bags within the 22 x 14 x 9 (or, a total of 45 linear inches) size restriction will be considered legal carry-on size by major domestic U.S. airlines. Many US airlines check-in desks have sizing boxes within which your bag must fit. Obviously, no knives or cutting instruments are allowed in carry-on baggage.

All luggage should have identification inside as well as secure baggage tags on the outside.

Please note that the US National Transportation and Safety Board now suggests that you do not lock your checked luggage. If a screener has to open your bag, the locks may have to be broken. This applies to flights within the US and international flights originating in the US. This, however, does not address other international travel

issues. We suggest that you lock your luggage and bring a couple of spare locks in the event one or more are cut off. But the choice is up to each individual traveler to make.

Hint: Aurora Luggage posts the most current luggage requirements for many airlines on their web site. (<http://www.auroraluggage.com/>)

CAMERAS & FILM

Photography: Please, approach people with an attitude of respect, just as you would want to be treated. Do not take anyone's picture without permission. Many times it is necessary to negotiate a fee beforehand. Never take any photos of airports, police or government buildings, military installations, or borders.

Equipment: Bring cameras and lenses you are comfortable using. If you get new equipment before you go, do so as far in advance as possible. Shoot and develop at least a dozen rolls before departure to work out problems. And, don't forget your camera operation manual, filters, and a flash unit. Cameras should be packed with good cushioning. The roads are sometimes rough, and constant vibration can do damage. Keep your camera with you as much as possible, and do not leave it on the floor of the vehicle when on the road. Make sure you have lens caps for all your lenses. Clean your equipment frequently. Bring along a puffer brush and lens cleaning tissues.

Lenses: A combination of fixed and/or zoom lenses with focal lengths from 28 mm to 200 mm is good for general travel photography, although you can take excellent photographs with only a 50 mm lens. Zoom lenses such as 35-80mm, 70-210 mm, or 100-300 mm will help you capture the sights in a variety of different settings. Serious photographers will want them handy. A macro lens is helpful for shooting close-ups, but a good set of extension tubes will work very well. A 2x converter is also a handy. Point and shoot cameras are nice for a group or indoor shots, but leave something to be desired when photographing outdoors. Bring a small cleaning kit and blower brush to keep equipment clean.

Video: If you are planning to shoot video on a safari, be sure to bring plenty of tape and batteries with you. Do not plan to buy videotape. Videotape is not affected by airport x-ray; only magnetic fields or prolonged exposure to heat will damage videotape. Your battery charger should be capable of automatically adjusting to 240 volts. You will probably have no problem finding a plug in most of the lodges and larger tented camps, but be prepared with plenty of batteries

Batteries: Put fresh photo-quality batteries in your camera and other electric equipment before you leave and bring at least two sets of spare batteries with you. Your camera will be useless without them, and batteries can be hard to find and expensive.

Film: It is always best to bring along whatever you need with you. Film is generally more expensive abroad and it may be hard to locate. You'll be surprised at how much film you use when you are trying to capture all those special moments. Even those not all that interested in

photography will probably shoot a couple of 36-exposure rolls per day, and enthusiastic shooters will easily double or triple that amount. Be sure film is fresh and, when possible, keep it refrigerated. A film speed of ASA/ISO 64 is an excellent choice for color slide film. Use this speed when possible rather than higher speed films. There is a noticeable difference in quality that it is worth the extra effort to keep your camera steady at a somewhat slower shutter speed than you would otherwise use. For color prints, there are several good choices, including Kodak and Fuji films (ASA/ISO 100 & 200) for daylight photography, ASA/ISO 400 & 1000 are good for lower light and nighttime situations.

It is helpful to set up a numbering system for your film, marking each roll with masking tape and numbers or letters, before leaving home. This way you can code the rolls of film and where they were shot. It's quite a job to sort through hundreds of pictures with no clue where or when they were taken.

Avoid airport x-ray machines whenever possible and request a hand search of your film only. While security people are often obliging, some are not so allow a little extra time. X-rays are cumulative on exposed and unexposed film so the more times film is x-rayed, the more risk of damage. This is especially true with older machines found in many countries. Lead bags for film are available for purchase and are worth the small investment. Do not have film in your camera because it may be opened for inspection.

SAFETY

Common sense safety precautions you normally observe when traveling anywhere should be followed to minimize the risk of personal injury or property loss.

Leave jewelry at home! Do not leave cash, traveler's checks, airline tickets, etc. in an unattended room, even in a locked suitcase. Most of the accommodations have safe deposit facilities at the front desk for your valuables. Use them.

In cities here as in cities at home, be aware! During the day and in crowds, be careful when carrying purses or cameras. Do not carry large amounts of currency or valuables. Do not walk around unfamiliar cities alone at night. Be wary of entering into conversation with unknown people on the street. These are the same precautions a visitor would observe in North American cities. Common sense is the best defense.

Pamphlets addressing safety issues abroad are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Or, from Bureau of Consular Affairs' website: <http://travel.state.gov>.

DEALING WITH JET LAG

With the joys and adventures of international travel come certain unavoidable inconveniences such as occasional lost luggage or bouts of jet lag. In fact, studies reveal that as much as 90% of long distance travelers experience a degree of jet lag.

Jet lag describes that out-of-sorts feeling associated with long flights, particularly those across time

zones. Symptoms and severity vary but may include drowsiness, fatigue, irritability, difficulty concentrating, headaches, insomnia, and swelling of the extremities.

The number of time zones crossed affects the severity of jet lag. The internal body clock follows circadian rhythm, which is controlled by the hypothalamus that processes nerve signals. That clock is designed for regular cycles of light and darkness. Depending on the number of time zones crossed, it may take several days for that rhythm to be restored.

But that is not the only influence. Other factors include cabin pressure, stale air, lack of humidity, and your overall physical condition at the beginning of your trip.

Although jet lag can not be completely avoided, there are some simple things you can do to help minimize its affects. Consider the following for your next scheduled trip.

- Start your trip well rested with a good night's sleep prior to departure. Getting adequate rest before starting on your journey will help minimize the amount of catching up you'll have to do when you arrive at the destination. Once home, try to schedule a day of rest before returning to work.
- Drink plenty of fluids -- water and juices will help you to stay well hydrated. Seasoned travelers recommend that you carry a bottle of drinking water with you and drink eight ounces every hour.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine just before and during flights. Both possess diuretic properties that promote dehydration. Alcohol also causes drowsiness and contributes to feeling sluggish.
- Once settled onboard, reset your watch to the time zone to which you are traveling. This small act helps you begin adjusting to your destination's local time.

- As much as possible, create a dark environment during flight. Studies have shown that bright lights strongly affect individuals' body clocks. If necessary, try eyeshades and earplugs to help block distractions and convince your body that it is nighttime. Closing window shades and turning off overhead lights may also help. Sleep on the plane if your flight has an early morning arrival time.
- Wear loose-fitting clothing and comfortable shoes that will help in the event you experience mild swelling. Experienced travelers often bring lightweight slippers to wear during flights.
- Although not always feasible, look for opportunities to walk around while in flight. Do simple isometric exercises (contracting and relaxing as many muscle groups as possible) in your seat. These will improve circulation, help promote increased alertness, and reduce chances of swelling.
- If you arrive in the morning, plan to stay awake. If possible, wait until the local bedtime to sleep. Many people swear that this is key in determining how quickly they adapt to local conditions. You will sleep better and will be less likely to suffer insomnia than if you nap upon arrival.
- During extended stopovers, showers are sometimes available. If you have the opportunity, shower. Trans-Pacific pilots report that taking a shower in Hawaii helps them recover more quickly from the general effects of jet lag after the flight.

