



Backpacking Tips

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Packing

Try to pack as light as you can. The smaller the bag the less likely you are to have to check it in on flights and wait around the luggage area. Your bag will also become cumbersome when taking public transport or taxis. You also need to consider that you'll want to be able to walk comfortably with it on your back - sometimes in hot weather. It can also be a problem leaving a large backpack in a locker if you need to leave it somewhere for the day.

The thought of wearing the same thing day in and day out may seem terrible now but it'll be well worth it!

Remember if you aren't 100% sure you need something - leave it out. You can always buy it in Australia.

You may want to consider taking a trek-type towel such as the ones which claim to absorb 900% of their weight and are fast drying.

A sarong has many uses. It acts as a tablecloth during a picnic. A wrap around if you've unfortunately managed to fry your legs in the midday sun. A belt that keeps your trousers up. A blanket to sit on while relaxing on the beach or in the park. Finally if you're lucky enough to get a bottom bunk you can pin it under the mattress above so you get a little more privacy.

If you are travelling in Australia's winter remember it does rain and it does get cold - so don't forget to take a jumper or two.

If you are planning on working during your stay, particularly if you will be hoping for some office work, pack some suitable business attire. Whilst casual might be great for the pub and the beach, most Australian offices still have a smart business dress code and you are also expected to dress smartly for interviews.

If you're travelling with a friend carry half their clothes and give them half of yours. That way if one of you loses your luggage you'll still have some of your own clothes.

Rolling your clothes takes up less space and creates less wrinkles.

If you're staying in hostels you may want to invest in a cheap pair of flip flops for use when showering.

Make sure you pack a Journal. This is a chance of a lifetime and in years to come you'll be pleased you recorded tales of amazing people and places you visited on your travels.

Travel Insurance

Seriously consider taking travel insurance out. The essential components of good travel insurance fall into three groups - medical insurance, cover for your luggage and personal property, and cancellation insurance.

Before you go – remember to let your travel insurer know if you have a significant change in your health, or if you develop a new medical condition.

If you go against any suggestions or recommendations made by any government or other official authority during your period of cover, you will not be covered by your travel insurance. So check out the governments web site before you travel.

All travel insurance policies include some activities (or hazardous pursuits) as standard. Check this list and make sure the activities you want to do on your trip are covered.

Be vigilant and take care of your property – particularly when you are drawing out money or taking photos with an expensive camera. Treat your passport like gold dust. If you are camping or in a youth hostel, don't leave anything behind.

In the event of loss, burglary or theft of money, personal baggage or documents when you are abroad, remember that all original receipts and police reports must be obtained within 24 hours.

When you arrive home, have the following information to hand if you need to contact your travel insurer's claims handler: where you bought the policy shop/phone/web; policy number; country and resort visited; value of the claim; brief circumstances; travel dates and incident dates.

Health

Remember, that whilst citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Italy, Malta, Finland, Netherlands and Sweden are able to obtain free essential healthcare in Australia, this does not cover ambulance trips, dental treatment etc. If you do need dental treatment and don't have insurance cover for it, contact the local dental hospital where you may be able to obtain treatment from dental students either free or for a minimal cost.



If you are from the above countries and are staying in Australia for some time, apply for a Medicare card at any Medicare Centre. Medicare is the national healthcare scheme and you will need to show this card when obtaining medical treatment.

If you need to visit a general practitioner (GP) during your stay, take your card along. You will probably need to pay for the consultation up-front (around \$30 usually) and then claim a rebate back through medicare (approximately 2/3 of the fee). Some GPs have a practice called bulk-billing where you only need to pay the difference, but such GPs are becoming a rarity.

Recreation

Always travel with a pack of cards. It's the best way to make friends and a lifesaver if you're staying in a hostel with no TV.

Always check out the Tourist Information Centre in the city that you are visiting. They're the people who know what's on for free. Many cities have free admissions or cheaper ticket days to galleries, museums and cinemas.

Eating out

Stock up on salt, pepper, Ketchup and mustard sachets as well as jam and napkins wherever you can. They'll come in handy and may even save you some money.

International Phone cards and Internet Access

Shop around when buying international phone cards and if your given the choice between a local call cost and a free phone number always use the local call - your minutes will last twice as long.

Rather than paying for Internet access in an Internet cafe why not visit a local library. Most large city libraries have Internet access for free.

Hostels

Invest in a backpacker card wherever possible if you intend to stay in lots of hostels during your trip. The savings wont be huge per night but it all adds up! Also see if your hostel offers free pick ups from the airport, train or bus station and you'll save here on your transport costs.

Find out if there's a free food shelf in the hostel. People often leave food when they move on and don't want the extra weight of food with them.

Money and Work

If you are taking 2 different kinds of "money" (i.e. traveller's checks and a Visa card) - put them in different places. For example, keep the visa card in your wallet and your traveller's checks in your hand luggage. This ensure that if the worse thing happens and you are the victim of theft or lose an item - you still have access to limited cash.

The main thing to remember is don't come to Australia without a float or back up money at home, because it might take time to find work and then time moving between other jobs. Also don't think that you will earn AU\$1,000's which will pay for your holiday in style.

Most work will get you about AU\$80 - AU\$120 per day and if it's not paid "cash-in-hand" then 30% tax will be deducted. It is possible to later claim back some of the tax/deductions but the process is bureaucratically complicated and is usually only practical upon leaving Australia.

If you're looking for seasonal work make sure you arrive in good time. In Sydney you need to be looking to arrive in September/October time to have a pick of the jobs

And Finally.....

Remember that this is a chance in a lifetime. You'll probably never get another opportunity like this again. So make the most of it by talking to everyone you meet and learning as much as you can about the places you visit. Its a great chance for you to broaden your mind and find out who you really are.