



# The Ultimate Pre-trip 'To Do' List

When *ITN* asked readers to submit their "master packing lists" recently, many included their "to do" lists as well:

everything they needed to accomplish prior to taking a trip. *ITN* has compiled them into the following master checklist. Perhaps you'll find a new idea or two that will help make your next trip go more smoothly.

## WELL IN ADVANCE

- After deciding on a destination, read up on it and prepare a list of things you want to see and do, then decide on a preferred itinerary
- Passport current for at least six months?/blank visa pages available?
- Get visas
- Make reservations — flights/train/ship/shuttle/ auto rental/lodging/private guides, etc.
- Consider buying travel insurance — trip cancellation, baggage loss, medical coverage, emergency medical evacuation, etc.
- Immunizations — find out what is required/check your status for each and get any shots needed/update tetanus shot/ get flu shot
- Checkup — medical, dental
- Get doctor's okay and any medical records you need to take
- Order refills on prescription medicine
- Jet lag precautions
- Research (on Internet) exhibits, performances and other events at destination
- Buy tickets for theater, museums or events
- Buy pertinent reference books, historical novels, travel videos
- Buy maps
- Language lessons/learn a few foreign phrases
- Get in shape
- Inventory luggage/check luggage for needed repairs and cleaning/clean or repair luggage/attach your name and an address to each piece of luggage/consider attaching address of your destination hotel to each checked piece/consider placing copy of itinerary inside each piece/tape or mark luggage for easy spotting
- Waterproof luggage, shoes, clothing as appropriate
- Photocopy documents — passport (first two pages and visas), airline and other transportation tickets, travel insurance policy and card/medical ID cards/itinerary/hotel vouchers/phone number of travel agent/emergency phone numbers list/credit cards/ATM cards/auto insurance card/driver's license/prescriptions/eyeglasses or contacts prescription/serial numbers of cameras, computers, etc.
- Have extra passport photos taken
- Arrange for an emergency contact person and give him or her copies of all information (itinerary, airline ticket numbers, passport, medical information, travelers' check numbers, etc.)
- Give family or interested friends a copy of itinerary
- Prepare personal medical history summary (allergies, blood pressure level, blood type, etc.)/ copy of directive to physicians/ copy of living will

Before leaving on your trip, replace batteries in devices you'll be taking.  
*PATRICIA SETZER, SACRAMENTO, CA*

- Get list of locations of hospitals accepting your medical insurance
- Prepare or update "just in case" list — phone numbers and email addresses of health insurance provider (or HMO) and physicians as well as family contacts, in case of illness or emergency
- Inform credit card companies and bank of travel plans/ask what phone numbers to reach them at from overseas
- Get list of ATM locations overseas
- Prepay bills or arrange payments (mortgage or rent plus utilities, Internet provider/check taxes due, auto registration, membership dues, subscriptions and upcoming deadlines)
- Consider temporarily canceling car insurance for rebate (if covered for liability only; inquire if advisable)
- Arrange for absentee vote (if applicable)
- Notify neighbors (leave key?)
- Arrange ride to and from airport/arrange airport van and check out the time
- Arrange for house sitter/print out instructions for sitter/give house keys to sitter
- Notify house security company/police
- Notify gardener/housekeeper/pool person, etc.
- Arrange for pet care/stock up on pet food for pet sitter
- Write to *ITN* for *ITN* Report Cards
- Check calendar for birthdays, appointments coming up
- Make a gift list
- List things to buy for self
- Get gifts for hosts overseas
- Gifts for locals overseas (ex., supplies for schools)
- Print out address labels to take with you
- Get cash (including small bills, clean and untornd) and travelers' checks/record numbers of travelers' checks
- Get small amount of foreign currency
- Buy film or one-use camera
- Arrange for international cell phone service (rent unit or get service on existing unit)
- Check and replace or charge batteries in any devices to be taken on trip (camera, watch, travel alarm clock, reading light, mini-fan)
- Charge electrical devices to be taken (ex., shaver)
- Store outside furniture (if necessary)
- Clean pool and/or spa
- Return library books, videos
- Clothes to cleaners?
- Get hair done/haircut
- Manicure/pedicure
- Get snacks "for the road"

Taking gifts overseas? It's best not to wrap them ahead of time if they'll be subject to search.  
*J. ARTHUR FREED, LOS ALAMOS, NM*

## THREE DAYS BEFORE

- Confirm all flights 72 hours in advance

## A DAY OR TWO BEFORE LEAVING

- Suspend mail, newspaper, e-mail news groups, etc./cancel deliveries
- Valuables to safe deposit box
- Clean house
- Fridge in vacation mode (clean out)
- Store and secure any firearms
- Back up computer
- Set VCR to record
- Water plants, lawn
- Fill bird feeders
- Gas up car
- Confirm flights and reservations (rental car, hotels, meals)
- Pack luggage/check off packing list
- Clean out wallet, purse/set up money belt
- Purge key case

I pack a folding cane. I've never used it but often have loaned it.  
*MURIEL P. DOWE, FORT WORTH, TX*

- Close blinds
- Set light timers/radio on timer
- Lock doors, windows, garage, storage buildings, pool gate
- Remove garage door opener from car
- Car alarm on
- Set house security system, alarms
- Have a good vacation!

## LAST DAY

- Check weather at destination
- Change bed
- Garbage and trash out
- Run garbage disposal
- Run and empty dishwasher
- Answering machine on or off/change message?
- Unplug appliances (TV [unless VCR is set], computer, coffee maker, toaster, microwave, lamps, hair dryer, iron, humidifier, vacuum system, garage door opener)/oven off
- Turn off ice maker
- Milk into freezer
- Turn off thermostat/heaters/AC/fans
- Water heater temperature down or pilot light off
- Flush toilet/Clorox in toilet
- All faucets off/shut washing machine valves off
- Sheets over couch

*We thank those who contributed to this list:*

Sherry Barber, Whittier, CA  
Louis Bechtel, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA  
Carol Blucher, Mamaroneck, NY  
Dr. and Mrs. William Bocchino, Guttenberg, NJ  
J.J. Brummer, Toronto, Ontario  
Valerie Bulkeley, Bloomfield, CT  
Carroll Chandler, Dallas, TX  
George S. Dehnel, San Diego, CA  
Julian P. Donahue, Los Angeles, CA  
J. Arthur Freed, Los Alamos, NM  
Barbara Hubinger, Danville, CA  
Albert Lindauer, Merrick, NY  
George Nastas III, Haslett, MI  
Cynthia Neuman and Richard Rawson, Sacramento, CA  
Joellyn Ross, Philadelphia, PA