

# Holiday Travel Tips



Since many people take time off to visit family and friends in other places, the holidays are the busiest time of year to travel. According to a survey from the American Automobile Association (AAA), more than 99 million Americans travel between the days leading up to Christmas and New Year's.<sup>1</sup> It's also one of the most stressful times to travel, with people reporting it was as taxing as moving.<sup>2</sup> Take the stress out of holiday travel with these tips.

## IF YOU'RE FLYING

**Do your research.** Whether you're planning weeks in advance or you're trying to get a last-minute deal, it helps to do your research. Choose flexible travel dates to help you pinpoint the best deal. Also, consider flying into an alternate airport nearby that may not be as busy.

**Plan carefully.** Flying in the winter may increase the chances of flight delays due to inclement weather. Avoid narrow layover times to reduce the chances of missing connecting flights or choose connections in warmer cities, if possible.



**Pack light.** More airlines are charging to check bags. Save money by packing lighter or sending items ahead to your destination instead of bringing them on the plane. Send gifts to their destination, or if you must bring them with you, don't wrap them.

**Leave early, whether you're flying or driving.** This will allow you the buffer time necessary to deal with traffic jams, parking and security. If you live in an area with a light-rail transit system that stops near the airport, use it to avoid traffic and airport parking.

**Stay up-to-date on flight changes.** Download your airline's app to get alerts about gate changes and delays.



Sources: 1. Forbes  
2. Smithsonian Magazine

## STAY HEALTHY WHILE YOU TRAVEL

In addition to being the holiday season, it's also cold and flu season. Traveling in close proximity to others may increase your chances of getting sick during your vacation. Keep germs and viruses at bay with these tips:



• **Stay hydrated.** Bring a water bottle and fill it at a water fountain once you pass through security, or purchase water from a vendor in the secured area. Since the pressurized cabin of the airplane tends to dry the eyes and nasal passages, increase your water intake to keep germs away. Water may also help prevent blood clots.

• **Bring your own blanket and pillow.** While some airlines still provide these amenities, most do not. Plus, carrying a small, foldable blanket and a neck pillow will reduce the number of germs you're exposed to.

• **Bring healthy snacks,** including nuts, dried fruit and other easily portable food items.

• **Move around to avoid blood clots.** Blood clots are a major concern when flying, especially if you are flying cross-country or overseas. Get up and walk around the cabin, if possible. While seated, tap your feet or do seated calf raises to improve blood circulation.



## IF YOU'RE DRIVING

**Get your car ready.** Take your car in for a tuneup and address any potential issues beforehand. Have the mechanic check fluid levels and check your tires as well.



### Plan your route ahead of time.

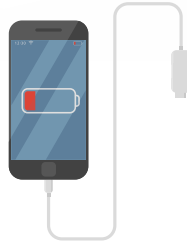
Whether you're driving a few hours or a few days, it helps to know the route you're taking. If you're

taking a long trip, plan where you want to stop for the night and make a reservation at a nearby hotel so you can be sure you'll have somewhere to stay overnight.

**Keep roadside assistance information on hand.** Having this information readily available will help you think clearly and act quickly in the event of car issues.

### Store a cell phone charger in the car.

Using your phone to navigate or play music can drain the battery. Keep a charger in the glove compartment or center console to keep it charged in case of an emergency.



**Pack a winter safety kit,** if you're traveling through a snowy area. The kit should include an ice scraper, a small snow shovel, tire chains, tow rope, jumper cables, a blanket, flashlights, a first-aid kit and a portable radio.



## TIPS FOR TRAVELING WITH CHILDREN

- **Take your time.** Give yourself lots of time—whether you're flying or driving—to check in, to get through security, at rest stops, etc., especially if you're traveling with young children.
- **Pack small toys.** When your child gets fussy or bored, give them a toy to play with.
- **Pack a change of clothing** (or several if you're traveling with a baby) in case of spills or accidents.
- **Have a small bag with only diaper-changing items** to take with you into the restroom.
- **Remind your children not to talk to strangers.** Keep an eye on them, or take them with you to the restroom.

# Tips for Traveling with Pets

• **Make sure your pet has identification.** While most pets have a microchip, it's helpful if your pet also wears a collar with a tag. On the carrier, clearly write "Live Animal," your full name and a cell phone number, as well as attach a current photo of your pet.

• **Get your pet up-to-date on its vaccinations.** If traveling to another country or Hawaii, look up vaccination requirements for animals before you book.

• **Secure the animal properly in the car** by placing it in a carrier or securing it with special seat belts that connect to its harness. Practice the routine of riding around in the car ahead of time to make sure your pet is comfortable.

• **If you're traveling by air and are crating your pet,** ensure it has room to move and stand. Help your pet feel at ease by including a favorite toy or blanket that smells like home. Also, provide bedding or paper in the crate in case of an accident. Keep the door closed, but not locked, in case of emergency. It's possible airline employees may feed your pet if there's a layover, so transport a bag of food to be safe.

• **Take a direct flight** to reduce stress on the animal.

• **If you're traveling by car, stop frequently** so your pet can eat and relieve itself. Throw a ball or take a walk to give it some exercise as well.

