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Ensure smooth sailing

Don't let a rough patch ruin your getaway. Use these tricks to navigate any storm and get back to your R&R! —Andrea Bartz

KEEP YOUR COOL Stay-calm secrets for trip stressors

Find the funny. Dwelling on sightseeing mishaps only eats into your time for other must-dos. To move on, highlight the hilarity of your blunders by calling out "new rules" (e.g., "New rule: Ask if the beach is clothing-optional *before* claiming sand space").

Take the helm. "Stress is worse when you feel helpless, such as when your flight is canceled. Regain a sense of control by communicating well with people who *do* have power," says Claire Wheeler, Ph.D., author of *10 Simple Solutions to Stress* (New Harbinger Publications). Tell the airline rep what she needs to know (you'll pay more for the next available flight) and skip the rest: Less whining brings better results.

Forget the office. Record small wonders in a journal or capture them with your camera. Focusing on the here and now helps you leave work woes and other anxiety at home.



DITCH THE DRAMA Skirt travel-companion conflicts with these easy strategies.

Big spender vs. frugal traveler Set a budget pre-trip, and balance splurging with cutting costs. If you're planning a fancy dinner, for instance, take buses by day.

Schedule stickler vs. carefree wanderer Pick three or four can't-misses and let the rest come as you go. The planner will learn the pleasures of stumbling upon things, and the laid-back tourist won't miss the sights.

Early bird vs. night owl Before departing, discuss your sleeping quirks and pack accordingly. A nocturnal roommate might bring a DVD player with headphones, and a morning person could keep an eye mask handy.

PACK LIKE A PRO

- 1 Start with a small suitcase—it instantly limits how much you can bring, says Susan Foster, author of *Smart Packing for Today's Traveler* (Smart Travel Press).
- 2 Stash meds, documents and items for your first day (like a swimsuit if you're beach-bound) in your carry-on, in case your checked bag arrives after you do.
- 3 Every article of clothing should work with at least two outfits. "Your daytime black blouse easily becomes a dinner top when you dress it up with glitzy jewelry and a brightly colored scarf," Foster explains.
- 4 Leave behind bulky bracelets and purses, and tote smaller necklaces, earrings and scarves to wear as accessories instead. Store them in plastic sandwich bags and tuck inside shoes to maximize space in your luggage. Lookin' good!

SNACK WISELY ALONG THE WAY

While chilling on a plane...

NIX Dehydrating snacks such as salted nuts and pretzels

NIBBLE Water-dense produce. Have oranges or snap peas.

While cruising the highway...

NIX Processed fast food fare, which can leave you sluggish and short on nutrients you need to stay sharp

NIBBLE Protein-packed foods such as lowfat string cheese

While taking in the sights...

NIX Empty-calorie pastries and sweets, which set you up for a sugar crash

NIBBLE If you can't resist local treats (*bonjour*, crepes!), add fruit for filling fiber and nutrients.



ENJOY THE RIDE Feel at home on the road with these creature comforts.

● **CleanRest travel pillow and blanket** with MicronOne technology (\$10; CleanRest.com) They're water-resistant, allergen-blocking—and cozy.

● **The SeatBuddy** (\$20; TheSeatBuddy.com) The holster hangs your iPhone or smartphone from the seat in front of you so you can view downloaded flicks.

● **N.a.p Gel Eyemask** (\$20; Brookstone.com) This cushy light blocker is fuzzy on one side, satiny on the other.

● **Traffic.com** Pinpoint slowdowns on saved routes or via GPS with this nifty (and free!) iPhone and BlackBerry app.

● **FlightStats.com** Create itineraries and track flights with this Android app (\$7).

SIDESTEP HEALTH TRAPS

JET LAG Sip water. Dehydration spikes stress-hormone levels, keeping you alert and awake.

BEDBUGS Before booking a room, log on to BedbugRegistry.com; the site tracks infestation spots.

TUMMY TROUBLES Only eat street food that's cooked on the spot (such as kebabs), and skip condiments, which can harbor bacteria.

VACATION POUNDS Staying active is a great way to see the sights. Use MapMyRun.com to find jogging routes or BikeAndRoll.com to schedule a bike tour or rental.

THE TRIP THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

“Visiting South Africa opened my eyes to how much socioeconomic status and family circumstances affect our well-being. It inspired me to pursue a career that would let me help others. I'm now a social worker at L.A.'s Childrens Hospital!” Courtney Diffner, 31, Burbank, California

