

TIPS FOR A FIRST-TIME TRAVELER

BIG FIVE
TOURS & EXPEDITIONS

ENRICHING LIVES THROUGH DISTINCTIVE JOURNEYS

LESSONS LEARNED THE HARD WAY, SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO

As a *first time traveler* outside the US, there are so many questions we don't know we need to ask. Our colleague, Courtney Miller, helped design this document with all the answers to the questions she wished she'd known to ask before her first trip abroad to Peru. If you're an experienced traveler, the Travel Handbook & Destination Guides are for you as they have more advanced advice.



CURRENCY

Always keep some local cash, you never know when you will find the perfect handcrafted souvenir by a local that doesn't take USD or card.

The best way to get local currency and avoid as many fees as possible is to withdraw from your own Bank (*make sure they're new notes*), then exchange the money at a local bank once you're on the ground if possible. ATM fees abroad are very expensive and can quickly add up. You can exchange at the airport also however they charge multiple fees.

It's best to notify your bank and creditors of your travel dates and destinations so your accounts can be monitored and help avoid any blocked transactions while you're away. It can be difficult to make calls while you're traveling so it's best to let them know in advance.

Figure out your base tipping price (per guide per day) and set that money aside. Envelopes work great to keep it separated and you can always add more before handing it over. *Find out beforehand which currency is preferred.*

BEFORE YOU GO

Be mindful of airport parking costs, rideshare or public transport may be a better investment.

CELL PHONES

If you don't want to pay for international service or it's not available on your carrier – check your phone for a Wi-Fi calling option and you should be able to use your phone as normal while connected to Wi-Fi.

LANGUAGE

Learn how to say “how do you say” in the local language. This will make the language barrier less daunting as the other person will at least understand you are trying to find the right word.

MASKS

When bringing masks, plan for one per day but don't throw any away unless necessary. **Always keep an extra on you** as you will lose them and may run out. Most areas have become relaxed with mask wearing but they will let you know if they're required.

EXPERT'S ADVICE

Don't be a know-it-all, TRUST the experts. Follow supplier or guides advice and warnings, if they say wear sunscreen, get the strongest available. They do this on a daily basis, with people from around the globe, trust in their advice.

RELAXING

If you're going to relax, take some time in the public areas such as a lounge or cafe, not always in your own room. This way you are still **experiencing the sights, smells and sounds** while giving your feet a well-deserved break.

IT'S OK...

Don't be afraid to change your plans or ask your guide for changes. It's your trip, make sure you are enjoying everything you do. It's ok not to like something, if you let your guide know, they may be able to arrange for something different if situation and time permits.

PACKING

Don't overpack as even with bag assistance, you will become quickly annoyed with large or heavy luggage. Our suggestion is bring one of each of the following: Comfort shoes, walking shoes and dress shoes for dinner. Color coordinate your clothes for maximum utility with limited pieces. Use one main color and one or two accent colors to mix and match for maximum outfit options. Laundry services in or outside your hotel are extremely worth it.

YOUR LIMITS

Know your physical limits and don't feel like you must push yourself, whether it's with food or hiking. Don't injure or make yourself sore/sick trying to keep up with someone who does it every day. The guides and staff are always prepared to accommodate you if you're not comfortable or need help and can find alternative options



Courtney Miller

Big Five Tours & Expeditions

As a first time traveler outside the US, I was so excited for all the possibilities my trip had to offer. The food, the music, the sights, there was just so much I couldn't wait to see. What I didn't know, was just how much my life was about to change. The last two tips I have to offer are below, these two are the MOST important, these are the two things I found that changed everything, and it's not something you can book or pay for, this choice is left in your hands.

The risk is worth the reward. Don't be afraid to step outside your shell, taste that weird food, dip your toes in that water, it's ok to take a chance. The stories, memories, and thrill of saying you did it makes it worth that minute of uncertainty. Live in the moment.

Interact with your surroundings as a local, not as a tourist and you will find your experiences are richer. The people will be more eager to share their culture and communities with you as they see them, and your eyes will be open to a view of the world that top floors can't offer.