

**A Welcome Gift To You From  
The Packing Secrets Community!**

# **79 Travel Tips So You Can Travel Smarter and Safer**

Hello and welcome,

As a Packing Secrets user you're now part of a network of thousands and thousands of travelers, all with great experience and tips to share with each other.

We all thought a great extra gift for all new Packing Secrets Members like you would be book of collected travel tips from the Packing Secrets Community...

...so here it is!

- ✓ Some will help you travel cheaper
- ✓ Some will help you travel safer
- ✓ Some will help travel easier
- ✓ Some will help travel more fun
  
- ✓ All of them will make you a smarter traveler!

Happy travels,

Michael Furniss  
(On behalf of The Packing Secrets Community)

P.S. If you find these tips useful, please feel free to share this document with your friends!

P.P.S. If you have your own travel tips you'd like to add to this book, please email them to me at [michael@packingsecrets.com](mailto:michael@packingsecrets.com)

### **1. Are you tired of catching colds while traveling?**

Take along a travel-sized package of Clorox wipes. Disinfect the tray table and armrests on the airplane, and the telephone and TV remote in your hotel room. William Alabaster, Rochester, N.Y.

### **2. Keep your passport information handy**

On international flights I used to fumble through my belongings—often having to retrieve them from the overhead bin—after a flight attendant appeared with the landing card, (I don't know of many people who have their passport number and date of issue memorized.) Now I write all my information on the bookmark of whatever I plan to read on the long flights so I don't have to dig out my passport. I can then fill out the card quickly—giving me more time to loan my pen to people who never seem to carry one. Wendy Anderson, Orange, Conn.

### **3. Don't toss out old prescription glasses**

Whenever my husband and I get news of eyeglasses, we relegate the old ones to our luggage, along with an inexpensive repair kit from the drugstore. If something happens while we're away from home, we can hopefully fix the glasses ourselves. If they're beyond saving, we have the backup pairs to get us through the rest of the trip. Wayne Babcock, Chandler, Ariz.

### **4. Even the disposable-camera lenses should be protected**

They scratch just like any other lens would. Place a small piece of painter's tape (or another that won't stick too much) over the lens to protect it from contact with other items in your purse or backpack during travel. Ursalene Baker, Santa Cruz, Calif. Suzanne Barr, San Diego, Calif.

### **5. Secure any small electronics to a bag**

I'm a gadget freak and I don't like to travel without things like my digital camera and my iPod. On one trip though, I put my camera down in a crowded restaurant and then, distracted, forget to put it back in my bag. By the time I remembered where I'd left it, the camera was long gone. Now, I attach those kinds of items to my daypack with a lanyard. They're still easy pull out and use, and they never get left behind. Susan Beagle, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

### **6. Pack separately for different parts of your trip**

When I travel for business, I usually tack on a few extra days to do something active like hike in a nearby national park. I find that by taking two small suitcases instead of a single large one, I stay better organized and less burdened. I keep my business clothes, papers, and laptop in one bag, and my hiking gear in another. I leave the suitcase I'm not using at the time in the rental car and easily carry the lightweight case with the equipment and clothes I need into my hotel room. Sherill Berg, Indianapolis, Ind.

### **7. Read the fine print on your rail pass**

You can often use it to save money on the other modes of public transportation. With a Scandinavian rail pass, for example, you'll pay less to ride the ferries. In Switzerland, a rail pass can get you free bus rides, as well as complimentary entrance to museums and discounts on funiculars and hotel accommodations. Scott Berger, Pawling, N.Y.

### **8. Put freebie key chains to good use**

No longer do the many key chains I get as advertising languish in a bureau drawer. I attach one or two at the ends of my luggage zippers. These extensions help me identify my luggage on airport carousels. Sandi Brenner, Port Townsend, Wash.

### **9. “No early check-in” shouldn’t deter you**

If you take an overnight flight to Europe and early check-in at your hotel isn’t an option, ask the concierge if you can store your luggage until later in the day and use the hotel gym’s shower. You’ll be refreshed and ready for a day of sightseeing. Pack a change of clothes in your carry-on. Ronda Burk, Celina, Tex.

### **10. Set up your own desk**

Need a place for a laptop in your hotel room? Take the largest drawer from the bureau and put it upside down on the bed with the drawer front away from you. This creates a perfect height desk for while you’re sitting comfortably on the bed (you can even lean back on the pillows), plus there’s side space for papers, and the top leans towards you for easy typing or writing. Patricia Callahan, Flagstaff, Ariz.

### **11. Save your airline socks**

My husband and I keep the stretchy slipper-socks some airlines provide. (We’ve gotten them on Virgin airlines economy class and on almost all airlines in business class.) They’re great to use when packing shoes: Just slip each shoe into a sock and you’ll prevent clothes getting marked by the soles. As a bonus, you’ll have slippers to wear when you’re away from home. The socks are machine washable and can last for many years. Parker Carveth, Encino, Calif.

### **12. Best Western hotels can be free Wi-Fi hotspots**

While working out of my car for more than a year, checking email was always a problem. One day I found out that all Best Western properties in North America offer free Internet access, often with Wi-Fi in public areas. That meant I could write all the emails I needed to and store them in my outbox. Then when I saw a Best Western sign, I just pulled up off the highway, parked next to the lobby, turned on my computer and sent the emails and received any new ones. Parisa Chico, Bridgewater, Va.

### **13. There are lots of uses for wet wipes**

I don’t go anywhere without individual packets of antibacterial wipes. I slip some in my carry-on or daypack, and shirt pocket. They’re very convenient when you can’t find any running water with which to wash your hands. And because they’re antibacterial, they’re also great for cleaning cuts, and the alcohol from the wipes helps stop the itching when you rub them on insect bites. Monica Chun, Alsip, Ill.

### **14. Pack a scale**

Few hotel rooms are equipped with scales. So bring your own—the portable kind that fisherman use—and you can weigh luggage before you get to the airport. Michele Clancy, Richmond, Calif.

### **15. Kids can have fun and learn on long road trips**

In order to keep my children entertained on a long journey, I bought each of them a plastic pencil box and a clipboard to stick in the seat pouches of our car. Before we left home, I filled the boxes with machine washable markers and attached games and puzzles (all free online), to the clipboard related to where we were traveling. Meredith Cockerham, Rio Rancho, N.M.

### **16. Don’t always believe the airline’s website when it comes to using miles**

After I was unable to find any mile-saver awards seats online for a wide selection of days and routes, I called the airline. An agent told me that the airline’s website can’t book seats for their partner airlines, but agents can. Within minutes, I had enough options that it was difficult to choose between them. May Cronin, Dallas, Tex.

### **17. A hotel pool is hours of free fun**

No matter where we traveled with our kids, the hotel pool was always a big plus. I used to pack a bag of items that made the pool even better, including a small flexible pool Frisbee, an inflatable beach ball, a few colourful plastic items, and last but not least, goggles to protect the kids’ eyes from the chlorine. I also brought along a few suction-cup hooks for hanging the wet suites inside the hotel tub for drip-drying. Mary Crow, Glensville, Pa.

**18. Tally spending at the end of a trip**

Last year I traveled to Greece with three friends. We knew we didn't want to spend time calculating proportionate shares of the dinner bills, so we kept a running tab of all expenses in a little note-book. Whoever was up for it would pay a bill, so only one person at a time fussed with money, and this way we all kept pretty close to even. At the end of the trip, the total expense amount was divided evenly, and those who'd paid less reimbursed those who had paid more. Mary Davis, Round Rock, Tex.

**19. Prevent accidents in showers abroad**

Grab rails and nonskid surfaces aren't common in European bathtubs and showers. I pack a few decorative rubber pads that have nonadhesive suction cups, so I can use them when I needed to prevent a slip or fall, and then I take them with me to the next hotel. Martin Day, Raleigh, N.C.

**20. Put an address label on your one-time-use camera**

On a trip I exchanged disposable cameras with a traveler so we could feature in our own photos, however, we got mixed up with whose camera was whose. If we'd labelled the cameras we would avoid this problem. Mark Egan, Rhinebeck, N.Y.

**21. Start a coaster collection**

At a bar in my late grandfather's home city in Denmark I was served a Danish beer called Ceres. I noticed the coaster under my glass and asked the barman if I could have one to take home. He gave me a stack of them and they make great conversation pieces at parties. Marie Farhang, Detroit, Mich.

**22. Carry a twist tie in your wallet**

Among other ingenious uses, a twist tie can temporarily replace a lost screw on a pair of sunglasses. Just peel the paper or plastic off the tie so you have bare wire, insert it where the screw was, and twist it to tighten. Unlike Scotch tape or a safety pin, a twist tie is small enough to hold until you're able to replace the screw. Lynn Fermino, Los Angeles, Calif.

**23. Socks protect fragile items in luggage**

Put your perfume or cologne bottles inside pairs of rolled-up socks to keep them cushioned during your trip. Lucy Fisher, Harwich, Mass.

**24. Pack your own picnic gear**

A company called Orikaso makes brightly colored polypropylene sheets that can be folded to form a dish or a bowl or a cup. The sheets are lightweight and reusable. You simply flatten them when you're finished. Lori Fraser, Fremont, Calif.

**25. Concierges are full of good advice**

When I'm planning a trip, I almost always call the hotel concierge before I arrive (and if my hotel doesn't have one I call one that does). Recently, I asked for advice on what to see since I had only four days in a new city. After I told the concierge what I thought I should try to do, she said I had too many things packed into four days. She gave me a list of hotspots to visit and places to avoid. With her help, my trip was much more enjoyable. Linda Freeman, Venice, Calif.

**26. Wax can free a stuck zipper**

If the zipper on your luggage or clothing is giving you trouble, rub some lip balm or candle wax onto the teeth to loosen it. Lesa Geraci, Blairs, Va.

**27. Bring your own windshield-cleaning kit**

Whenever I know I'll be renting a car, I pack a couple of folded paper towels and two small spray bottles. One filled with a window cleaner and the other with Rain-X, a product that repels rain drops. It's hard enough driving an unfamiliar car in an unfamiliar location. At least with a clean windshield I'm able to see properly. Lawrence Goodyear, Glencoe, Calif.

**28. Follow the crowds for safe street food**

If you're looking for authentic street food, don't buy from the pitifully lonely vendor who has no customers. Head to the cart with the longest line in front of it. Locals know which vendors serve the best (and safest) food. Even if you have to wait a while, your stomach will thank you. Laura Hacker, Frederick, Md.

**29. Geography lessons can be fun**

We laminated a large foldout map of the US and tacked it up inside our garage. With coloured pushpins, we mark the places our family visited—vacation spots, grandparents' homes, etc. We also flag the places we're heading to next, giving our kids something to look for. Laura Hanna, Philadelphia, Pa.

**30. Making friends by learning the locals' favourite pastime**

In Provence, my husband and I befriended some locals by joining them in a game of petanque. It was a memorable experience. Now we brush up on games each time we plan to travel abroad. We've played dominoes in Spain and bocce in Italy. Katrina Harwood, Swiftwater, Pa.

**31. Line your suitcase with a plastic bag**

On a trip to Molokai, the plane we were on was small and luggage was crammed in every which way. At baggage claim, we noticed that someone had packed a bottle of something and it had broken and leaked everywhere. Now we line our suitcases with garbage bags to protect our clothes, just in case. Kathy Huseman, Niceville, Fla.

**32. Don't settle for the first answer to your travel question**

If you need flight information, it's a good idea to phone the airline more than once and ask the same question. Recently, I wanted to see if I could fly standby on an earlier flight the same day. The first time I called I was told the earlier flight was booked. The second time, the agent said I could certainly fly standby. In the end I not only got a standby flight, I was upgraded to first class. Kathryn Johnson, New York, N.Y.

**33. For sales on cruise mementos, pick the last sailing to a particular region**

We like to buy shipboard souvenirs, so we try to choose a ship that's completing its run of the area—that's when merchandise is generally put on sale. Last year for example, on a sailing in South America, all of the T-shirts, glassware, and rain jackets were 75% off. Kathie Kilker, Patterson, N.Y.

**34. Hit the gym for free water**

Before you buy expensive bottled water from your hotel room minibar, head to the fitness center. You'll be able to fill up an empty bottle at the gym fountain for free... and you don't need to break a sweat. Karen Lees, Williamsville, N.Y.

**35. Leave damaged dollar bills at home**

We've traveled to Mexico and China in the last year and had the same experience in both countries: When we tried to exchange dollars to local currency, the banks wouldn't take any bills with graffiti or that were ripped or damaged in anyway. Make sure any money you want to exchange are crisp and clean. Julie Levinson, Northville, Mich.

**36. Tie a bell to your luggage to thwart thieves**

In order to keep track on my bags, I use a small metal ball, the kind dancers from India wear on their ankles. I thread it with fishing line and tie it to my carry-on. If anyone touches my bag after I set it down, the bell chimes. It's not a very obtrusive sound but is distinctive enough for me to notice if a thief is trying to get my things. You can do the same to the doorknob of your hotel room if you're worried about security. Joss Lew, Chesapeake, Va.

**37. Be nice to hotel house-keepers and they'll be nice to you**

Depending on the hotel, checkout time is usually around noon. On the last day of my last vacation, I tried to arrange a late checkout, but was told it wasn't possible. The hotel offered a day room but it was used by other guests with a long queue for the shower. Instead, I went upstairs and noticed that someone was about to clean my room. I asked her if it was possible

to have a quick shower before she started. She said she could do something even better, she would start the room next door first and give me even more time. Joia Lisle, McCall, Idaho

**38. Use carabiners to free up your hands**

Buy a couple of carabiners—the kind that rock climbers use—and attach them to the top of your wheeled suitcase. Purses, cameras, and shopping bags can be clipped to your suitcase, giving your hands and shoulders a rest while you're walking around the airport. John Locher, Arlington, Va.

**39. Ziploc now makes extra-large bags with handles**

They're nearly 2' by 2', and although Ziploc advertises them as being good for storage, they're even more useful when you're traveling. Use one on long shopping excursions and then as an extra carry-on for all your souvenirs. Joanne Mancini, Beaumont, Tex.

**40. Bring your own linens**

They're useful in a million different ways. Obviously a soft cotton pillowcase makes those scratchy airplane pillows bearable, but it can also be used to gather loose items when deplaning. A nice sheet will cover up an ugly bedspread or sofa, and makes a great tablecloth or picnic blanket. Jessica Martinez, New City, N.Y.

**41. Take photos of what you pack**

In order to provide any reimbursement for a lost suitcase, most airlines and insurance companies require an itemized list of exactly what was inside it. Unfortunately, remembering everything you packed after the fact is virtually impossible. To avoid the headache, take pictures of the items you're going to put in your suitcase with your digital camera or cell phone. The photos will make creating the lost a breeze, and in the event of a dispute with the airline or insurance agent, you will have some visual evidence of the ownership. Jennifer Matchett, Dunnellon, Fla

**42. Accidentally reformat your camera's memory card?**

As long as you don't overwrite the disk by taking more photos, those original pictures are still there. Buy another card to use in the meantime, and then, when you get home, either purchase a file-recovery software program (about \$35) or take the card to a camera shop. Isabel McCarthy, Mesa, Ariz.

**43. Keep travel numbers handy**

I have the words hotel and taxi on my cell phone speed dial. On a trip, I change the numbers, but leave the pre-programmed titles the same—instant access and no more little slips of paper everywhere. Hugo McCulloch, Pleasant Hill, Calif.

**44. Carry a small calculator**

If you plan to do a lot of shopping in a foreign country, it helps to have a calculator. When you find something you like, hand the seller the calculator and ask him to enter his best price. It's easy to convert the response into dollars so you know what you're spending. If needed, the calculator can be used to haggle, especially if you don't speak the language. Heather Meyer, Bedford, Mass.

**45. Make your stroller stand out**

When traveling to a theme park, tie a bright colored scarf to the handle of your stroller before you enter a ride. When you return, you'll quickly pick out your stroller from a sea of look-alikes. France Minton, Satellite Beach, Fla.

**46. Keep your luggage safe in a car**

Our bags have been stolen twice from inside locked rental cars. Now we travel with a bicycle cable and lock. If we absolutely must leave our suitcases in the car, I hook them together by the handles and attach the whole thing to the frame of the seat or a secure item in the trunk. Even if the thieves manage to get into our car, the cable will make it very difficult for them to make off with the luggage. Fran Montiazeri, Staten Island, N.Y.

**47. Consider bring your bike on a cruise**

We decided to take along our own bikes on our last Caribbean cruise. It was a little crowded in the cabin, so we asked the steward if we could store them down the galleys with the wheelchairs. We were last off the ship when we docked in the Bermuda, but in less than 5 minutes we were far away from the busy port, enjoying a beautiful, deserted snorkeling beach. Farrah Moore, The Villages, Fla.

**48. Pack a few hooks**

I find that hotel bathrooms rarely have enough hangers and hooks for clothes and wet towels, so I always bring a few snap-lock suction hooks. (They work better than regular suction hooks because they're more secure and therefore hold heavier items.) It's always nice to have a place to hang a bathrobe. Erica Murphy, Atlanta, Ga.

**49. Water-bottle holsters are good for holding more than water**

I own several Water Bottle Totes by Outdoor Research. With their Velcro-like straps, I can fasten them anywhere to my belt, camera strap, airplane seat etc. In addition to holding water, I've used them at various times to carry binoculars, snacks, umbrella, fan, flashlight, sunglasses, windbreaker and a rain poncho. Ellen Parks, Mechanicville, Va.

**50. Book separately to earn bonus miles**

We've noticed that when booking a flight for our family under one reservation, some airlines will only credit the 1,500 bonus miles to the person whose name the reservation is under. This is regardless of whether the other family members have mileage accounts. To avoid this, make separate reservation for each family member, and then pick seats together. Ed Pearce, Dexter, Mich.

**51. A beach ball can replace many expensive in-flight gadgets**

Depending on how much you inflate it, the ball can function very comfortably as a footrest, back support, or as a lap pillow to support your book. Ed Perun, Sioux City, Iowa

**52. Research any local auto insurance requirements before renting a car**

With two of our last three car rentals, the local branch wanted documentation beyond the standard insurance card issued by our insurance company. In San Juan, we were delayed half an hour while the agent made phone calls to verify that our liability insurance was good in Puerto Rico. In Miami, if we hadn't provided proof that our insurance covered rental cars, we would have been charged a daily collision insurance fee. Fortunately, we knew ahead of time and took a copy of the pertinent section of our policy. We were using a credit card that included car rental insurance, but proof of that cover was also required. Dorothy Pileggi, San Francisco, Calif.

**53. Put your bathing suit in your carry-on**

There's nothing worse than not being able to swim because you made it to your hotel but your luggage didn't. If your suit is still damp for the flight home, again, put it in your carry-on so it won't get moldy if your bags are delayed. Dori Plewak, Leawood, Kans.

**54. There's yet another use for those old contact lens cases**

They can store the last bit of lipstick or concealer that can be scooped out of the bottom of the tube. Sure beats wasting it. The case is watertight and holds just enough for a weekend trip. Deb Porch, Lanoka Harbour, N.J.

**55. Use hangers for in-room laundry**

Instead of bringing one of those bungee cables to hang-dry my delicates and socks, I pack a couple of mini plastic hangers—the ones that bras and panties come on when you buy them. They take up very little room in my luggage and can be thrown away at the end of the trip. Danne Prendergast, Huntington Beach, Calif.

**56. A small key ring will thwart prying fingers**

A padlock zipper tells thieves there's something in your bag worth stealing, but a key ring is much less obvious. Best of all, you'll never have to worry about forgetting your combination. Cynthia Rainer, Cape Coral, Fla.

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**57. The ideal toiletry bag is a lunch box**

After years of looking for years for the perfect toiletries bag and being frustrated by many that were less than ideal, I've finally discovered one that is just right: a soft-sided lunch box I bought at the supermarket. It has an outer-zipped pocket with small compartments and lots perfect for often-used items like toothbrush and toothpaste. There's a small removable zipper pouch inside for those smaller hard-to-find items like nail files and pill bottles. The remaining space inside is just the right size for larger items like shampoo and hand lotion. Other helpful features include both a small handle and shoulder strap, and a waterproof, easy-to-clean interior. This lunch box was designed for children, so I know it's going to last. Cynda Ramos, Brooklyn Park, Minn.

**58. Enjoy your coffee anywhere on the cruise ship**

Bring a travel mug for early-morning coffee fill-ups at the buffet. Your coffee stays warm, and travels well around the ship—the mug specifically designed to stop spillage—and you don't have to linger in the restaurant after you've finished eating breakfast. When you return to your room or your favourite deck chair, you'll have a fresh cup. Chris Reed, Union City, N.J.

**59. You can suspend more than your newspaper when you're away**

On several occasions, DirecTV has agreed to pit my account on hold while I was away traveling, without penalty, additional fees reconnection charges or the like. So, instead of having a monthly bill of \$65, I have mine protracted, without fail. Cheryl Rounsefell, Chicago, Ill.

**60. Use baby wipe to remove stains**

As well as being good at killing germs, you can also try using baby wipes on your clothing if you spill food down yourself. Charles Rybczyk, Richmond, Va

**61. Make a travel journal for your kids**

Before we went to London, I created a personalized booklet on our computer with fill-in pages like "the new foods I tried", "best candy", "words I learnt" and the "most fun/boring museums". Instead of being daunted by lots of blank journal pages, my daughter had a blast answering the questions and filling in all the details. Carole Sapp, Warren, Vt.

**62. Thou shalt not sightsee on the Sabbath**

If you plan to visit Prague, and the Jewish Holocaust memorials, remember that synagogues close early on Friday and stay closed on Saturdays. Make sure you aren't only there for the weekend. Carol Scherzberg, Media, Pa.

**63. You won't always save by bringing the rental car back early**

Alamo has instituted a new early-return policy at all of its locations, designed to discourage customers from returning cars early. If you show up at the lot a day or two ahead of schedule, Alamo will recalculate what you owe them on a daily rate. If it turns out to be less than you would have paid for the week, they'll charge a \$15 fee. Yet another reason to read the fine print on your contract carefully. Carol Schmidt, Yarmouth Port, Mass.

**64. Avoid unnecessary minibar charges**

While I was reviewing the itemized bill prior to checking out of my hotel, I noticed a \$7.50 charge for a beer from the minibar. I was very surprised since I had put my own drinks back in the minibar to replace what I'd taken. When I asked at reception they told me that the minibar was weight sensitive. Once I explained, they removed the \$7.50 charge. Carey Schweisguth, Americus, Ga.

**65. Skip the hotel dry-cleaning**

Instead of dropping my laundry off at the front desk, I take a walk around the block and look for the nearest dry cleaner—probably the same one the hotel would take them to. By cutting out the middleman I usually pay a quarter of what the hotel charge. Brian Serues, Cottage Grove, Wis.

**66. Stock up on crosswords**

About a month before leaving on vacation, I started clipping the crossword puzzles from the daily newspaper and pasting them into a blank notebook. The puzzles keep me occupied during my trip. The newspaper's crosswords are so much more interesting than those generic books of crosswords that you can purchase at the airport. Brian Shelton, Schertz, Tex.

**67. Compare prices with foreign airlines**

Recently I was booking tickets online for an upcoming flight to Europe from the East Coast. One particularly attractive fare was offered on a US based airline, as well as on their foreign partner airline. Same flight, same base price. But imagine my surprise when, searching both airlines for availabilities, I discovered that it was more than \$100 cheaper per ticket to book the flight with the foreign airline versus the US airline. Brett Simms, Brooklyn, N.Y.

**68. Getting the right maps**

For road trips on the Continent, European maps are much more helpful when it comes to reading road signs. They'll say Roma instead of Rome, Firenze rather than Florence. I could spend all day waiting for a road sign for Munich and miss the exit for München. Bill Starks, Helena Island, S.C.

**69. Pack a homemade medicine kit**

When traveling with my kids, I always bring a Ziploc bag that includes four things: a bottle of Benadryl, a bottle of my children's ibuprofen, one of those little medicine cups, and a thermometer. This all-purpose kit can help with minor ailments, or treat a more serious flu until you can get to a doctor. Best of all, it beat driving around at 2am looking for an all-night pharmacy. Beth Steuer, Larose, La.

**70. Bring your own menus**

I carry bilingual takeout menus when I'm traveling to countries like China, Korea and Vietnam. Then, when I'm at a restaurant with no menu (or one I can't read), I give mine to the waiter so he can point to dishes they can prepare. Remember to pack a few extras, as the restaurants often like to keep a copy. Becky Stewart, Washington, D.C.

**71. Ship snacks ahead**

Before our trip to Disney World, we shipped ahead a box of juices and snacks. When we arrived at our time-share with tired and whiny children, the package was waiting, and we were able to change their moods with the goodies. The supplies lasted all week, and we ended up saving quite a bit of money by not purchasing the items at the local stores with their inflated prices. Anne Stockmal, Sarasota, Fla.

**72. Ask about departure taxes**

Before exchanging all your foreign currency at the airport, find out if there's a departure tax. At the Bangkok airport, we were very upset—as were the other travelers around us—to find we had to go pay a fee before being allowed to go to our gate. Unfortunately, by this point everyone had cashed in their baht, so the options were conveniently located ATM, a credit card, or an exchange booth with notably poor rates. When we described this incident to friends, they told us of a similar experience when trying to leave the Dominican Republic. Amy Tackett, West Grove, Pa.

**73. Take a bus tour**

Many big cities around the world have tourist buses that run circuits of the most popular sites. Spending a day on one is a great way to get the lay of the land in an unfamiliar place. It's much cheaper than riding in a cab, takes less time than walking, and gives you a better view of the city than the subway. Amanda Tillman, Baltimore, Md.

**74. Share your travel stories online**

By starting a blog for each trip, you can keep your friends and family and the world updated on your adventures. All you need is an Internet café to add entries and photos while you're on the road. Allen Uhl, Seattle, Wash.

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**75. Organize your receipts**

If you have to save receipts while traveling, purchase a plastic coupon holder to help you keep track of them (it'll also protect them). You can label each section of the coupon holder by category (hotel, rental car, gas, food, etc.); or you can label it by day of the week. The coupon holders area compact and easily fit into a laptop case, purse, or travel bag. Alice Vasquez, Concord, Calif.

**76. Dress like a local**

When my husband and I visit places like India and Thailand, we pack only one extra change of clothes. When we arrive, we hit a local market and buy native attire—woven shirts, saris, sarongs etc. Not only does this make packing easier, but we get a better cultural experience and end up with lots of wearable souvenirs. Alegre Vincent, Phoenix, Ariz.

**77. Make instant memories**

Carry a Polaroid camera when traveling to third-world countries. In Cambodia, several village children gathered around us, posed enthusiastically for pictures, and were fascinated by their images in our digital cameras. We wanted to send them pictures, but they were unable to tell us their addresses. Polaroids would have solved the problem. Alan Webb, Springtown, Pa.

**78. Witch hazel has multiple uses**

It can kill odor-causing bacteria, relieve sunburn, stop bleeding, act as a facial astringent, and even be used as mouthwash (just don't swallow). It can be put in a travel-sized spray bottle. Aaron Worthing, Williamston, Mich.

**79. Don't waste time waiting for your luggage on the first day of a cruise**

Instead of packing your swimsuit away with the rest of your clothes, put it in a small bag and carry it with you. Once you board the ship, you'll be able to enjoy the pool long before your suitcases are delivered to your cabin. Tom Griffith, Millbrae, Calif.

**Got your own travel tip you'd like to add?**

**Email it to me at [michael@mobalphone.com](mailto:michael@mobalphone.com)**