

OVERSEAS TRAVEL

- Duty Free is actually available before you depart without the sealed bag routine. The Tourist Refund scheme allows you to get back the GST on items purchased within 30 days of Departure that cost \$300 or more. The GST paid is refunded to your credit card by filling out forms either before, or at the airport. <http://www.customs.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=4646>
- Before you leave, research what you want to buy, and what it costs. I set up a spreadsheet with it listed as below; (Example only). Just prior to departure I put in the exchange rate, so that I won't pay more than I'd pay at home (Ebay or RRP) Currency conversions use <http://www.oanda.com/> for a free converter.

ITEM	RRP	EBAY	Foreign best price
Canon 100-400 IS lens	\$3500	\$1995	\$2,185SGD

Beware of them trying to offer alternative products. This is because you mightn't be aware of the price, and they can sell with a higher margin. Lucky Plaza in Singapore is renowned for this.

- Advise your credit card provider that you will be overseas from (Date to Date), and the type of items and expected price you might put on your card. That way, if the card is stolen, it will most likely raise suspicion when for example a jewellery purchase of a substantial quantity is made, where a Camera one would not. This helps them to help you.
- Keep your passports in the Hotel safe, and carry a colour scanned copy on you. This is sufficient to prove ID, but more difficult for people to fraud you if it's stolen and you still have the real one to fly out with. In the highly unlikely event Police need to sight the original, they can take you to the Hotel to allow you to retrieve it.
- Don't be scared of declaring things. Most prohibited items are of a quarantine nature, and are simply yes/no. And the queue for declaring us usually a lot shorter (read quicker). A Travel agent friend purchases boiled lollies, and would ask if it needed to be declared. Most times they said "Is that all?" and waved him through.
- Make your luggage stand out (Not boogie board style!). It's much easier to locate a bright tag or sticker on both sides of a bag than just another black suitcase. And use the luggage tamper seals where you can. Domestic luggage in the USA is not allowed to be locked now, unless with TSA approved locks. If not, they will break the locks. TSA locks can be opened with a master key, and pop up a Red "Flag" to show if it's been opened by them. If the TSA search it, get them to tape it up, and then put on your seals. Then it won't be touched for the remainder of the trip.
- Check out local laws on Photography. Since September 11, many Government buildings, presidential palaces etc are not allowed to be

photographed. I'd rather ask and get declined than spoil my holiday for a snap I could get on a postcard.

- Don't try to be too cheap. If you want to stay in miserable places, that's what you'll remember. You don't have to be extravagant at all, but for the sake of an extra couple of hundred dollars it can make a cheapskate memory into a far better one. Remember, it's never cheaper than when you are already there!

ALL TRAVEL

- Plug all your power packs into one long power-board. Use tape or tie-downs to hold them on. This helps when you stay at places where there are very few power-points. Keep in mind if it's overseas travel, there might only be one international power-point, or adaptor, so if you have to charge still and video cameras, backup devices, laptops, mobile phones, you would have to run a roster to get them all charged by the next day, or risk things running flat.
- Keep a list of all serial numbers of your gear. Most gear is recovered by serial number matches at pawnbrokers, as they have to notify all serial numbers of items purchased or risk cancellation of their trading licence. They also have to obtain ID of the seller, and many use CCTV of the selling area. They then have a withholding period before they can sell it. For those who can't be bothered, my thoughts are if they have smashed the window of my vehicle and stolen my stuff, anything to nail them for it and give them grief is time well spent!
- Backup frequently! DVD's and CD's are very cheap nowadays, so we mail them home on a regular basis for the kids. That way, if disaster strikes, we don't lose the lot. And don't forget the Video Camera too. There are backup devices like the NEXTO that will back up them as well. I can think of nothing worse than losing one of the new HD-DVD HDD camera's with 3 weeks of holiday all gone. Call me a Luddite, but I'm happy with Mini-DV Tapes, and critical things get dropped to DVD on the laptop as well.
- Finally, the camera bag. I carry at all times a long and short lens, filters, Grad filters, and lens cleaning cloths. I also have both a dry and wet cleaning cloth, and a dust blower. Add a battery grip, and 2 spare batteries, and a small reversible screwdriver for adjusting Tripod heads. I also have a notepad & biro, and a compass.
- If you are planning on getting Sunrise/Sunset photos, get these times http://www.perthobservatory.wa.gov.au/information/rise_set_times_phases.html Don't forget to adjust for places out of Perth. All the info is there. And allow enough time to get there and set up for the dawn from your preferred vantage point. There is nothing worse than driving to say Monkey Mia from Denham and watch the sunrise happening before you get there. Set the alarm if you want it, and get there on time.

REMOTE TRAVEL

- Research your destination, and the best time of year to go. Use resources like the local tourist bureau, CALM, RAC journey planner, Shires, and even the Local Police Station. And don't forget the internet; there are plenty of Blogs etc which can tell you what you need.
- Some links are;

<http://discoverdownunder.com.au/>

<http://rac.com.au/go/travel/journey-planner>

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~badger04/>

<http://www.west-oz.com/>

- VEHICLE PREPARATION – Work out your worst Mileage situation, than carry another 25% at least, in case you get bogged. Carry adequate spare tyres, and make sure you have no doubts about your vehicle reliability. And always carry water in the cabin in a squeeze bottle if 4WDing through long grass. Many a car has been lost with a hot exhaust starting a scrub fire. And don't forget the trailer/Camper. Make sure the bearings are fine, and it's roadworthy too.
- NOTIFICATIONS – For many things, especially the Canning Stock Route, PLAN!!!! Make a responsible person your point of contact, and make sure if you don't report in, he'll make the necessary calls to get help on its way. Drop in your itinerary to your local Police Station with Vehicle registrations and descriptions, how much fuel and water you are carrying, how many people, and any medical issues (Diabetes, heart condition)
- COMMUNICATIONS – Satellite Phones are expensive to hire and call. About \$5 per minute! And HF Radio's are also out of the reach for occasional travellers. Consider an EPIRB. They are cheap to hire or borrow from someone with a boat not being used. When they are activated, they are a Federal Government responsibility. Aircraft can be diverted to look for you, and it offers the best response. The State police won't be making budget

considerations on search planes, as the Commonwealth pick up the tab.
Don't activate needlessly, but when you need the cavalry, they are there for
you.

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