



## Immigration and customs



Travel abroad could be full of pitfalls. One wrong step and your vacation could be ruined. But there are some good practices and tips available to help you make your journey smooth.

- Get a plastic folder to keep all your documents with you. These could include the following:
  - Airline ticket
  - Passport
  - Foreign visa (if applicable)
  - Yellow fever card (if applicable)
  - Itinerary and hotel confirmations
  - If you will be staying with friends or colleagues, get an address, telephone number and even an invitation letter from them
  - Your country's embassy information in the country you are going to
  - International Driver's permit (if applicable)
  - Credit cards brought on the trip
  - Extra ID or passport photos
  - Any receipts of visas etc. paid for
- Never throw away any piece of paper they give you at immigration/customs – keep it in the plastic folder – you may need it when you leave the country. It may look like a hand-scribbled piece of paper, but could be your ticket out!
- Make copies of all your official documents and have it certified at a police station – keep this separate from your original documents, in case the originals get lost
- If you plan to drive overseas, you may need to obtain an International Driving Permit
- You can scan all your documents and keep it somewhere on Google.docs. Save it under a name like 'Uncle Henry', to obscure it. Then you can retrieve copies of your documents wherever you are in the world – also in case the originals get stolen.
- NEVER NEVER NEVER lose your temper
- Never show if you are getting impatient
- Stay friendly at ALL times
- Don't make jokes with officials with a play on words – they may not get it and think you are saying something else
- Don't make jokes about drugs or the country or their religion
- If you are using chronic medicine, get a prescription letter from your doctor listing these medicines and keep a copy with the medicine and the original letter in your folder. This goes for any other prescription medicine, e.g. Antibiotics.
- Learn what medical services your health insurance will cover overseas, and have a member card and international emergency numbers with you
- Most customs do not allow you to take in certain products, like meat, and other animal / plant products. Do research on the internet regarding the rules of the country you are going to. Adhere to these rules – they will find it and could stop you from entering and/or charge a fine

- Don't give them information they did not ask for – the 'need to know' principle
- Get a few simple survival phrases (greetings, thank you etc.) in the language spoken in the country you are going to. Try it out at immigration/customs etc. They love it when you try (even if it is not quite right) and you will have much favour with them.
- Remember to bring a light jacket or jersey in your hand luggage, because it can become quite cold in the air plane
- Always pack zip-lock bags. They are ideal for packing things tighter, separating wet from dry and managing small items like batteries, and keep your passport safe and dry.
- If travelling as a couple, divide each person's belongings and all chronic medicine amongst all luggage. If a bag gets lost, then you still have clothes and meds for the both of you