

# Happy Trails: Globetrotting Through Retirement

Contributed by Denise M. Clark

You've certainly waited long enough to take that trip around the world, and you've certainly earned it. The only problem is, you're not thirty years old anymore, and things have changed. Your spirit may be young, but your joints ache, you're taking any number of medications, and despite your excitement, there's also that tingle of stress over taking such a long journey.

If you plan carefully and know what to expect ahead of time, you can decrease those concerns and have the time of your life, one that you deserve. By taking precautions and doing a little research ahead of time, you will find that traveling after retirement can be one of the greatest joys you've ever experienced. However, make it easier on yourself and your spouse, if you're not traveling alone.

To make the most of your trip, no matter where you're destined, there are a few things you should do before you shove off. First, visit your doctor and make sure you are up to date on any vaccinations. Ask about recommended vaccinations to other parts of the world several months prior to departure. You can contact your local Health Department for a list of recommended shots or vaccinations that will cover any global destination you have in mind.

In addition, if you are traveling with medicines, call the Embassy of the country you are planning to visit and make sure that your medications are legal in that country. There may be a limit to what you can bring, so plan ahead. Always ask your doctor to provide you with a letter that verifies the medications you're taking, their dosage and what it's for, as well as the fact that it has been prescribed for your own personal use. This is especially important for diabetics that need to bring syringes and needles with them on their trip. Leave medications in their original bottles and packages.

Prepare a small first-aid kit to pack in your bags, which includes aspirin, antacids, band-aids and the like. In most cases, you might also want to include insect repellent and antiseptic lotions. Contact the TSB online for airport guidelines on how to pack such items in your suitcase.

While traveling, always keep your medications with your carry-on bags, in case you and your luggage are separated from each other. If you need insulin or any other medication refrigerated while flying, ask the stewardess to store supplies in their refrigerator. They'll be happy to accommodate you. This is also common practice on ships as well.

When flying long distances, drink plenty of fluids and constantly stretch your feet and legs as much as possible. Walk around the cabin and perform isometric exercises while seated. This will help to prevent deep vein thrombosis as well as to prevent excess stiffness and discomfort.

Try, whenever possible, to drink water from only bottled sources when traveling overseas, and avoid ice in soft drinks or alcohol. Remember, ice cubes merely preserve germs, but don't kill them.

Dress appropriately, observe local customs when it comes to clothing, and most of all, try not to stand out like a sore thumb when in a foreign country. Never carry large amounts of cash on you. If you wear a money belt, tuck some money into a sock or even the bottom of your shoe for emergencies as well.

No matter how many things you want to see or do after you've arrived at your final destination, try not to overbook your itinerary, especially the first couple of days after a long, international flight. Be aware of changes in altitude, and take things slow and easy the first few days out. Allow your body to become accustomed to changes in climate as well.

When dining, choose foods that have been cooked. Avoid salads and unpeeled fruit whenever possible. Carry an anti-

diarrheal in your bag for emergencies. To avoid bouts of intestinal distress, take precautions. Before you leave on your journey, try to acclimate your dining selections to the foods and spices that are likely to be available at your destination. Doing so will give your stomach a head's up that will help to avoid excess trips to the bathroom.

Traveling through retirement can provide joys you never dreamed of, but if you don't plan ahead, you may find your long-dreamed vacation fraught with difficulties and frustrations. Don't wait until the last minute. Plan ahead, be informed and be prepared to have the time of your life!

Denise M. Clark is a published author, freelance writer and editor. You may find her on the web at Gemini Writing Services.