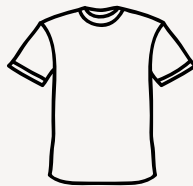
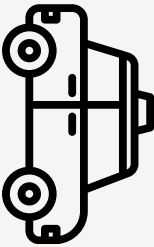
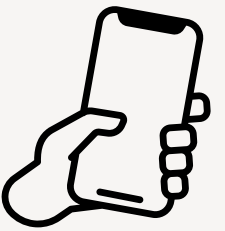
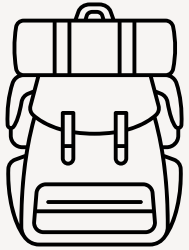
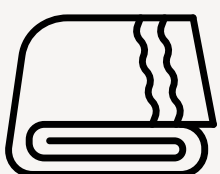
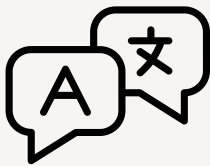
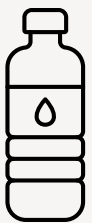
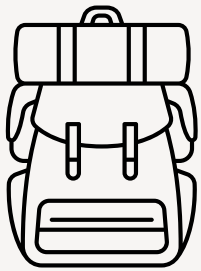


GRINGO NATION



31 TRAVEL TIPS I SWEAR BY





TRAVEL LIGHT — AIM FOR CARRY-ON ONLY

Trust me, it'll save you from dragging heavy bags (especially through those ancient cobblestone streets in Europe), waiting at baggage claim, or dealing with lost luggage. If you need something, just buy it when you get there! Plus, it's nice to leave some extra space in your bag for souvenirs or a new shirt. I even bring an old t-shirt just so I can ditch it and pick up something fresh. Another bonus: you can check in online and skip the baggage drop-off line, meaning you get to the airport later and breeze right through to security check.



PACK VERSATILE CLOTHES

Choose items that work for different occasions—like a t-shirt that doubles as workout gear or casual wear for a night out. A button-up shirt can be used in formal settings (hello Bumble dates!) or worn open at the beach for a laid-back vibe. You'd be surprised how much space you can save by picking clothes that can do double duty.



ALWAYS CARRY A UNIVERSAL ADAPTOR

It's a small, simple item that ensures you're always prepared to charge your devices no matter where you are. It's saved my butt on multiple occasions. You really never know what kind of plug you'll run into!



RENT AN ONWARD TICKET IF YOU NEED IT

Trust me, I learned this the hard way when I got stuck in an airport in the Philippines for 3 days. Some countries want proof that you're leaving, so if you're not sure where you're heading next, just rent a ticket for around \$15 from sites like BestOnwardTicket. It's good for 48 hours and takes the stress out of immigration. Sure, sometimes they won't even ask for it, but after my experience, I'm not taking that risk again!



DOWNLOAD GOOGLE MAPS BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

Chances are, you won't have local data right away, and sometimes airports don't offer free Wi-Fi. The easiest fix? Download an offline map of the city you're landing in. It'll help you get your bearings as soon as you arrive and make navigating unfamiliar places a breeze—especially when Wi-Fi is hard to come by.



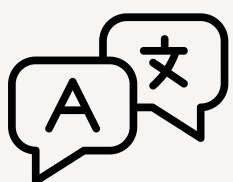
PLAN YOUR AIRPORT RIDE IN ADVANCE

it's usually where scams happen. Check if ride-share apps like Uber or Grab are available at your destination airport. If not, ask your hotel or Airbnb host about local drivers; some hosts might even pick you up themselves. No luck? Research buses or average taxi fares before arriving. If you need a taxi, knowing the typical price can help you avoid overpaying. For metered taxis, find out which companies are trustworthy. A little research goes a long way!



PACK WITH A “MAYBE” PILE

Start by packing your essentials first. For items you're unsure about, put them in a separate “maybe” pile, away from your main bag. Once your bag is packed, only add from the “maybe” pile if you have extra space. If you still feel unsure about an item, leave it behind—you likely won't use it. Keep it light and stress-free!



LEARN A FEW LOCAL PHRASES

Making an effort to speak the local language can open doors, build rapport with locals, and show respect for their culture. Plus, it makes everyday interactions easier for you. Knowing even a few words can make all the difference. Apps like Duolingo or Google Translate are great for quick learning. If you want to fully immerse yourself, start early—watch movies, binge TV shows, or read books in your target language months before your trip. It's a fun way to learn and helps you pick up pronunciation and cultural context naturally!



SLOW TRAVEL BEATS RUSHING AROUND

Spend more time in fewer places to truly soak in the culture. It's less stressful, more budget-friendly, and lets you enjoy your trip at a relaxed pace. Instead of ticking off a long list of landmarks, focus on experiences—like savoring tapas in the sun rather than cramming in three crowded cathedrals. Taking it slow often leads to deeper connections and more authentic memories!



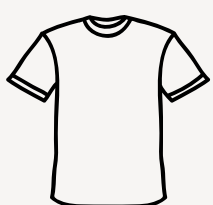
EAT WHERE THE LOCALS EAT

Follow the crowd! If you spot a hidden gem packed with locals, that's your sign it's probably high-quality and reasonably priced. Stay away from touristy spots, especially those with someone outside trying to lure you in with a menu—they're often overpriced and underwhelming. This is especially true in Europe, where tourist traps are common. In the end, the best meals often come from the places that aren't in the guidebooks. By venturing off the beaten path and embracing where the locals dine, you'll not only save money but also experience the true flavors of the place.



CHECK OUT WALKING TOURS

They're an awesome way to get a feel for a new place while picking up cool insider tips from local guides. Plus, it's a great chance to meet other travelers who are probably just as eager to socialize as you are. Most of these kinds of tours are free (huge win!), but hey... don't forget to give your guide a nice tip. Bonus: you'll get some exercise while you're at it!



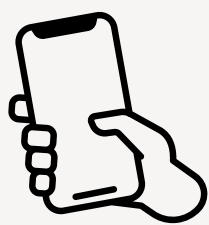
STICK TO NEUTRAL COLORS

They're super easy to mix and match. Bright prints can be fun (I like to keep a couple for those special nights out), but if they don't pair well with most of your stuff, it's better to leave them behind. Keeping it simple makes putting outfits together way easier. Plus, neutral tones can help you blend in a bit more when you're traveling. Let's be real: being a foreigner is usually enough attention on its own!



USE GOOGLE FLIGHTS FOR PRICE FUNCTION

When booking flights, take advantage of Google Flights' price tracking feature. This tool shows you how much a specific flight has cost over the past thirty days, giving you insight into whether the current price is higher or lower than usual. If you notice the price has been lower in recent weeks, it might be worth waiting a bit longer to see if it drops again. This simple feature can help you decide whether to book immediately or hold off for a better deal.



KEEP DIGITAL COPIES OF YOUR DOCUMENTS ON YOUR PHONE

It's a total lifesaver if your passport or anything important gets lost or stolen. Plus, carrying your original passport around isn't always the best idea, especially if there's a chance your bag could get snatched or misplaced. The only time you really need it on you is when you're traveling between places. Otherwise, just leave it somewhere secure, like a hostel locker or a hotel safe, and save yourself the stress.



STAY AT HOSTELS

They're definitely the way to go if you're looking for social vibes. They're super affordable and perfect for meeting new people, especially if you're traveling solo. Most people staying there are also looking to connect, so making friends is pretty easy. Plus, hostels usually have common areas, group activities, parties, tours, and even family dinners where you can hang out and swap travel tips. Bonus tip: if you're using Hostelworld, download their app—you can chat with other travelers heading to the same city or hostel. I've met some amazing people this way!



ALERT YOUR BANK

Let your bank know you're traveling to avoid the hassle of frozen cards while you're abroad. A quick heads-up about your plans ensures your transactions go through smoothly, no matter where you are. If you're a digital nomad like me and bouncing between countries every few months, it's especially important. Just let them know they'll see activity from different places—it's better than getting stuck explaining it later when you really need access to your money.



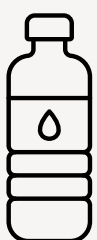
USE TRAVEL-SIZED CONTAINERS FOR TOILETRIES

These containers help you save space and avoid lugging around bulky bottles. They're super cheap and easy to grab on Amazon, but you can get creative too. Hotel shampoo containers work great in a pinch, and I've even reused old soy sauce containers from food delivery. Anything compact beats wasting precious space in your bathroom bag



SKIP EXCHANGE HOUSES AND STICK TO ATMS

They're almost always cheaper and more convenient. Banks like Wise or Revolut make withdrawing money abroad super easy, often with low or no fees, depending on the country. I rarely exchange cash anymore, but if I have to, I avoid airport exchanges since their rates are terrible. Instead, I head into the city center where rates are usually better. Pro tip: a quick rideshare to your accommodation and a local ATM can save you a ton.



BRING A REUSABLE WATER BOTTLE

Pack a reusable water bottle for your airport trips and skip the overpriced bottled water. Once you're through security, just fill it up at a water fountain—it's a lifesaver, especially on flight days. I've had enough of those tiny cups of water on planes that barely do the job. With your own bottle, you'll stay hydrated and have a much more comfortable journey!



NOISE-CANCELING HEADPHONES

These are a travel essential. Whether you're on a flight, in a noisy airport, or just need a break, they block out distractions and let you escape. Pop on your favorite playlist or podcast, and say goodbye to the chaos—no more screaming babies ruining your vibe.



BOOK A PLACE WITH A KITCHEN

it's a total game-changer. Even just a hotplate and fridge can save you money and keep meals healthier than eating out all the time. I've saved tons this way, and it's let me stretch my budget for even more adventures!



ASK THE LOCALS

they know all the hidden gems! Whether it's the best places to eat, visit, or explore, their advice always beats hours of online research. Chat with tour guides, hostel staff, or even restaurant workers—you'll discover spots you'd never find on your own.



TRAVEL IN THE OFF-SEASON

For fewer crowds, cheaper prices, and more authentic vibes. I swear by this—skipping Europe in the summer and exploring Southeast Asia during the rainy season has never disappointed. The quieter atmosphere always makes the experience feel more special.



BOOK LONG-TERM STAYS ON AIRBNB

This will help you save big. Many hosts offer discounts for month-long bookings, making it a great budget option. Not sure about committing? Start with a few nights to test it out. If it works, you can even ask the host about an off-platform deal—it's often cheaper for both of you. Not all hosts are open to this, but I've been able to make a deal through WhatsApp numerous times.



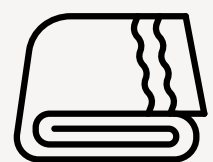
JOIN FACEBOOK GROUPS

It will help you connect with locals and travelers. It's an easy way to get insider tips, plan meetups, and find support while on the road. Look for groups like "Expats in Bangkok" or "Foreigners in Buenos Aires"—they're packed with people who've already mastered things you're just learning. Not only have I picked up invaluable advice this way, but I've also made lifelong friends along the journey.



AVOID BOOKING THROUGH 3RD-PARTY SITES

Avoid websites like like Gotogate, Expedia etc. I learned this the hard way. When one of my flights was canceled, Gotogate claimed they weren't responsible, and the airline told me to take it up with Gotogate. I was stuck in limbo with no help and completely stressed out. Next time you see cheap flights on Skyscanner or Google Flights, go directly to the airline's website to book. Trust me, no discount is worth the stress if something goes wrong, and companies like Gotogate don't deserve your money.



LEAVE THE TOWEL AT HOME

All hotels and Airbnbs provide them, and even hostels usually have one to rent for cheap. If you really need your own, go for a compact, fast-drying towel that's easy to pack. Bulky towels take up space, and wet ones can make your bag smell terrible. It's just not worth the hassle!



A WATERPROOF BAG IS A MUST-HAVE

It's perfect for island adventures, keeping your belongings dry, and doubles as a makeshift laundry hamper or for quick packing. On lazy travel days when I'm not flying or taking a bus, I do a "lightning pack" by tossing extra items into my waterproof bag, then load everything into a taxi—it's a lifesaver. If you're into van life, some waterproof bags with air vents can even double as a makeshift shower when filled with water. This versatile tool is one of the most useful items in my travel kit!



OATS FOR DINNER?

Absolutely! They're budget-friendly, easy to prepare, and healthy—a perfect backup meal. A single bag can stretch across a week if you're on a tight budget. To make them tastier, add fruits like bananas, apples, or berries, unsweetened peanut butter, coconut milk or cream, and a dash of cinnamon. Oats are widely available and simple to whip up when you're too tired to cook or step out. Keep some in your pantry—they're a reliable lifesaver for quick, no-fuss meals anywhere in the world!



DON'T OVER-PLAN LEAVE ROOM FOR SPONTANEITY

The most memorable adventures often happen when you embrace the unexpected. Flexibility is key because you might love a place and want to extend your stay or decide to move on sooner than planned. Unless you're visiting a spot that requires advance booking due to heavy tourism, try this: book 3 nights, see how it feels, and go from there. Solo travelers often make friends on the road, and plans might change if a group adventure comes up. If you're locked into a rigid itinerary, you could miss out on incredible opportunities—don't let that happen!



SEARCH AIRBNB REVIEWS LIKE A PRO

After staying at 70 Airbnbs all around the world, I've nailed down what makes a place work for me: fast internet, no construction noise, proximity to shops and cafes, and proper workspaces with comfy chairs. These little details can make or break your stay. That's why using Airbnb's review search tool is a game-changer. Type in keywords like "wifi," "quiet," or "desk" to instantly filter reviews and check if a listing meets your needs. You can adapt these keywords to whatever is important for you—"clean," "far," "city center," "broken," "comfortable," "uncomfortable," and the list goes on! It's a huge time-saver and helps you avoid booking regrets!