20 for 20: The tech travel tips we've tried, tested, and learned

A view from: **Tarran Street**

Scoring great deals, navigating busy airports, and planning your dream vacation can be done on any device with no complications

Twenty years ago, Expedia was just a twinkle in Microsoft's eye, and twenty years ago, planning a trip involved very little technology, often nothing more than a series of phone conversations with traditional travel agents. Expedia has since made huge strides and disrupted the way people plan and book travel by leveraging technology to improve the booking process.

Our wanderlust inspires us to travel the world, stamp our passports, and take all those cheesy tourist photos. We've become pretty seasoned in traveling, but sometimes vacations can leave you victim to a series of last-minute frustrations and unexpected trip hurdles. Don't fret, we've compiled a list of our most brilliant travel tech tips to help you navigate, explore, and share worry free!

1. Loyalty rules. Sign up for free loyalty programs offered by many travel providers to earn points or rewards when you travel or spend money on their sites. For example, Expedia+ Rewards members receive access to exclusive member-only deals and bonus offers as they shop, special amenities and perks at +VIP Access hotels, and triple rewards points just by booking with the Expedia mobile app.

2. Bundle booking. When booking a trip on an online travel agency, book your flight and hotel at the exact same time. You might save hundreds because of obscure travel industry pricing rules. Book them even one minute apart and the savings disappear!

3. Better safe than sorry. Take a photo of your passport page and keep it on your trusty device you never leave home without (just in case)!

4. Do your homework. Scroll through sites and read those reviews before you book. Don't find out your dream hotel room is less than desirable as soon as you cross the threshold.

5. Allow push notifications! Instead of haphazardly dodging fellow travelers to clear a path while you're running through the terminal, get real-time notifications and alerts about any flight status changes to your smartwatch or phone, so you can keep cool and know

exactly if you have time to stop for that much needed coffee or snack before boarding the plane.

6. Sharing is caring. Share your app itinerary with any family members or friends who may be anticipating your arrival. Itinerary sharing instantaneously notifies your selected contacts about the status of your trip and provides immediate alerts regarding unexpected changes. Then they can automatically track your flight departures, arrivals, and delays to stay in the loop from afar without you ever having to lift a finger.

7. Free breakfast? Welcome drink? Heck yes! Double check your itinerary in your app before you check-in to learn about any extras you might be getting during your stay.

8. Breeze through security. Laptops have to come out of your bags at most screening checkpoints, but tablets, e-readers, and gadgets smaller than 13 inches can stay in your carry-on. U.S.-based travelers should also consider applying for special programs and services like <u>TSA Pre-Check</u>, <u>Clear</u>, and <u>Global Entry</u> to get into quicker screening lines and avoid many of the typical airport security hassles like removing your shoes and coat during testing.

9. Entertain yourself. Download your favorite music, movies, magazines, and books on your tablet or smartphone, and don't forget those headphones! Long

flight or <u>noisy neighbor</u>? You're going to want to plug in and catch an in-flight movie or listen to your favorite jams to block out any crying babies who may be seated nearby.

10. Charge before you go. Low battery?! Don't get that sinking feeling when you take your seat, make sure you have a full charge on all your electronics by charging up your mobile devices before leaving for a trip.

11. Back it up. Long trip or glued to your device? Pack a portable battery back or mobile charger in your carry-on bag so you can keep working (or playing) throughout the flight.

12. Save trees, go paperless! Don't have time to print your boarding pass? No worries, just have it sent to your smartphone or access from the airline's mobile app to make check-in a breeze (well, depending on those security lines).

13. Capture the moment. Keep your phone on airplane mode to avoid draining the battery on a flight, and be sure to keep it handy when you're in the window seat in case you catch an amazing sunset or aerial view you know will make the perfect Instagram. #NoFilter

14. Don't get caught roaming. If you're globetrotting, be careful of enabling international data and roaming cell service so you don't get stuck paying unexpected fees or extra charges on your phone bill when you return.

15. Text on the beach. Share those photos, make your friends jealous! But don't forget, sun, sand, and surf don't mix well with electronics. Protect your phone from the elements with a cover, screen protector, and even waterproof bags in case of tropical mid-afternoon showers (and don't forget some sunscreen for yourself)!

16. Wrap it up. A tangle of cords is never fun. Wrap cords around their devices, pack chargers together in one bag, and take advantage of rubber bands and twist ties to keep them tangle-free.

17. Apps, apps, apps! A few airlines are starting to offer in-flight entertainment on your device. The catch is you need to install their app before you get on the plane. Check before and be prepared.

18. Lock it up. Keep your gadgets safe and sound while you are out exploring. Utilize the safe in your hotel to store your laptop, passport, money, and other important documents and devices when you don't need them.

19. Be aware. Phones and gadgets are hot commodities and commonly stolen, so keep them close. Be careful about placing it in an open bag or even your back pocket, you may never notice those sticky fingers.

20. Break language barriers. Download popular translation apps so you can communicate more easily with locals and never be at a loss for words.

And don't forget to download the award-winning <u>Expedia app</u> to browse and book everything from hotels and flights to rental cars and local activities on the go and access up-to-the-minute trip details and alerts in a radically simple, efficient way. *Bon voyage!*

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