

Don't make these tech travel mistakes

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There are several tech steps you can take to make sure you have an awesome trip. Columnist Jennifer Jolly shares some tips.



I travel a ton—as much as 10,000 miles a month for work—which means I've made a whole slew of tech-related travel mistakes over the years. The good news is, now you don't have to. Here are my top ten tech-related travel gaffes all in one place, so that you can learn from my mistakes and have the best trip ever (whether for business or pleasure).

Mistake #1: Not Packing (Enough) Power

Dead batteries are the worst, especially if you need your smartphone to connect, navigate, and share. I've learned over the years that there's no such thing as too much back-up power. I bring my wall charger, at least one additional charging cable (to plug into my laptop or a hotel TV USB port when I run out of outlets), a multi-outlet plug, portable charger, and if I'm going to be driving, a car charger too. Of course, if you're traveling overseas, you might need to grab an outlet adapter. Belkin makes reliable [wall and car chargers](#) while [the tiny Travelcard charger](#) (\$30) offers

extra power without extra bulk. Whatever you carry, be sure to pack it neatly and label everything, so you don't wind up with a confusing mess. For that, I use a basic [Grid-It](#) (\$15) organizer.

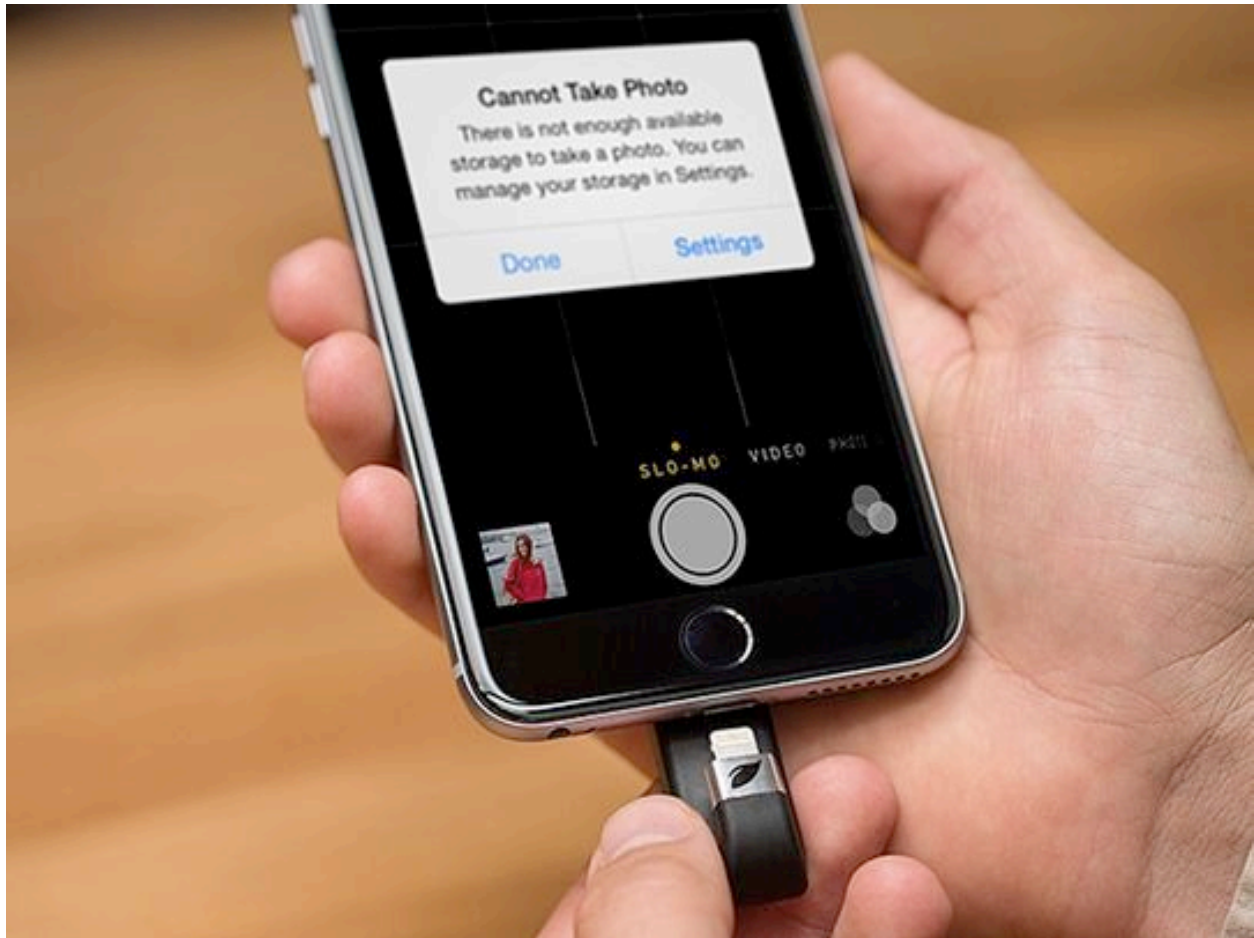
Mistake #2: Relying on Airplane Earbuds or Smartphone Speakers

Headphones are essential for rocking any trip—and airplane handouts definitely don't cut it. Instead, pick up the [Zagg Flex Arc Wireless headset](#) (\$100). This sleek, lightweight wearable has retractable earbuds and connects via Bluetooth, so there are no cables or cords to get tangled in. Plus, the Flex Arc doubles as a wireless boombox, with 13mm external speakers that deliver rich, full sound to liven up the mood anywhere you go.

Mistake #3: Not Bringing a Real Camera

Loading up your smartphone with every vacation video and photo isn't so smart: Snapping lots of pictures runs your battery down and eats up your storage space. It's easier than ever now to pick up a real camera without breaking your budget. One new device is the [Now Cam](#) (\$130) which lets you point, shoot, capture, save and share your memories via Wi-Fi. It sports a 120° wide-angle camera for still photos, 6-second video bursts, and continuous video, and comes with a compact speaker with built-in mic to make sure you never miss a moment. The waterproof [GoPro Hero4](#) (\$500) is more of a splurge, but it's also a great go-to for capturing magical moments—though be sure download often or add storage, as it often fills up faster than you expect!

Mistake #4: Running Out of Storage Space



(Photo: Leef)

Speaking of your precious memories, don't run out of room on your mobile devices with the [Leef Bridge](#) (\$30) for Android (\$30) or the [Leef iBridge](#) for iPhone (\$60). Both of these tiny mobile memory gadgets plug into your smartphone or tablet to add up to 256GB of memory—that's a lot of vacation awesome-ness! This is the perfect solution to increase storage capacity and continue capturing videos and photos on the go. Paired with Leef's [MobileMemory](#) app (Free), you can also carry your entire movie or music library along without taking up any space on your iOS device. I love this.

Mistake #5: Not Keeping an Eye on the House

Having smart home gadgets monitoring the house is great when you're in town, but when you're on vacation you need something that can call for

help on its own. Enter [LivSecure](#) (\$35/month), a high-tech home security system that pairs window and door sensors, lights, smoke detectors, and more with 24/7 professional monitoring. Whether you're near or far, LivSecure sends you real-time alerts and lets you check in from a computer, phone, or tablet anywhere that you have Internet access. But what's even better, is that if a fire breaks out or burglar breaks in, LivSecure calls authorities right away. This is huge and solves a problem a lot of people are worried about. In a recent Harris Poll, 93% of people said they want alarm systems to notify emergency responders **immediately** when something happens. LivSecure also lets you remotely arm your system, turn lights on and off and keep your home or apartment just as safe (or safer) as when you're at home.

Mistake #6: Using Your Phone Overseas

If you're traveling internationally, jumping online with your smartphone can mean a huge bill—but don't panic, because there are ways around it. The easiest—but not cheapest—option is to call your carrier and get a plan featuring international service. If you have Google's newest Nexus phones, the company [offers budget-friendly cell service](#) with international connectivity, and if you have an unlocked phone, an [international SIM card](#) lets you prepay for service with your existing phone. For everyone else, look for a prepaid phone with service wherever you're traveling.

Mistake #7: Not Having the Right Apps

No one wants to spend their vacation downloading things, so before you go, load up your phone with everything you need. At the airport, [Flio](#) helps you navigate and connect to Wi-Fi while [Loungebuddy](#) is the simplest way to get into airport lounges. For getting around, [Google Maps](#) lets you look up destinations and tells you when they're busiest while [Moovit](#) offers public transit directions to get there. And don't forget travel guides and phrasebooks!

Mistake #8: Not Calling Your Bank

Practically all of us use credit or debit cards when we travel, which means it's crucial to call your bank to let them know you're leaving town. It only takes a few minutes—most banks offer easy options to do this on the phone or online—and it prevents the bank from locking up your card when

they see it being used from different locale. I forget to do this every work trip, and it's so embarrassing to stand at a register and call my bank. No matter how often it happens, my cheeks still turn beet-red every time. Plus, nothing ruins your vacation faster than not having any spending money.

Mistake #9: Not Being Able to Carry What you Need

No one wants to lug a bulky purse around on vacation—plus it's a target for theft. A jacket or vest from [Scottevest](#) lets you carry everything you need, from your tablet to your water bottle. Some of their products also block RFID which prevents high-tech scammers from grabbing your credit card or passport information without even picking your pocket. One word of advice though—buy one size bigger than you normally wear. I wear a women's small, but the fit is snug enough that you can see a lot of the gadgets through the material. A baggier fit helps hide your precious gadgets even more.

Mistake #10: Missing Out on the Right Luggage

A great bag can make travel so much easier. For the gadget-obsessed, the [Bluesmart](#) suitcase charges your smartphone and can be tracked using an app—no more lost luggage. If you fly so frequently packing has become a hassle, [DUFL](#) lets you pack your bag once, and then send it to DUFL. Just enter your next trip in the DUFL app and your bag's waiting at your hotel—when it's time to go, DUFL will pick up your bag and launder your clothes so you're ready for the next trip. Easy!

Bonus Tip: Consider Unplugging!

I just returned from my first “real” vacation in five years, and I didn't take my laptop out of my luggage the entire week I was away. That's a huge first for me, but remember—it's a vacation—and sometimes just unplugging and recharging your own batteries is the best advice of all!

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