

Official Planning Timeline

Use AirTreks' Official Around the World Travel Planning Checklist and Timeline to organize your trip to-do list from a year out all the way up until the day you depart. We don't mean to brag, but it's one of the best free resources for planning a complex, multi-city trip you're likely to find.

1 year – 6 months before you go:

- It's still too early to be purchasing RTW tickets, so use this time to decide on your top destinations, outline your itinerary and set budgets – in other words, dream.
- Make a **destination list**, ranked by importance, interest, and convenience.
- Use [TripPlanner](#) to price out different around the world itineraries and get a feel for what each one costs based on what matters to you most: price, trip length, destinations and/or route.
- Research, then prioritize your country and city list. Decide which to include or omit.
- Use seasonality and resources like TimeOut and official tourism website's calendar of events to get an idea of when you want to be in different locations.
- Dig a little deeper - not all of the best info is reachable through Google. Check blogrolls from your favorite travel blogs for interesting links and read them. Some of the best info can be found on [smaller travel blogs](#).

- Start planning your budget. Set a price goal and then add 25% to it, just in case (everyone needs a little wiggle room on the road).
- Research the sale of your home to see if that's a good fit for you.

6 months – 4 months out:

- **Time to get the ball rolling!** Select a route on TripPlanner and follow the prompts to **submit it to one of our agents**.
- Wait for the callback or email from one of our consultants (within one business day), or [call us](#).
- Take as much time as you need when working with a travel consultant to get the trip you want. Ask lots of questions. Our consultants will give cost differentials for whatever tweaks you have in mind.
- **Apply for a passport** or make sure the one you have will be valid at least 6 months beyond your last travel date. If not, renew. [It's best to do passport stuff early](#).
- Research [necessary visas](#) (visa rules and length of stay limitations often dictate travel dates).
- Decide on your trip dates.
- [Take the plunge](#) – buy your round-the-world air tickets! (Don't forget insurance.)

4 months – 3 months before departure:

- Set up the other facets of the trip: where you're staying, what you'll be doing. Arrange accommodations, tours, events, activities, etc.
- Tell your family and friends you'll be out of town and give them your dates of travel and any information they'll need to reach you on the road.
- Start the application process for visas and work permits.
- Create a day-by-day itinerary – it doesn't have to be too detailed but if you have specific places or sites you want to see, *pencil* them in between flights.
- Buy or download guidebooks or destination apps to take with you.
- Begin to organize your life for an extended leave of absence, i.e., figure out what to do with your house/apt, bills, car, mail, pets, etc.
- Set up frequent flyer accounts.
- Acquire no fee international credit cards. (Or make sure yours can be used internationally. Pro tip: Make sure you have a 4-digit pin, even if you prefer to sign)
- Request a spare debit card from your bank(in case you lose one).
- Contact friends in faraway places to let them know you're coming.
- Get an email account (Yahoo or Gmail are free) that's not linked to work or school if you don't have one already and notify your contacts you're switching.
- Organize your address book. Fill out any missing contact info (phone numbers, addresses, and emails you don't have). Don't forget to add our customer service email to your list!
- Read our [101 Things To Do Before Your Trip](#) blog post.

3 months – 1 month:

- Take advantage of this time period to hone your travel skills. Take local trips, be a tourist in your hometown or simply take a planning break. Maybe watch movies about far off places or listen to some world music.
- Purchase any needed supplies, gear, and clothing (backpacks/luggage, electronics, SD-cards, travel-wear, soap, personal ID, long white scarf, etc.) If you buy something technical, like a camera, familiarize yourself with it by taking it for test runs.
- Request your sabbatical or hand in your work resignation (gulp!).
- Set up a travel blog
- Read an [inspirational book](#).
- Get your student i.d. card if applicable.
- Get an international driver's license if applicable.
- Acquire extra passport photos.
- Arrange for someone to rent or sublet your place (since you'll be on the road, a property management company may be the best choice for managing this).
- Set up online bill-pay.
- Get your cell phone unlocked so you can switch out sim cards in different locations. Trust us, buying a local pay-as-you-go sim card in each location is much cheaper than paying international roaming charges.
- Plan dinner dates with family and friends you won't see for a while.

1 month – 2 weeks:

- Finalize accommodations, especially for your first couple of nights away ([but don't commit to staying long-term in a place you haven't seen in person](#)).
- Get your travel vaccinations and immunization records and leave a copy with someone you trust, or scan a copy and save it to your cloud.

2 weeks – 1 week:

- Carefully read over your itinerary/reservations and make sure everything is ready to go.
- Visualize yourself in each destination from day to day. This will help prepare you mentally and emotionally for the experience and also remind you of things you need to pack for each stop on your route.
- Copy and/or scan important documents. Keep originals on your person, and a hard copy elsewhere in your bags. You can also leave copies with someone you trust or upload them to your cloud so you can access them online without anyone else's help.

Final week:

- [Pull out our packing checklist](#) or, if you want to travel light, never fear--turns out [a backpack may be just enough baggage for your round-the-world trip](#). Use these pieces to pick up the items you're sure you can't live without, and discard the rest. When it comes to luggage, less is usually more.
- Call your bank to let them know where you'll be traveling — banks often freeze accounts when international charges appear out of the blue.
- Forward your mail to someone you trust, or stop it altogether.

3 days:

- Reconfirm your first flight! (It's best to do this before *every* flight.)
- Jot down a to-do list for the night before your departure.
- Set up an out-of-town message on your email to let people know about response delays.

2 days:

- Start packing! Grab everything you're taking with you and *take inventory*. Keep that list with you throughout your trip so you can keep track along the way. This will help [keep your baggage within airline weight and size limits](#) and also let you know right away if you've lost something.
- Get cash/travelers checks and *some local currency from your first destination*.
- Do laundry.
- Don't forget to breathe! Try to get plenty of sleep. Anxiety overload can keep you from accurately gauging what's left to do.

Day before departure:

- Finish packing. Checklist in hand, [load up that luggage](#). Don't forget to weigh and measure your bags and check Luggage Limits.
- Make any last minute phone calls.
- Hug your family, friends, and pets.
- Charge your phone/camera/laptop/music player.
- Look forward to the future.
- Celebrate! But don't forget that hangovers can [make jet lag worse](#).

Day of departure:

- Eat well and drink lots of water. A good meal before your flight will give you the energy to stay awake, but staying hydrated is even more important. Skip the alcohol--it dehydrates you and worsens jet lag, which can be debilitating upon arrival in a new country. You'll need your all your faculties, so be prepared!

After departure:

- Reconfirm your flights two to three days before each flight (see above).
- Take lots of pictures.
- Keep in touch with family and friends via phone, email, skype, or your blog.
- Enjoy your trip! You've earned it.