

Here's how to avoid a travel disaster of your own during the pandemic

It's important to keep in mind that most travel providers are offering great flexibility during the pandemic. In general, airlines, cruise lines, and most hotels will allow you to cancel and receive a future credit should you decide not to travel. However, these policies vary and always require the traveler to cancel within a given timeframe.

So that you don't end up in a travel disaster of your own — honeymoon or not — here are some steps to take leading up to your trip.

1. Visit the website of the CDC

The website of the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) should be your first step](#) as you research the feasibility of an international journey right now. The page on international travel is updated regularly, and you should bookmark it for frequent reference before and during your trip.

2. Check with the U.S. Department of State

The [U.S. State Department maintains health and safety information and entry requirements](#) for every country around the globe. Travelers should bookmark their destination(s) for quick reference. Don't forget to review not only your destination's requirements but any transit country on your itinerary as well.

3. Confirm entry requirements with your destination's embassy or consulate

From the U.S. State Department's country pages, it's very easy to locate the website of the embassy or consulate of any destination. Make sure you understand all requirements for your visit. Keep in mind that some countries may allow you to enter, but you may be required to quarantine once there. If that isn't something you're willing to do, you may wish to postpone your trip. As we've seen in today's story, some countries require travelers to provide proof of health insurance that's valid abroad. Lastly, in recent weeks we have become aware that a number of foreign governments are requiring visitors to produce a vaccination card. And remember, you're not fully vaccinated until two weeks after your final injection. It's critical to take all of this into consideration long before you head to the airport.

4. Ensure that your health insurance is valid for your trip

Obviously, international travel during a global pandemic poses an increased health risk. Many countries and cruise lines currently require passengers to prove that they have valid medical insurance to cover any treatment while abroad. If your own personal health insurance provides coverage abroad, make sure to get that in writing on the company's official letterhead. If, as most policies do not, your own health insurance doesn't cover you abroad, travel insurance with medical coverage is a requirement for many destinations. You can read through [Christopher's article about buying travel insurance](#) during the pandemic to help guide you through this process.

5. Don't forget your passport, travel/health insurance proof, vaccination card, masks, and hand sanitizer

If you've done all your planning and you're about to head to the airport, make sure you have all the required documentation in hand. Many foreign destinations require some pre-arrival information from visitors at this time. You may even need to have been pre-approved for entry. Of course, you would have found that out by visiting the website of the embassy or consulate of your destination (in step 3). But don't forget to bring that information with you to the airport along with your passport (with at least three months of validity beyond your return), travel insurance information, vaccination card (if you have one), comfortable masks, and, of course, hand sanitizer (and use it often!).

6. Rinse and repeat — Oops, I mean check, check and check these policies again

I can't stress this enough; you must continually run through this list right up to departure. Policies are changing rapidly — and what is true this week may not be valid next week. If you don't commit yourself to checking and rechecking frequently, you could easily find yourself rejected at the airport or dock — with no refund included. (Michelle Couch-Friedman, Elliott Advocacy)

Access this and other travel tips, at www.elliott.org.