

## Tips for Thoughtful Travel: Before You Leave

---

1. **Look forward with joy.** Recognize that anticipation and reflection can be the most meaningful parts of your trip. Relish looking forward to your trip.
2. **Realize the power of expectations.** Too often, we let Web sites and guidebooks form our pre-trip expectations. Being informed is good but be aware of how much your expectations can affect you or even disappoint if they're not met.
3. **Embrace risk.** Prepare before you leave to be bolder than you might be at home. This is your chance to step out of the confines of your comfort zone. The worst situations at the time often make the best stories later. Growth occurs when we overcome challenges. Treat your trip as what it is: one great adventure.
4. **Re-think suffering.** Brace yourself before you leave for encountering life in the raw. In other countries, people don't try to hide or avoid suffering like we do. Take a risk and seek to engage in the life and suffering of those you meet. You may ironically find more joy than you expected.
5. **Learn to be present.** Pay attention as you travel. Your trip will give you opportunities to be present to others, to yourself, your situation and surroundings. Notice smells, tastes and even textures and temperature. Touch, feel and be aware of all the things that habit blinds you to at home.
6. **Enhance discovery by exploring context.** It's easy to just want to go and enjoy the moment. But you will better *understand* the moment if you're aware of the context in which it occurs. Learning as much as you can about the culture and even the language before you go helps make your discoveries more meaningful and whole.
7. **Be prepared for unfamiliar emotions.** Your feelings will range from confusion and frustration to giddy excitement. Enjoy and embrace the ride. You probably won't be able to sort them out at the time, but you can do so later when you reflect back on your trip. Remember the only thing you need to do with feelings is to have them.