

PREPARATION CHECKLIST - WAY BEFORE

- Itinerary / Air Tickets / Lodging
- Travel Advisories: US Dept. of State (Note: Ignore generalized cautions. US advisories are notoriously overly wintry).
- Passport : Must be good 3-6 months beyond return date, and make sure there are at least 3 empty pages.
- Visas: required for some countries. Check consulate/embassy website.
- Tourist Office: Contact for sent information. Communicate special interest and special destinations.
- Departure Tax: See if needed (paid upon leaving destination). These days, mostly rolled into the airline ticket.
- Medications / Vaccinations: Update.
- Travel / Bird Books: Buy and study.
- Birdsong Study: Check websites for downloadable libraries.
- Foreign language: Buy phrasebook (Common mistake: Don't memorize complete phrases—see Travel Tips).
- Exercise: Start walking regularly. And do it for life.
- Credit cards: Set up PINs for cash withdrawals. Doublecheck fees for this. And inquire about rental car coverage for particular destination (some cards exempt certain countries from coverage).
- Cell Phone: Call or check online for foreign rates and plans.
- Internet: Check booked hotels for service (can help decide whether or not to carry along laptop or netbook).
- Currency: Check exchange rates and see if your bank can pre-order.
- Electricity outlet/voltage information: Buy converters/adaptors as needed.
- GPS/Navigation: Map needed? Available in rental car?

PREPARATION CHECKLIST - JUST BEFORE

- stop newspaper
- stop mail (do online at USPS)
- stop or rearrange services: maid / pest control / lawn (overgrown lawn shouts 'not home!')
- housesitter / pet arrangements
- call home security w/ dates
- debit card \$ on account
- call credit cards w/ dates, destination (or they may 'freeze' your card due to sudden odd charges)
- check in online and print out boarding passes
- watering / place hoses
- fill hummingbird and bird feeders
- prepay bills
- check birthdays / anniversaries
- tag optics with contact information
- water plants
- clean out frig
- last garbage pickup
- itineraries to friends / family
- home computer / electronics unplugged
- download airline apps or load 800's #'s into phone
- reset DVR recordings
- travel electronics charged up
- 'When Leave House' reminder: phone charger, reset A/C or heat, hide laptops, set lights