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WANDERLUST 101: BEGINNER'S ODYSSEY

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The shackles of the movement control order have finally been lifted, setting the stage for an exhilarating global escapade. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) reported that 2022 witnessed the increase of international travellers by 50% from the previous year. More than 900 million tourists travelled internationally, and Middle East happened to be the most favorite destination while Asia and the Pacific recorded as the least.

Thanks to the digital age, choosing your next odyssey has never been easier. Social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Twitter and Facebook have become virtual treasure troves, teeming with tantalizing recommendations of awe-inspiring locales, delectable culinary delights and insta-worthy cafes. Your wanderlust can now be guided by the collective wisdom of fellow explorers.

Leave application – approved! Passport – checked! Bags – packed! Nothing beats the excitement of a planned trip to escape from the reality for a moment. There are two types of travellers in this world; one who planned way in advance – we're talking about at least 6 months to a year of planning, and the other one who are more spontaneous and adventurous where traveling can be an impulse decision. Some travel for business, some travel for leisure and some travel to visit friends and relatives. No matter which type of traveller you are or for what reason, always spare some

times to do some research and preparation prior to your journey. Here are some tips for you on how to have a worry-free traveling.

Bring along extra copies of your documents. First and foremost, arm yourself with extra copies of essential documents. Print multiple sets of your passport, travel insurance policy, flight itinerary, hotel bookings, transportation arrangements and other important documents. Safeguard these duplicates separately from the original documents in case of emergencies. We never know what will happen when you are thousands of miles away from home. Pickpockets, accidents or maybe your own negligence can be a joy killer to your trip. Not to say that these extra copies can help prevent it from happening but at least it can expedite all the processes that might occur, and you can resume with your trip sooner than expected.

Pack smartly. One of the most important aspects of traveling is packing efficiently. Craft a meticulous checklist of essential items and pack only what you truly need. Consider the weather conditions, duration of your sojourn and the activities that await you. Employ organizational aids such as packing cubes or compression bags to optimize space, leaving ample space for souvenirs. Amidst your belongings, don't forget to tuck away crucial documents, essential medications and a trusty universal power adapter. Though

our passport ranked as the 14th most powerful passport in the worlds with 179 visa-free destinations across the globe (FMT Business, 2023), don't forget to check other traveling requirements as it may differ from one country to another.

Embrace local culture. Immerse yourself in the local culture by respecting customs and traditions. Aloha! Annyeonghasayo! Learn a few basic phrases in the local language to facilitate communication and show respect to the locals. Indulge your taste buds in the local cuisine, lose yourself in vibrant local markets and engage with the community to gain a deeper understanding of their unique way of life. Being culturally sensitive and open-minded will enhance your travel experience and foster meaningful connections.

Be flexible and open to unexpected adventures. Now brace yourself for the unexpected, for that is where the magic lies. Despite your careful planning, serendipitous moments may arise leading you on the most unforgettable detours. Embrace flight delays as invitation to explore unseen corners, where untold stories await. Let changes in weather become an opportunity to dance in the rain or chase the rainbows. Venture off the beaten path and watch as the road less travelled unfolds its secrets. For it is in these unpredictable adventures that cherished memories are born.

So, dear wanderer, what are you waiting for? Renew that passport, apply that leave, pack that bag and go travel. Explore new places, make new friends, experience new culture, try new food and most importantly tick off that bucket list that you have since before pandemic. As the wise Saint Augustine once said, "The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only one page." Turn the pages of this magnificent world and let your story unfold.

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