



RustyHints are travel horse-sense reminders, some will have slipped your mind; and you'll say "oh ya, that's right"... and still others are may not have occurred to you but may really "save your bacon."

RustyHints are applicable toward any journey. **RustyHints** come from decades of travel experiences, and may be applicable to your travel, and a few them may bring a smile.

The subjects of these hints and suggestions are in random order. The Disclaimer is that they are just what they say, hints and suggestions; not applicable to all travelers or situations. I hope you find some of them create an "ah ya, that's a good idea" moment for you.

If you have a particular topic in mind, then use your computers FIND feature to bring up hints that are appropriate to your inquiry. Example: Pickpocket; electricity, safety, food, water, grandmother, etc.. The best of travels to you. I hope you enjoy the day, Rusty



#1 Attach two luggage tags to each piece of luggage. Tags frequently are pulled off luggage and lost. Also, including identification inside your bag is a wise and prudent choice.

#2 Double check your tickets for correct destination and date. **RustyStory.** I recently had a woman book her flights to Jackson Hole, Wyoming for a Yellowstone backpacking trip. But when I checked her reservation it was for Jackson Hole, Alabama. She had clicked on the wrong city choice.

#3 A 45 minute airline transfer between flights is allowed, but is questionable and frequently does not work in the "real world" for you, or your checked bags. Consider a longer layover to catch your next flight when on a long awaited and possibly expensive travel adventure is planned. Choosing to leave a day early for Quito, Lima, or Bangkok will be cheaper than missing your trip, it will reduce stress, and will add fun to your adventure. After all it's more fun there than here, right? Take a day to relax, get over jet lag, explore a bit, have a vacation!

#4 Scan the inside cover of your passport and store it in your email account. Losing a passport is a big challenge and happens amazingly often. Travelers set down and walk away from their daypack, or someone has "permanently borrowed" your wallet. The US Embassy can take 7 to 10 days to replace a lost passport, no joke. Having a good copy of your passport details as well as a spare passport photograph for the US Embassy when overseas will reduce the time needed to obtain a new passport by several days. Alternatively, consider scanning your passport onto your Gmail or Hotmail account for easy retrieval.

#5 Keep your hands out of your mouth when traveling. One big way to stay healthy while traveling is to not put the outside world inside you unless it's thoroughly cooked; broiled & boiled, and a fly has not since landed on it. Remember, don't rub your lips or pick your teeth. Carry and use hand sanitizer... when eating or touching your face.

#6 There are no seatbelts in the bathrooms of commercial jets. Eat food that is well cooked and served on dry clean plates. Beverages should be served in bone dry glasses without ice, or drink from the bottle. Carefully prepared fruits peeled them with clean hands.

RustyStory. Tea served along the trails of Nepal is commonly available and well boiled. However the tea cup may have been quickly rinsed out with a splash of unboiled water. Use a dry cup or use your own cup.

RustyStory. No seatbelts in the bathroom. I just completed a 26 day trekking trip in Asia with a nice group of folks who were healthy every day. Among the members is a nice lady who is set to fly home from Bangkok in the morning. She purchased one of those small, ultra delicious sugar bananas from a local market. She fully peels the banana and recycles the skin. Now she eats the sugar banana. Thirty minutes later she had an urgent need for a bathroom, repeatedly. The banana's skin was wet and she had peeled it contaminating her hands, and then ate the banana rather than peeling a little and taking a bite. With medication she was able handle her problem in preparation for the 18 hour flight home as there are no seatbelts in the bathroom of commercial jets.

#7 Illnesses. Leave home with the knowledge of the difference between food poisoning and contaminated food so that you can treat each effectively and quickly. The CDC website is <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>

#8 Travel with at least two extra passport images. Countries change the rules sometimes and being able to produce another image for a visa or National Park pass saves time and hassle.

#9 Carry two or three credit cards, Visa is well accepted worldwide and Master Card is

typically good. a) Call your bank and tell them the dates you are traveling and using the credit card, and (b) tell the bank what countries you are visiting during your travels.

#10 Photocopy both sides of your credit cards, also write down the secret security answers that may be needed if you must cancel a credit card(s). Give this document to your sister, mother, dad, or other trustworthy person. While traveling, if you lose a credit card(s) then give a quick call to your mom and ask her to cancel the missing credit card(s). Contacting a bank from overseas to cancel a credit card is often challenging and time consuming given the time difference, language, and foreign phone systems. **It's a lot easier to just call mom.** (She would like to hear from you anyway.... Maybe. Ha.)

Putting this information in a "cloud" or gmail\hotmail account also makes it easy for you to retrieve official or important information or documents while traveling. Flight confirmations. Hotel confirmation information. The inside cover of your passport. Credit Card information. **Remember to encrypt the file.** (Google or Bing can tell you how if you're not sure.)

#11 Smiling persistence and politeness will get you further than bullying an official that you need something from. **RustyStory.** It's a hot and sticky day at the Calcutta airport. The European tourist at the ticket counter draws attention when in a loud voice he says to the agent "I hate your F#\$^!@ country, get me on that flight." The agent stepped back, smiled and said "no," then he looked past the man and firmly said "next". I stepped up with a smile. He smiled back, we got-on great, and I did make that flight.

#12 Carrying more than one wallet. Two wallets and frequently three when traveling are useful. One wallet is a "daily wallet". Consider putting \$40 dollars worth of local currency (or whatever you think you need that day) inside the daily wallet and perhaps one of your credit cards. This wallet is reasonably easy to access and is divided into compartments to allow for more efficient bargaining (not allowing the seller to see how much money you actually have). Another wallet is the "trip wallet" with your valuables; all your money, passport, credit cards, airline tickets. etc.. This wallet is buried under clothes, and you must nearly strip to get to it, impossible to steal, even you have a problem getting to it. The third wallet is a "coin purse." Many countries use a lot of coins as they are difficult to counterfeit, but are heavy. A handy item is a small coin purse. (Ever try carrying Irish coins in your pocket? I can tell you, you won't do so for long.)

#13 Respectful dress code and behavior will get you much further with a foreign countries bank, airline, or government official than a very casual or sloppy appearance. "American casual"

is not the accepted dress code with officials and looking good will engender a more courteous and prompt response from local people who have something you need or want.

RustyStory. I had an emergency at home and needing to leave Kathmandu quickly, but flights were overbooked, and I desperately needed a supervisor's assistance. Without success, for two days I blew hours in lines trying to speak to an airline manager without success. I decided to leave my daily trekking clothes behind and dress up. I purchased a \$12 briefcase, put on nice clean clothes that were pressed, trimmed my beard, and again went to the airline counter. I smiled and went in "looking good", I also soon left with my air ticket. I have similar stories following the "recipe for success with officials". I used "the recipe" with Chinese border guards in Tibet; the chief of the Beijing Police North District; the Arusha Tanzania airport administrator; the Tajikistan border post commander, the Nepal\Tibet Friendship border immigrations supervisor and others that the "recipe" worked with. These are fun stories to recount and swap with others at a pot-luck party, but the bottom-line is that a respectful dress code and culturally respectful behavior is usually an asset when dealing with officials.

#14 Lock your overhead luggage on flights, especially those that are long haul flights where you may be sleeping. **RustyStory.** I've seen a camera stolen out of overhead luggage, and a friend's camera too was "permanently borrowed" during a trans-Atlantic flight. On long flights I like to put my carry-on luggage with cameras \ electronics on the floor under my feet or in the overhead bin in front of my seat rather than over my seat. I sleep better this way.

#15 "Luggage Vest". A photographers or big pocket travel vest can become a huge asset for bringing your "necessities" on a flight. Luggage limitations for space, weight, and rising costs are particularly challenging on smaller aircraft like 737's. A multi-pocket travel vest can assist with lightening your day-pack or check-on luggage. Your camera, food items, guide books are small and heavy, your "Birds of Columbia" or "Birds of Nepal" will fit in the vest. My Acer netbook computer fits in the back pocket. Airlines are not yet weighing personal clothing, so a "luggage vest" can be an asset for travel items you can't afford to have in checked luggage. Warning! Photo\travel vests can test your memory because of the many pockets, and they can get pretty heavy too.

#16 Important: If you miss a flight, be sure your down-line flight reservations are reconfirmed, even those for returning home weeks later. If you have a multi-international set of flights and all reservations are on one ticket-record (often this creates the best priced flights) and you miss a flight prior to reaching your destination, be sure the airline agent re-establishes your ongoing flight reservations or you are really goofed up. **RustyStory.** You are

flying Atlanta\Chicago, Chicago\Tokyo, and Tokyo\Bangkok. You then overnight at the Bangkok airport hotel with a flight the next morning, Bangkok\Kathmandu. Then everything happens in reverse to go home. Your flight out of Chicago is cancelled for weather or mechanical reason. The airport agent reschedules you on another carrier Chicago\Tokyo\Bangkok. As you have missed your original connection out of Tokyo to Bangkok, **you are a no-show**. **ALL reservations on that ticket-record will be cancelled**. No hotel reservation in Bangkok, no flight reservation Bangkok\Kathmandu, nor flights home. When planes are full, you have a bad problem. Depending on what started your problem, the airlines may or may not be responsible.

Important. Confirm and ask the airport agent if all your reservations on that ticket-record have been re-established? Airport agents, usually re-establish flight confirmations, however, they can make an expensive mistake resulting in your using your credit card to buy new tickets or maybe not go your intended trip.

#17 Important. **Look at your checked luggage receipt**. **Be sure it lists your end destination** and has not been miss labeled. **Don't lose the luggage receipt**, it's your "breadcrumb" for finding your lost luggage. Ticket agents are often swamped; they can hand you the wrong tags. They can put the wrong tag on your luggage. You need to look at those tags and be sure the correct ones are going on the bags and in your hand.

#18 Life happens especially prior to an expensive trip. If your next trip has non-refundable features, **buy trip cancellation insurance**. Moms fall down and hurt themselves; you twist an ankle playing basket ball, your sweetie trips over the dog and breaks an ankle etc., just prior to a trip. **RustyStory**. I have a guest going on a \$5000 trek to Mt. Everest. She lives in Tucson and we've been talking about gear, Chitwan NP elephants, and international flights for a year. Two weeks prior to departure a windstorm blows down a huge saguaro cactus which flattens her garage and she needs to stay home and rebuild it. Insurance refunded her trip. Another Mt. Everest trekker called a taxi to go to the airport and tripped over her trekking duffel when leaving the house. The taxi took her to the hospital for her broken ankle rather than the airport. Insurance fully refunded her trip. Trip cancellation insurance also covers emergency evacuations, and pro-rates trip cost too. Example: You are on the third day of a 14 day trip. You trip and dislocate your ankle. Not a terrible problem, but you can't hike, you need to go home. Collect up your doctor receipts, details, expenses with evacuation and trip insurance will then come into play. You have 3 days of fun, pro-rate your trip for the balance. [Travelex](http://riadventuretravel.com/insurance)
<http://riadventuretravel.com/insurance>

#19 Life happens when you are on a trip and evacuation insurance is cheap*. Say you have

a trip that does not have non-refundable features, yet we all know "life happens." Basic evacuation insurance is cheap at \$30 to \$50, but covers medical emergencies from \$100,000 to \$500,000. **RustyStory** I've never had to use evacuation insurance personally, but I always buy it as a serious accident can happen. "Things" happen; aneurisms; falls; unexpected events, and an evacuation is needed. Helicopters are expensive wonderful things, and emergency evacuation insurance is cheap. Full Trip Cancellation Insurance will include emergency evacuation insurance too. **Evacuation insurance is available at Ri Adventure Travel we recommend Travelex Trip Insurance.** <http://riadventuretravel.com/insurance>

#20 Traveling : Details : Reservations After a week or two or three in the woods\jungle\mountains, the details of months of planning (that you thought you couldn't possibly forget) become fuzzy. Create a simple one sentence itinerary of each day; where, what, when you are doing things and put that in your binder too. Long trips run more smoothly when the important parts are organized. A binder keeps you on track and efficient for the next step on your journey.

Use a flexible cover three ring binder to keep all your records in one location, a Trip Binder. Flight confirmations, hotel confirmations, outfitter contact information, notes with answers to questions like "how much was that taxi suppose to cost at the Lima or Bangkok airport", guides names, useful websites you want to refer back to, etc.. Details start becoming fuzzy about 3 days into the trip. The sooner and more profound the memories fade, the better the trip was! Bring a binder with the details; you'll really be glad you did.

#22 New city, new language, don't get lost, take a photograph. Arrive, drop the bags and go exploring the town or village or city with your hotels business card. Then consider taking a photograph of the name\entrance of the hotel, or a nearby street scene with your digital camera. The convenience of a digital camera extends beyond pictures of Mt Everest or Machu Picchu or a dancing blue-foot booby, the camera can be very useful if you become lost. Those images may help you return "home" by showing them to a friendly local who will instantly recognize where you are trying to return to.

#23 New country, new language? **Have someone at the airport** and\or your hotel write down the information you need in their language; your hotels name, a famous market, a monastery or restaurant you wish to visit. This "bread-crumbs" is great for showing to taxi drivers, or a local person. People are friendly and are almost always glad to help out a visitor.

#24 When lost in a city I look for a hotel, a jewelry store, or a bank as I can often find

someone there who speaks English. Give people a smile and they'll usually help a lost tourist.

#25 You have an important international flight. (Aren't they all important?) A battery powered alarm clock will get you moving despite a power outage or a sleepy front desk clerk that did not wake you. **RustyStory.** Many times a hotel front desk has not called or not called on time to wake me for a flight or special event. Bhutan and Kathmandu often have rolling electrical brown or black-outs. Besides the hotel early wake up, I set my own alarm to ensure I get my sleepy head up and out for the next step in the journey.

#26 Taxi haggling. When bargaining, smile, as this is a game and you are usually in control. There is a lot of competition for your business, so you usually have most of the leverage. But, set the price before your luggage goes into the car, rickshaw, or is thrown across a donkey or tied to a yak. You've lost your leverage to bargain when your bags are locked in the trunk.

#27 Learn in the local language at least these words: "thank you," "hello," and "bathroom."

#28 If there is any question of your watch battery failing during your trip, change it. You can't miss a flight. And, carry your own battery operated alarm clock, you can't miss a flight.

#29 When traveling where staying healthy is a challenge, don't eat off of a wet plate, or drink out of a wet glass, and don't use ice cubes. **Minimize the luck required to stay healthy. RustyStory.** I have had the good fortune to not be ill overseas in many years due to a little luck and a lot of caution. I eat only well cooked meals using dry utensils and look with suspicion on salads and milk products. I also travel with drugs in case my luck runs out. (See your doctor for recommendations on how to handle the most common ailments.)

#30 See your dentist before you leave on a journey. (I've seen village dentists at work; it's an experience I/you want to avoid.) If while traveling you have a tooth or other health problem, contact the local US Embassy or consulate for their recommended medical professional. I always travel with a list of embassy phone numbers for the nations I'm visiting.

#31 Make your luggage easy to identify at a distance. Luggage carousels around the world all confirm that most travelers' luggage is a variation on blue and black and frequently look alike. You've seen people pick up luggage at a carousel, only to put it back down. Having luggage that stands out allows it to be quickly found when surrounded by hundreds of other bags. Consider high-lighting your luggage with colorful yarn. My own checked bags are banana yellow or snow white rolling duffels that are easy to spot. I also use eye-catching colorful luggage tags. See

also **RustyHint #1**.

#32 Netted stuff sacks make organizing items in your luggage fast and efficient. Also, consider beginning adventures with an empty stuff sack for clothes you need to wash or never wish to see again until you return home. (The exception being those too frequently worn socks that stand-up on their own. Time to toss-um.)

#33 Close your daypack and its zippered pockets when traveling, every time. Be as inconvenient as possible to a strangers "wandering hand."

#34 Important. Your passport is not really valid for 10 years, but for 9.5 years. With 60 to 90 days validity your passport will allow you to enter a few countries in northwestern Europe, Canada, and Mexico. However, most countries on Earth require your passport to be valid for 6 months or more on entry. This can be a rude awakening at the airport if you have not checked the rules for your destination. Simple rule of thumb, don't attempt to travel within 6 months of your passports expiration, just get a new passport. Go to the US State Department for an update on US Passport Information or <http://travel.state.gov/> and click on "passport." If you need a new passport quickly, give a ring to RiAdvTvl and we'll provide you with some pointers on how to get a new passport more quickly.

#35 Be aware of your surroundings. Be loud if you observe that you are being "marked" or taken advantage of, alert your friends and others to come to your aid. **RustyStory** Cusco Peru: While four of us walked through a busy market, one of my guests shouted "Help!" Turning I saw she was surrounded by many older Quechuan Indian women who were jostling her. We three moved quickly to her side and those local women dispersed. We found her day pack had been sliced with a razor. Luckily she had lost only her tissues and hand cream. **RustyStory.** Cinque Terra Italy. Boarding a train with eight travelers and lots of luggage, we found three local young women suddenly helping us get our bags into our staterooms. I also found a hand trying to remove my wallet from a back pocket that was purposefully tight. Grabbing the hand I shouted loudly "thieves, watch your bags." The three helpful women quickly twisted about, turned, and left the train at a run. We found two day packs with pockets open but nothing missing. Be as observant as you can, make yourself inconvenient to a thief, and be loud in confrontation.

#36 Bargaining is a game to pursue with a smile and a laugh. But bargaining really hard can be a hardship for a person who badly needs money, and who will take a loss to earn at least some money. If stepping through a shops doorway, you may consider bargaining harder than with a person who displays their wares on a blanket on the sidewalk. **RustyStory.** I'm the worst person

to bargain with because I don't care if I buy "it." I rarely need "it", and so with a smile I may cut the asking price by 75% and not go higher than 50%. I always smile and laugh, its okay if I don't buy it. Again, I always consider where I am, what is the condition of the person I'm buying from, and then I haggle accordingly. We have some fun and I almost always get a story out of my purchase. I'm in control of what I buy; the seller is in control of how low they'll go. Have fun.

#37 In Asia, it's a tradition that the first person in the shop must buy something or it's a poor-luck day for that shopkeeper. Bargaining is fast and to the shoppers' advantage if you're the first person in the shop. On the other hand, if you are just a looky-lou that morning, be nice and let someone else enter a shop first. **RustyStory I've used this tradition many times by purposefully being the first customer so as to purchase something expensive that I knew I wanted. I therefore encountered less haggling for the price I was willing to pay. Good luck....**

#38 Adventure travel is most fun and educational in a spirit of "k-garne". Adventure travel by definition means that the unplanned for is very possible. "**K-garne**" is an excellent Nepali word for how to enjoy traveling the world. K-garne is an attitude that translates as "a smile and a shrug of the shoulders", it means "this is where life is taking us," or "I will go with the flow, be patient and roll with it". K-garne allows for serendipity to occur often with a positive and interesting result.

#39 Pickpockets. Pants with loose pockets. If you don't have to squeeze your hand into your pocket, then it's loose and an open invitation. Use pants pockets that are tight, have zippers or velcro for access. Remember; close your pack or zippers after their use. Most pickpockets are not talented or skilled, but rather folks looking for an opportunity. Those who are really good, well, you just try to make their "take" very small. **RustyStory**. I admired the skill of the two women who "took" my wife and me on a cold and crowded subway train December 14th in Rome. (The story is good, I even remember the day.) We had done things right, moved our fanny packs to our front, had them under thigh length winter coats with zipper and velcro closures. Standing amid dozens of folks, while facing each other we were both robbed of our "daily" wallets. The thief had to get her hand under a coat nearly knee length, lift it, then unzip a waist high, over stuffed fanny pack, and pull out a wallet without being noticed. And, do this in a ride of only 10 minutes with both of us keeping an eye on each other. Impressive. However, the thief's skill only rewarded her with 1 credit card and \$100 (I felt the skill deserved more, but of course happy that wasn't the case).

#40 Move your daypack or fanny pack to your front. I put important items in zippered

compartments with a small carabineer on the zipper pulls to make opening them an effort that discourages "wandering hands."

#41 Be inconvenient to a thief. Use passport pouches and or money\belly belts under your clothes. Let someone else be an easy "mark." If it's hard for you to get to, then it's really hard for "wandering hands" to reach. **The point is to "be inconvenient to a thief", right?**

#42 Consider leaving passport, most money, most credit cards locked behind in your hotel room or in the hotel front desk safe. **RustyStory.** Leaving my locked duffel bag with valuables enclosed in my room has never resulted in a theft. Walking around with valuables invites loss or theft many times more likely than leaving them behind locked up. I walk the streets of Kathmandu, Cusco, Quito, Bangkok, Cairo, Beijing, Rome, or Lhasa Tibet with one credit card and only enough money to buy what I anticipate for that day.

#43 Money. The quality of US currency is important; bring good-looking US currency on trips. Make sure paper bills do not; have pen marks, and doesn't appear to have been 25 times through the washing machine. Do not accept abused local currency from local people either; they are just trying to give it to an unsuspecting traveler who will find out it's of no value but as a souvenir. This **RustyHint** seems to be the rule in 92.4% of the world. Some countries, like Peru, are very persnickety, frustratingly so about the US currency they will accept, as well as, their own currency. When obtaining money at your bank prior to a trip, check every bill for quality or you are going to come home with those poor appearance or damaged US dollar bills as **local shopkeepers and banks won't accept them.**

#44 More money. You may purchase foreign currency from many commercial banks here in **the US.** I like to buy currency at my "gateway" airport. Example: SeaTac airport does not sell Peruvian Soles, but the Miami airport does. **RustyStory** Arriving into Lima Airport this past July we purchased soles from an ATM inside the airport thinking this would produce quality currency. About 1\3 of the bills would not be accepted by businesses during the journey. Buying money from a foreign exchange counter or a bank in Peru allows you to make your own choices about the quality of local currency. Peru is exceptionally challenging as concerns counterfeit bills.

#45 Money is an important topic and ATM's vary widely depending on local conditions and culture. ATM's are widely available in major cities around the world. However, they do not always work or may have significant restrictions requiring you to visit several ATM's to obtain the amount of money you require. Note too; ATM's are not always in English, sometimes you may need to go into a bank to buy local funds.

#46 Counterfeit currency is common in some regions or countries. US currency in \$100 bills is not well accepted in regions of Asia and Latin America. Traveling with \$50 bills or smaller is much less a problem.

#47 Travelers Checks once were common, but are much less accepted everywhere. Use credit cards, cash and ATM's. Note: Credit cards typically have "foreign exchange fee" when used outside the USA. Call your credit card company to find out what they charge. FYI, currently Capital 1 Visa does not charge this fee. Again, cash, whether local currency or US dollars should be in excellent condition and traveling with more than one credit card is a prudent idea.

#48 Rechargeable, AAA and AA batteries do not like 32 degrees or less. If you are going somewhere cold; a trek to Mt. Everest or to Machu Picchu during July, bring lithium batteries and it's prudent to bring two sets.

#49 If you have a lot of gear, consider a rolling duffel bag or travel backpack with hidden control straps. Look for features like size #8 or #10 zippers (they don't break), and taped seams, too. **RustyStory**. When I trek in Nepal, Bhutan, the Amazon rainforests, I arrive with my gear in rolling duffel that includes a "field duffel" inside. Rolling duffels are rigid and horses, yaks, lamas, small boats, and small aircraft don't like rigid duffel. Rolling duffels are great for travel and getting through airports; but are then left behind in the hotel in Cusco, Quito, or Kathmandu while you rough up a less expensive and flexible "field duffel." Bringing this extra duffel also allows you to buy an extra Tibetan carpet or your own Terra Cotta Warrior to bring home.

Two full duffels can be a burden when traveling, but not with a 7' strap. If you lay on the ground a 7 foot strap with a 2" Fastex buckle (these are easy to make, call me and I'll tell you how in two minutes). The rolling duffel straddles this strap, the field duffel lies on top of the rolling duffel and bring the strap up around them, click it shut and tighten. Pick up the handle of the rolling duffel and walk away. Time involved is less than 30 seconds. You will be quite mobile, ready to go wait in line for the next flight and still have a hand free to hold your coffee.

#50 Travel with a small roll of Gorilla or Duck tape. RustyStory. We fly out with a brand new \$180 Eagle Creek rolling duffel (my favorite brand) on a camping trip to Costa Rica. On the bags first flight, arriving into San Juan we found the side has a 14" cut in it. Gorilla tape worked great, it's a bit ugly, but it works great and is still on there 15 years later.

#51 Travel with your grandmother. Traveling in remote or rural regions, interacting with locals with a different language and culture can be a lot of fun if you have a small photo album that includes your grandmother, your sister riding a horse, a family portrait, your brother's new baby, a recent hike in the mountains, the fish you caught last summer, etc.. When trekking in the Himalaya, or Andes, consider traveling with photos local folks can relate to. The best photos start a conversation, demonstrate commonality of life, as well as, create smiles and new friends.

#52 In Asia, the Middle-East and much of Africa the left hand is 'dirty.' Try to pay people, give a gift, or touch someone with your right hand. A taxi driver or shop keeper in Kathmandu is going to accept money from your left hand, but will appreciate your using your right hand. In many places eating with your left hand is offensive, "not right" and disturbs local people whom you may be sharing a meal with. They likely won't say anything, but take your queue of proper etiquette by watching those around you.

Who wants to put off or offend people? Do a little reading and learn the basics of local customs, its fun and makes for more fun.

#53 Americans are well accepted all over the world for being considerate and somewhat knowledgeable of local customs. A number of our European "cousins" have a much poorer reputation I have found. Knowing some of the basic customs, traditions of the nation or people you are visiting is going to literally open doors for you, it perpetuates the good reputation most Americans have generated, and it's fun. **RustyStory.** My wife and I recently explored the Kingdom of Jordan and also the classic antiquities' of Egypt. People in Jordan were really, really happy to see Americans, we got along well. However, in these devout Muslim nations, we encountered 5 separate times (thankfully not American but European, though locals would not be able to tell this difference) where an incredibly rude situation of "undress" occurred. These foreign women, with their revealing clothing would draw attention anywhere in the West. The place for a g-string, covered by a see through silk thigh length piece of fabric is more in keeping with Rio or some beach locations in Europe. We were given every courtesy by local people in the cities and countryside during our vacation. People were very hospitable everywhere, everyday. When we saw these rude situations, we were ashamed, embarrassed, and a bit angry too. Respecting others values and cultures is largely what travel is about. Thank you for traveling knowledgeably, doing some research, and helping to build-up the good reputation nearly all Americans engender abroad. Guide books like Footsore, Lonely Planet and others will typically have a section on the basic "do's and don'ts".

#54 Begging is a tradition in some destinations. But many great destinations, like Nepal, Bhutan, Vietnam, Tanzania, Peru, etc., this is not normal and we firmly suggest "don't give into it". Kids in

Nepal have learned they can get a tourist to give them candy, pens or money by holding out a hand and plaintively just asking. You have lots of these things; surely you can part with some of them? Don't do it, politely decline. If you wish to donate school supplies, a village headmaster will undoubtedly appreciate them.

Rather than "stuff"; give that child a conversation, interact with them. You may not speak their language but you can still interact with them. Compare buttons on your shirts, read from their English school book, pull out your photo album, etc.. Their teeth don't need the candy, they don't need a pen and their father can go earn money rather than collecting it from his children. Begging is a behavior that demeans culture and is an unwelcome experience to those travelers who walk that trail after you. Resist giving "stuff", rather give something both useful and valuable like your time. Try it, its fun.

#55 Suddenly travel problems have happened, a flight is delayed, the bus is late, whatever the problem is, you are not going to make it on time to the start of your trip. If you are incurring expenses that you believe will be covered by the trip insurance you purchased, you need to start keeping receipts and **documenting the challenge immediately**. Example: A common trip interruption is a serious flight delay. While you are in the airport waiting for a readjusted flight, have your airline document the problem for you. Get it in writing that the flight is delayed due to snow, thunderstorm, mechanical, or security issue.

RustyStory. Fly to the Galapagos via Quito Ecuador. Houston Texas has summer thunderstorms that sometimes delay connecting flights to Ecuador. Arriving in Quito a day late means literally missing the boat and your trip, as there is no "catching up." Getting documentation from an airline days or weeks after your trip is over is very challenging, its old news forgotten, and that documentation is important for trip insurance purposes. Insurance companies need documentation; keep your receipts from hotels, taxis, restaurants, doctors, and airlines because you will need them to recoup your expenses. (I suggest flying to Quito a day early, take the stress off and have some extra fun near Quito. Or during summer months consider a Miami or LA flight rather than flights via Texas.)

Your trip cancellation insurance helps you in many situations, but not all. Your policy will clearly state what circumstances are not covered, typically events like; acts of war, civil unrest, and civil strikes may void coverage. Broadly speaking "natural problems" like a relative's accident, your spouse's sudden health problem, etc., are typically covered. Insurance companies like; Travelex, Access America, and Travel Guard do a good job of stating clearly what is and what is not covered. Call the Travelex 800.819.9004 phone numbers or speak with your travel agent for greater

clarification. Go to Travelex Trip Insurance for more information and \ or to purchase. Contact Rusty with your questions if you like. [Travelex http://riadventuretravel.com/insurance](http://riadventuretravel.com/insurance)

#56 Do you need a vacation after your vacation? Easy; come home one or two days prior to returning to work. **RustyStory.** Many times I've watched my co-workers return on a Sunday from international adventures to work on Monday, only to call in sick with a cold or exhaustion on Tuesday. Frequently we spend the last 3 days of our trip thinking about work on Monday rather than on the howler monkeys, or world class ruins we've traveled so far to see. Add a day at home prior to returning to work. Settle into your home, take some stress off from traveling and sleep in for one last morning of a vacation holiday.

#57 Baby powder, don't leave home without it. You are on a "trip of a life time", walking all day, seeing and doing cool stuff and often working up a blister, really dry-skin or really odiferous feet. It's time to powder your feet, stay healthy and enjoying "doing cool stuff." Also: **When you are not able to wash your hair, dust it. Really!** Then just shake and \ or comb out your hair and you are good to go again. By the way, sprinkle baby powder on the clothes in your duffel bag to keep them fresher, removes odors, and they are more appealing, I've tried this, it works. These hints come from the very experienced traveler; **Ms. Theresa Mottet. Thank you Theresa, R**

#58 Bandana. There are 148 different uses for a bandana and counting. **1-** Colorful fun. **2-** Wipe your nose or face. **3** On flights draped over my eyes you can sleep. **4** A hot pot can be picked up off a camp stove. **5** A pre-filter water before pumping it. **6-** An impromptu towel. **7-** A hummingbird attractor in the Amazon. **8** A tourniquet (bad problem to have). **9-** It's your towel. **10-** It's where you put the parts of your camera or watch as you repair it. **11-** A bandana is a flag for waving down lost trip members in a huge Bangkok airport or Utah slot canyon! **12-** Warm rice rolled up in it and laid on your eyes after a dust invades your eyes is relaxing and healthful. **13-** A bandana is an impromptu head-scarf for visiting the Vatican or a Mosque. **14-** Soaked and put around your or another neck a bandana can ward off heat-stroke. (all cotton is best) **More to come.**

Email traveler@rustytraveler with your suggestions.

#59 Gosh another plastic bottle to toss when traveling, don't-cha hate that? It's not so much the \$1 spent on the water, it's the waste this creates in the environment because you know it's not likely to be recycled into a fleece sweater but more likely into a landfill. Try a water filter pump. Pump water from your hotel bathroom sink into your water bottle or 3 liter drinking bladder/hose. I use the MSR Sweetwater myself, but there are many and you can find them at

outdoor stores like REI.com.

#60 Power; electricity for our "toys". Do I need a power converter? Dual Voltage. We're all traveling with gadgets these days; camera battery chargers, laptops, MP3 players, cell phones, AA/AAA rechargeable battery chargers, and other gadgets. Since 1992, travel oriented gadgets have been produced with "dual power" conversion. Retail travel stores conveniently don't mention this. Don't trust me on this, check your gadgets "very fine print." On your gadget or its power cord, in really very small print you should find **AC 110-240V 50-60Hz**. This indicates dual voltage capability, and that **you do not need** a weighty \$25 "power converter". For many countries you will still need a wall adapter, but that is cheap, and you are otherwise good-to-go.

#61 "Have gadgets; will travel." So, where's the power? **RustyStory** I travel with my sweetie a lot, and she to carries 2 or 3 cameras, an MP3 player, and we carry a rechargeable battery charger for our rechargeable AA batteries, as well as I carry an Acer 1 laptop. That's a lot of gadgets to power up. The hotel room, the Amazon jungle lodge, the inn in Nepal, a vessel in the wonderful Galapagos, etc., frequently have just one convenient wall outlet when we would like power for several gadgets. So, I travel with a small power strip, specifically a [Simran SM-60 110V-250V Universal 3 Outlet Power Strip/Surge Protector \(Amazon.com\)](#). A power strip is way useful when traveling and this one includes surge protection. Or, I also use this tiny combination.



#63 Wall adapters. The world has invented over a dozen electrical wall outlets. The most common socket in Asia, South America, Europe and much of Africa and Australia requires a small plug with two round prongs. (See previous photo with white adapter.) This adapter is cheap and too easily forgotten. I seem to leave them behind in hotel rooms like a tip. (I'm a nice guy.) I carry two of these adapters as I'm sunk without one.

#64 Why vacation and why binos? A philosophy 101 course type question. Many of us travel for experiences, and to see "stuff" that's not at home. Oh my gosh, you have spent time and \$\$\$\$'s of dollars to get somewhere special, then end up missing the details of your subject just because of a lack of \$100 binos... grrrr. **What's more important, a camera or binoculars? A camera of**

course... unless the travel topic is wildlife (or gruesome painting on the ceiling of any cathedral in Florence, ... really, have you seen those ceilings? They are amazing, but binos are needed to really appreciate the detail.) If the priority is on SEEING what you've traveled so far to see ... then **bring small binoculars**. In Istanbul the national museum has [Hamurabi's Tablets](#) behind a glass case only 8 inches away, easy to admire. But, imagine an [Amazon Lodge](#) visit, or a trip across [Bhutan](#), or [Nepal](#), these are great trips of a lifetime. These places are just like what you see on TV. But, there are small wonderful jewels to be enjoyed, like the delicate hues of feathers around the eyes of a macaw or the cute face of an [Emperor Marmoset](#) that can only be fully appreciated, and experienced while using binoculars. Bino's allow for the colorful Galapagos Redfoot Booby eye feathers, or the dancing tiny [Redcapped Manakin \(moonwalk manakin\)](#) to be enjoyed in all their natural detail. Seeing these features will make that day one of the best days of the entire trip!

In Nepal and Bhutan YOU get to look in wonder at the towering Himalaya, but white summits are all the more powerful when you can see the fluted shoots, seracs, and spindrift details. With binoculars you may also watch "talented crazy people" climbing the snowy peaks of the Annapurna or Mt Everest. Binoculars will make a great trip an unforgettable "Trip of a Life Time".

Here is the deal... How to buy binoculars. Hey, any bino works at noon, it's whether it allows you to see well at dawn, dusk or in deep forest when wildlife is out that really counts. **Binos come with two numbers.** Example: 7x21. 7 times closer magnification and the second number relates to how much light comes in. **This is the bottom-line; the farther apart the two numbers are, the more you will enjoy the binoculars.** A 7x28 is more fun to use than a 7x21. A choice of 7x21 or 8x30, you want buy the 8x30's, they are significantly brighter. Binos are a compromise between light vs size and cost. Light comes first, then it's a fight between size\weight and your wallet. The cost usually relates to durability too. A \$120 bino is usually more durable than a \$40 bino for rough handling and a short drop. The \$300 binos are usually quite durable, are small, and are bright. More expensive binoculars than \$300 usually means they are brighter yet, smaller still, and a bit snobbish. I admit have very snobbish binos. But I really enjoy the light they bring in, that I can drop them vigorously, yet keep them for a lifetime of adventure travel, and they still keep working. Give Rusty a ring if you wish further feedback on binoculars. Enjoy the day.

#65 What shots do I need? Your nearest large university probably has a travel-clinic. The university has faculty and students traveling to and from destinations all over the world, during different seasons of the year. A University travel-clinic will typically ask very good questions based on when, where and what you are doing. They are a great resource for what medications

you may need based not on some dusty book or generalized answer from the CDC, but on what is really needed given your specific needs and adventures.

What topic should #66 be?

Check back from time to time as RustyHints is always a work in progress.

Have a great time finding your next Ri Adventure Travel experience.

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