



The holidays are chaotic enough, even without leaving home. We rush around to buy gifts, attend Christmas parties, and visit our hairdresser to look fresh on the day. Add travel into the mix and we can get an idea what the 'silly season' really means.

But, travelling at this time of year can also be magical - whether you're enjoying festivities in a foreign country or coming home to spend time with your family.

## Be mindful of others

You're one of millions of people travelling this month. When you're feeling frustrated about the long airport lines, packed shopping centres and traffic on the road, remember what this season is all about. Christmas and the holiday period is a time to come together with family and friends, and enjoying the company of those we love most.



*When you're travelling this Christmas, remember what the season is about.*

## Christmas can be a hard time for many

While there's nothing festive about waiting in line, focus your attention on the spirit of Christmas. It's a hard time for many, with losses in the family, divorce or people simply unable to be together. Gift everyone you touch with positivity. You don't know who really needs it and will appreciate a kind word or gesture.



*Christmas can be a hard time, and many people go without.*

## **Add more ‘buffer’ time to your travel schedule**

To avoid rushing around like Kevin’s family in Home Alone, factor in an extra 30-60 minutes when you travel. Prepare for crowds, no matter where you’re going. Chances are, you’re going to join the cohort of travellers at every step of your journey - on the roads, checking in, at customs, and in taxi lines.





*The roads will be crowded, so allow plenty of driving time.*

## **Pack light and smart**

Your luggage size will vary, depending if you're coming home to your family or going on holiday. Travellers returning home might need an extra bag (or at least a dedicated section) for presents. But, if possible, keep your gifts small and sentimental. Try to pack your essentials into your suitcase first, that way you won't forget something important in the Christmas rush. Double-check all your travel documents the night before, and make sure you have everything for your flight in your hand luggage for easy access.

## **Consider the best way to transport gifts**

Avoid putting gifts in your hand luggage and holding up security, as officers may confiscate them. If time allows for it, you can always pick up a few presents upon arrival if necessary. It's also a good idea to wait until you arrive at your destination before wrapping gifts, just in case they need to be inspected at customs.



*Gift someone an experience this year instead of a present.*

## **Instead of buying a gift, exchange an experience instead**

For those who are heading abroad, instead of buying your travel mates gifts, why not exchange an 'experience' at your destination? Maybe a day tour, entry to a tourist attraction or dinner at a famous restaurant?



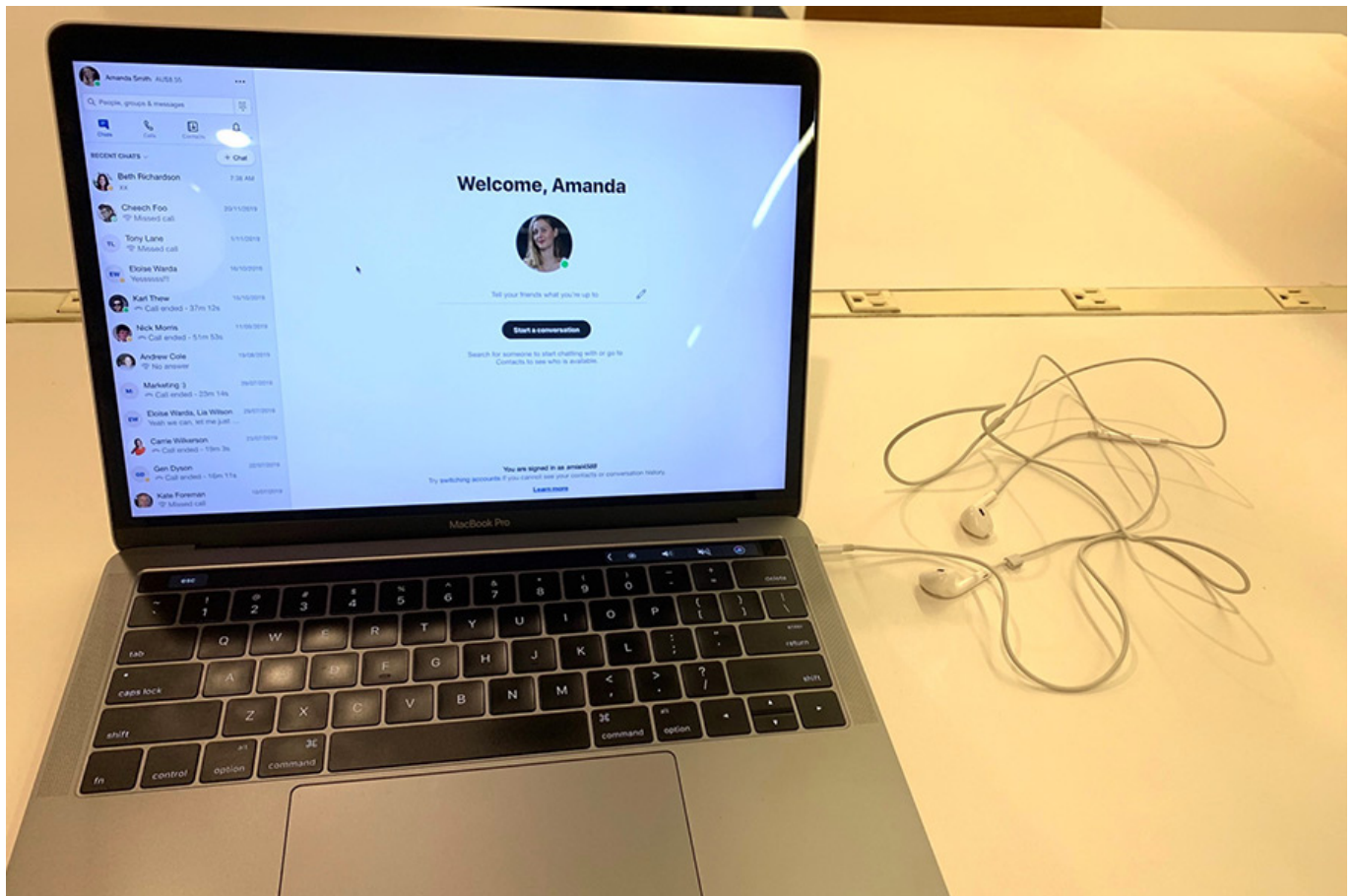


*In the lead-up, try and take care of your health. You can indulge in Christmas goodies later.*

## **Take care of your health, pre-flight**

The last thing you want to do is arrive home after weeks, months or maybe years away, and be exhausted. Chatty aunties, emotional mums, demanding friends, all need you at 100%. The same goes for those of you travelling. You're probably going to come up against contrasting weather alongside jetlag.

So, prime your body pre-flight with a nutritious diet, as many vitamin packets as you can handle, and stay hydrated. Keep your cortisol levels in check, so you don't settle in your seat with a ball of nerves.



*Teach your relatives how to use Skype so you can stay in touch.*

## **Download Skype (and teach your relatives how to use it)**

If you're away on Christmas Day, make sure you have Skype or another video tool on your phone. Pick the easiest one if your family aren't tech-savvy. Show them how to download and log into Skype, Facebook Messenger or even FaceTime. This way, you don't have to miss out on all of the Christmas cheer back home. A short call can make the world of difference.





*Make sure you take care of yourself and indulge a little.*

## **Treat...YOURSELF!**

Christmas can sometimes feel like you're trying to catch up with everyone (or if you're away, feel guilty about it). No matter where you are in the world, it doesn't mean you can't go all-out in Christmas mode. Put up decorations in your accommodation, embrace new traditions, and most importantly, do something for yourself.

Ask your family for money instead this year and buy yourself a little gift in a local market or online. Have a day entirely to yourself to explore, reflect, and enjoy whatever it is YOU love. Make a delicious meal, have a bath and watch Christmas movies or go out and explore the amazing country you find yourself in.

Immerse yourself in the meaning of Christmas. In who you have in your life and in experiences, more than things. Travelling the world is the biggest gift, after all.

**What's the best Christmas experience you've ever had?**