



If you're anything like me, no amount of time away is ever long enough. It starts with two-week-long trips, then stretches out to a month, maybe six weeks. But, it never suffices. I took the Dalai Lama's, 'once a year, go someplace you've never been', quote as religion (with my passport my bible).

By now, you've probably done the group tours in Europe and package holidays in Bali. But, you know this is only just the beginning. Whether you're going for a little longer this time, say three months, or you're quitting your job and embarking on a year-long, culture-immersed sabbatical, your travel preparation will be a little different.

Coming from someone who spent one summer (our winter) eating my way across the Mediterranean, dedicated six months logistically (and emotionally) preparing for my big move to Bali, and went through a year-long journey to set up my second base in New York City, planning for longer trips requires a different mindset.



Staying longer in one place or taking a 3-month trip involves some preparation.

Emotional and mental preparation

In my experiences, emotional and mental preparation is just as important as getting commitments in order, like work and your finances – especially if you're embarking on a solo journey, which I'm a huge advocate for.

Once you get there, you can let go of 'reality' and let the free-spirited you emerge. But, until you step off that plan, take your preplanning seriously. This leads us into my first point – something I battled with at the start.



Consider the mental preparation involved in your trip.

Being flexible vs. following an itinerary

Should I plan every day out or leave room for spontaneity? Is it safer to have a set itinerary? The best way to answer this is by determining what you want from the experience. Is seeing a lot of places important to you? What about forging friendships and leaving things open, in case you fall in love with an unexpected place?

I've found the more I travel, the less I plan. But, I also found security in a loose plan, so that's what I recommend if you're setting out on your first long trip. Use Google Docs to colour code the weeks you plan to be in each country. Add your flights in there, any visa expiry dates, and other relevant information.



Set a loose itinerary so that you can still have unexpected adventures.

Consider slow travel as an option

You might not have experienced the luxury of slow travel before, so avoid the temptation of jam-packing your 'schedule.' How long you spend in one place depends on various factors – such as the length of time you'll be away, your finances and work limitations, if you're travelling alone, the continent you're exploring. When making decisions, always come back



to that important question: *what do I want from this experience?*



Leave room in your schedule so you can stay longer if you want to.

Should I plan it myself or use a travel agent?

Oh, and last point here, plan it all yourself. This is the fun part. Google is your 'travel agent'. I navigate between Google Flights and Skyskanner to find the best fares. There's really no need to use a travel agent, unless you're going somewhere you're really concerned about.



Be your own travel agent and plan your trip yourself.

See more, without breaking the budget

Your money mindset will change the longer you travel, too. I used to budget \$100 per day, no matter where I was. This was, of course, well beyond what I needed. The cool thing about leaving space in your 'itinerary' is that you can choose trains over planes, or cheap flights (with stopovers) over direct routes.

I always bring a credit card in case of emergency, but this is the general rule I follow with budgeting. If I'm travelling in a western country, I allocate \$75 per day. This includes my Airbnb (which offer a discount the longer you stay, buying one meal out, and public transport.



You can explore a new city without breaking the bank.

I typically allow an extra \$100-200 per week for groceries and bigger purchases, like an event ticket. I specifically stay in Airbnb's so I can use the kitchen to prepare two out of three meals per day.

Travelling in somewhere like South-East Asia is a little different. I bought every meal but I only paid \$15 per night in accommodation. If you're moving around Asia, Eastern Europe or Central America, \$50 per day is a realistic budget. Some days you'll spend \$30 but others will be \$70. Set a weekly budget based on the affordability of the location, then you'll know how much you have to play with.



Budget things like transport based on where you're going in the world.

Logistics of money

A quick word on the logistics of your money. I use the Qantas Frequent Flyer travel card because I get points for every dollar I load onto it. If you're looking for a debit card with no international transaction or ATM withdrawal fees, the [Citibank Plus](#) is a great option.



Choose a debit card without international fees so you can avoid those costs.

Travel insurance & health

While I've only ever used travel insurance once or twice before, I always get it. Always. My favourite provider is [World Nomads](#). They're Australian, independent, and super easy to deal



with. Plus, part of their proceeds goes to charity, so that feels good.

The secret to constant travel

People often say to me, I don't know how you constantly travel. My secret? Follow a routine. I get up at the same time most days, cook my meals, workout, speak to family, and try not to overdo it. Long-term travel isn't sustainable without routine. It took me a long time to accept that it's okay to not always be doing something, just because I was in a new country.

Sign up to a local gym (which usually offers one-month free), explore your surroundings by foot, go on nature adventures, and protect your sleep. Get your eight hours. Trust me.



If you don't have access gym, keep up with your fitness routine by exploring your surroundings

Check in with yourself, and your friends and family

'Check-in' with yourself, as well as your friends and family back home. Buy a journal and use it to express your emotions, work through challenges, and document your journey. You'll have days where everything goes wrong.

This is the other side of travel that no one talks about – the moments where you're lying on your bed at 11.00pm wanting to go home. In hindsight, it was in these situations where I discovered my inner strength.



Make the time to check in with friends and family.

Learn, from the greatest teacher there is...travel

Embarking on a long overseas journey is equally exciting and unnerving. It's totally okay to feel anxious in the lead-up to your departure. You're going to learn important things about yourself that only slow travel can teach you.

Embrace the lessons, expect the ups and downs, and let this adventure be just as much as external one as it will be internal.