

Now Take Off!

2019 Holiday Travel Planning Guide

2-6 MONTHS BEFORE YOU TAKE OFF - DESTINATION DETAILS

- Print this checklist. Read through.
- Dream and Discuss - Imagine yourself in the middle of eating / opening presents. Where are you? Who is with you? What will bring you the most joy (consider both short term and long term)?
- Book accommodations/make sure you've got a room (or two!) at Grandma's
- Coordinate with other families (if needed)
- Book airfare (if needed)
- Book rental car or plan transit from airport to lodging (if needed)
- If traveling with a little one, look over the Holiday Packing List, decide what items you really need and can borrow or rent at your destination

IF CELEBRATING THE HOLIDAYS ABROAD:

- Research passport, visa, and vaccination requirements
- Get passport photos taken
- Apply for passports and visas if needed
- Schedule vaccination appointment(s)

Insiders tip: Check with your GP and pediatrician first, if they don't administer the vaccinations needed, they should be able to refer you to a local place that does.

In Nashville, I went to the Vanderbilt Travel Clinic.

4-8 WEEKS BEFORE YOU TAKE OFF - PREP IN ADVANCE

- Think through stocking stuffers with car activities
- Consider ideas to invite kids to engage and [make their own special memories](#) of the trip
- Decide for whom you will be bringing holiday gifts and contemplate what would delight them (don't forget your partner and kids if you're celebrating the big day(s) away!)
- Schedule pet care if needed
- If traveling for multiple days, plan overnight stops on your route (Campgrounds, friends who love you, hotel options. Book if necessary.)

2-4 WEEKS BEFORE YOU TAKE OFF

- Print and read through the Holiday Packing List. Note anything you need to dig out of the attic or buy (especially holiday outfits/shoes for kids!)
- Find out what holiday dishes you can bring (if needed)
- Make list of ingredients you need for each dish
- Purchase/make holiday and hostess gifts - If you are ordering online, can you ship them to your destination and wrap them when you get there?
- Find a few new games/activities/toys to delight and surprise kids during the ride

NOTES:

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WEEK BEFORE YOU TAKE OFF

- Look over Holiday Packing List. Note anything you need to dig out of the attic or buy
- Make plan to use as many perishable in your fridge and pantry as possible this week
- Purchase ingredients and any transport supplies needed for holiday dishes
- Purchase snacks for the ride
- Download audio books/movies/games/ebooks
- Visit library for playaways and books
- Prepare holiday food that can be chilled until the big day
- Finalize, wrap holiday and hostess gifts (plan to disguise gifts for your kids!)
- Let a trusted neighbor know your plans, give them a key in case of emergency
- Ask a friend or neighbor to care for your houseplants and look for packages
- Hold mail (or ask that friendly neighbor to collect your mail!)
- Confirm pet care (if needed). Invite pet sitter over to walk through your pet's routine

2-3 DAYS BEFORE YOU TAKE OFF - START PACKING

- Designate a "to take with us" area in your house
- Pull out suitcases
- Go through your packing list. Pull out any items you need but don't use regularly
- Do laundry, making sure what you intend to pack is clean - pack what you can
- Print directions (or make sure a map or atlas is in the car)
- If bringing prepared food or ingredients, make sure ice packs are frozen. If you don't have enough ice packs, fill a few gallon size bags with ice cubes - be sure to double bag!

DAY BEFORE YOU TAKE OFF - FINISH PACKING

NOTES:

- Pull out coolers (if needed)
- Drop off pets (if needed)
- Finish packing everything on your list except what you'll use that night and in the morning. Lay out travel clothes.

DAY YOU TAKE OFF

- Hand wash any dishes you use
- Pack cooler with prepared dishes or ingredients and ice
- Pack car
- Leave a central or bathroom light on or set a timer light
- Turn off water (if freezing temps possible)
- Take out trash
- Buckle those seat belts
- Turn on the [Sing Along with Mandy Podcast](#) on your favorite player and have a blast!

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NOW TAKE OFF! NOTES TO SELF: