



## **Making sure your luggage arrives when you do**

March 23 2010: More than 25 million bags disappeared or were misplaced across the world's airports in 2009 at a cost of \$2.76 billion.

While just over half of these bags were misplaced during aircraft transfers according to the latest data released by air transport electronics group SITA, 16 per cent of luggage failed to arrive on time because they weren't loaded.

Australia's largest premium travel group, Travelscene American Express has some common sense advice to avoid becoming a lost luggage victim.

General Manager Jacqui Timmins says there are some simple steps all travellers, domestic and international, should take.

"The obvious first step is to make sure you have travel insurance which covers you for missing and lost luggage," Ms Timmins said.

"Make the most of your carry on luggage. Never ever pack valuables in bags which are to be checked on to the plane and make sure you pack a change of clothes and any necessary medication in your carry-on luggage so that your checked bags do go astray, at least you will have a fresh set of clothes to wear."

"Try to fly direct and arrive early to check in. Tight connections and extra flights increase the risk of lost luggage as does checking in late."

"Make a note of the brand, size, colour and style of your checked luggage and, if you're travelling to a country where you don't speak the language, take photos of your bags and carry them with you, ideally on your phone or your digital camera," Ms Timmins said.

"Remove any old destination or arrival stickers or tags to reduce the possibility of misdirection and, once you land, head straight for the carousel and make sure the suitcase you collect is actually yours – and that someone else doesn't accidentally collect your bag."

And then there's the added pressure of tighter security and stricter enforcement of carry-on baggage size and differing weight across airlines.

The differing luggage restrictions can also create confusion and present a trap for the unwary.

"If you're travelling overseas, and especially if you're connecting to a low-fare airline in Europe or Asia, make sure you check each airline's limits. Some airlines such as Ryanair, for example, now charge for each piece of checked luggage. It's also worth remembering that the QANTAS' allowance is amongst the most generous in the

world. I'm aware of many an Aussie traveller who have found themselves in the US only to learn that their suitcases were too large for internal flights."

So what do you do if your luggage does disappear? Ms Timmins says a little bit of preparation, a couple of deep breaths and a lot of persistence is what's required.

"If the worst happens, and you arrive but your luggage doesn't, then don't leave the airport until you've filed a missing luggage report with as much detail as possible. Make sure you provide contact information for the next 48 hours and that you have the proper forms to lodge a lost-baggage claim."

"If the worse happens, and your bags really have been lost, the right travel insurance policy really comes into its own. In short, plan ahead, be prepared, and stay calm and happy travelling."

### ***Travelscene American Express' Top Tips***

- 1. Make the most of your carry-on luggage***
- 2. Make sure you have travel insurance which covers missing and lost baggage***
- 3. Fly Direct and Check-in Early***
- 4. Tag your bags with Name and Phone Numbers inside and out***
- 5. Know Your Bags – make sure they stand out and that you have a digital picture of them on your camera or phone, particularly if you don't speak the local language***
- 6. Check the baggage allowances of each airline your travelling on***
- 7. If you arrive but your luggage doesn't, don't leave until you've filed a missing luggage report***

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