

# Road Trip Preparation - To Do Lists

## 3 Months Before You Go

- Start daydreaming about where you'd like to go.
- Buy "Planning Road Trips" book from Amazon.com
- Buy roadside attraction apps, park guides.
- Buy phrase books or language guide apps.
- Research monuments, attractions and parks online.
  
- Define the purpose of your trip (visit, attractions, roaming).
- Decide where you want to go if time limited vacation.
- Use Google Maps to calculate the driving distances.
- Buy GPS unit, or GPS software and practice using it.
  
- Arrange annual vacation time, or leave of absence from work.
- Arrange for an elderly care giver or live-in assistant for parents.
  
- Renew the passport if not six months remaining.
- Get a second credit card, from another vendor, as a back up.
- Visit the doctor for travel vaccinations and medications.
- Obtain any visitor visas required by destination countries.
- Get child consent letter (Your right to accompany them).
- Get an eye exam and update prescription eyewear.
  
- Scan important documents into your computer.
- Make photocopies of important documents, if no scanner.
- (See the Documents Packing List at [PlanningRoadTrips.com](http://PlanningRoadTrips.com))
  
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## 1 Month Before You Go

- Join the local auto club AAA or CAA.
- Get an international drivers license if required.
  
- Arrange pet care or accommodations.
- Go to the dentist for checkup and cleaning.
- Notify the day care, school, etc, of away time.
- Arrange for a housesitter and emergency contact.
  
- Create a budget for the trip, if money is tight.
- Calculate your car's gas usage to budget accordingly.

- \_\_\_ Revisit and revise your road trip plan.
- \_\_\_ Create your itinerary if on the time limited trip.
- \_\_\_ Map out the route you plan to drive.
- \_\_\_ Plan which days will be driving days.
  
- \_\_\_ Research the hotel chains you're considering.
- \_\_\_ Use Google maps for virtual tours of towns.
- \_\_\_ Decide on which towns you'll be exploring.
- \_\_\_ Purchase special event tickets.
  
- \_\_\_ Buy video, or digital camera and practice using it.
- \_\_\_ Buy adapters & cords for AC power, USB, data transfer.

---

---

---

---

## 2 - 4 Weeks Before You Go

- \_\_\_ Go to bank and set up auto credit card payment.
- \_\_\_ Get destination currency if traveling out of country.
- \_\_\_ Buy travelers checks if you'll be using them.
- \_\_\_ Get roll of quarters and change for tolls etc.
  
- \_\_\_ Phone utility companies and switch to credit card billing.
- \_\_\_ Get travel & medical insurance from agent, or auto club.
- \_\_\_ Get prescriptions from doctor to last the entire trip.
  
- \_\_\_ Set up a post box at the UPS Store.
- \_\_\_ Buy a postal mail redirect to the box.
  
- \_\_\_ Shop, compare and buy food coolers.
- \_\_\_ Buy collapsible bowls and eating utensils.
- \_\_\_ Visit the "Apps Packing List" to prep the smartphone.
  
- \_\_\_ Make reservations at your first destinations.
- \_\_\_ Buy maps or print out Google maps for GPS backup.

---

---

---

---

## 1 Week Before You Go

- Do a visual inspection of car tires and engine.
- Get the routine car maintenance done.
- Get a fresh can of tire puncture sealant to fix flats.
- Get any windshield chips or cracks fixed.
  
- Prepare the emergency kit (Emergency Kit Checklist)
- Prepare the first aid kit (First Aid Kit Checklist)
  
- Research the attractions you want to see.
- Plan your final itinerary for time limited vacations.
  
- Get spare home keys made.
- Put valuables in safety deposit box.
- Buy automatic light timers and learn to use them.
- Buy security locks for sliding doors and windows.
  
- Enter important phone numbers into mobile.
- Enter medical info into cell phone notes.
- Create encrypted drive or folder on computer.
- Put all important scans, docs into encrypted drive.
  
- Put regular deliveries (newspaper, grocery, etc) on hold.
- Put utilities on hold (hydro, internet) for long trips.
  
- Get a haircut and any personal stuff done.
- Pick up any dry cleaning, tailoring, etc.
- Check memory cards and batteries for electronics.
  
- Tell neighbor you trust about the vacation.
- Remind the housesitter and emergency contact.
- Notify credit card companies of your itinerary.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## 1 - 2 Days Before You Go

- Take out cash at ATM and have at least 200 on hand.
- Check bank account balances and transfer funds.
- Pay all monthly bills, if auto payment not used.
- Pay utility bills in advance if leaving for a long time.
  
- Clean out the car interior of non essentials.
- Load the "stay in the car" items into the car.

- Check for the spare tire, jack and essential tools.
- Get gas and top up the window washing fluid.
  
- Cut the lawn and do any yard maintenance.
- Buy snacks and food for the day and next morning.
- Prepare music playlists, ebooks to listen to.
- Charge up the cell phone and all electronics.
  
- Give spare home keys to housesitter.
- Show housesitter how to use home security system.
- Notify the alarm monitoring company of your itinerary.
  
- Give copy of itinerary to emergency contact.
- Give copy of important documents to emergency contact.
  
- Start packing by organizing stuff into piles.
- Pack the storage clothing bag and cleaning tote.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## The Day You Go

- Pack the main overnight bag.
- Pack the non perishable storage cooler.
- Pack the toiletries into zippered container.
  
- Turn off the clock radio, PVR, cable box, etc.
- Turn off all electric heaters.
- Set air conditioning to vacation mode.
- Unplug any chargers, adapters not being used.
- Shut off the breaker to outside power outlets.
  
- Turn down, or shut off the hot water heater.
- Turn off furnace, water heater, fireplace, pilot lights.
- Turn off the gas mains to the house and appliances.
- Turn off water main, or at least the laundry hoses.
  
- Water and feed all the plants.
- Set all of the automatic light timers.
- Empty all the garbage and dispose of it.
- Hide remaining valuables around the home.
- Set up the home phone answering machine if using.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

## Just Before You Go

- Get changed into your comfy driving clothes.
- Listen for traffic closures and road conditions.

- Do one last visual inspection of the car.
- Set up the GPS on the mount in the car.
- Do quick perimeter check around yard.

- Fill up water jugs and bottles.
- Empty, clean and put away water filter.

- Pack the main cooler around the ice packs.
- Clean perishable items out of the fridge.

- Turn off the lights, stove, fans, heaters, etc.
- Check all doors and windows are locked.
- Take digital photos of your home.

- Take out any remaining kitchen garbage.
- Everyone goes bathroom for the last time.
- Set the home security system.

---

---

---

---

## While on the Road

- Use a hands free device if talking while driving.
- Take turns driving if one of you feels tired or dizzy.

- Stop every two hours at rest areas, stretch and play.
- Give pets water when arriving at (not leaving) rest areas.
- Lock the GPS in the glove box, when leaving the car.
- Empty trash from the car after each day's drive.
- Do visual inspection around the car before driving.

- Phone the hotel if you're going to be late.
- Arrive, inspect, check in, sanitize the hotel room.
- Ask the hotel staff their favorite restaurant.
- Ask the hotel staff about local events & activities.

- Use the GPS search near me function to explore.
- Write a journal of the trip.
- Update your travel blog daily with photos.
- Transfer photos from camera to computer as backup.
- Tag photos with keywords like name and location.
  
- If roaming and exploring, pick your next destination.
- Plan driving days and overnight stays to next destination.
- Reserve the next few hotels several days in advance.
- Plan attractions to see along the way if no itinerary.
  
- Take digital photos when checking out.
- Collect the reward points for the hotel chain.
- Keep all receipts from purchases and hotels.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Returning Home

- Unpack bags in the garage, hallway, or mudroom.
- Leave bags outside main living area for quarantine.
- Toss travel clothes into laundry piles.
  
- Listen and make notes of home phone messages.
- Water all plants if no housesitter came.
- Pick up the pet from the kennel.
- Pick up mail from post box.
  
- Go shopping for groceries and stock the fridge.
- Wash the water jug and start a new filter.
  
- Phone the neighbors to tell them you're back.
- Call the housesitter and set a date to return key.
- Phone the emergency contact to thank them.
- Call the office to let them know you've returned.
- Phone the daycare, school, club, kids, parents, etc.
  
- Turn the hot water heater back on.
- Put the air conditioning back to normal operation.
- Turn on the water mains, or laundry taps.
- Turn on the gas and light the pilot lights.
  
- Turn off the automatic light timers.

- Switch on the breaker to the outside AC plugs.
- Turn on the clock radios, set clocks, PVR, etc.
- Program new entry codes into home security system.
  
- Wash all clothing used on the trip before putting away.
- Wash all dishes and utensils before putting them away.
- Wash the cooler interiors with mild bleach solution.
- Vacuum out the luggage exteriors and pockets.
  
- Cancel the yard maintenance and mail pickup.
- Cancel the elderly care giver, or live-in assistant.
- Restart utilities that were placed on hold.
- Restart the newspaper and grocery deliveries.
  
- Start watering the lawn and yard if they need it.
- Check the yard and home for any signs of damage.
  
- Login to online banking and check balances.
- Verify all credit card charges with online banking.
- Stop auto payment of bills, if you really want to.
- Do any outstanding bills and tax matters.
  
- Vacuum out the car and empty any trash.
- Wash the car and front grill free of bug juice.
- Make list to restock emergency and first aid kits.
  
- Transfer any remaining photos or video to computer.
- Organize digital photos of the trip into albums.
- Back up computer to the back up USB drive.
  
- Buy a gift, or take housesitter out for lunch.
- Get the spare house keys from the housesitter.
  
- Go back to work and school. (Sigh!)
- Start planning your next road trip ! (LOL)
  
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_