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#1 – You’ve purchased the vacation of your dreams. Now you need to protect it. People readily purchase car insurance and home insurance to protect those assets, and lots of people purchase life insurance so their loved ones are protected in case the unthinkable happens. Yet, when it comes to purchasing a vacation, which IS an investment, most people gamble that nothing bad will happen, and fail to purchase travel insurance. That’s a big mistake!

Just look at the real life examples of past clients below.

One client went on a cruise with her extended family to Europe. Unfortunately, her father in law passed away while on a shore excursion. This client (and all of the extended family) had purchased third party travel insurance. The insurer took care of all the arrangements of getting the father in law back to the United States, as well as getting the extended family back. The cost to the family was minimal, other than emotional, and it could have cost the family upwards of close to six figures to just get the father in law home.

This next story illustrates that paying attention to what kind of insurance you purchase is as important as purchasing the insurance. A client purchased insurance for herself and her husband. When they arrived at the airport, their flights were delayed and finally cancelled. They were put on flights for the next day for the same airline, even though there were flights available out of the airport for other airlines. The insurance this client purchased specifically stated flights would not be reimbursed for delays or cancellations, as long as the airline made reasonable accommodations, which they did. So, this client had to miss another day of work because she did not purchase the right type of travel insurance.

Purchasing the right **type** of insurance is just as important as purchasing travel insurance for your trip, as well as *making sure you have coverage for every component of your trip*. Most travel agents are not insurance agents, but can sell you travel insurance. They can point you to the right person. An insurance agent will make sure all your questions are answered. Some of your insurance needs may be met by your home owners policy as well as your credit card company(ies), but if you are traveling outside of the United States, you should know that medical coverage ceases once you leave the border.

#2 – Long lines at the airport made headlines throughout 2016. Did you know there are ways to shorten your wait time through security at the airport? Do you know the “right way to go through the security line at the airport? Below, we’ll share the right way to go through the security line to speed up your wait time, as well as two different programs you can use to drastically improve your wait times at both domestic and international airports.

You should know you should be checked in and going through security 2 hours prior to your domestic flight and 3 hours prior to your international flight. In fact, in some countries, if you are not at the airport and at the gate at the time specified on your ticket, **you will be denied boarding and will have to rebook on your own dime.**

Getting through security in US airports (other airports may do things slightly different) would be a breeze if everyone remembered the TSA rules. All liquids must be 3.4 ounces or less and in a see through quart bag. Belts, shoes, coats, hats, all laptops, and the quart bag must be removed, as well as all items from your pockets and placed in bins for screening. Depending on the airport, you will go through some type of screening device or patdown, or both. This is the part of the line where people are slowed down.

If you absolutely **hate** lines, we recommend either Global Entry (if you travel to foreign locations frequently), or TSA-PreCheck.

TSA Pre-Check costs \$85, and you must fill out an application online and go to a center nearby for an interview. They will have already done a background check on you, and will fingerprint you at the interview. If everything checks out, in about a week, you will be mailed a Known Traveler Number (KTN) that you put in your reservation every time you fly. This allows you to go to a special line in most airports which is much shorter. You do not need to remove your shoes, your belt or your jacket. Your laptop stays in your case, and so does your quart bag of liquids. Your carryon still needs to be scanned, and you still have to go through the scanner yourself, but it's a much faster process, and well worth the money and time investment.

Global Entry costs \$100, and you must fill out an application, and go to a center as well for an interview, but it's not always a close center, as these are regional. They also do a background check, and fingerprint you at the interview, but this process takes a bit longer. Once approved, you receive all the benefits of TSA Pre-Check, plus access to expedited entry benefits in partner countries, and expedited entry back into the United States.

#3 – Traveling to most places in the Caribbean and Mexico, you will not need to exchange your dollars, as most places will readily accept the United States dollar. However, there are a few resorts in Mexico that do require pesos, and if you will be using public transportation, you will definitely want to already have some pesos on hand, as you may not receive the correct change if you pay in US dollars.

There are a few ways you can go about getting money exchanged. The least expensive way is to go to your bank and exchange money there. Your bank will usually have to order the money, so you will need to plan ahead and notify your bank. The next least expensive way is to use an ATM machine that does not charge foreign transaction fees, once you are at the location of the choice. The most expensive way to exchange money is to do it at the airport.

#4 – A good packing list for your romantic getaway will serve you well, and we have included a list for most needs. You can expand upon this list based upon your needs. The packing list is included at the end of this list of 10 Travel Essentials.

#5 – Proper Identification is crucial for every trip. The only locales in the Caribbean and Mexico that do not require a passport are Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands, as well as closed loop sailings. Otherwise, you will need your passport, which should not expire until at least 6 months past the date of your travel. In addition, some locales in the Caribbean and Mexico require tourist visas, which may be obtained online prior to entering the country, or at the airport. A driver's license should also be taken as backup identification.

#6 – Smartphone Travel Tips – Most people traveling today do so with their smartphones, but not all travel with their phone, texting and data plans. There are a lot of options available for Americans traveling to the Caribbean and Mexico with their smartphones, and it depends on your carrier as to exactly what options you choose.

Some carriers offer the ability to pay a per day fee and carry over the same features their phone uses in the United States. Other carriers offer other options.

Some people may choose to not pay the fee, and simply use wi-fi while out in the Caribbean or in Mexico. They use apps such as Skype, What's App or Facebook to talk with their friends and family.

For more information and tips on smartphone use while in the Caribbean and Mexico, please email us at [andrea@romanceme.travel](mailto:andrea@romanceme.travel) or call Andrea at 912-388-0565!

#7 – Travel Notifications: We all know the world is an ever changing place and things can and do happen all over the world. For the most part, the Caribbean and Mexico are safe places to travel – as long as you use common sense. With that said,

the US State Department does issue travel warnings on occasion, and there is a current travel warning for most of the Americas with the Zika virus. In addition, weather related travel warnings for things such as hurricanes, floods or earthquakes could be issued at any time, anywhere. That's why the State Department created the SMART traveler program. It allows travelers to register their travel with the US Government so the Embassy in that area will know US citizens will be there at a certain time and date. Romance Me Travel has a corporate account and registers all of its clients as a courtesy.

#8 – Backup Copy of Credit Cards and Identification: Romance Me Travel recommends its clients use credit cards that do not charge foreign transaction fees (most Discover cards do not), to carry at least two cards (some places only accept MasterCard or Visa, plus it's a good idea to have a backup credit card), and to be sure you make two copies of all your credit cards and identification you will be taking with you. Leave one copy with a trusted friend, and bring one copy with you. The copy that you take with you should **not be kept in the same place** you keep your credit cards and identification (for example, do not put both in your purse).

#9 – Emergency Contact – In addition to your travel expert being an emergency contact, designate someone else who does not live with you and is not traveling with you be an emergency contact, and be sure their name is listed on everything – as an emergency contact on the airline tickets, at the hotel, your tours, travel insurance, etc. This person should also have a copy of your credit cards and identification.

10# - Checklist for Pre-Vacation – Do you have a checklist for things to do before your vacation starts? We have some ideas for you:

- Confirm flights & schedule
- Confirm hotel & shuttle
- Pay bills
- Arrange pet care
- Hold your mail
- Hold your newspaper
- Adjust thermostat
- Adjust water heater
- Turn off faucets for clothes washer
- Set timer for house lights
- Address list for postcards
- Ask bank re spending limits on debit cards
- Notify neighbor or family member to watch house
- Set email out of office
- Set voice mail out of office

Enjoy your Getaway!!

WHILE EVERY EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO MAKE THIS LIST AS COMPREHENSIVE AS POSSIBLE, IT DOES NOT NECESSARILY INCLUDE EVERY ITEM FOR YOUR PARTICULAR TRIP

TRAVEL TIPS: Remember to secure a luggage tag with your name and phone number outside and inside your luggage. Do not include your home address on luggage tags! Take pictures of your packed suitcase and bring proof of purchase for expensive items packed inside your luggage (for customs purposes). If turning your luggage over to a porter at any location (airline check in/cruise pier), take a picture showing all of your suitcases being checked.

#### DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

- Itinerary
- Plane Tickets
- Cruise Documents, especially boarding pass
- Travel Insurance Policy
- Cruise luggage tags
- Passports & VISAS
- Drivers License
- Medical Insurance Card
- Security case for travel documents & passports
- Security Money Belt/Pouch
- Copies of passports kept in a different place than the passports

#### MONEY & FOREIGN CURRENCY

- ATM/Credit Cards
- Travelers check
- Cash (small bills for tips)

#### FOR THE AIRPLANE

- Travel Pillow & blanket
- Ear Plugs & Eye Mask
- Headphones & splitter
- Chips/Snacks
- Mints/Gum/Candy
- Tissues
- Hand Sanitizer Wipes
- DVD player & movies
- IPOD or CD player & CD's
- Deck of cards
- Kindle/Nook
- Reading Material
- Pen/Notepad
- Eyeglasses/Reading Glasses /Contacts
- Spare glasses or contacts
- Eyeglass cleaner
- Contacts/solution/case

#### MEDICINES

- Vitamins
- Imodium
- Roloids/Pepto Bismol

- Seasick pills or seabands
- Motrin/Tylenol
- Allergy/cold/flu pills
- Cough Drops
- Nasal Spray
- Eye drops
- Mini first aid kit
- Ace bandage
- Sunscreen
- Sunburn gell
- Bug/mosquito spray
- Sleeping pills
- Lip balm

#### ELECTRONICS

- Camera/underwater camera
- Camcorder
- Memory cards
- Extra batteries & charger
- Camcorder
- Memory cards
- Extra batteries & charger
- Power cords & USB's for devices
- Cell phone
- Cell phone charger
- Binoculars

- 2 way radios
- GPS
- Laptop
- Luggage locks & keys (do not lock for plane travel)
- IPOD & accessories
- European plug converter
- Power strip
- Alarm clock

#### COMFORT ITEMS

- Iron
- Room sanitizer/air freshener
- Disinfectant wipes
- Small flashlight
- Corkscrew (not in airline carry-on)
- Powdered drinks
- Duct tape
- Zip ties
- Bungee cord
- Beer/wine
- Room snacks
- Reusable water bottle
- Travel umbrella & poncho
- Ziplock bags – large enough for wet suits
- Sunglasses
- Visor/hat
- Fan/extension cord
- Super glue
- Pocket knife (not in airline carry-on)
- Clothes pins
- Over the door organizer
- Padded envelope to protect postcards & pictures
- Guide books
- Maps & compass
- Translation book

#### TOILETRIES

- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Hair spray
- Baby powder
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Dental floss
- Shave cream

- Razors
- Tweezer
- Denture care
- Mirror
- Bath sponge
- Hair dryer (if not provided)
- Curling iron/curlers
- Shower cap
- Deodorant
- Body/hand lotion
- Facial cleanser
- Makeup
- Make up remover
- Hairbrush/comb
- Nail clipper/file
- Hair scrunchies
- Perfume/cologne
- Qtips/cotton balls
- Nail polish & remover
- Nail repair kit
- Sewing kit
- Eyeglass repair kit
- Laundry bag
- Laundry soap & fabric softener
- Roll of quarters
- Stain remover

## CLOTHES

- Shorts/pants/skirts
- Shirts/blouses
- Formal wear/shoes
- Sweater/jacket
- Underwear/bras
- Shoes/socks/hosiery
- Sandals
- Swimsuits
- Cover ups
- Pj's/sweats

## ACCESSORIES

- Evening bag
- Jewelry/cuff links
- Belts/ties
- Lint roller

CONFIRMATION NUMBERS & PHONE NUMBERS

Trip \_\_\_\_\_

Car Rental

\_\_\_\_\_

Transfers

\_\_\_\_\_

Tours & Excursions

\_\_\_\_\_

Travel Insurance

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Airline(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Hotel

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Toll Free Numbers

CC \_\_\_\_\_

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CC \_\_\_\_\_

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CC \_\_\_\_\_

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

Family \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Doctor \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dentist \_\_\_\_\_

Pharmacy \_\_\_\_\_

Embassies \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Trip Supplier \_\_\_\_\_

Travel Agent \_\_\_\_\_

LIST MEDICATIONS

Keep in original containers and/or bring copies of prescriptions

DIABETIC SUPPLIES & COOLER

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