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**Hed:** 24 Common Travel Mistakes, According to T+L Travel Advisors

**Dek:** Our A-List advisors have seen it all. Here are the mistakes they're always hoping you won't make—but know that you might.

**By:** Travel + Leisure Editors

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Any travel advisor who has made the T+L A-List knows how to plan a trip. But even more importantly, they know how *not* to plan one, too. Here are the travel mistakes they hope to catch before they happen—whether they're small errors with major consequences, like forgetting to renew your passport, or risky booking decisions that you wouldn't know about without a heads-up, like setting aside enough layover time while flying to Africa.

### **Booking Errors**

#### **Booking Nonrefundable**

"Booking nonrefundable air fare or hotels. You'd be surprised the number of times I get called to help with a direct booking because the wrong dates or destination were booked." — [Carmen Teresa Targa, Condado Travel](#)

#### **Not Updating Your Passport**

"Not keeping your passport updated. Or if you bought plane tickets under a name that doesn't match. This can cause headaches." — [Crisney Lane, Mosaic Safaris](#)

#### **Ignoring the Fine Print**

"Ignoring instructions and rules can lead to painful mistakes, like not having enough pages in a passport, not processing visas on time, and not getting vaccinated within the right window." — [Liz Wheeler, Micato Safaris](#)

#### **Booking Too Late**

"Booking too late. Destinations are filling up a year (or more) in advance. Hotels, guides, and transport services get booked and prices increase. Once you've decided on a place, contact a travel advisor to start planning." — [Niall Causer, Audley Travel](#)

## **Dismissing the Off-Season**

"Limiting yourself to high-season safaris. You will pay more, deal with crowds, and face high airfare with little mileage redemption. We encourage travelers to be consider other times." — [Daniel Saperstein, Hippo Creek Safaris](#)

## **Risk Management**

### **Too Short a Connection**

"Missing a connection in Newark, especially between July and September, the peak season for African safaris. Insurance companies have caught on and no longer insure connections shorter than two hours. We recommend a layover of at least four hours." — [Craig Beal, Travel Beyond](#)

### **Foregoing Travel Insurance**

"Skipping travel insurance. It protects your investment in case of cancellations, delays, medical emergencies, or lost luggage. In today's unpredictable world, it offers peace of mind." — [Candice Heckel, Africa Endeavours](#)

### **Not Considering Currency**

"Exchanging money at airports and hotels. Sometimes there's no way around it, but they charge higher conversion rates plus higher fees. Standard market prices can be found at bank ATMs." — [Mo Noubani, The Travel Box International](#)

### **Wishful Thinking**

"Not anticipating problems. Unexpected obstacles happen: someone gets sick, a boat charter gets rained out, a restaurant is closed. A travel advisor handles these issues and helps you pivot." — [Maria Diego, Diego Travel](#)

## **Smart Preparations**

### **Only Using Blogs**

"Relying solely on blogs. They may look current, but are actually severely outdated. It's helpful to talk to someone who's been there recently or works in the region regularly." — [Mary Curry, Adventure Life Journeys](#)

### **Going It On Your Own**

"Booking directing the hotel directly and not using an advisor. Clients don't realize that our buying power and relationships can mean VIP attention, amenities and upgrades." — [Siobhan Byrne, Adams & Butler](#)

### **Research Is Key**

"Not doing any research. I know some travelers prefer not to spoil a surprise, but it's good to be prepared. For instance, don't assume India is always hot. It can get chilly enough for jackets and gloves in the winter." — [Marion Miller, Micato Safaris](#)

### **There's Such Thing as Too Much**

#### **Too Many Restaurants**

"Overbooking restaurants—especially Michelin-starred spots. This often leads to burnout or even illness. We advise moderation and to leave room for spontaneity." — [Jennifer Schwartz, Authentic Explorations](#)

#### **Not Giving Time to Immerse**

"Trying to do too much. I advise staying in each location for at least two days. Why travel if you don't take the time to engage with the local people, culture, food and experiences?" — [Julie Jones, TopFlight Travels](#)

#### **Speeding Around**

"Rushing through locations. This is how you miss the magic. A country like Portugal may look small on a map, but there's a lot to explore.." — [Sheree M. Mitchell, Immersa Global](#)

#### **Diving Into the Busy Part**

"Traveling directly to a metropolis. Instead, it helps to ease into a trip. Start with a few days at a ranch before exploring Buenos Aires, or shake off jet lag on a Okinawa beach before going to Tokyo." — [Steve Wilson, LiNGER Travel](#)

### **Stay Mindful of Your Purpose—and of Others**

#### **Copying Others**

"Copying another person's itinerary. Just because one person loved their trip doesn't mean you'll love doing the exact same thing. Traveling is such a personal experience." — [Kendra Thornton, Royal Travel](#)

### **Not Knowing Your Wh**

"Overlooking what they want from a trip. Reflect on the purpose beforehand. Without that clarity, it's easy to fall into packed itineraries that leave you feeling scattered." — [Sarah Groen, Bell & Bly Travel](#)

### **Breaking the Golden Rule**

"Being rude to hotel staff. If you're patient and considerate, even during hiccups, the staff will go above and beyond to make the recovery extra special." — [Kelly Grumbach, Quintessentially](#)

### **On-Site Logistics**

#### **Driving on Roads You Don't Know**

"Driving on your own in a foreign place where you don't know the road rules and don't speak the language. Get a local driver to avoid mix-ups, wasted time, and potential tickets." — [Bob Preston, GlobeBley](#)

#### **Underestimating Altitude**

"Don't underestimate the effect that altitude can have. Much of our work is in the Andes at very high altitudes. Listen to our advice when dealing with it." — [Harry Hastings, Plan South America](#)

#### **Naively Heading Into Remote Terrain**

"Heading into remote places without the right equipment. We always send very detailed packing lists to ensure that our guests are well prepared for all types of weather. " — [Marc Telio, Entree Canada](#)

#### **Packing Too Much**

"People often pack too much for tropical trips. You don't need that much clothing, and hotels typically offer laundry. It's more practical to pack lightly." — [Jarrod Hobson, ATJ Travel](#)

#### **Not Prepping for Golf Trips**

"For golfers, failing to book tee times in advance, not packing the right gear, and not researching the course. My simple rules are: plan ahead, pack thoughtfully, and prepare physically and mentally. " — [Robert Markovich, Sofia's Travel](#)