

5 must haves for a corporate traveler

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Every trip is different, and packing for every trip requires a curatorial approach. An adventure trip may include a solar powered backpack for remote power backup, or power adaptor if you need to charge your laptop for preparing that presentation on a business trip. But at the nucleus of any trip is a group of time-tested items that are labeled “ must-have”:

1. International Calling Card: Whether you are a student going overseas for studies, a senior citizen visiting your children settled abroad or a corporate heading for an international meeting, a calling card is a must have. There are several benefits to buying one before you board your flight rather than procrastinating buying one until you land there – you get a local number of the destination country even before you have embarked on the journey, which you can share with your family here and with anybody who might be coming to pick you up at the airport; you get voice and data bundles that have been specifically designed for an Indian traveler with more India-calling and messages built in; and enjoy benefits like free CUG if you are a group of travelers or colleagues flying together.

These features can help you save big on some hidden costs that you will incur if you postpone the purchase until you land at the airport. Most importantly, always pick a pre-paid international calling card so that you have complete control on your price and consumption and there are no sticker shocks at the end of your trip.

There are horror stories of travelers purchasing post-paid cards without understanding the hidden charges like roaming data (which can go as high as \$5 per MB) who ended up paying phone bills worth lakhs!

Summing up, a pre-paid calling card is a smart, convenient, reliable and inexpensive way to stay connected with your near and dear ones while you travel around the world. And if you end up running out of talktime or data, you can do a recharge online anytime!

2. Travel Insurance: Insurance as a product category is always a no-brainer, but only a fraction of us are insured in general in life, let alone while we are traveling. Simple and affordable travel insurance can save you money and heartburn – but it's a complicated product which travelers skip to understand and purchase, thinking that everything on the trip is perfectly planned and Murphy's Law wouldn't apply.

However, this is a classic case of being “ penny-wise and pound-foolish” – an international trip is a big-ticket purchase and most of Indians save for months before going on their dream trip. With just a few thousand rupees per traveler (that maybe 1-2% of the total travel budget per traveler), you can get insured for flight delays, lost baggage, emergency sickness and other unforeseen incidents which is a must for any traveler, business or leisure.

3. Prepaid Travel Card: The world of payments is fast moving from cash to plastic to digital, and nothing beats plastic when it comes to paying while traveling. A prepaid travel card is a simple instrument that enables you to convert at better exchange rates, carry multiple currencies, pay at all Visa/MC partner vendors (and that's a lot of them) and convert to cash at fixed transaction charges. It also offers a simple yet powerful way to keep track of your expenses and receipts.

Considering every corporate traveler gets an allowance from the company, a traveler card is an ideal option. If you end up running out of currency on the travel card, a reload can be done almost instantly from anywhere in the world.

4. Currency Notes: There is a saying in the business community, “ Cash is king”. It is also true when you travel. We all know plastic is great, safe and convenient but some basic currency to pay for the cab ride or for that souvenir at the flea market or to the porter at the hotel who was courteous to you – cash to the rescue!

A secret stash of currency notes stored inside that hidden pocket is also a must-have!

5. A Virtual Reality Headset: Our ubiquitous smartphone is also a very powerful virtual reality device that can transport us to our destination while we are traveling. Most of the business events and conferences today enable 360-degree live feeds of their events that can be experienced using a virtual reality headset so that you don't miss out on the action because of a delayed flight or last-minute traffic.