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## Top Tips when taking a Gap Year

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**With our wealth of experience in Gap Yearing and being parents of Gappers we have put together the Mind The Gap Year Top Ten Tips to help you to plan your trip and to help parents assist.**

### Top Ten Tips

#### 1. Research

Many countries that are now part of the well trodden Backpacker path are culturally, economically and environmentally very different to home.

Make sure you understand the rules and regulations of the countries you plan to visit, did you know that in Barbados you can be arrested for wearing combat trousers, or that you can't chew gum in

Singapore?

This is the first action point, everything else stems from there. So read travel books, use the FCO and other relevant websites.

Mind The Gap Year provide a web service from red24, where the traveller can research any country in the world for free.

#### 2. Preparation

It is a good idea to go on a Safety Training Course, this teaches you how to make yourself less conspicuous, how to spot possible signs of trouble, how to handle yourself in the correct manner etc.

Did you know that by opening your rucksack by a wall, you have just reduced your risk by 50%.

Mind The Gap Year offer a £30 discount off a safety training course

#### 3. Booking

This is the fun part, deciding where to go, what to do, what to see, there are many Tour Operators and Travel Agents that can help with this.

One idea is to go to a Gap Fair where you can speak to many companies who will give you plenty of ideas: volunteering, is always a popular choice, or why not learn how to instruct a specific sport such as skiing.

Mind The Gap Year have an affiliation with a Travel Agent who offer a bespoke service to help plan your travel arrangements including a meet and greet option to help you in your first days away.

#### 4. Planning

Get organised, when are jobs and visas required, what equipment do you need, how long before your passport expires as some countries require you to have at least 6 months to run on arrival.

Mind The Gap Year provide an electronic planner/diary to help with planning, which includes e-mail reminders.

#### 5. Health

If you have a medical condition make sure that you have the means to obtain the correct medication in the countries you are visiting and make sure your travel Insurance covers that condition.

Also take advice from your local doctor or nurse on what vaccinations and medications are required for the countries you are visiting, some must be applied months before departure.

Make sure you arrange a check up with your dentist before travelling.

Pre-existing medical conditions must be notified to your Travel Insurance provider before you take your trip.

#### 6. Insurance

Make sure you obtain a good quality specialist travel insurance, your family Annual Multi Trip policy does not cover these types of trips and if something were to happen, costs can rise to thousands of pounds (there have been cases of properties being remortgaged to pay for repatriation, medical costs or personal liability).

Also check the Insurance you choose has cover for the following:- working, volunteering, high risk activities you may wish to do, airline failure, bereavement etc.

If you are in doubt, it is always best to contact the Insurance company before you do certain activities.

Mind The Gap Year offer a specialist Gap Year Insurance.

#### 7. Documents

Your passport, visas, flight tickets, travel documents, drivers licence, and Insurance documents are all vital to make your trip run smoothly. What were to happen if you lost any or all of these, it would be a nightmare!

The answer is to make copies, either leave a copy of all at home or scan and store electronically somewhere. At least then you have some proof of who you are.

Mind The Gap Year offer a free electronic document safe where these and other documents can be stored.

#### 8. Support whilst abroad

In the unlikely event that something unfortunate were to happen when you are away, it is a good idea to have the best support at hand (the Foreign Commonwealth Office, can't help in most cases).

Travel Insurance can help in many situations, but you may wish to look at other types of extra support too, including Specialist Assistance Companies.

Mind The Gap Year offer an Action Response Service from red24 and a free Interpretation Service.

## 9. Money

Inform your bank of your travels to make sure your credit and debit cards work overseas.

A good idea is to set up an internet bank account which you can view from online computer. You may also need to set up a bank account in the country you will be residing in if you are working, which can be done before you leave.

There are other products out there, which will save you money on currency conversion, these are worth investigating.

It's also a good idea to leave someone with a Power of Attorney who would then be able to handle any financial matters while you are away.

Mind The Gap Year website list a few products which could prove to be invaluable and will lessen costs.

## 10. Communication

Keep friends and relatives updated as often as you can.

Set up an e-mail account, obtain an International roaming Sim card it will save you money and you won't need to buy one when you get there, you can even start up a blog which diarises your experiences.

And finally do ring or text home on arrival – they just want to know you got there safely!

Mind The Gap Year offer International Sim cards, which cut the cost of phoning home in half.

We hope you have found the above useful. Enjoy your planning; it's all part of the fun of taking a Gap Year.

END

Source: PR-Inside website (14 August 2009)  
<http://www.pr-inside.com/top-tips-when-taking-a-gap-r1437480.htm>