

THE HOLIDAY GALS · FREE TRAVEL GUIDE

THE FIRST-TIME *Flyer Guide*

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO FLY CALM, COZY & CONFIDENT

WELCOME, FIRST-TIME FLYER

You've got this, *friend.*

Your first flight can feel like a lot: new words, new lines, new rules. This guide walks you through every step in order, from booking to baggage claim, so nothing surprises you. Print it, tuck it in your bag, and check things off as you go.

YOUR FLIGHT AT A GLANCE

1 **Weeks before**

Book your flight, check your ID, learn your airline's bag rules and download its app.

2 **The day before**

Check in online (usually opens 24 hours ahead), pack your bags, charge everything and plan your ride to the airport.

3 **At the airport**

Arrive early, drop off any checked bag, go through security and find your gate.

4 **On the plane**

Board with your group, stow your bags, buckle up and relax.

5 **After you land**

Follow the signs to baggage claim, your connecting gate or ground transportation.

Tip Everyone was a first-time flyer once. Airport staff and flight attendants answer first-timer questions all day long, so never be shy to ask.

STEP ONE

Book it *& bring the right ID*

BOOKING SMART

Pick an easy flight

A nonstop flight means no plane change. Morning flights are often a nice choice for a first trip, since there's more of the day to sort out any delay.

Read the fare type

The cheapest "basic" fares may not include a seat choice, a full-size carry-on or changes. Check what's included before you pay.

Choose your seat

Window to watch the view and lean on the wall. Aisle to get up easily. Seats near the front get you off the plane faster.

Get the airline app

Your boarding pass, gate, delays and bag updates all show up there, often faster than the airport screens.

YOUR DOCUMENTS

ADULTS · U.S. FLIGHTS

REAL ID or passport

Adults need a REAL ID-compliant driver's license (look for the star) or another accepted ID, like a passport, to go through security.

KIDS · U.S. FLIGHTS

Usually no ID at security

TSA doesn't require ID for children under 18 traveling with an adult in the U.S. Your airline may still ask for proof of age for a lap infant, so check.

Flying out of the country?

You'll need a valid passport for everyone, including babies. Some countries also want it valid for months after your trip and may need a visa, so check early. Passports can take weeks to arrive.



Rules can change. Always confirm ID requirements with TSA and your airline before you fly.

STEP TWO

Pack your bags *the easy way*



Personal item

A purse, tote or small backpack that fits under the seat in front of you.

Carry-on

A small suitcase for the overhead bin. Sizes vary by airline, so check yours.

Checked bag

Your big suitcase. You drop it at the counter and pick it up at baggage claim.

THE RULES TO KNOW

LIQUIDS IN YOUR CARRY-ON

Think 3-1-1

3.4 oz (100 ml) bottles or smaller, in 1 quart-size clear bag, 1 bag per person. Bigger bottles go in your checked bag.

BATTERIES

Power banks fly with you

Power banks and spare batteries go in your carry-on, never your checked bag. Some airlines also limit using them on board.

Keep these with you

- ID, phone and wallet
- Medications and glasses
- Chargers and headphones
- A change of clothes, in case a bag is late

Good to know

- Leave gifts unwrapped: security may open them
- Jams, dips and sauces count as liquids
- Bring an empty water bottle and fill it after security
- Put a name tag on every bag



Not sure if something's allowed? TSA's website has a searchable "What Can I Bring?" list.

STEP THREE

Airport day, *step by step*

Plan to arrive about 2 hours early for a U.S. flight and 3 hours for an international one, a little more during the holidays.

1 Find your airline

Follow the signs for "Departures" and your airline's name. Big airports have more than one terminal, and your app or ticket says which.

2 Drop your checked bag

Already checked in online? Head to the bag drop line. If not, use a kiosk or the counter. Keep your ID handy.

3 Go to security

Have your boarding pass and ID out. An officer checks them, then you walk to the screening lanes.

4 Use the bins

Bags go on the belt. Follow the officers' directions on laptops, liquids, jackets and shoes, since it can vary by airport and lane.

5 Walk through the scanner

Empty your pockets first. If an officer asks to check something, that's normal. Just follow along.

6 Find your gate

Look at the departure screens or your app for your gate number. Gates can change, so check again before you sit down.

7 Board with your group

Your boarding group or zone is on your boarding pass. Doors often close about 10 to 15 minutes before takeoff, so stay close.

STEP FOUR

On the plane, *cozy & calm*

Find your seat

Rows are numbered and seats are lettered. Your seat is printed on your boarding pass, like 14C.

Stow your bags

Carry-on in the overhead bin, wheels first. Personal item under the seat in front of you.

Buckle up

Keep your seatbelt on whenever the seatbelt light is on, and loosely fastened while you're seated.



FEEL YOUR BEST

Ears popping?

Chew gum, yawn or swallow during takeoff and landing. For babies, a bottle or pacifier can help.

Stay comfy

Planes get chilly. Wear layers, bring a big scarf and cozy socks, and drink plenty of water.

Bring fun

Download shows, music and books before you board, since in-flight Wi-Fi isn't always free.

FEELING NERVOUS?

Totally normal, and it helps to know

- Bumps, called turbulence, are common and usually just like a bumpy road
- New sounds, like the landing gear and engines changing, are part of every flight
- Slow breathing helps: in for 4 counts, out for 6
- Tell a flight attendant it's your first flight. They're there to help

STEP FIVE

You landed! *Now what?*

Getting off the plane

Stay seated until the seatbelt light turns off. Rows usually leave front to back, so grab your things when it's your row's turn.

Baggage claim

Follow the "Baggage Claim" signs. A screen shows which belt has your flight's bags. Check the tag before you take a bag that looks like yours.

Catching a connection

Check your app or the screens for your next gate as soon as you land. Connecting gates can be far apart, so head straight there.

Getting a ride

Follow the signs for "Ground Transportation" or "Ride Share." Text your ride your door or pickup zone number.

IF PLANS CHANGE

Flight delayed or canceled?

Check the airline app first. You can often rebook right there, faster than waiting in line. You can also ask the agent at your gate.

Bag didn't show up?

Go to your airline's baggage office near the belts before you leave the airport, and keep your bag tag receipt.



PRINT & CHECK OFF

Your first-flight *checklist*

BEFORE YOU GO

- [ ] ID: REAL ID or passport
- [ ] Airline app downloaded
- [ ] Checked in online
- [ ] Bag rules checked
- [ ] Liquids in a quart bag
- [ ] Medications in carry-on
- [ ] Phone and power bank charged
- [ ] Shows and music downloaded
- [ ] Name tags on every bag
- [ ] Ride to the airport planned

IN MY BAG

- [ ] Empty water bottle
- [ ] Snacks
- [ ] Headphones
- [ ] Scarf or light layer
- [ ] Gum for takeoff
- [ ] A change of clothes

AT THE AIRPORT

- [ ] Arrived early
- [ ] Checked bag dropped off
- [ ] Through security
- [ ] Found my gate (and checked it again)

FLYER WORDS

Boarding pass: your ticket with your seat, gate and group.

Gate: the waiting area where you board your plane.

Boarding group: the order you get on the plane.

Layover: time between two flights on one trip.

Nonstop: one flight straight to where you're going.

Jet bridge: the hallway from the gate to the plane.

Turbulence: bumpy air, usually harmless.

TSA PreCheck: a paid program for a faster security line.

Overhead bin: the storage space above your seat.

Lap infant: a baby under 2 who rides on your lap.

Happy flying!

FIND MORE HOLIDAY TRAVEL TIPS, CHECKLISTS & KITS AT THEHOLIDAYGALS.COM · @THEHOLIDAYGALS

This guide shares general travel tips. Airline, airport and TSA rules change and vary, so always check with your airline and TSA before you fly.
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