

# Top travel tips

HemiHelp's transitions adviser, **Lildovía Lawrence**, offers some travel tips for young people heading off this summer.

Travel is amazing. It can be miraculous, scary, mind-boggling and eye-opening in equal measures. However you view it, travel is an interesting experience and can open your mind to a host of new things.

As we move into the warmer spring months many of you will be dreaming of sunnier climes and faraway lands. No wonder this time of year is a popular period for booking summer holidays, tropical travels and gap year adventures.

Whether you're organising a two-week trip to Spain or an epic trek in South America, all expeditions require careful thought, planning and consideration. The best way to guarantee an enjoyable and stress-free trip is to plan things out and make sure that you are well prepared.

## Before you book

Make sure you've taken out comprehensive travel insurance suitable for all your needs. You may want to think about finding a specialist travel agent who deals specifically with disability.

Research the embassy and tourist board of your chosen country. This can give you information about things such as transport options and ease of access in your chosen destination.



## Health and medication

If you're travelling within the European Economic Area or Switzerland you will be able to get a free European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) online. This will give you the right to access state-provided emergency treatment during your stay.

Some airlines will ask for medical clearance before you fly. You can get this from your GP in the form of a Medical Information Form (MEDIF). If you're a frequent flyer you can get a Frequent Travellers Medical Card (FREMEC), which gives the airline a permanent record of your needs.

This may sound like an obvious one, but if you take medication you should make sure you have enough to last for your whole trip (plus a small reserve supply). Make sure to store it in your carry-on bag; don't leave it trapped in your check-in luggage.

## Accessibility

Contact all airlines, transport companies and airports well ahead of time. Make sure to ask any questions you have and check they

Avoid non-tourist areas, especially after dark. There's no point heading off the beaten track if you are putting yourself in danger, especially in places which are unfamiliar to you.

Don't leave your drink anywhere – someone could put something in it. Trust your instincts – you know best!

## Being social

Make a point to try and meet local people. Even with a possible language barrier you can often learn more about a place from people than from any guidebook.

Enjoy daily life in your chosen location. If you really want to pick up the vibe of a place, spend a few hours people watching in a city centre plaza and see what you notice.

## Take lots of photos!

You want to remember your adventures and share them with friends and family, so make sure to snap, save and back-up along the way.

## Take it easy

Travelling should be fun and in order to make the most of your trip it's important not to have a 'filled to the brim' itinerary. Pick a few must-do activities and spend the rest of the time choosing as you go. Bon voyage!

are aware of all your needs, such as use of a mobility buggy or large print for documents.

Get in touch with your hotel and find out about their facilities. Don't assume that hotels/hostels will know what your needs are. Take care to be very specific when gathering information.

## Questions to ask could be:

- Can I have a room on the ground floor/near a lift?
- Do the bedroom/bathroom facilities fit my needs?
- Is there step-free access?

If you want to hire a car during your trip, the Blue Badge scheme is available throughout the UK, and adapted cars can be hired in many countries. If you're taking a taxi, book in advance and make sure that the vehicle they'll provide will suit your needs.

## Staying safe

Keep your accommodation details written in both your phone and in a notebook.

We hope you've found these tips useful for planning your next trip. If you've been on a great adventure abroad or here in the UK, why not write something for the next HemiHelp Magazine? Contact our editor, Laura Pares to find out how you can get involved: [laura@hemihelp.org.uk](mailto:laura@hemihelp.org.uk)