

# International travel



## Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

If you are someone who is very passionate about your chosen outdoor activity, I encourage you to do some world travel and experience that activity in foreign lands. I have been fortunate to travel to four continents in pursuit of fishing and hunting. Some of these trips give the family finances a double hernia, so my wife of many years makes me “pace myself.”

The good news is that with modern air travel, you can be just about anywhere in the world within 36 hours. The bad news is you have to use modern air travel to get there.

That means TSA, security checks, lost luggage, overbookings, late and cancelled flights, missed connections, and the list goes on and on. The surprises abroad are the things that make you lose sleep at night, but there is a way to head some of that off.

Let's start with the simplest: your passport and travel itinerary. Your passport must be current, and not set to expire for at least nine months before your trip's return date. Passports can be renewed fairly easily, and they even have an expedited service. Check the passport long before you book and visit [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for answers to all your passport questions.

The name on your airline itinerary must match your passport name spelling exactly, and when you get boarding passes, check the spelling. I have been bounced back from TSA because one spelled out my middle name while the other had an initial. Makes a great start for a big trip to get bounced



Foreign travel could mean lost luggage, missed flights, security checks, and small charter flights to take you 1000 miles northwest of nowhere. It's best to tackle it with a smile and be prepared before you go. (Courtesy photo/Mark Rackay)

around and does little for your mood.

Your passport must have at least 4 blank pages for Visa stamps, and some countries require six. Several African countries will only put their stamp on a blank page and want blank pages before and after their stamp. Beats me why, but you don't want to get turned around and sent home for that, and some places will.

I know you are sick and tired of COVID, no pun intended, but some places still have restrictions. I left the US with no restrictions in place to Argentina, that required proof of double vaccinations and current booster, and a negative COVID test in hand.

When we got to the airport, an hour and a half before the flight, we planned on just checking in, because we were on a non-stop to the US where no COVID restrictions were in place.

Not so fast, chum. The airline let us know that Argentina required a negative COVID test to leave the country. Needless to say, we missed our flight and spent the next 48 hours flying around the different airports, trying to get home.

All of that could have been prevented if I would have checked [www.traveldoc.aero](http://www.traveldoc.aero) for current COVID requirements including vaccinations, COVID testing, health screening forms, and required health/travel insurance. The same site will let you know if a visa, or an ETA (electronic travel authority) is required for your destination, and if it needs to be submitted in advance. Again, you could get sent home if you don't have a proper visa.

The Bureau of Consular Affairs has a website dedicated to international travel, to help ensure you are getting things properly completed, and check regularly for updates, warnings, and alerts, and even check when you are there. You can visit this page at <https://bit.ly/4dUYPer>.

This website will show any travel alerts, embassy information, visa details, currency restrictions, health requirements and passport requirements. Most places accept U.S. dollars, and some do not. I traveled to some islands in the Caribbean fishing with a pocket full of greenbacks, and nobody would take them. It made for some difficult moments. You can probably

order some currency from your bank.

Give your credit card company a call before you go, and let them know where you are going, and for how long. I had a Visa card denied in Newfoundland once and spent several hours on the phone getting it straightened out. Also, carry two different cards, just in case. My wife and I have separate cards, with different banks, and it has saved the day a couple times.

Take photocopies of your passport, credit cards, insurance cards, and any other important travel documents, and take a photo of your bags when you check them in. This can come in handy in case things are lost or delayed. We carry the extra copies in our carry-on.

Speaking of carry-on, all your medications should be with you, at all times. If the luggage is lost, at least you have those meds. All prescriptions must be in the original bottle with the prescription information on them, you best check about what drugs you can't bring along. Several African countries do not allow narcotics, prescription or not.

You probably don't want to spend your dream vacation in a foreign prison, so check first.

Use luggage tags on all your bags, checked and carry-on. I also write my name, address, and cell number on all my bags with a paint pen. Write your name and address inside the bag also, just in case. We use TSA locks on everything, the combination ones. Regular locks sometimes get cut off by security, leaving your bags unlocked. I carry a couple of extra locks in my carry-on, just in case.

Carry phone/laptop chargers and power cords with you, not in checked baggage. Bring a travel power plug adapter and converter suitable for the country you are visiting. Some countries use 220, and most use a plug different from the US.

Bring the entire adapter kit with you. I was in South America, staying at a place that did not use the standard South American plug, they used the European one. Needless to say, my phone battery died.

About phones, when traveling, I have always used WhatsApp as a calling option outside of the country. It is free and all you need is wifi. I use it regularly in the States to talk with friends in South America and Africa. Your normal cell carrier proba-

bly won't work where you are going, and if it does, the charges can be steep.

Changes take place at the last minute, or in transit, so check flight times in the airports. Checking in with the airline in advance is a good idea. I recommend downloading the app on your cell phone for the airlines you are using. Sometimes you get notifications there first.

Many countries require you to have health insurance valid for the country you are visiting. Your carrier may not offer coverage out of the US. Medicare is one that doesn't. A temporary policy covering the duration of the trip is relatively inexpensive, and most cover evacuation. You will be able to get home if you are sick or injured, so an evacuation policy is important. Check with your insurance agent or visit [www.globalrescue.com](http://www.globalrescue.com).

Travel with a smile, and don't be the ugly American. You are a guest in the country you are visiting, and the people there do not give a hoot about your constitutional rights. I have always been friendly, polite, and most folks will treat you the same way, and will help you with whatever problem you have.

The worst part of the trip is the flying. Some airlines are great and treat you very well as you join them in the friendly skies. Others are like a cattle car with wings, and their motto is “You will feel like you never left the ground, because we treat you like dirt.”

Just grin and bear it. *Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press, Delta County Independent, and several other newspapers, as well as a feature writer for several saltwater fishing magazines. He is an avid hunter and world class saltwater angler, who travels around the world in search of adventure and serves as a director and public information officer for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. Personal email is [elkhunter77@icloud.com](mailto:elkhunter77@icloud.com) For information about the posse call 970-765-7033 (leave a message) or email [info@mcspi.org](mailto:info@mcspi.org)*

## Log Hill Hustle race to raise funds for Ridgway scholarships

STAFF REPORT

The Fortuna Tierra Club is hosting the in-person, 9th annual Log Hill Hustle, Fun Run and fundraiser on Sunday, August 25 at 8 a.m. starting and finishing at the Divide Ranch and Club Clubhouse at 151 Divide Ranch Circle, Ridgway.

The 5k (3.1 miles) and 10k (6.2 miles) races

will wind through the Divide Ranch roads offering views of the San Juan and Cimarron ranges. Running, jogging and walking is encouraged. Baby strollers are allowed, but please no dogs or bikes.

Parking will be at the Divide Ranch and Club mailboxes and overflow parking south of RM Timing tent. Arrive early

for parking spaces. Carpooling is highly recommended.

The races will be based on chipped timing provided by RM Timing.

Enjoy a free continental breakfast sponsored by Fortuna Tierra Club. Awards will be given to Log Hill Hustle winners. All runners are eligible for door prizes. Race packets can be

picked up at the Ridgway Farmer's Market in Hartwell Park in Ridgway on Friday, August 23 from 10 a.m. — 2 p.m.

Sponsor donations are used to provide scholarships for Ridgway secondary school graduates. FTC also funds purchases of educational materials and equipment to enhance the K-12 student learning experience.



The Fortuna Tierra Club is hosting the in-person, 9th annual Log Hill Hustle, Fun Run and fundraiser on Sunday, August 25. (Courtesy photo/Fortuna Tierra Club)



# SUMMER CLEARANCE SALE

Save on Summer apparel from Marmot, Kuhl and Outdoor Research

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