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Your holiday planning checklist by Sean Burke

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Planning a holiday can appear daunting, especially if youâ€™re travelling with a large party and youâ€™re charge of all the arrangements. From booking flights to getting to the airport on time, there are many elements that need to be planned carefully if youâ€™re going to have the perfect holiday. Not sure where to begin? Hereâ€™s an essential holiday planning checklist to get you started.

It might sound obvious but the first thing you need to do is decide where you want to go â€“ and when. Be prepared to be flexible: if you really want to go on a beach holiday, Spain might seem like the obvious destination. However, depending on the cost of flights and special offers that you might find, Egypt could be a cheaper and more attractive option â€“ especially if youâ€™ve been to Spain before. Then, figure out the best time to go and make sure that you â€“ and your holiday party â€“ can get the time off from work. Thereâ€™s nothing worse than booking flights to your dream destination, only to find out your boss wonâ€™t let you go.

Before booking your flights, you need to decide whether or not you want to build your holiday yourself or go for an all-inclusive offer. All-inclusive holidays mean you pay one amount for everything: for instance, for Â£1500, each traveller will receive flights, accommodation, all meals, drinks and snacks at a Caribbean resort. This is a particularly good option for travellers who want to stick to a specific budget. However, if the meals at the all-inclusive resort arenâ€™t tasty, you may end up paying more to eat elsewhere. Buying your own flights, accommodation and all other related expenses separately may be more work, but ultimately it allows you to plan your holiday the way you want to.

Booking accommodation, then, is the next step on your checklist for travellers not going on an all-inclusive holiday. Before booking, itâ€™s important to consider a few questions. For example: are you looking for self-catering or catered accommodation? Would you prefer to stay in a large beach-side resort or a secluded boutique hotel? Most importantly, how much are you willing to spend? Once youâ€™ve considered these questions, search for suitable options online and read reviews to get a feel of which accommodation best suits your needs. Then, make your booking. In some instances, you may need to may for your accommodation or pay a deposit when making the booking, rather than after your stay.

Next, youâ€™ll need to book travel insurance, or make sure that your existing annual policy is still valid. Holiday travel insurance is often seen as an extra rather than an essential component of a travel checklist. However, a comprehensive policy can offer thousands of pounds worth of cover for medical expenses, accident assistance, lost baggage and theft, often for a one-off cost of less than Â£40. And while the chance of you experiencing such unfortunate events during your holiday is small, purchasing travel insurance is worth it for peace of mind as well as its practical benefits.

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