

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

HOTEL AND SPA

Travel tips and strategies – make it easier on yourself

The Twelve Apostles Hotel is pleased to offer a range of useful travel tips and strategies in these challenging times for today's intrepid traveller.

Roger Collis, business travel columnist with the International Herald Tribune for over 20 years, shares his recommendations to make life a little easier before setting off on your journey and The Twelve Apostles Hotel have compiled other useful tips as well as incorporating some of them already in the hotel operations.

Roger Collis recommends:

- Leave your laptop at home and carry your data on a 'flash disk' or 'memory stick' of up to 2 gigabytes (like carrying your hard disk around your neck) that you can plug in to a friendly computer at the other end and get down to business. But you need to have the use of a PC; a 'dumb terminal' of the kind you find in high-tech hotel rooms or business centers, will not do.

- Will Geddes, managing director of ICP counter terrorism advisors (www.icpgroup.ltd.uk) in London, recommends taking a tougher laptop like a Panasonic 'toughbook,' which can stand 'being dropped on concrete,' and is resistant to cold, heat, water and dust; being mindful that data should be carried separately in an encrypted memory stick; or opt for a mini-laptop, like a Sony Bio P, which should leave room for a spare shirt plus underwear (sorry, no toiletries, or heaven forbid, liquids!) in your 'standard laptop bag.'

- 'Downsize' even more by toting a 'mobile/pocket PC,' such as the 'Qtek 9100' (marketed by O2 as the 'XDA Exec' and Orange as the 'SPV M5000'). This gizmo comes with a folding '180-degree pivot screen' and QUERTY keyboard that would make this erstwhile touch-typist a candidate for therapy. I rely on the Blackberry to get my e-mail (sending terse thumbnail replies) and hope to find a friendly keyboard when I arrive.

- Travel without a laptop and you can still access your office files at your destination by logging on to GoToMyPC.com from any Internet-connected device - even a dumb terminal in a hotel lobby - and pick up work where you left off. The connection is secure, and it feels as though you are sitting in front of your own PC. You can log on wherever you are in about two minutes. But you must keep your home computer on, at least in 'sleep mode,' while you are away. A monthly subscription to GoToMyPc.com costs about £12 (\$23).

- Mobile phones and laptops are now allowed as hand baggage, but there are anomalies, and travelers should check with airlines, and regulatory authorities, before leaving home, especially when making several stops. Otherwise, take an international SIM card that will work on any GSM handset.

- The U.S. Transportation and Security Administration gives an exhaustive list of what you can and cannot carry on board at: <http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm>
Travelers to and from the UK should consult the Department for Transport (www.dft.gov.uk) and BAA which operates major airports, including London Heathrow, Gatwick, and Stansted, at www.baa.com. The Canada Air Transport Security Authority is at www.catsa.gc.ca.

- Geddes recommends that for 'international travel' the best 'most conservative source' for cabin baggage rules is the British Airways site (www.ba.com).

- Watch out for an increasing squeeze on checked baggage, as airlines adopt new rules on the weight and number of bags as they struggle to cut handling costs. British Airways' new baggage rules (from October

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11) on all its routes mean that no single piece of checked luggage may weigh more than 23 kilograms, the maximum free allowance. If you have any excess weight you will need to transfer belongings into another bag where a fixed fee will be payable. The fees will depend on the length of journey - with long-haul flights costing £120 per bag, short-haul, £60, and domestic flights, £30. BA currently charges per kilogram depending on destination. On a flight from London to Singapore, for example, one currently pays £34 per kilogram for excess weight. The new charges mean that anyone carrying more than 3.5 kilograms in excess will be better off financially.

- Check when you change airlines, and planes, en route that you do not fall foul of different baggage rules, such as between the so-called 'piece' and 'weight' systems, especially when you are decanting off an international flight to a no-frills carrier.

- Never ever put anything you'll need, such as passport, credit cards, business papers, in checked luggage. Bags are even more likely to go astray, or be pilfered, with the present limit on cabin baggage. Travelers departing from Britain are not allowed to carry anything in their pockets: everything must go in the one 'laptop-sized' carry-on bag. After take-off, I transfer stuff back in my pockets for safety. But if you can't do that, stow your bag in an overhead locker adjacent to you rather than over your head where you can keep an eye on it.

- In Europe, think of high-speed trains, like Eurostar between Paris and London and Brussels, that reports a 27 percent increase in passengers since August 10. "We are the only international rail operation to have airport-type security screening, both covert and formal," a Eurostar spokeswoman said. "In five days since the airline bomb scare, we've had more than 40,000 extra passengers." Rail is often the fastest, most comfortable way to travel for journeys between city centers of up to 350 miles (560 kilometers). High-speed trains are hassle-free and one is free to work with a laptop and use a cell phone from the moment one boards until one arrives. Quality time is ever precious in these tremulous times.

- For trans-Atlantic travel, look for the new generation of all-business-class airlines like MAXjet, that operates Boeing 767-200ERS with 102 seats between London and New York and Washington, and has reported "full flights" and a "30 percent increase in sales," in the last two weeks; or Eos, that offers a first-class service, with narrow-body 48-seat Boeing 757s. Silverjet, which plans to become the third start-up airline to operate all-business-class flights between London and New York, with small planes - may confirm a trend towards scheduled services with business jets on North Atlantic routes, that were pioneered by Lufthansa, that flies between Dusseldorf and New York with 48-seat Boeing business jets, and Swiss, with 56-seat Boeing business jet between Zurich and New York.

- The ultimate promise of hassle-free travel is business-only flights with smaller planes, like private jets, between smaller terminals free from the madding crowd.

- Meanwhile, take non-stop flights whenever possible, start from small airports, and spend miles or money for an upgrade.

- You don't have to travel first or business class or be an 'elite' level frequent flier to enjoy the use of an airport lounge (preferably 'airside' rather than 'groundside') which takes some of the pain from flight delays, cancellations and long connecting times. You can relax with a drink, or catch up with work, far from the madding crowd (although it can be more of a zoo in the lounge than the main concourse), safe in the knowledge that it's farther from the gate than you think when the flight is called! (check whether the lounge is 'airside' or 'groundside'). A lounge is one perk that's worth the money, whether in the price of a premium class ticket, or joining a lounge program that allows you access whatever your airline or class of travel. Even if you are an 'elite' frequent flier member, you may not have lounge access at every airport, especially if you choose to fly with a different carrier.

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- Priority Pass (www.prioritypass.com) that offers members access to more than 500 airport lounges in over 275 cities and 90 countries. Some airports offer a choice of lounges at each terminal. Priority Pass offers three types of membership: 'Standard' costs 99 euros a year and 24 euros per visit; 'Standard Plus,' 249 euros a year, includes 10 free visits a year, 24 euros per visit thereafter; and 'Prestige' for 399 euros a year £259 allows unlimited lounge access. You can bring guests for 24 euros per visit. Equivalent dues for U.S. residents are the same in dollars. Priority Pass has contracts with lounges that are run by airport authorities, ground handling agents, and airlines themselves, and so will vary in comfort and amenities.

- Lounge Pass (www.loungepass.com) offers more than 130 lounges at 100 airports worldwide, including 18 in Britain, from £12 (about \$23) per visit. Choose a lounge from three regions on the map: Europe/Africa/Middle East, the Americas, Asia/Pacific and book online.

- U.S. airlines are obliged by law to offer club membership to everybody. American Airlines' Admiral's Club (www.aa.com/content/travelInformation/airportAmenities/AdmiralsClub.jhtml); Delta Air Lines' Crown Room Club (www.delta.com/traveling_checkin/airport_information/crown_room_clubs/member_enrollment_fees/index.jsp); and United Airlines Red Carpet Club (www.united.com) - click on 'travel support' - have lounges at 30 to 40 locations around the world, with annual dues from \$400 (free for certain classes of frequent fliers); well worth joining if you are flying their way.

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Other travel tips...

- In the event that restrictions on hand luggage re-occur and you have to check your hand luggage in, carry some clear plastic bags with you to hold travel documents/wallets only to go through security. **The Twelve Apostles Hotel have them readily available, please ask the concierge or front desk.**

- Always have a spare travel padlock with you to secure your hand luggage if you need to put it through as checked luggage. **The Twelve Apostles Hotel have them available for purchase, either in the mini-bar or at front desk.**

- If you must take a laptop ensure the carrying case has a protective sleeve and the accessory of a "second skin" for added protection if it is consigned to the aircraft hold.

- Obtain help with shipping baggage via the many companies offering this service such as The Luggage Club in the U.S – www.theluggageclub.com and First Luggage – www.luggagefirst.com in the U.K. and Europe or Royal International Couriers - www.royale.co.uk Excess baggage – www.excessbaggage.com ships bags from offices and homes in 300 countries. They also have a network of agents that include Contour USA – www.contour-usa.com - for shipments from the United States, and Baltrans – www.bim.com.hk from Hong Kong.

- Drinking tips. Because some liquids are banned from taking on board flights and there can be longer waiting times at the airport then stay well hydrated at least 24 hours before your flight. Drink plenty of water and avoid dehydrating drinks such as caffeinated black tea, coffee and alcohol.

- Eating tips. Those possible longer waiting times at the airport could mean hunger pains while you're waiting in a queue. Therefore, before leaving for the airport, eat a meal with fairly high amounts of protein.

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It has been suggested that adults should aim for 15 or 20 grams of protein, children about half that. Try to keep yourself feeling full by eating something with a lot of fibre, such as a high-fibre cereal or oatmeal.

Travelling from North America? How about?

- Nalgene Medium Travel Kit - Travel-size bottles and containers guaranteed to be leak proof for shampoos, lotions, gels, etc that must be placed in checked luggage \$9.85 www.distantlands.com or www.magellans.com
- Eagle Creek see-through Packing Cubes that hold clothing and other items - they organise, and streamline a search for the TSA Agents decide to open one's bags. \$10-22.00 - also found at www.magellans.com
- Polystyrene Foam Bottle Moulds - to protect wine bottles from breakage in checked luggage. \$2.50 to \$10.00 www.wallywine.com or www.whwc.com
- Planewrap Feet Wrap Disposable Slippers - to keep your feet clean when you have to remove your shoes to shuffle through airport security checkpoints. They come in medium and large, fitting shoe sizes for women 4 to 13. Packages contain ten pairs. \$9.85 – www.magellans.com