

Official Planning Timeline

Everything worth doing before a round-the-world or multi-stop trip, in the order it is worth doing it. Start wherever you are. If you are already inside one of these windows, work backwards and catch up on what matters.

Dream and cost it out

12 to 6 MONTHS BEFORE YOU GO

- It is too early to buy. Fares this far out are rarely the ones you will end up paying, so spend this time deciding where you are going rather than watching prices.
- Make a destination list and rank it by how much each place actually matters to you. The ones at the bottom are the ones you will trade away later to make the routing work.
- Price a few shapes of trip in [TripPlanner](#) and see what moves the number. Most people are surprised by which stop is the expensive one.
- Read [how much a round-the-world trip costs](#) so your budget starts from real figures rather than a guess.
- Set a budget, then add 25 percent. Everyone needs room on the road, and the trips that go wrong are usually the ones with no slack in them.
- Check seasonality before you fix an order. Monsoon, hurricane season and high season decide more about a good route than personal preference does.
- If money is the constraint, [travelling round-the-world on a budget](#) is a different discipline from travelling cheaply for a fortnight.
- Work out what happens to your home while you are gone. Renting it out changes your budget more than almost any other single decision.

Talk to a human and book

6 to 4 MONTHS OUT

- This is the window. [When to buy round-the-world tickets](#) and [how far in advance to book](#) both go into the why.
- Send us the trip. Build a route in [TripPlanner](#) and submit it, or just [get in touch](#) with a rough sketch. Rough is fine.
- Have [what your consultant needs](#) to hand. It makes the first reply a real itinerary instead of a list of questions.
- Expect a reply within one business day, and take your time from there. Ask what each change costs. That is the part worth being slow about.
- Check your passport is valid for at least six months beyond your final travel date, and has enough blank pages. If it is close, renew now. Renewals take longer than anyone plans for.
- Research [which visas you need](#). Visa rules and maximum stays often dictate your dates rather than the other way around.
- Fix your dates.
- Book. And sort out [travel insurance](#) at the same time, while the trip is fresh and you know what it cost.

Build the trip around the flights

4 to 3 MONTHS OUT

- Now book the ground: accommodation, tours, the things you are actually going for.
- Start visa applications. Some take weeks and some want proof of onward travel, which you now have.

- Sketch a day-by-day outline. It does not need detail, but pencilling in the fixed things shows you where the trip is too tight.
- Read up on [changing an itinerary after booking](#) so you know what is flexible before you need it to be.
- Tell family your dates and how to reach you.
- Organise the life you are leaving: bills, post, car, pets, subscriptions.
- Set up frequent flyer accounts before you fly, not after.
- Get a card with no foreign transaction fees, and tell the bank your dates. A frozen card in a country you just landed in is a bad first day.
- Ask your bank for a spare card and keep it somewhere separate from your wallet.
- Download offline maps and a translation app for your first few stops.

Get yourself ready

3 MONTHS TO 1 MONTH OUT

- Take a short trip. A weekend with the bag you are actually taking tells you more than any packing list.
- Buy gear now so you can test it. A camera or a pack you first use at the airport is a camera or pack you will fight with for a month.
- Request your sabbatical or hand in your notice.
- Sort a student card or international driving permit if you will need one.
- Get spare passport photos. Visa offices on the road still ask for them.
- Arrange someone to look after your place.
- Move your bills to autopay.
- Check whether your phone is unlocked and read up on [eSIMs and local data](#). A local plan is still far cheaper than roaming.
- Book dinners with the people you will miss.

Health, documents, and the first few nights

1 MONTH TO 2 WEEKS OUT

- See a travel health clinic. Some vaccines need several weeks or multiple doses, and a few countries still ask for proof of specific ones on entry.
- Carry your vaccination record and keep a photo of it in the cloud.
- Check the current entry rules for your first two or three countries. They change, and they change at short notice.
- Book your first couple of nights properly. Do not commit long-term to a place you have never seen.
- Photograph or scan every important document. Keep the originals on you, a copy in your bag, and a copy somewhere you can reach online.

Read it all again

2 WEEKS TO 1 WEEK OUT

- Go through the itinerary line by line. Check every name matches the passport it belongs to, exactly.
- Check your connections. [How luggage works across airlines](#) matters most at the stops where you change carrier.
- Walk through the trip in your head, day by day. It is the fastest way to notice the thing you have not packed for.
- Know what to do if something slips: [what happens if you miss a flight](#).

Pack

FINAL WEEK

- Read [how to pack minimally for a round-the-world trip](#). Almost nobody comes home wishing they had brought more.
- Lay everything out, then take away a third of it.
- Weigh the bag. Check the limits for every carrier on your ticket, not just the first.
- Redirect or stop your post.
- Put the AirTreks support number in your phone now, not when you need it.

The last few days

3 DAYS OUT

- Check in online when it opens, and confirm seats for the long legs.
- Write tomorrow's list tonight so you are not holding it in your head.
- Set an out-of-office.
- Charge everything, and pack the cable you will want in the airport.

Pack for real

2 DAYS OUT

- Pack properly and photograph the contents. If a bag goes missing, that photo is your claim.
- Get a small amount of local currency for your first arrival, enough for a taxi and a meal. Everything after that is an ATM.
- Do laundry.
- Sleep. Being exhausted on day one costs you the first three.

The day before and the day itself

DEPARTURE

- Finish packing, weigh the bag again, check documents one last time.
- Make the calls you want to make.
- Eat properly and drink water. Skip the alcohol, it makes [jet lag](#) worse and you want your wits about you on arrival.
- Hug everyone. Go.

Once you are moving

AFTER DEPARTURE

- Check each flight the day before it. Schedules move, and knowing early is the whole game.
- Keep the AirTreks support details with you. There is a human on the other end for the length of your trip.
- Take more photographs of ordinary things than you think you need to.
- Enjoy it. You did the work.

Ready to price it?

Build a route in [TripPlanner](#) and a specialist will come back with something bookable, or read [how to plan a round-the-world trip](#) first. If you would rather just talk to someone, [get in touch](#).