



Vintage photographs reveal



This'll have you in stitches: The artist



'The bacteria levels were off the scale':



Snake on a plane leads to



Glamorous flight attendants and



JFK Airport to get \$10billion 'world



Chasi sun?

Got your holiday booked? Then it's time to go through the expert checklist covering everything from vaccinations to airport parking

- The Mail on Sunday has listed how to minimise costs and plan in advance
- A single on the Heathrow Express costs less when booked ahead of travel
- Items such as sun cream and plug adaptors are cheaper on the high street

By [FRED MAWER FOR THE MAIL ON SUNDAY](#)

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Choosing where to go is the hardest part but there are lots of other things you may need to sort out, particularly if you are jetting off abroad.

To minimise costs and ensure all goes smoothly on your trip, advance planning is key.

This checklist highlights what you need to do when.

Weigh what you intend to check in to ensure that it's below your airline's allowance – charges for excess baggage can be very steep

As soon as you've booked

Arrange travel insurance

Policies come with cancellation cover, so if you (or a close relative) fall ill and you can't make the trip, you may be able to get your money back.

Saga ([saga.co.uk](#)), which offers cover to over 50s, and LV= ([lv.com](#)) are among the highest-rated travel insurers by consumer group Which? But do check other policies on comparison websites, which can flag up affordable policies for oldies and those with pre-existing medical conditions, as well as mainstream cover.

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But don't just select on price. Check the valuables limit is high enough for equipment (camera, phone, tablet) you'll be travelling with, and that adventurous activities you or your family will be doing are covered.

If you travel abroad more than twice a year, bear in mind that an annual, multi-trip policy is likely to work out cheaper than single-trip policies.

Book car hire

It's worth sorting out your car hire long before you travel if you're heading to prime holiday spots such as the Spanish costas or Balearics – rental rates often rise steeply closer to the pick-up date at peak times in popular destinations. Turn to Economy Car Hire (economycarhire.com), a highly-rated agent.

The excess on car rental insurance can be sky high, and car-hire companies charge ridiculous amounts to reduce it.

It's far cheaper to take out a separate excess-waiver policy: see moneymaxim.co.uk/compare-car-hire-excess-insurance for options.

With the paper counterpart licence no longer valid, some car-rental companies now ask to see your licence online to see if you have any endorsements. To enable this, obtain a check code (gov.uk/view-driving-licence) closer to the rental pick-up day – the code is valid for 21 days from the date created.

Two months ahead

Get any necessary jobs

To be fully effective, some vaccinations need to be administered six weeks before you travel, so ideally visit your GP or a travel health clinic two months before travel. More information: fitfortravel.nhs.uk.

A single on the Heathrow Express bought at least 30 days ahead costs £8.80-£14.30, compared with £22 from a ticket machine on the day of travel

Book trains to the airport

Booking well in advance may save you a packet. A single on the Heathrow Express (heathrowexpress.com) bought at least 30 days ahead costs £8.80-£14.30, compared with £22 from a ticket machine on the day of travel. (Tickets bought at least 90 days ahead are cheaper still.)

On the Stansted Express (stanstedexpress.com), a one-way ticket booked well ahead costs from £8, compared with the £19 standard fare. On cross-country routes, savings on advance bookings can be even greater.

Research airport parking and hotels

At many airports, the longer ahead you book parking, the cheaper it is. For a week's parking at Luton's Long Term on-airport car park, the rate I've been quoted is £32 less when arranged more than a month ahead instead of the day before.

If your flight departs at the crack of dawn, stay the night before at an airport hotel. Many offer stay-and-park packages which can cost little more than just the parking.

Use Holiday Extras (holidayextras.co.uk) to compare deals for on- and off-airport car parks, 'meet and greet' services and airport hotels with and without parking; all-important transfer details are spelt out on the website.

One month ahead

Check passports, get visas

Is your passport valid, and does it have enough months left to run on it? Some countries, such as Turkey and Thailand, require at least six months. To avoid paying extra for a fast-track service, make passport applications in good time – using the standard service, allow up to three weeks for a renewal or a child's first passport; see

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[gov.uk/browse/abroad/passports](https://www.gov.uk/browse/abroad/passports). Also check whether you need a visa for the country you're visiting – the process can take several weeks.

Check in online to avoid fees charged by some airlines for checking in at the airport (Jet2 £17.50, Ryanair £45), and with other airlines such as British Airways you'll save time and hassle on the day of travel

Check your EHIC is up-to-date

In EU and some other European countries, it's worth travelling with the free European Health Insurance Card (ehic.org.uk). While no substitute for travel insurance, it entitles you to state medical treatment on the same basis as local residents – often free or at reduced cost. If you already have an EHIC, check its expiry date: the card expires after five years.

The week before

Sign up to a mobile roaming package

Roaming costs have plummeted in the EU, but are still crippling elsewhere, especially for data roaming, so before you go abroad, check rates on your mobile operator's website. If you're with Three, check if you're going to one of 18 countries where you can use your phone at no extra cost. Otherwise, the best way to reduce costs is to sign up to a roaming package.

Shop for travel essentials

Items such as sun cream, mosquito repellent and plug adaptors are cheaper on the high street than at the airport. Boots sells affordable and compact first-aid kits, costing from £6.24 on [boots.com](https://www.boots.com). Also, Enterogel ([enteromed.co.uk](https://www.enteromed.co.uk)), can help you avoid, or reduce the effects of, tummy trouble.

The day before

Check in online

You'll avoid fees charged by some airlines for checking in at the airport (Jet2 £17.50, Ryanair £45), and with other airlines such as British Airways you'll save time and hassle on the day of travel.

Assess your luggage

Weigh what you intend to check in to ensure that it's below your airline's allowance – charges for excess baggage can be very steep.

Many airlines are sticklers for hand-luggage size and weight limits, so check and stick to those too. Do remember that some, but not all, airlines allow you to carry on a second smaller bag (yes with Ryanair, no with easyJet travelling on its cheapest fares).

Don't fall foul of airport security restrictions. Any electronic item in hand luggage needs to be charged: if it won't switch on when requested, you risk not being allowed to take it on to the aircraft.

Read [gov.uk/hand-luggage-restrictions](https://www.gov.uk/hand-luggage-restrictions) for rules on liquids, and take your own re-sealable transparent plastic bags to carry small quantities of liquids through security – some airports charge extortionate amounts to buy them.

For more information, see [abta.com/tips-and-latest/travel-tips](https://www.abta.com/tips-and-latest/travel-tips).

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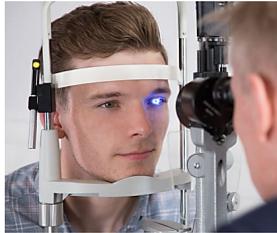
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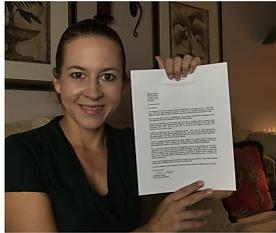
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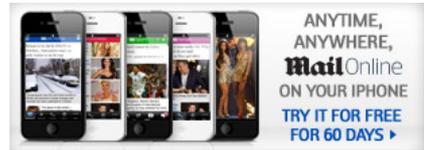
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