

1+ year before departure

- Decide why you are taking this trip.** Coming up with your why will help shape your trip, what you want to get out of it, and what your life (and career) may look like when you get back.
- Choose the pillars, or must-sees for your trip.** These will help shape your itinerary.
- When choosing pillars, consider resume-worthy experiences.** Your career break is the perfect chance to take part in activities that will look great on a resume to future employers, so think about things like volunteering, learning a new language or skill of some sort, etc.
- Look into flight options - Traditional multi-stop ticket vs. buy as you go vs. combination**
 - Look at your rough itinerary and research all possible flight options for your trip
 - Get prices for each option
 - Prioritize price vs. freedom vs. having a plan
- Come up with a preliminary budget**
 - Research your pillar countries and per day costs of traveling there
 - If you signed up for [Plan Your RTW Trip in 30 Days-Career Break Edition](#), download the Trip Planning Spreadsheet (introduced on day 4) and enter countries you plan to visit and per day costs in tab 1 (if you are not taking part in RTW 30, start your own spreadsheet to stay organized)
 - Go to [Indie](#), enter your estimated route and dates to get a rough price on your flights
 - Total your flights and costs per country to find out your preliminary budget
- Figure out how much you can save per month**
 - Enter income, and monthly bills into the Trip Planning Spreadsheet to see how much saving potential you have per month
 - Put a plan together to cut unnecessary spending
- Find ways to make more money**
 - Evaluate all your possessions
 - Make a list of what you will keep
 - Make a list of what you can get rid of (add these to the Trip Planning Spreadsheet)
 - Make a list of what you can sell for money
 - Make a list of what you can give away
 - Start selling some of your unnecessary possessions to add to your travel fund
 - Devise a plan for storing the things you will keep for after your trip

6 months - 1 year prior to estimated departure

- Find your departure date**

- Evaluate your current bank balances
- Look at recurring monthly bills you'll have to pay while on the road
- Come up with an amount you want to have for your "coming home" fund
- Add all these figures into your Trip Planning Spreadsheet to figure out how soon you can leave
- Figure out the total amount you need to save, divide that by your monthly savings potential, and you have how many months until your departure date
- Set your departure date
- Getting rid of housing**
 - If you rent and plan on moving out, look at your rental agreement and give the appropriate notice that you are moving out
 - If you rent and are interested in subletting, look at your rental agreement and start planning
 - If you own, decide on renting vs. selling
 - If selling, talk to a real estate agent and get a plan in place for when you will put your house on the market
 - If renting to someone else, look into all options
 - Ask family, friends, and friends of friends if they may be interested in renting
 - If you don't know anyone interested, look into taking out ads in the local newspaper and on sites like Craigslist and Airbnb.
 - If renting, find a family member or close friend in your hometown to be your go-to person for any issues that may arise
- Start the immunization process**
 - Research which shots are required for the countries you will visit (the [Centers for Disease Control](#) website is a great place to start)
 - If you have a family and traveling with them on your career break, make an appointment with your pediatrician to discuss options and philosophies, and to learn more about the process (remember that everyone, even different doctors, may have differing opinions on the matter)
 - Research which shots are recommended for the countries you will visit
 - Research costs of these shots where you live
 - Make an informed decision about which shots you will get
 - Schedule your first round of shots (remember that some shots are done in a series, with the first shot 6 months before the second)
- Look into and decide your career options**
 - If you want to return to your current job, look into sabbatical policies
 - Talk with your boss/HR about negotiating a sabbatical or leave of absence if no policy is stated
 - If you don't want to return to your job, start thinking/planning now for what you will do after your return
- Passport:** Make sure everyone who is going on your career break trip has one.

- If you (or someone going with you) doesn't have one, order it.
- If you do have a passport, make sure it's valid for the length of your trip and has enough pages for stamps for each country you will visit (you may want to add pages, but keep in mind this is fairly easy to do on the road if necessary)

3 - 6 months prior to departure

- Consider slow travel as part of your itinerary**
 - Look into spending more than a few weeks in one location
 - Choose a few locations where you may want to settle down for a bit (perfect time to volunteer or learn a new skill that will be resume-worthy)
 - Research long-term rental costs and options
 - If you want to travel slowly, build into your itinerary and adjust your budget accordingly
- Solidify your route**
 - Decide where else you want to go and start building your route around your pillars
 - Research seasons - high and low and weather - in each place on your itinerary
 - Start planning the order of places you will visit and look into flight options/costs, no matter what your preferred flight plan
 - Decide where you will begin your trip
- Decide which flight option you will go with**
 - Book your flight(s), whether it's just the first one, the first couple, or a multi-stop flight, flights are typically cheapest 3-6 months out

2 - 3 months from departure

- Start telling people**
 - Come up with a plan for telling family and friends about your trip
 - Come up with a plan for breaking the news at work, even if you won't tell them until right before you leave
 - Start spilling the beans
- Look into accommodation options in the places you plan to visit**
 - Research all options available - hotels, hostels, rentals, house-sitting, camping, couchsurfing, etc.
 - Research prices for all options that interest you
 - If planning your trip in advance or traveling during high/festival/holiday season, send inquiries and make reservations when necessary

- Adjust your budget accordingly
- Research overland travel**
 - Research different regions you plan to visit and what overland travel is like there
 - Look into traveling overnight in the regions you will be visiting (and the safety of doing so)
 - If you are traveling in more developed and expensive regions, research overland travel there
 - Research flights in all regions - you never know when they may be cheaper
 - If passes are available, cheaper than flying, and must be purchased before departing, buy them
- Decide on travel insurance**
 - Research the difference between trip protection and [travel insurance](#)
 - Shop around to see what each company offers (don't forget to read the fine print!)
 - Have a plan in place for being covered medically when you return
 - If you plan on taking part in any extreme activities, know what each policy does and doesn't cover
 - Make a decision and buy the policy best for you and your situation

1 - 2 months prior to departure

- Get gear and clothes packing lists in order**
 - Decide which type of camera to bring
 - Decide whether or not you will bring a laptop and/or tablet
 - Decide whether or not you will bring an ereader
 - Decide whether or not you will bring a phone
 - Make sure you know you to "unlock" it
 - Get a preliminary packing list of clothes together
 - Start a list of what you have and still need
 - Start shopping and keeping an eye out for what is still needed
- Choose your luggage**
 - Decide which type of luggage you will bring (backpack, suitcase, or hybrid)
 - Decide which type of day bag you will bring
 - If you need to purchase anything new, go to a store and look at your options
 - Test out any new bags before purchasing
- Packing list**
 - Come up with a master packing list, broken down into categories - clothes, gadgets, toiletries, and first aid
 - Get everything together that you wish to bring and lay it all out somewhere
 - Do a test run and pack everything you want to bring - go for a walk around the neighborhood to see what it's like hauling everything around - you'll be doing it daily

- Adjust and prioritize ~~if~~ when you have too much stuff
- Make and bring copies of your passport**, passport sized photos, and make sure your bank account/credit card information is easily accessible from the road
- Have a plan in place for what to do about proof of onward travel** (when using one-ways to fly into a country and/or crossing a border overland, you are often asked for "proof" of onward travel)
- Get rid of your house/apartment/condo**
 - If your rental agreement ends or you sell your house and will need a place to stay prior to leaving, set that up now
 - If subletting, finalize the agreement who is subletting your place (and set up a place to stay before departure if the situation warrants it)
 - If you own and are renting your place out, finalize the agreement with your renter
 - Downsize as much as you can and get rid of anything else you don't want to keep around.
- Get your visas situated (or have a plan in place)**
 - Look into visa requirements for the countries you are visiting
 - Get any visas in advance that you can
 - If you will be obtaining many visas on the road, research what you will need to do so

1 month prior to departure

- Automate your bills/Banking**
 - Sign up for an online money management software (we like [Mint](#))
 - Know what bills you will continue paying while on the road
 - Get them all set up to be paid automatically
 - Consolidate and delay - IRAs, investments, automatic transfers, etc.
 - Cancel services and bills that you will no longer need (Netflix, cable, etc.)
 - Implement a plan for paying or deferring student loans
 - Look into your bank's ATM fees - get their policies in writing for withdrawing money internationally
 - Shop around for a different bank and find one with the least amount of international fees
 - Look into your credit card fees - get their policies in writing for use overseas
 - Look into and sign up for a travel credit card
 - Designate a power of attorney at home
 - Taxes: Will you need to file your annual return from the road at some point during your trip?
 - Have all documents you will need scanned and easily accessible
- Working on the Road**
 - Decide if you will need to work on the road in order to travel for as long as you want
 - Look into your working on the road options

- Get any necessary paperwork together - diplomas, certifications, resumes, letters of recommendation, etc.
- Staying connected**
 - Make sure anyone who you hope to stay connected with is signed up and knows how to use Skype, Google Hangouts, FaceTime, etc. Do a test run before you leave
 - If you plan on having a blog, start it before you leave
 - If you hope to monetize your blog, start it well before you leave and learn as much as you can about making money from your blog
 - If you are counting on funds from your blog to supplement your travels, have a plan to start making money long before you leave
- Book 1-3 nights in your first destination**
- Make any last minute doctor or dentist visits for everyone**

2 weeks prior to departure

- Quit/leave your job**
- Pack all the things you aren't bringing and get them in storage**
- Have a going away party**
- Eat and drink at all the places you will miss**

1 - 7 days prior to departure

- Cancel any other bills/services that you haven't finished yet (cell phone, Internet, cable, renter's insurance, etc.)**
- Pack your bags for your trip**

Get on the plane and go!