



*DAN's Smart Guide to Travel*

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# Know Before You Go: How to Plan Your Dive Trip

- Dive Travel Packing Checklist
- Travel Preparation Timeline
- Tips for Health and Safety
- Gear Care Guidelines

## DAN'S SMART GUIDE TO TRAVEL

Whether you're taking a 23-hour flight to Malaysia or a 23-minute drive to the shore, all diving involves some form of travel. For this reason, DAN recognizes travel safety as a key aspect of our mission. This Smart Guide is a quick and easy reference tool to help you prepare for your dive travel to local and international destinations.



# BASIC PACKING CHECKLIST

The following checklist is not comprehensive. It is intended to provide a foundation to make it easier for you to customize according to the specific details of your trip. Copy, scan, or retype and customize this list, adding in any specialized equipment you need, as well as your clothing, toiletries, and other personal items necessary for your trip.

## Essentials

- Certification card (C-card)
- DAN membership card
- Hat
- Nutritious snacks
- Sunscreen
- Water
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Gear

- BC/BCD
- Booties/fins
- Cutting tool or dive knife
- Dive computer
- Exposure suit
- Gear bag
- Gloves
- Hood
- Lights
- Mask
- Reels
- Regulator
- Snorkel
- Surface signal
- Tank(s)
- Weight
- Whistle
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Specialized equipment (optional)

- Camera and other photography equipment
- Diver propulsion vehicle (DPV)
- Oxygen unit
- Rebreather
- Speargun
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## “Save-a-dive” kit

- Batteries
- Clasps
- Defogger spray
- Duct tape and waterproof adhesive/sealant
- Fin buckles and straps
- Lighter
- Mask strap or extra mask
- Multi-tool (including an adjustable wrench and hex key)
- O-ring kit (including O-rings for high- and low-pressure hoses, an O-ring pick and silicone grease)
- Regulator mouthpiece
- Snorkel keeper
- Weight belt or buckle
- White trash bag (or some white working surface)
- Zip ties/cable ties and bungee cord/shock cord
- Zipper wax
- Dive tables
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## First-aid kit

### Basics

- Nitrile (hypoallergenic) gloves
- CPR barrier (oronasal device or face shield)
- Tweezers
- Safety pins
- Scissors
- Soap (or antiseptic solution or wipes)
- First-aid guide

### Dressings and bandages

- Adhesive bandages (such as Band-Aids)
- Gauze pads and rolls
- Triangular bandages
- Elastic bandages (such as Ace Bandages)
- Medical tape

### Accessory items

- Vinegar
- Sterile saline solution
- Irrigation syringe
- Hot and cold packs

### Medications

- Aspirin
- Acetaminophen (such as Tylenol)
- Ibuprofen (such as Motrin or Advil)
- Diphenhydramine (such as Benadryl)
- Hydrocortisone cream
- Antibiotic ointment
- Dimenhydrinate (such as Dramamine)
- Loperamide (such as Imodium)
- Antacid (such as Tums)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

# DOMESTIC TRAVEL

One of the benefits of domestic travel is that it can be more spontaneous and cost efficient than international travel. Knowing how to get and stay prepared for even a short ride to the nearest coast, lake, or quarry can help make your local trips easier, safer and more enjoyable.

## GET PREPARED:

- Create a packing checklist based on your typical dives.
- Maintain your gear so you can grab it and go.
- Assemble a first-aid kit and a save-a-dive kit.
- Keep your relevant certifications up to date.

## BEFORE YOU HIT THE ROAD:

- Research the weather, currents, and water temperatures at your destination.
- Customize your packing checklist for this specific trip.
- Check — and if necessary replenish — your first-aid kit.
- Tell someone where you are going.
- Remember to bring plenty of water and healthy snacks.



# INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

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## 2 MONTHS BEFORE TRAVEL:



- Be sure your passport is valid at least six months following your last intended date of travel.
- Determine whether you need a tourist visa.
- Find out whether you need any vaccinations.
- Complete RSTC medical form and have copy of physician sign off if needed.
- Decide whether you want to apply for Global Entry.

## 1 MONTH BEFORE TRAVEL:



- Check your destination country's laws about your prescription medications.
- Acquire local currency and talk to your bank about international ATM arrangements.
- Find out if there are foreign transaction fees associated with your credit cards.
- Enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), which connects you with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

## 2 WEEKS BEFORE TRAVEL:



- Customize your packing checklist.
- Set up a global calling plan.
- Inform your credit card companies of your intention to travel abroad.
- Make sure you have purchased or renewed your travel insurance.

## 1 WEEK BEFORE TRAVEL:



- Make two copies each of your passport (color copies are preferred), driver's license, credit cards, itinerary, lodging confirmation and visa (if you need one). Leave one set of copies with someone at home, and pack the second set someplace separate from the original documents.
- Contact your post office to request that they hold your mail while you're away.
- Pack everything you won't need before your trip.

## 24 HOURS BEFORE TRAVEL:



- Check in to your flight, and make sure you have a seat assignment.
- Run back through your packing list again, and make a copy to help you pack for the return trip (so you won't forget your toiletries, chargers, medications, etc.).
- Notify someone of your travel plans.

# AIR TRAVEL WITH GEAR

Looking forward to invigorating days of diving is sometimes the only way to get through the headache of traveling with dive gear, which can be clumsy, cumbersome, and difficult to explain to airport security. Use the following guidelines to streamline the process.

## CHECK BEFORE YOU CHECK

If you're planning to bring your gear with you, think about what you have to check and what you should bring in your carry-on to make sure you can dive immediately even if your bags don't make it. Remember also to research your airline and destination country's baggage allowances.

### Carry On

- | Regulator
- | Dive Computer
- | Mask
- | Swimsuit

### Carry On or Check

- | BC/BCD
- | Fins
- | Snorkel

### Check Only

- | Cutting Tools
- | Spearguns
- | Cylinders\*



## RENTAL GEAR

If you choose to forgo the hassle of traveling with your gear, find a dive operator that offers gear rentals. The quality of rental gear varies, so make sure you thoroughly research the dive shops at your destination. If you do choose to rent gear at your destination, you'll still want to bring a few items.

<u>Items widely available for renting</u>	<u>Items that may or may not be available for renting</u>	<u>Specialty items to consider renting</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>  Wetsuits</li><li>  Drysuits</li><li>  Gloves, hoods and booties</li><li>  Tanks</li><li>  BCs/BCDs</li><li>  Regulators</li><li>  Weights and weight systems</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>  Masks</li><li>  Snorkels</li><li>  Fins</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>  Cutting Tools</li><li>  Surface marker buoys</li><li>  Light</li></ul>

*\*When traveling with cylinders, make sure to remove the valves.*

# DIVE SITE REGULATIONS

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Depending where you dive, rules differ. The site can regulate everything from what gear you can use to what hours you can dive. Before you go, ask these questions:

## **DOES MY TRAINING MATCH DIVE SITE REQUIREMENTS?**

Not all dive sites allow open water recreational divers. In fact, some dive sites — such as cavern and cave diving sites — require a high level of training. Make sure you either check online or call the local dive operator to determine certification and training requirements.

## **WHAT EQUIPMENT IS ALLOWED?**

Some sites require you to bring special equipment such as surface marker buoys or spare air. Other locations prohibit use of certain items such as diving gloves or spearguns to protect the marine environment. Learn what is necessary and what is restricted before you pack.

## **WHAT ARE THE SITE'S ACCESS REQUIREMENTS?**

Protected dive sites or sites located next to private property may require you to purchase a ticket or tag to dive. You may also find out that entry is limited to specific locations. Don't show up to a site only to be turned away. Do your research.

Good diving etiquette dictates that divers should follow the rules set in place no matter where in the world they travel. Remember that diving regulations are in place to protect your safety, the safety of the marine environment, and the local customs and laws of your travel destination.



# HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

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Most divers are accustomed to thinking about maintaining fitness to dive, avoiding the bends and minimizing the risks of marine life injuries. But all divers are also travelers and should be aware of travel-related medical conditions.

## DEHYDRATION:

**What is it?** Depletion of water and other bodily fluids. Can impair body's ability to carry out normal functions.

**Why does it affect travelers?** Whether traveling by car, bus, train, air, or boat, you may lack convenient access to drinking water. Air travel is particularly dehydrating because the air on planes is very dry.

**What to do:** Prevent dehydration by bringing one or two bottles of water in your carry-on. While traveling, check your urine. If it is dark, drink some fluids right away. If you notice extreme thirst, lack of urination, withered skin, dizziness, or confusion, refrain from diving and seek immediate medical care.

## DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT):

**What is it?** When blood clots form in the body's deep veins, usually in the legs. Can lead to life-threatening conditions such as pulmonary embolism or stroke.

**Why does it affect travelers?** Long periods of inactivity inhibit normal blood circulation.

**What to do:** Whether you're driving or flying, make sure to get up and stretch your legs from time to time. If you know you are at increased risk for DVT, wear compression socks and consult with your doctor about taking clot-preventatives. See DAN's online *Health & Diving* library for more information.



## FOODBORNE ILLNESS:

**What is it?** When food incubates bacteria, transmits disease from person to person or animal to human, or carries other toxins (as with poisonous fish). Can be fatal or cause life-threatening symptoms in extreme cases.

**Why does it affect travelers?** According to the CDC, travelers' diarrhea is the most common illness affecting travelers and may occur in up to 50 percent of international travelers. It often results from consuming improperly handled food or untreated water.

**What to do:** Avoid raw or undercooked meat and seafood as well as raw fruits and vegetables, untreated water and ice cubes, and any food you suspect may have been prepared in unhygienic conditions.

## VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES:

**What are they?** Illnesses transmitted by mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, and other insects. These diseases include chikungunya, dengue fever, malaria, and others.

**Why do they affect travelers?** They don't affect travelers per se, but rather are endemic to certain areas of the world.

**What to do:** Find out whether your travel destination carries a risk for vector-borne disease and take appropriate precautions, which may include vaccination, insect repellent, or avoiding certain behaviors or environments.



## QUICK TIP:

Research any endemic diseases or special conditions to which you may be exposed, especially if you plan to travel internationally. These can range from malaria to heat stroke. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)) is a great resource for comprehensive information on current alerts and common diseases in your destination.

## FLYING AFTER DIVING

Flying to a destination near sea level before diving poses virtually no risk. Flying after diving, however, increases decompression stress, since the pressure in an aircraft cabin is lower than ground-level atmospheric pressure. DAN recommends you follow these guidelines when traveling:

Dive Profile	Minimum Preflight Surface Interval Suggestion
Single no-decompression dive	12 hours or more
Multiple dives in a day	18 hours or more
Multiple days of diving	18 hours or more
Dives requiring decompression stops	Longer than 18 hours

Please remember that any postdive ascent to a higher altitude – even using ground transportation – increases your decompression stress.

# BRING DAN WITH YOU

DAN is here for you 24 hours a day, every day, anywhere in the world. If you need non-emergency medical information or assistance, visit [DAN.org](http://DAN.org) or call the medical information line at +1 (919) 684-2948 during normal business hours. In the event of an emergency, here's what you should know before you call:

1. Contact local emergency medical services (EMS) immediately. After EMS is activated, call DAN for additional assistance.
2. The emergency number on the back of your DAN card (+1-919-684-9111) accepts direct and collect calls, but countries vary in how to make collect calls. To make a collect call from within the United States, replace the country code with a 0. When traveling outside of the United States, research that country's collect calling protocol and EMS numbers prior to departure.
3. When you call, you'll need to provide the following information:
  - Your name
  - The name of the injured person
  - Your location
  - A call-back number
  - A description of the emergency
  - Names of prescription medications you are currently taking
  - Any pre-existing health issues or concerns
4. The DAN Emergency Hotline also serves as your resource for activating DAN's *TravelAssist* benefits, including medical evacuation.



## WHO TO CALL

### Emergency Procedures:

**STEP 1.** Call 911 or local EMS if abroad

**STEP 2.** Call DAN's Emergency Hotline **(+1-919-684-9111)**

### Non-Emergency Procedures:

**STEP 1.** Call DAN's Non-Emergency Medical Information Line **(+1-919-684-2948)**

## QUICK TIP:

Whether you're traveling domestically or internationally, research the availability and location of emergency medical services at your destination. Adjust your dive plan accordingly and have a realistic emergency action plan.

# GEAR CARE GUIDELINES

As divers, we're all familiar with the demands of traveling with dive gear. Luckily, routine maintenance and careful storage of gear can not only make your diving safer, but it can make your trip planning easier. The following guidelines will help you make sure your gear is ready to go when you are:

Item(s)	Before you Dive	After you Dive	Storage	Professional servicing
Mask, snorkel and fins	Keep well organized to minimize the risk of their being kicked, stepped on or tripped over.	Rinse and dry well.	Pack and store carefully so they're not crushed by heavier gear.	Not applicable.
BC/BCD	Test before you dive.	Rinse the outside and flush the bladder with fresh water. Hang to dry.	After drying, partially inflate jacket for storage.	Have professionally inspected annually; remember the low pressure hose and dump valve.
Regulator	Test function as soon as you set up your gear.	Rinse and clean while still connected to cylinder and pressurized. Leave out to dry.	Keep dust cap in place and secured. Store in a regulator bag.	Service at least once a year.
Wetsuit, boots, gloves and hood	If necessary, lubricate zippers.	Rinse, turn inside out, and hang to dry. If wetsuit has an unpleasant odor, use wetsuit shampoo in postdive rinse.	Store in the shade, as neoprene is susceptible to UV damage.	Not applicable.
Dive computer	Check battery icon.	Rinse and dry.	Store in a dry, cool, ventilated area.	Service every one to two years, or per the manufacturer's recommendation.
Cylinder	Handle with extreme care, as a pressurized cylinder presents a risk of explosion. Secure tightly for transportation.	Rinse thoroughly and let dry. Regularly remove tank boot to prevent a buildup of salt and debris.	Never drain completely of gas. Reduce pressure to the lowest reading on the pressure gauge. Keep a clean, dry dust cap on cylinder valve.	Make a visual inspection once a year.  Perform a hydrostatic test every five years.

# BECOME A DAN MEMBER

Dive safety should be taken seriously. When you join DAN, your exclusive member benefits ensure you have access to invaluable resources including:



## **24-HOUR EMERGENCY HOTLINE (+1-919-684-9111)**

Help is just a phone call away anytime, anywhere.



## **TRAVEL ASSISTANCE**

\$100,000 USD of emergency evacuation coverage for diving and nondiving emergencies.



## **DIVE ACCIDENT INSURANCE**

Exclusive access to premier dive accident insurance, as well as travel insurance.



## **MEDICAL INFORMATION LINE**

Access to the latest medical information for the prevention, identification and treatment of diving injuries.



## **DIVE SAFETY RESOURCES**

Access to DAN's Health & Diving reference materials, incident reporting and *Alert Diver* magazine, which features medical and research information, underwater photography, dive travel and marine environmental issues.

Your DAN membership supports ongoing research, medical programs and education efforts that promote awareness of dive safety and ensure the availability of medical resources if and when you need them.

**LEARN MORE AT [DAN.ORG/HEALTH](http://DAN.ORG/HEALTH)**



6 West Colony Place  
Durham, NC 27705 USA

**PHONE:** +1-919-684-2948

**DAN EMERGENCY HOTLINE:** +1-919-684-9111

**JOIN US AT [DAN.ORG](http://DAN.ORG)**

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