

## Business travel

Travel for secular "pleasurable" purposes is a fairly recent concept. For most of human history, people either traveled for [religious reasons](#) or out of economic necessity, hence **business travel** may well be the oldest form of travel. This article deals with this concept.

### High-travel jobs

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“ I realized that selling was the greatest career a man could want. 'Cause what could be more satisfying than to be able to go, at the age of eighty-four, into twenty or thirty different cities, and pick up a phone, and be remembered and loved and helped by so many different people? ”

—Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*

This list contains jobs which intend the employee to be based in their home country, in contrast to [working abroad](#) (e.g. [digital nomads](#) who work outside their home country, may periodically relocate, but the job itself doesn't entail a lot of travelling)

- **Sales** is the classic high-travel occupation, so much so that "traveling salesman" has become a bit of a cliché. **Consulting** can also mean high travel, but on a somewhat less intense scale, as individual consulting gigs can sometimes last weeks or months and can easily turn into long-distance commuting. In general, any very specialized job, where customers are few but can afford to (or have no choice but to) fly in experts will tend to mean high travel.
- **Transportation workers** such as truck drivers, bus drivers, locomotive engineers and ship crews see many places through work. The **airline industry** also offers good travel opportunities. Aside from the obvious pilots and cabin staff, maintenance crew and sales & marketing people may also fly extensively, and even desk job employees can often fly for free or very cheaply using space-available seats. The quality of accommodation varies a lot, and free time on a destination might be short.
- **Academia**, including research, studies and teaching, also offers international travel. Some academic subjects that naturally contain travel for **field research**, are aerospace engineering,

#### Not a vacation

Travel to exotic locales, staying in quality hotels, maybe even flying business class may sound like an all-expenses-paid vacation. But it's not: in the end, business travel often boils down to the **stress of working** combined with the **hassle of travel**, only now you'll often be working in an unfamiliar environment without the ability to walk down to your colleague's cubicle and ask for advice. You are only rarely in control of your own schedule. You may have no time to explore the destination, just seeing chain hotels and the airport walkways.

Being on the road constantly can have an **adverse impact** on:

- **Relationships.** You may not be able to see your family or significant other while travelling.
- **Health.** Practicing sport and eating well is harder when travelling, and the risk of picking up bugs your immune system isn't equipped to handle is higher.
- **Levels of stress.** After a bad day at work, imagine going to the airport only to find that your flight has been cancelled.

Of course, business travel does have its **positive aspects**:

- **See the world for free** or low cost – flight tickets, taxis, hotels and meals all add up to a significant sum. Your company

anthropology, astronomy, archaeology, biology (including ornithology), civil engineering, geology, geography, linguistics and meteorology. Scientists are usually the only people who go to next-to-impossible destinations, such as exclusion zones. In addition, researchers also occasionally travel to attend **academic conferences**. See studying abroad and science tourism.

- **Language** experts can often get temporary jobs or assignments abroad, as interpreters, translators and teachers (but they may also be stationed abroad for long periods, and not effectively travel much). See teaching English.
- **Military** personnel may get to work abroad, though this depends on the country and your position. "*Join the Navy, See the World*" is a classic slogan. Going abroad in uniform does not necessarily mean going to war; many missions abroad are for training, observation, logistics, or peacekeeping.
- **Religious** personnel such as chaplains and missionaries typically travel to places far from home. The assignment is usually combined with humanitarian work and proselytizing.
- **Journalism** (especially foreign correspondence and photojournalism) and **writing** might include travel. This is however a high-competition business with poor job security.
- **Doctors** and **nurses**, and other health personnel can work on board ships, or in isolated communities. In some countries a mandatory stint in some far-off region is actually a required part of your job-training.
- **Domestic work** is a common migrant job; while no formal skills are required, it is usually poorly paid. While some domestic workers are hired locally, others are recruited internationally, and yet others follow their employer around. Au pair service is an interesting way for young people to see a foreign country; usually without a proper wage.
- **Entertainers** frequently travel for work, such as actors traveling to movie sets on location or to attend film festivals, as well as touring musicians.

will usually pay all of these for you, allowing you to visit a new location for free or very low cost. If visiting over multiple weeks then you effectively get a paid weekend break to do whatever you like in your new city. It may also be possible to have a (short) holiday at the destination before returning, paying food and accommodation for the extra days, but not the return ticket.

- **Frequent flyer miles**. Your company pays for the tickets, but it's you who will rack up the miles. Some companies restrict the airlines that you can travel on.
- **New challenges, new experiences**. Business travel is still travel, and you will encounter new people, new things and new situations that are guaranteed to be a learning experience and change the way you think.

## Get around

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Business travellers can in many cases afford high-cost options, for a speedy and comfortable journey. See transportation for comparison between vehicles.

- **Flying**: Businesspeople create the market for first and business class flights. If budget is short, consider economy class; the difference in comfort and service is not that big, on most airlines.
  - For a VIP in a hurry, general aviation such as a business jet or a helicopter might save some time.
- **Rail travel** gives a fast and comfortable ride on distances up to 1,000 km (620 mi), if available. First class (or in some cases even a specially named class "above first") is often aimed at business travelers. Level of first-class standard varies between operators, but usually allows better dining and paperwork on board than the airlines. Furthermore Wifi service on trains is becoming more and more common among major long distance operators. This means you can get more work done in the same travel time than on a plane.

Many rail operators offer silent compartments, which is good if you want to work concentrated and in silence. However, do keep in mind that talking on your phone is a major no-no in silent compartments. High speed trains tend to beat planes in market share if their travel time is 3:30 h or less. DB (among others) has recognized this and offers an "ICE Sprinter" – aimed at business travellers – on select routes that makes limited or no intermediate stops to reach or beat this time.



Typical business class seats offer more room and comfort than economy.

- **Public transportation** rarely guarantees good comfort, but is usually the most practical way to get around in a big city.
- **Driving** makes a traveller independent, but also tired. Usually the only practical option in the countryside, and if you don't bring your own, renting a car can be an option. Driving and parking in an unfamiliar city can however be difficult. In addition, things like disorderly traffic or inability to read street signs in the local script may make hiring a car with a driver the best alternative.
- **Taxis and Rideshares** provide door-to-door service, in the best case with a helpful and well-informed driver. Can be everything from a tuk-tuk to a stretch limousine, depending on budget.
- **Bus travel** is not always the fastest road transport; some long-range buses are however fast and comfortable enough to appeal also to those with a good budget. They can be a good option in some countries such as Japan, Mexico and Sweden, where good quality buses from airports stop directly at major hotels, or for onward travel to another city or town from the airport. If your business operates on the proverbial shoestring (or if you are subject to the oft-quoted sadistic expense account manager) you might find yourself on a bus more often than not.

## Sleep

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While business travellers tend to stay at hotels, some organizations offer private accommodation in different sizes and comfort levels. Workers who spend much time at a destination might consider renting or buying a second home.

## Cope

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Business travellers might often find themselves on their own. See travelling alone.

## Data security

If your laptop, smartphone or usb drive is stolen or your phone calls or data connections are monitored, you may leak business secrets or confidential information (human rights activists may be targeted). As the risks may be bigger when travelling, and certainly are more difficult to control abroad, you should check what procedures to follow with the relevant department of your employer. If you do not have such resources, make sure you understand the most important risks yourself.

The worst problems may not come from criminals but from authorities (unless you trust they are not involved in industrial espionage, and that they do not use confidential information they recover). To lessen the problem of border authorities possibly wanting to get access to your devices, you might want to travel with a "clean" laptop, downloading any secret documents you need afterwards, via a secure connection

(VPN, SSH or similar). You may still need your keys (e.g. to check there is no man-in-the-middle when making secure connections), but at least some of them are public, and they are smaller anyway, easier to hide in innocent looking places. You might have to check that the computer has not been tampered with (a bootable read-only medium can confirm integrity unless also the BIOS is "upgraded"). If your destination country does not allow secure connections across the border, you have a problem. Before you return, upload and delete the sensitive information. Make sure the files are truly deleted, not only deleted from your view.

If your devices may be stolen by people interested in your secrets, any such information should be encrypted, so that it cannot be recovered without your passwords or keys (encrypted keys can be kept elsewhere so that you do not lose the information by forgetting your password). Check also the risk for unencrypted temporary files and paging areas. Encryption works best when your laptop or smartphone is turned entirely off (used content will be in cleartext in memory, and may be copied as such to the disk at hibernation).

If you are traveling with sensitive information, consider keeping your computers and any sensitive documents with you at all times. Locking them in a hotel safe provides only protection against thefts of opportunity. The hotel staff have master keys or master codes to open all the hotel safes in all the rooms. This is necessary for normal operations, in case a guest accidentally forgets the code or departs without remembering to empty the safe, but it means that your computers and other documents could be removed from the safe, copied, and returned there without your knowledge.

Few people know what information a smartphone keeps, so cleaning it for travel and restoring it across the border or when returning home might not be feasible. Instead bring a clean phone bought for the purpose, and copy just the information you need and are ready to leak from your ordinary phone.



A cheap flip phone makes for a great travel phone. SIM cards are easily swapped, battery life tends to be good, and losing a cheap phone stings less than an expensive one. Some cheap phones may include smart features, such as navigation.

## Before you travel

- **Find a good travel agent.** Booking online can be cheap and easy, but making changes later can be difficult and expensive. A good travel agent or your company's travel provider can be worth their weight in gold when you need to react to changes.
- If you are a frequent business visitor of an APEC-participating country, consider apply for an **APEC Business Travel Card**, in which card holders are able to travel without visa to specified countries on your card and enjoy expedited border crossing.
- **Have a packing routine.** Invest in a good carry-on bag and learn to pack enough to survive a week with it. Figure out the optimal way to pack it, because when everything has its place, it's easy and fast to pack. If you often travel on short notice, consider keeping the bag packed and ready to go.
- **Mileage, mileage, mileage.** You probably know you can get miles from flying — but you can also get them from staying at hotels and renting cars, and if you pay by credit card, you can get more miles yet again. Familiarize yourself

### Packing for Business

The needs of a business traveler will differ from that of a typical tourist. In general it's a good idea to pack basic business tools such as business cards, stationery, and a small/easily packed gift from your home city while traveling. These, along with normal essentials such as hygiene supplies, can easily be stored in a go bag for short notice travel.

with the programs at places you visit regularly and work out how to maximize your benefit. Dedicated sites like [FlyerTalk \(http://www.flyertalk.com/\)](http://www.flyertalk.com/) are useful for working out the loopholes and finding the latest promotions.

## On the road

- **Learn the language.** Even a few words will smooth your way and you can pick up the survival-level basics of most languages in a few weeks if you take some time to study.
- **Work out.** Most business-level hotels have a gym and any hotel's front desk will be happy to advise you of a good jogging route nearby. In some places, Wikivoyage do have mentions about different parks that may be near your hotel, which can make for a good place to go jogging in. It's listed under "Do" or "See" in the destination article. If you are a member of a gym at home they may be part of a chain with multiple locations (24 Hour/California Fitness, Planet Fitness, LA Fitness/Esporta, Orange Theory, YMCA, YWCA etc) or affiliations (Gold's, etc) with other gyms in different locales. You may be able access an affiliated gym for free or for a low cost with your current gym membership. Ask before leaving home.
- **Get out of the hotel.** It's all too easy to sit in your hotel room, order overpriced room service, and grumble about how miserable the dump you're in is. Ask a local (or check Wikivoyage!) for a recommendation and go for dinner or a drink elsewhere (which may be less expensive than the hotel dining room, bar or room service) and sightsee.
- **Find a local friend.** The Internet is full of friend-finding and online dating services, and many people will gladly take a visitor for a tour of the sights, even if you're only in town for a day or two — just offer to return the favor when they come your way.

## Stay safe

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Business travellers may visit places that the average tourist could find dangerous. The general advice in [Staying safe](#) and [Arriving in a new city](#) still applies, only it's much more important for business travel: a scruffy backpacker may draw interest because he probably has a wad of cash stashed somewhere, but a guy in a suit toting a laptop case, speaking into his late-model cellphone while signing bills with his platinum credit card is a **far more enticing target**. Consider the following precautions:

- **Pre-arrange your transportation.** From the airport, hotel pickup services are safe and can often be expensed. Follow hotel or partner recommendations for local transportation.
- **Meet-and-greet services** can be worthwhile when traveling to dodgy locales, especially for the first time, so enquire discreetly at your hotel. For fees starting from US\$50 or so, you'll be met at the plane door and whisked through immigration and customs with a minimum of hassle.
- **Backup all your data.** Before leaving, and frequently while on the road. Applies both to laptop and mobile/iPads/other gadgets with user data. Buying a replacement for hardware is frequently much easier than dealing with lost data.
- **Be careful about sensitive data.** It is an old truism, but true nonetheless: The weakest link in any security is a human being. If you happen to travel around with any type of storage device/paper with sensitive information on it – or a device with which you can access such information – this is most likely worth more than all your other possessions. Guard it accordingly. A cavalier attitude towards data security can get you fired or worse.

## Stay healthy

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Check your travel and **health insurance** before you go. It can cover travel-related illnesses, including treatment in other countries and medical evacuation. Many companies provide this to their employees as standard, but check nevertheless.

Visiting a new region or country may cause **dietary reactions**, either from different levels of sanitation or just your body adjusting to a new diet. Try getting accustomed to new food slowly over time, and avoid tap water as well as washed salads, especially in low-income countries.

**Jet lag** is a common side effect of business travel over different time zones. Allow some days to get used to the new time zone if possible (i.e. arrive Saturday morning for working on Monday). Avoid activities such as driving until you are well and fit.

Each country has different regulations regarding **pharmacy drugs**. For example it is very difficult to buy full-strength paracetamol (acetaminophen) or other pain killers from a pharmacy in China, requiring a time-consuming and expensive visit to a medical facility. German pharmacies will refuse an asthma inhaler without a prescription, even if you are gasping for breath. You can usually bring the basics in with you. Where Cannabis is legal for recreational or medicinal use, it is almost always not allowed for foreigners to partake, at least in theory.

## See also

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- Billionaires' Social Calendar
  - Time management
  - Working abroad
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