

# Tips For Travelers

By Don Mankin



**The Adventure Geezer has traveled all over the world on all kinds of trips. Most of the time, the trips have been great. But every now and then, there have been moments of misery – e.g., endless, jet-lagged nights lying in bed waiting for dawn and trails that looked easy in the brochure but turned out to be knee-pounding, glute-burning nightmares.**

At least I've learned a few things from those painful days and sleepless nights and I'm happy to share a few tips with you to help make your adventures more fun and less miserable.

## **Before You Go, Get a Realistic Preview of the Challenges**

Don't rely on the trip ratings (e.g., "easy," "moderate," "strenuous," etc.) provided by the tour operator. It's not that they are inaccurate. They are probably right on the mark. The problem is that they are rarely

specific enough. For example, if the trip is "challenging," in what way is it challenging?

Does it involve long days of hiking up steep, rough trails at high altitude? Or is it because you will be sleeping on the ground in a tent and walking in the dark in the middle of the night to get to the compost toilet a hundred yards away?

Ask the tour operator for more details or names and contact information for former clients who have already taken the trip. This information is critical to help you make an informed decision about whether to take the trip, and if so, how best to prepare for it.

## **Bring Earplugs and a Headlamp**

Most every tour operator will provide you with an extensive packing list before the trip. I bet that none of them will include earplugs and a headlamp. If you are a light sleeper like me, these two unlikely items could very well be

the difference between nights of misery and a transcendent travel experience.

The reason why I recommend earplugs is probably obvious, especially for those Saturday discos and wedding receptions with unbelievably powerful sound systems that can rattle your dental implants from miles away. The modest investment I made in a set of custom ear plugs a few years back has more than paid for itself in hours of (almost) restful sleep in places and circumstances where sleep is the last thing you might expect.

If you're not going camping, "why a headlamp" you might ask? Just imagine waking up in the middle of the night which most geezers do on a regular basis, in an unfamiliar hotel room. You can always stumble in the dark to and from the bathroom or turn on the light and ruin any chance of getting back to sleep after your bathroom visit or risk waking up your spouse or travel partner. Or you can use your headlamp to find your way.

## **Write a Story When You Get Home**

I experience each trip twice—when I actually do the trip and when I sit down in front of my computer, go through my photos and write the story. For the 3-4 days it takes to write the story, I am right back there, paddling the kayak, hiking the trail or standing on the deck watching the scenery slip by. I also get to share my stories with others. Maybe you can too. Try to publish it in a local paper or give it to your friends and grandkids. They might also enjoy it. If you're lucky they won't tell you what they really think. In any case, who cares? You are the primary audience for your story.

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*For more tips and information, go to [adventuretransformations.com](http://adventuretransformations.com)*