



Holiday Stress: Traveling

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The holiday season is the busiest time of the year for long-distance travel. Planes are overbooked and highways are overcrowded, which can add stress to the season.

Keep Your Sanity

To keep travel worries from ruining your holiday plans, learn to reduce your stress by planning ahead. To start, try using some of the following tips—they can help you stay in control during your trip.

If you are flying:

- Do not delay. Make your reservations well in advance to make sure you have many flight times, prices and seats to choose from.
- Choose your ticket wisely. Travel on off-peak days and during early morning hours whenever possible. Airports tend to be less crowded during these times, which will make it easier to get another reservation if your flight is cancelled.
- Call or check online to confirm that your flight is still on time before leaving for the airport.
- Check in for your flight online, if possible, to avoid an extra line at the airport.
- Stay hydrated. Drink at least eight ounces of water every hour to avoid jet lag.
- Pack wisely. Avoid checking luggage, but if you have to, keep prescriptions, glasses and other overnight basics in your carry-on bag in case your luggage gets lost. Keep in mind that most airlines charge fees for checking luggage.
- Fight boredom. Pack quiet activities to help pass the time, especially if traveling with children.

If you are driving:

- Be prepared. Have a mechanic examine your vehicle before your trip. Also, be sure to pack emergency and first aid supplies in case you break down.
- Know your route. Plot out your route before leaving, and bring a map. Try using an Internet route-planning site, or bring along a global positioning system (GPS).
- Save time. Try to do most of your driving during non-rush hour times to avoid the bad traffic.
- Take a break. Rest every two hours and limit yourself to eight hours of driving each day. Stop at rest areas to walk around and stretch. Make more frequent stops if traveling with small children or pets.
- Lay off the caffeine. Drink plenty of water and eat balanced meals. Drinking caffeine may make you crash a few hours later.
- Wear safety belts at all times. When used correctly, they significantly reduce the number of serious traffic injuries and fatalities.