

Things to do before you leave for vacation

3-4 months before International travel

- Check your passports** – make sure they haven't expired and will have at least **six months of validity**—beyond your actual travel date. [More info here.](#)
- Make sure you have a valid visa.
- Enroll for free at [STEP.state.gov](#) to **receive travel and security updates** about your **destination**. This service is for US citizens and nationals.

A week to 48 hours before

- Put a [hold on your mail](#) and **newspapers**.
- Return your **library books**.
- Make **arrangements for pet care**.
- [Review your packing list](#) and order/buy items as needed.
- Limit the purchase of perishable grocery items** – buy only as much as you need.
- Schedule** all your **bills** (mortgage/credit cards/utilities etc).
- Call your bank /credit card** company (if you are planning to use the credit card if you are traveling).
- Enlist your friends/neighbors to water your plants**.
- Hire** a company to **mow your lawn/snow removal**.
- Withdraw cash** in the currency of your destination.
- Call your alarm company** (ADT etc.) and let them know you are traveling
- Review your itinerary** – call your airlines/ hotels/car rentals to confirm your reservation.
- Leave your contact details** with your neighbors or anyone who is watching your house while you are gone.
- Make copies of your passport** – digital copy (in your camera) and paper copy in a bag which does not hold the passport.
- Take a backup** of your **laptops/phones** and memory cards. If you are going to take pictures from your phone, make sure to delete some data to create space for all those pictures you are going to take. Erase your memory cards for cameras as well.
- Printout your travel itinerary**

24 hours before you leave for your vacation

- Do your laundry**
- Clean your refrigerator** – freeze fruits or chop them for your journey. Freeze what you can and discard the rest.
- Check-in for your flight and hotel**
- Arrange for airport pick up** and drop off
- Review the travel checklist** and make sure all the essentials are packed.
- Take care of dirty dishes**
- Remove any cards** (grocery/department store) from your wallet that you won't need on your trip.
- Store valuables in a safe place or bank.

A couple of hours before departure

- Fully charge** the electronic **devices** that you are planning to take with you – laptop/mobile/iPad etc.
- Set your temperature** at **50-55 degrees F** in the **winter** to prevent against freezing pipes and to **85-90 degrees F** (or even turn it off) in the **summer**.
- Take out trash** from EVERY room in the house. Don't forget the bathrooms.
- Leave a light on** or invest in a [programmable timer](#) that will turn lights on and off randomly.
- Unplug small electrical appliances** such as toasters, laptops.
- Check your laundry** – make sure there are no wet clothes inside.
- Empty your dishwasher.**
- Close blinds and curtains** before you leave.
- Make sure all the **doors/windows** are **locked**. Don't forget to close your garage door and the door that connects the garage to your house.
- Activate your alarm** before you leave.
- Turn off** your **main water supply** to prevent any leaks when you are gone.
- Pour baking soda** and **vinegar** down your drain – your **toilet won't stink** from stagnant water when you come back from a long vacation.