

## TRAVEL TIPS FROM TOM

**Foreign currency \$\$\$** Tom recommends that you place an order with your bank to have some “**walking around money**” for the trip in Australia and if you are going to New Zealand that as well. Do this before we depart as **we don't have time to wait for everyone to do currency exchange at airports**. Tom recommends that you take some US dollar bills in the denominations of 1's, 5's, 10's and 20's, but nothing higher as 50's and higher around the world are considered to be counterfeit. I am not going to get into the exchange rates, but just know our dollar is worth more than both of the Australian (our USD worth about 60 cents and about 70 cents more than the NZ \$). Suggest you might want to have \$300 - \$500 each of Aussie dollars and Kiwi Dollars. Your Credit cards are acceptable, too. Also, just know not to expect to find everything and prices the same as America and yes, they have been hit with inflation as well.

**Electrical:** Like most places you travel to in the world with the exception of Mexico and the Caribbean the electrical current coming out of the socket is about twice of what we have in America of 110/120 volts. With that said you will need to have a converter and appropriate adapter that goes in the wall outlet, especially if you are running such things as a hair dryer or curling iron any kind of motor driven or heating element with you. The adapter you need for both countries is a 3-prong adapter. However, if you are just needing a charge for laptop, tablet or cell phone, they only need the adapter as your electronic items convert the electrical current.

**Medicine:** Any kind of prescription drugs you are taking with you on the trip should be in the original container with the prescription label showing. **Do not put your drugs in your checked luggage.** If any of the drugs you take are a “controlled substance”, please only take the amount for the trip and a few days over, but no more. **Large supplies of controlled drugs will be “red flag” and you will be taking a trip to the back room to be interrogated.** Australia drug control is very serious and the dogs will be awaiting us upon arrival at the Sydney Airport sniffing out everyone coming off the plane.

Should you come down sick or injured on the trip just know to call down the front desk of our hotels and let them know your issue. Hotels are connected with a medical clinic or doctor **on-call** that usually makes house calls. A doctor will come to your room or if you prefer, you can go to the Urgent Care or ER at the hospital on your own. Just know for this kind of medical service you need to be prepared to pay on the spot with cash or credit card and get a receipt. If you have travel insurance, then you will file a claim with receipt when you get back home. Anything more serious and you have insurance and you get admitted to the hospital you will need to have someone call for you to the phone number on the last page of your insurance policy as they are open 24/7 anywhere in the world and they will take over from there. Armed with all of this info, you can handle any medical issue yourself. **Only contact Tom if something serious happens**, so we can account for you and make the proper adjustments on the travel side.

**Directions/Location:** If you are truly one of those who is directionally challenged in a new place anywhere, please be sure to stay and hang out with someone in the band so you don't get lost and we have to send a search party out looking for you. Also, I highly recommend that when we travel from place to place with new hotels to please grab a card at the front desk of the hotel name, address and phone number and put it in your wallet in case you get lost and you can't remember the name of the hotel or where it is at so you can get a taxi to bring you back.

**Luggage & Laundry:** For a long trip like this you do not need to bring everything you own! I recommend you have (1) checked bag and a carry-on and personal item. Some of you will have to check an instrument as well. Qantas

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allows for (1) checked bag of no more than 50-pounds and 62 dimensional inches (Length + Width + Height) just like airlines in the USA. This should be familiar if you have been traveling by air in the last 20 – 30 years or more. Good news for everyone, there are no baggage fees, yay!!! Those with Premium Economy & Business Class, you have greater baggage allowances. Yay!!!

When packing, you will get more in your luggage if you roll your clothes and pack in an organized way. Since this is a long trip at some point you will need to do some laundry! This is easy and turn-key for you to do if you follow these steps. First off, fill out the laundry list form included with the plastic or paper laundry bag in your room. Next, bring the clothes bag and form to the hotel front desk by the time deadline. You can generally expect it back to your room the same day; usually near 4:30 pm – 6:30 pm. This service is not free as you will be billed to your room for this. If you need some items dry cleaned and or pressed you will see an area for that, and you will be billed to your room. The other option is to do laundry in your room. Bring some kind of detergent in your checked luggage, don't bring a large amount and make sure it is in sealed in a plastic zipped bag, too. Based on our itinerary, the best time to have hotel laundry service is your first or second night in Sydney. If you are going onto New Zealand then I would suggest you might want to do it on your first night in Rotorua, NZ.

**NOTE:** Now there is no need to call or write Tom about the how, when or why about laundry. Tom has provided you with all the info you need!

**Food:** The food in Australia and New Zealand is just fine and nothing unusual other than they do eat a lot of beef, lamb and fish in their diets. The healthy kick has been in this part of the world for a very long time like Europe, so if you have special needs/diets such as heart healthy, vegan or vegetarian they can accommodate you quite well. For wine fans, some of the great wines in the world come from the Bourassa and Hunter Valley regions. The beer in Australia is great as you will find such brands as Foster's, Coopers Brewery, Victoria Bitter, Carlton & United Breweries and Tooheys Brewery and Carlton just to name a few. You may want to try some Vegemite (we have it here in America), Fairy Bread, Meat Pies, Anzac Biscuits, Chicken Parma, Pavlova, Pumpkin Soup, Fish & Chips, Sausage Rolls, Australian Burgers, Grilled Kangaroo, Crab Sticks, Cheese & Bacon Roll. For New Zealand you will find that lamb, pork and venison, salmon, crayfish, bluff oysters, scallops, kumara (sweet potato), kiwifruit, tamarillo and pavlova and fish and chips are all very popular items. Popular beer in NZ would be Speight's, Tui, Wanaka Beerworks, Monteith's, Emerson's, Mac's Beer, DB, Sunshine Brewery, Bays, Yeastie Boys and Epic just to name a few to try out. One bond that both Australia and New Zealand have in common is having tea, especially an afternoon tea like we can find at our neighbors to the North in Canada. You might be surprised as there are **no Starbucks in Australia** as they struggled in Australia as they approached the market with an American coffee culture as many of the drinks on the menu had a wide selection of sugary drinks as that did not appeal to the local Australian tastes. However, **there are Starbucks in NZ** as they only have 34 locations and not one on every corner like here.

**Being on Time:** It's very important that you manage your own clock when it comes to being places, especially our performances and be ready to go. Times will be posted for our departures and announced each day for our departure times and departures by motor coach to airports. It is very important that I get your full cooperation on this as you could be left behind and will have to find your way to event or the airport. If being on time and ready and waiting in the lobby of the hotel is a challenge for you, then I am going to recommend right now you find someone or attach yourself to a buddy to help you make this work.

### Most important tip:

**Have a great time Down Under as we add a new TBGO adventures to our memories!!!**