

# Episode 36: Top 10 Travel Tips for 2025 – Expert Tips To Maximise Your Travel Experience

## This is episode 36 of the Global Travel Planning Podcast

Tracy: Happy New Year, everyone. This is episode 36 of the Global Travel Planning Podcast. Are you planning your travel adventures for 2025? Maybe you're dreaming of exploring far off destinations, crafting the perfect itinerary, or looking for insider tips to save time, money and stress while making the most of your travels. In this episode, we're sharing our, top 10 travel tips for 2025, packed with practical advice to help you travel smarter, avoid common pitfalls and create unforgettable memories. Whether you're a seasoned globetrotter or a, first time adventurer, you'll find actionable tips to make 2025 your best year of travel yet. Hi and welcome to the Global Travel Planning Podcast.

Tracy: I'm, your host, Tracey Collins, who.

Tracy: With my expert guests will take you.

Tracy: On a weekly journey to destinations around.

Tracy: The globe, providing travel inspiration, itinerary ideas.

Tracy: Practical tips, and, more to help you plan your next travel adventure.

## **The Global Travel Planning Podcast is going weekly this year**

Tracy: Welcome to the first episode of the Global Travel Planning Podcast for 2025. This year we are going weekly, so do tune in every Wednesday when there's a new episode of the Global Travel Planner podcast. Now, there's going to be a slightly different format this year as well in that we will have destination focused episodes for three or four, depending on how many, the Wednesdays there are in.

Tracy: A month episodes where we will have.

Tracy: Destination specialists coming in to share travel expertise, knowledge, tips and practical information with you to help you plan your travels across the globe. But each month, the final episode of the month will feature myself, my friend Melissa, who's Australian, and my friend Shelley, who is from North America. She's from Seattle originally. And the three of us have a, vast. I actually wouldn't want to add up to how many years it is of experience traveling the world. We have vastly different travel styles, we have vastly different travel experiences, and not only from our perspectives of being different nationalities, but, we've all traveled differently, whether that's solo, in a couple, in a family. We've got experience basically of every type of travel. we also done some budget travel, we've done luxury travel, we've done all sorts of ways of traveling around the globe. And we've all been traveling extensively now for a long time. And I felt there'd be a fantastic opportunity to get Shelly and Melissa on every month and we will do a deep dive into a particular travel tip.

**This episode features two experts on solo female travel: Melissa and**

## **Shelley**

So I've actually been asking in my Facebook group, Global Travel Planning Facebook group, what are, the major obstacles when it comes to you, when it comes to traveling. So what would you like to know about? and you can leave us a message through Speak pipe, which I will put a link in the show notes for this episode so you can actually record a message and tell us what you would like to know about. Also, if you join our Facebook group, Global Travel Planning, as well, ah, you can go into the group and ask us questions and also basically get in touch and just let us know what it is that you are finding difficult when it comes to travel. So at the end of this month, we will be doing a deep dive into how we plan our travel around the world. and I know in our Facebook group there's a number of topics that have come up that are of interest. How, to find accommodation, how to travel safely, solo female travel. And we will be looking at solo female travel of, over 50s as well, because that's a specific area of expertise for all of us. because that's what we do. We are, when we travel, solo female travelers, we're over 50, Melissa's nearly over 50. myself and Shelly are well into our 50s, and so we have a huge amount of expertise in that area too. Now, in this episode, I'm going to welcome both Melissa and Shelley. Melissa is going to introduce herself and tell us a little bit about her background, and her, kind of experience of travel, before then sharing her top three travel tips for 2025. After, Melissa, I then welcome on Shelley, and Shelly will introduce herself and give you a bit about her background and her websites and her travel. And then she will share her top three travel tips for 2025. And then that follows up with me sharing my four top travel tips for 2025. So stay tuned.

**Melissa is the Aussie ambassador for the global planning podcast**

So, first of all, let me introduce Melissa to you guys.

Tracy: So I'm really excited to introduce the Aussie member of our trio now. So, you're gonna recognize her voice because Melissa has been on a couple of episodes of the global travel podcast before. but this is now Melissa's opportunity to introduce herself before then we're going to start talking about her top three travel tips for 2025. So, Melissa, it's great to see you again. I've been missing you for the last few months and I've been traveling.

Melissa Kailey: So, yeah, thanks, Tracy, for

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Melissa Kailey: having me on again. And I'm excited to be the Aussie ambassador for, the global planning podcast. But, yeah, I'm the editor of a couple of different websites, the Queensland Travel Guide, Brisbane Travel Guide, and Thrifty Family Travels, which I've been running, you know, for a couple of years. I think about eight years all up now. And something very exciting for me. I've recently started working at a little travel agent. So now I can as well as help people plan all their trips. I can help book them as well.

Tracy: Oh, that's really exciting.

Melissa Kailey: but look, I've lived in Brisbane all my life. Bit unusual for a traveler, I know, but I love it in Brisbane. which is why I've got the Queensland Travel Guide and the Brisbane Travel Guide. But on top of that, I have also traveled across the globe quite extensively.

Tracy: Oh, you have? Just tell us some of the. The highlights of the places that you've been to. I mean, I know I was talking to you the other day because I'm thinking about a trip to central South America. And at the first I thought, right, I'm going to shoot a message over to you. And you were like, yes, yes, yes, I've been. So I was like, I've done a.

Melissa Kailey: Lot of different travels. You know, I've done the whole, you know, backpacking around Europe travel like a lot of Aussies do. but then I did family travel, you know, when, I got married and my daughter came along. And now I'm sort of started to move into that, you know, that older woman. I'm not quite 50, but I'm starting to move into that older, solo female, travel with. Whether it's by myself or with my wonderful friends like you, Tracy. But, yeah, I don't know, some of my hearts, I mean, living in Australia, I've traveled a lot in Southeast Asia. It's close, and it's very cheap for us. But, yeah, I've traveled. I like going places that are off the beaten track a little bit. So when you asked about Central America, I've been to, like, Honduras and Nicaragua, but, yeah, also traveled down through South America and Europe. yeah, a lot of places, but still got a lot of places to go.

Tracy: Well, you know, when you say that, it's funny because I was sitting the other day thinking about all the places I've visited already, and then I'm thinking about all the places I want to go to, because I was. I was after speaking to Josie Kelsh about bucket lists. I've kind of been trying to think about putting a bucket list together. And honestly, when you sit down, there are some obvious things to me that I want to do that I've always had in my head. But then I start thinking about the number of places I haven't been to, and it becomes a bit overwhelming, actually. I kind of bit. Oh. But there's three questions I'm going to ask, and I'm actually considering. I'm going to ask Shelley these as well. And I'm considering asking all the guests these questions. So if you listen to the

podcast, I'd love some feedback if you like these.

## **Mel Meloni says next week he's going to Europe to see snow**

So, favorite destination, Mel?

Melissa Kailey: Okay. Thailand is the first one that comes to mind. I mean, there's so many different places in the world, but, yeah, Thailand ticks a lot of boxes for me.

Tracy: Perfect. And your favorite experience, where was that in the world?

Melissa Kailey: well, one of my favorite experiences, we went to Prague at Christmas time with my family and my daughter, who was only about 6 at this time. And it was the first time she saw snow, and snow falling. And it was really precious watching her so excited about seeing snow.

Tracy: Oh, I can imagine.

Melissa Kailey: We don't see snow. I mean, we can, but not very often.

Tracy: No, but it's really funny.

Tracy: I mean, I'm used to snow because I grew up kind of between Europe and Southern Africa. But with time when I spent in Europe, I've seen a lot of snow. And I spent the, early years of my life living in the uk, So I have seen snow. But I'm so excited because I'm going to see snow. We're recording this at the beginning of December, but

next week I'm going to go off to. I'm going to be in Europe and I'm going to see lots of snow. And I'm actually really excited, so I totally get that.

## **Melissa and Shelley share their top 10 tips for travel in 2025**

So kind of that leads me into the question of where next for you, Melissa.

Melissa Kailey: I'm going to Bali and Lombok for Christmas. so a bit different to those in the Northern hemisphere. I'm going to have a hot, warm, lots of beach time and snorkeling time in Indonesia.

Tracy: We'll have to share some photos from that trip. We'll definitely put those in the show notes, because by the time this episode comes out, beginning of, beginning of January, we'll have done our trips. And actually, I'll be talking to Shelley, soon for her segment, but she's actually on a plane to Abu Dhabi at the moment. and I think that's the beauty of the fact that we've got me as a Brit, you as an Aussie, and, we've got Shelley. Take the American perspective, is that we are genuine travelers. We're out and about. We not only have traveled extensively our whole lives, but we are constantly traveling we're constantly learning and, the ability to share that knowledge and our experience is so exciting. So I thought a great way to start 2025 was, was to do exactly what we're doing, which is to share our top 10 tips for travel in 2025. And I know you've got, your three tips, ready, Melissa? So if you want to go ahead and share, that would be great.

## **Make sure you have travel insurance 100%, Melissa says**

Melissa Kailey: All right, so this first tip for anybody who knows me and travels with me will come as no surprise. And that is make sure you have travel insurance. I'll tell you why. You know, I'm like, I'm like the poster girl for travel insurance. I'll tell you why in a minute. But, you know, you probably heard people say, if you can't afford travel insurance, you can't afford to travel. And I couldn't, agree with that more. look, sometimes, you know, depending on how old you are and any medical conditions you are, you've got, it can be a little bit pricey, but you just have to have it. Don't, don't skimp on that. And I say, why? I'm

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Melissa Kailey: the pin up girl. For travel insurance. I have broken my foot, my foot three different times. Once in Lombok, once in Greece, and once in Spain. And, I was with you on one of those occasions, Tracy.

Tracy: We were in Greece together when, when you. And, you know, and I think that, you know, travel insurance is the one thing that you, you take out that you hope you're not going to need, but when you do need it, it's an essential.

Melissa Kailey: Okay. So when I broke my foot, earlier this year, ah, in Spain, I. And so that was the third time I actually sat down and I wrote, all the expenses because, you know, my. So my trip got cut short, so I lost flights, I lost hotel, bookings. Trip bookings. I had to move hotels, so that was extra money. I had to take taxis because I couldn't take public transport. Blah, blah, blah. All up, it was somewhere around about \$14,000 because I had to be flown home business class because you can't fly in, economy with



your foot. Because what happened to me the previous year when I broke my foot, I ended up with DVT, DVT and in hospital for that. So it's quite dangerous. So, yeah, definitely take out travel insurance 100%.

Tracy: And I remember when in Greece, you'd actually just gone downstairs to the toilet and you literally tripped up some stairs. And that was it.

Melissa Kailey: That's it. And, so that's the thing. Don't think, oh, I'm not doing anything exciting. I don't need it. Like Tracey said, I was at a. At a conference, a travel conference, and I just was walking to the toilet.

Tracy: And I fell over.

Melissa Kailey: And it was pretty much the same thing that happened the following year. I was just walking and fell over. So, yeah, hopefully you're not as clumsy as me, but you don't need to be doing anything too risky to need travel insurance.

Tracy: No, 100%. And I mean, considering what Europe's like in terms of cobblestones and uneven pavements, it's. It's. Honestly, it's very, very easy to slip and fall over and hurt yourself. But even, I mean, I. Last year was in. Was, in South Korea, got sick, then flew on to Vietnam, and I ended up with pneumonia and ended up in hospital. So thank goodness I had the travel insurance was a godsend. I got looked after really well. So 100%. I agree with you with that one, Melissa. for sure.

**My second tip is about packing light. Until now, I only travel with the essentials**

So what's your second tip?

Melissa Kailey: My second tip is about packing light. And I learned the hard way with this. So when I first. When I was in my early 20s and I went on a big trip around the world, I took pretty much the biggest suitcase I could find, and I packed it with as many clothes as I possibly could. Now, that suitcase was probably same size as me and so heavy. And here I am as a solo traveler on my own, carting this suitcase around Europe, you know, trying to get it on trains, trying to put it up in the sort of locker. It was a big no, no. So after that, I really learned that, the lighter the better. And it. I didn't just all of a sudden become a light packer, you know, the next trip I got a bit lighter and lighter and lighter. Until now, you know, I only travel with the essentials. And there's a couple of reasons for that. Is, it's really annoying unpacking and repacking and having so much stuff and you just don't need it. And also, you know, now with, a lot of, airlines, they really full on with, you know, how much luggage you've got and then they'll charge you for. And it's a bit crazy really. The other thing related to packing is I like to travel with a backpack most of the time. Not. Sometimes I'll still take, a suitcase, but it's kind of good to have your hands free when you travel. Like, you know, I mean, like, when you're Sort of, you know, traveling on the, on a plane or a bus or whatever because, you know, you might need your passport in one hand or your phone in another. And so having your hands free is really, really good. And even when I traveled as a family, it was good because then I could hold my daughter's hand and have something else in my other hand. So I found a backpack was really good. Traveling with a young child, which I don't think a lot of people would consider. But, yeah, travel light. You do not need all that stuff.

Tracy: No, 100% agree with you.

Melissa Kailey: Purchases. Me and Tracy went to India earlier in the year and we both

traveled really, really light. Tracy's excellent at traveling light. Yet somehow we still managed to pack a lot of purchases from India in our very small bags.

Tracy: We did, we did, we did buy quite a lot. And that's really funny because I'm packing for next week and I'm away for three weeks and then going straight to Edinburgh. And, I've got to the point where I'm struggling a little bit with a backpack. So, I've got to be really careful with that. And I think till recently I did do the backpack thing. I'm nearly 58. 58. I'm finding it a little bit more difficult. but I still have like a day pack backpack which I'm using. And when I went to Italy, I've just come back from Italy, I was there three weeks and I took my backpack and I honestly, by the end of it, I was ready to throw it. So I did actually, I did go and buy a little pull along suitcase, because I could find that I could lift that up. But even now packing for next week, I am really conscious about taking the minimum. A, because I do want to purchase a few little bits and pieces at these Christmas markets. But also B, I just find the more I have, the more stressed I get.

Melissa Kailey: Yeah, you do. You really, really do. And you know, someone, someone earlier along told me, you know, be whatever you take, be able to carry it yourself. So even if you are going to

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Melissa Kailey: take, a pull along, obviously you don't, you shouldn't be carrying it too much. But Tracy, like, remember when we were in India going up and down, those stairwells that didn't have lifts or escalators? Like, it might only be the rare occasion, but you really do want to be able to manage your own bags and not have to rely on other people to help you.

Tracy: Oh, no, 100%. Because, in Italy you need to really ideally lift your Suitcase and put it on the overhead locker thing. Not locker, but, you know, overhead bit on the train. And so I was able to do that pretty easily. I think my, my suitcase weighed about 8kgs because when I got to the airport I actually checked it in, which I tried to avoid, but it was just one of those situations. Well, I had, I had had my backpack with less things in it, but I'd purchased some kind of fragile things. But the thing is, was being able to kind of be able to put it up. because often you think people would help you, but.

Melissa Kailey: I know, but they don't. No, they do not. They, do not. and also, you know, like, particularly like in Europe and stuff, you're going up and down like in train stations and stuff. And whilst there is going to be a lift somewhere, you've got to find that lift and it's not.

Tracy: Sometimes it's not working, sometimes it's not working. Yeah, yeah. And. Ah, so. No, absolutely. And I know, I know when we were India, there was a couple who were quite a couple of heavy suitcases and they were kind of probably, I would say in the 70s and they struggled. And I just think genuinely you may think you need all that stuff. You don't. You really, really, really don't. You just don't.

Melissa Kailey: You know, you just. I find that, you know, I wear the same things over and over again and just, you know, and people sort of say, like, for me, it doesn't matter if I'm going somewhere for a week or five weeks, I'll still take the same, you know, because you just have to get used to washing and things like that. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Tracy: Three outfits, I think is what I'm kind of aiming for.

Tracy: That's it.

Tracy: because we. And also trying to consider along the way when, where you can wash. It's easier in some parts of the world. You know, you've got Asia, Southeast Asia, very easy to get people to wash. It's a bit more expensive if you're staying in a, in a hotel in Paris to get it, you know, to do your washing. But we do have a little washing line and well, you use that in India.

Melissa Kailey: It was awesome. Yeah, yeah, we did use that washing line. Yeah, we did.

## **My last tip is spending money wisely or making your travel dollar go further**

Tracy: Okay, so tip number three, Melissa.

Melissa Kailey: Okay. My last tip is spending money wisely or making your travel dollar go further. you know, as I said, I am the editor of Thrifty Family Travel, so you can kind of guess from that title that I like to, try and get the most out of my travel dollar. So when I say spend money wisely, I don't necessarily mean go for the cheapest of everything. I like to sort of work out where's a good place to save money and where the place is not to. And generally I think you can save money on accommodation and maybe transfers. And it's the experiences that I often say, you know, don't compromise on experience. You know, like just an example, there's no point going to the Paris if you can't see the Eiffel Tower sort of thing. You know what I mean? Like that might not be true for everyone, but I'm just using that as an example. Like, you know, you don't want to go, oh, I've just, I've got an amazing hotel and like, let's face it, a lot of the time you hardly in your hotel, you go there to sleep and you're out from the minute you wake up to the minute you go to sleep. So. But you know, then on the other end, the other end of the

scale, like in terms of accommodation, when I'm talking about spending money wisely, maybe, you know, if you're going to be relying on trains and make sure your accommodation is close to a train station, might cost you a little bit extra, but then at least you're not paying money for taxis to go back and forth all the time. So, yeah, just thinking a little bit how you can make the most out of your money before just going with the fanciest hotel or whatever because you really want money. it's the experiences for me that make travel anyway.

Tracy: Yeah, no, that's true. I tend to, I know what we, we tend to book kind of mid range and then have a blowout where we'll stay in it. So over Christmas we're staying at BudPass, so I've booked a hotel with a pool and just so, so it's kind of balancing it out, I think, and working out, working out what's important for you when it comes to going to a destination. What experiences do you want to have and how do you want to, how do to do them? and like how you're going to budget for those as well. But I know one thing that we are both really keen on is, collecting points for flights.

Melissa Kailey: Yes, thank you, Tracy.

## **You can earn enough points to fly around the world for free using cheap airlines**

I was going to say that that was my other, other tip that you know, I'm Australian so I, I follow, you know, point hacking tips in Australia, but I know in, you know, pretty much all around the world they have different programs. So yeah, you will really be surprised how easy it is to earn enough points to fly around the world for free. So, you know, if you're in Australia, come and follow me. you know, otherwise, wherever you are in the

world, definitely look up how you can make the most of points and start tomorrow because it's really, it really is.

Tracy: Well, Doug's flying at the present time. Doug is actually flying back from. He's flying from Australia. He's on his way to Dallas at the moment and then is connecting from Dallas to London. And that entire, that entire flight is on. Is on points with a little top up, but

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Tracy: not very much.

Tracy: It's.

Melissa Kailey: Yeah, it's amazing. And so not only that, so, like, you know, I, I generally fl. I pretty much always fly on points, but then I try and get upgrades, on points as well. So, you know, I could never afford to fly, in business class, but with points. I've flown in business class quite a lot over the last few years and I haven't paid for it once.

Tracy: I know, it's amazing. I, I did manage to get a points upgrade from Singapore to Brisbane on my first ever business class flight last year, or actually it was earlier this year, which was amazing. So, yes, I was a bit spoiled. I'm not sure. I've got to keep collecting my points to get my upgrades. But definitely, definitely worth it, but brilliant. It's been so good to catch up with Melissa and get those three tips. Now, at the end of January, yourself and Shelly will be joining me for, a dedicated episode. So at the end of every month, the last episode of every month, the three of us will be chatting about a particular travel tip and we'll be kind of deep diving into that so we can share in our

experiences and our perspectives, to help you plan a better trip. So this, in fact, this month at the end of January, we're going to actually do a deep dive into how we plan our trips.

Melissa Kailey: Sounds awesome. I can't wait to talk about that.

Tracy: Yeah, so that's going to be brilliant. But it's been so good to catch up with you, Melissa. And, I will speak to you soon.

Melissa Kailey: Thank you.

Kerry Heaney: Bye.

## **Shelly Marie joins Global Travel Planner to talk about solo travel**

Tracy: So I'm now also very excited to introduce the third member of the trio, who is our, American expert contingent, born traveler. and that is Shelly Marie. So, hi, Shelley. Thanks so much for joining us on the Global Travel Planner podcast. And you're going to be having, you're going to be involved in the monthly segment with myself and Melissa. so would you like to introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about where you're from, about your travel experiences and obviously about your website, etc. Etc.

Kerry Heaney: Yeah. Hi Tracy. I'm so excited to be with you today and to be part of the trio. I am a solo female traveler. I started solo, traveling right out of school and I went ahead and continued my travels full time about three years ago. In between that time, I was in the healthcare field for several years, lived a very linear life, nothing too exciting,



just day to day things like everyone else does. And, when I am in the US I live on the west coast, I have family on the east coast, and now I travel most of the year and just touch base in the US I am the owner and editor of, Solo Her Way, which is a website and social platforms for female solo travelers to give them expert advice and tips and confidence to follow their solo travel dreams and do that without fear, apprehension and really empower them to do what they desire.

Tracy: And you're a perfect, perfect addition to the trio, Shelly.

## **You're joining us to share your travel experiences with our listeners in 2025**

And obviously I just spent, some time with you in Puglia in South Italy, which I was inspired to do after you were on the Global Travel plan podcast earlier in 2024 talking about Puglia. And I was like, well, it sounds amazing. and I have to say I had totally admire your traveling, solo all over the world, driving all over the world, just booking stuff and going for it. you're very, very inspiring, I have to say. And you have so much experience and knowledge. So it's going to be really exciting throughout 2025 to, share all of that knowledge and experience you have with, our listeners. So, yeah, so welcome. We're so excited that you agreed to, to join myself and Melissa.

## **What is your favorite destination now? Southern Italy and Sicily**

So we'll do the quick fire questions because I think that those are always exciting to

ask. So what is your favorite destination?

Kerry Heaney: Well, that was really, really a hard one. I would say my favorite destination now. it's just like a child. When you go someplace, your favorite destination is the place that you're at at the moment. But, my favorite destination really has become Southern Italy, so I would say the Puglia region and Sicily. It's, it's just become a place where I feel at home. I've gone many, many times now. I've made several friends and I was so happy that you came and you joined me and I was your tour guide and I was able to show you around and show you the hospitality and the food and the traditions and, la dolce vita that they truly, truly,

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Kerry Heaney: embrace and cherish in that area.

Tracy: Absolutely. And as well, I, will just mention as well that you are kind of foodie expert as well, having a love for food around the world. So that was exciting for me to try lots and lots of, delicious Italian foods when we were in Puglia. And obviously we also went to Florence as well and had some exciting experiences in Florence.

Kerry Heaney: Yes, I was so excited about that.

Tracy: It was really good.

**So your favorite experience? Um, my favorite experience was in Borneo**

So your favorite experience?

Kerry Heaney: my favorite experience. That was a hard one too, I would say. my favorite experience was when I was in Borneo in the Saba region in Malaysia, and I went to a UNESCO site and it is the rainforest tree canopies. And it's very interesting. It's one of the few rainforests in that area outside of like, the Amazon. And it, it is amazing. So they have 620 meter high ironwood trees. They have massive flora all throughout that you can only see sometimes in the Amazon or indicative of this. But what they do is they, they have these massive ropes that they string like 27 meters. And for our American people, 20 or 88ft long, ropes in between these trees. And they only have like one or two foot boards that are your walking boards and you are literally hundreds of feet off the ground and you're just swaying in these trees. But it's, it's, you're, it's like a canopy of ropes and it's a maze that you're walking through the trees. So you're up in the trees listening to all of the birds and you're seeing the mountains and it's just. You hear the wind and it's so peaceful. It is like no experience that you have ever, ever experienced in your life. It is just, it's just beautiful. Now, I will say if you are afraid of heights, this is not the experience for you, but I would highly, highly recommend it. There are platforms in between the several ropes, rope bridges. I believe that there's seven or eight rope bridges in total. There might be more, but, they're very safe, children, you know, as long as you could physically, you know, go, you know, you'll, you'll be okay. There are no elevators.

Tracy: Okay.

Kerry Heaney: This is born, this is Borneo, this is Saba. So.

Tracy: Yeah.

Kerry Heaney: But it is a magical experience.

Tracy: Have you got any photos from there, Shelley?

Kerry Heaney: Yes, I do. Yes, I do.

Tracy: Oh, well, we'll have to share those in the show notes for sure, because.

Tracy: I definitely want to have a look at that.

Tracy: I'm working on my 65 before 65 bucket list. So I might have to add that in.

Kerry Heaney: Definitely, definitely. It is really magical when you're, when you're standing there and you, you just see, especially at sunset and you see the mountains in the background. It is just beautiful.

Tracy: Wow.

### **Third question is, where next? Tracy is going to Sri Lanka**

Okay, so third question is, where next?

Kerry Heaney: Well, I am currently. I just landed someplace very familiar to you, Tracy.

Tracy: That's true.

Kerry Heaney: So I am in Australia. And, but I am next. I am going to Sri Lanka. So I am meeting up with, one of our friends, Paula, and we are going to go on a 15, day. I believe it is a 15 day trek around Sri Lanka. And one of my bucket list things is taking the blue train all around. I believe it was. It's not candy. I can't remember the city, to be quite honest with you. But we will be going to Kandy and we will be going all around Sri Lanka, but it is the famous blue train. So, yes, I'm really, really excited.

Tracy: So I'll have to catch up with you after you've come back from Sri.

Tracy: Lanka and we can have a chat about that. I think that would be a great episode.

Kerry Heaney: Yes.

Tracy: Okay, so let's go. We've spoken to, I've spoken to Melissa for her three top tips. travel tips for 2025.

## **You must, must have travel insurance, but not just travel insurance**

So this is your turn, Shelley, now, to share your three top tips. So should

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we head into those?

Kerry Heaney: Yes. Okay. I want to touch base real quick about Melissa's. Her top one about travel insurance. I just want to piggyback really, really quickly on that. Absolutely,

positively. You must, must have travel insurance, but not just travel insurance. You must have the correct travel insurance. I'm not sponsoring anyone. I'm just saying I ran into a situation myself last year. I had a pretty serious injury. I had to have an operation overseas. I had to spend two months in a hotel. So it was pretty serious. But luckily I had the right travel insurance that took care of me, paid for everything, and transported me back to the US. So it's very important not just to get generic travel insurance. Look at your health needs. Me being a former health care provider, look at your individual health care needs. Pick travel insurance that meets your needs. It will pay in the long run. And honestly, if you never need it, you know what? M. It's. It's money well spent. So I just wanted to touch base on that because I agree with her 200%. So my top three, travel tips are number one, sign up for hotel reward programs. So when I go to Sri Lanka this time I will be staying four nights totally free, in one of the large, big chain hotels, and it will be all on points. And I will have lounge access, I will have Wi fi, I will have possibly an upgrade, I'm hoping, and late checkout. So, that being said, a lot of people think, oh, well, I'm only going on vacation for two weeks, or I'm only going on vacation for two days or three days. Sign up. it's just like the airlines. It doesn't matter if you're taking one flight, five flights, 10 flights. Every little bit adds up. If you're going to stay someplace, sign up. It doesn't cost you anything. And eventually those points add up, add up, add up, and you may get a free night, you may get a bonus just for signing up. Sometimes they give you 2, 000 points just for signing up. So it's, it's worth it. And you will get status, whether it's, you know, free Wi Fi or a free welcome drink or late checkout or whatever it might be very, very quickly. And, I think with Airbnb prices and fees going up so much and the backlash of Airbnb affecting communities, and I think that's why we're having such a problem in Europe right now with tourism. And I know in America, there are certain cities in America that Airbnb is really affecting the rates and the rents of, communities for locals. And there's a backlash for that. So hotels now, the trend is people are going back to hotels. That is the trend now. So I think for 2025, you're going

to see that hotels are going to be attracting more people. And I'm not saying Airbnb is going to go away, but I'm gonna say a lot more people are going to be gravitating towards hotels. So sign up for those reward programs.

Tracy: Yeah, that's excellent.

Tracy: That's a very, very good tip there, Shelly.

## **Tip number two is visas and Ettas before you travel**

Tip number two.

Kerry Heaney: Tip number two is visas and Ettas. And what that is is, of course, you know, to get a visa to go into another country that maybe your passport won't let you into, but there's also a thing called ETAs, which are electronic travel authorities. And it's basically like a visa, but it's not. It's just. It's just another form that the government has you fill out that to allow you into the country as a visitor. So, my tip is make sure that you are checking your sources before you travel. If you can do it two to three weeks ahead, that is perfect. I ran into a problem recently where some ETTAS are good for up to a year, some six months. It depends on the country or the place that you're at. So it's very important

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Kerry Heaney: that you check on the government websites on different sourced places, not just, you know, Google something, because there's a lot of misinformation out there.

Recently I just ran into a little bit of an issue coming, Australia. I was under the impression that my ETTA was still valid for a year and come to find out it was not because there was a little tweak in the Australian government guidelines. So it was resolved. but it was a little glitch because you have to make sure you have all that in place before they can check you in for your flight. So this is very important. And so that is my, my tip just to keep, you know, alert on the ever changing government guidelines. The other caveat to that is when you're applying for a visa or an ETA, ETTAs aren't usually that pricey, but visas sometimes can be very pricey. There's a lot of companies out there, apps out there that will expedite these, these, and, and some of them are wonderful. So I've used them myself. But that being said, I'm getting ready to take a trip to Sri Lanka and I went on one of those apps that I've used prior and the visa was going to be three times as much as me going on the government website. So if you are prepared and you have time. Usually the government websites only take a couple weeks, maybe three weeks. So save yourself some money because I, I only paid a quarter of the price that I would have paid on the app. So that's, that's another tip.

Tracy: Oh, no, that's excellent advice, Shelley. Definitely. And in terms of the eta, there's a new ETA coming in in the uk. by the time this episode comes out, actually think the ETA will be live in the UK for, people who don't require a visa need an eta. and I know there's an ETS which is coming out for the Europe, next year as well, so. Or in 2025. So it's always worth checking.

Tracy: Absolutely.

Tracy: About that.

Tracy: So, that's really useful and a really handy and very practical tip for people.



## **Tip number three is airport lounge access for domestic and international flights**

Now, what about tip number three?

Kerry Heaney: Tip number three are airport lounge access. So a lot of my friends, followers have asked me about airport lounge access. Of course, many people have access through their credit cards, through their points, through their airline carriers. Sometimes when you Purchase a ticket and you upgrade your seat, you'll automatically get airport, lounge access. But if you don't have those resources. I had a friend of mine just not too long ago, he, was going to the, Balkans and he booked his flight. And then I wish he would have asked me beforehand because he booked his flight and the airline said, hey, do you want to book your, your airport lounge pass right now? And he did because he had a decent layover. And, that cost him a lot of money through the airlines. A lot of money. Whereas I have flown that same airlines and I do not book it through my ticket. And I will just go. If I have a long layover and I present my ticket at the lounge and I ask them, can I, you know, have lounge access for four to six hours? If they have availability, which 99 of the time they do, they will go ahead and grant it. And it costs maybe it costs maybe, anywhere from €50 to €65, €70. But that is the same cost as you would pay for a drink, a sandwich, and sitting on a hard chair for four to six hours. So most, of these lounges, what they'll do is they'll let you go in, they'll let you look at it, see what kind of food they have showers, they have quiet rooms, they have places, places you can work at, they have free drinks, you know, soft drinks, alcohol, whatever. Each lounge is different. So that's my tip. Just because you don't have credit card or you're not flying business class or first class, or you don't have huge points with the certain airlines, you are not excluded from this. Just go in with your ticket, your passport, and be prepared just to pay, you know, a little bit of money. And

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Kerry Heaney: this works for domestic and international flights.

Tracy: Well, that's really good to know, Shelly.

## **You can book lounge access through your points or before your flight**

That's, Usually we book the lounge access through our points or before we go, but I've never thought about actually just kind of turning up and, and seeing if I can get in. So do you find that's a pretty foolproof method, just, just turning up or has there been any times where they've kind of gone, no, it's full.

Kerry Heaney: I have never had them say, no, it's full, full. And I've used this literally around the globe. The only, the only caveat to that is some bigger international airports will have multiple lounges. So you may not get access to the premium lounge that maybe the first class customers or you know, their executive people holders have, but they always have Two or three other lounges that are just lovely and comfortable. And I've never been turned away. I've never been turned away. And I've. It's so enjoyable. They'll announce your flight. it's just a really good way if you have a decent layover.

Tracy: Oh, definitely worth it for 100%.

## **Shelley and Melissa share their top travel tips for 2025**

well, Shelly, that's been fantastic to get your three top tips for traveling in 2025. I can't wait to talk to you in a few weeks where we're going to share between myself, you, and Melissa, we're going to talk about our, our top tips for actually planning. When we do. When we're actually planning a trip, which we do all the time. So we're going to do a bit of a deep dive into that. So that'll be fantastic to chat with you. But in the meantime, I know you're going to be visiting Sri Lanka, so that's going to be exciting as well. So we'll have to have a chat about that at some point.

Tracy: but it's great.

Tracy: I'm really looking forward to doing that monthly episode with you.

Kerry Heaney: Yes, me too. And yes, I am excited about going to Sri Lanka. This will be my first trip to Sri Lanka, so I'm really looking forward to it. And we could chat about it. And I think it's going to be great that we can all chat together and hopefully give a lot of useful information from, you know, our experience traveling around, our, our positive, experience and some of our fails.

Tracy: But yes, things that we've learned.

Kerry Heaney: Yes. Maybe I'll save somebody from, making our same stake.

Tracy: Absolutely. Oh, no. Brilliant.

Tracy: So thanks so much, Shelley. I'll catch up with you in a few weeks time for the next episode.

Kerry Heaney: All right. Safe journeys.

Tracy: Thanks so much to Shelley and, Melissa for coming onto this episode to share their top Travel tips for 2025. Both Melissa and Shelley will be back at the end of the month to share their tips for how they plan a, trip. And I know that's something that a lot of you struggle with. it's actually can feel quite overwhelming coming when it comes to sitting down and starting to plan a trip. So that's what we'll be talking about.

### **Tip 7 is to prepare to travel to a destination by learning a few words**

So now I'm going to share my four tips. So tips 7, 8, 9, and 10. So tip 7 is to prepare to travel to a destination, consider learning a few words, read a few books about a destination, watch some, documentaries and some films that were set in that, that particular destination, and just learn a little bit about the local customs. that's something that I really like to do. And I have got quite a few posts on my global travel planning website with examples of, some good books to read for certain destinations and some TV shows and films to read for particular destination. I always think it's a really cool way to prepare. and Doug's very, very good at learning a few words in each of the languages of the different countries that we travel to. And that's something that I'm trying to do a bit more of. And I know it's something that if we're considering some visits to some, Spanish speaking countries in the near future that I'm hoping to do maybe a bit of a duolingo course on, on Spanish to prepare myself a bit more. So that's something that I recommend. And if you listen to episode one of the global travel planning podcast where I had guest Amanda Kendall come on to the podcast to share her recommendations or different ways that you can become a more thoughtful traveler, you can actually find Amanda on the thoughtful travel podcast podcast. And that's an

excellent episode because honestly, so many of the recommendations that she makes, they're just small things that you can do and easy things that you can do before, during and after you travel to become a more thoughtful traveler. so that's my tip for number number seven.

### **Tip number eight is to consider booking in advance if you are traveling to a particular destination**

Ah, tip number eight is to consider booking in advance if you are traveling to, a particular destination. And I know that sometimes goes against the flow because I know in our Facebook group often get people say, oh, I just want to wing it. I'm not going to plan, I'm not going to book anything. We're just going to get a car and we're going to drive. Sometimes it's just not that easy. And so I really would recommend that you do some research into a particular area that you're going to visit the country, the destination. Because some places just get booked up. The Isle of Skye is a great example. You have to book accommodation quite a long way in advance before you go to the Isle of Skye restaurants. Another one on the Alice guy. And I know when we booked in September when we got our email back from the, accommodation, they said, make sure that you book restaurants.

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We already knew that because of previous visits. If you're wanting a car, an automatic car, rather than a manual, make sure that you book that well in advance. tickets to some places can get sold out. And again, I know this can be such an unpopular recommendation that I make and people Go, God, I want to do that. I want some

flexibility. And I agree, you know, flexibility is great, but if you're so flexible it means that you miss out on seeing something that you really really want to see or you want to have a go on a food tour that you really really want to do or you want to do something, you know, have an experience which is it's more difficult to get on to do then you have to think about booking that in advance. So it's something that I recommend. We've got a five step itinerary, planning challenge, in the UK on a UK planning website. And in that challenge the first thing I kind of say is really consider, you know, what, what is that you want to see and have your priorities. And if those priorities involve something that is incredibly popular, you're visiting London at Christmas or you want to go and see the Christmas markets in Europe, then you need to be really thinking ahead of time and making sure that you've booked accommodation and flights and tours and things like that. Particularly high season, travel's not getting any quieter, shall I say. It's getting busier if anything. So do plan ahead just to avoid disappointment really.

## **Tip number nine is really around cash and contactless when travelling**

Tip number nine is really around cash and contactless and how you're going to pay when you travel. we've just come back from a trip around the Christmas markets actually I think we went to about seven countries. I kind of lost track now I'd have to think about it. but there was lots of different currencies that we had to have access to. So Euros, Swedish, Krona. We were in Poland and we were in Hungary. So again different currencies. So most places these days will accept contactless rather than cash. we found that a lot of places who just don't want cash now. And even in the UK I've done the cash versus contactless challenge and have a cash with me and never used it once in a month or two. and as I say there are quite a few destinations now that will actually just want non cash payment. So a couple of things to think about. So we

use a, I use a Wise card, that's how. And I have lots of different currencies on my Wise card. I have the Wise app on my phone and I use that to pay. So something like that is really good. Or find a credit card that has no foreign currency exchange, fees, make sure that you, if you are taking credit cards now. I travel with my Phone all the time. I have my app on my phone and that's how I pay with contactless. But I always have a couple of credit cards with me as well. Make sure that you know the PIN numbers because you will get asked, quite often you will need the PIN numbers in some destinations that will ask you to give the PIN number rather than you have to insert the card rather than just tap. Make sure you tell your bank before you travel so that your bank knows that you're going to be using, where you're going to be going and where you're going to be using your cards so they don't block you when you're overseas, because I've heard of that happening before. Also, if you go to pay and the restaurant or your accommodation, they ask if you want to pay in the, the home currency or if they want to. If they want to exchange it into dollars or pounds or whatever your currency is, keep it in the local currency. Rather let your bank do the exchange rate rather than, the hotel or the restaurant or wherever that's asking that question because you will get a better exchange rate, doing that yourself. So we generally make a little card, with the exchange on so we know what the value of for example what one euro is to an Australian dollar or to a US dollar. Make sure that you've got that. Either have an app on your phone with that because it's very easy, especially when you're dealing with multiple currencies, to actually lose track of what one of those is worth in your own currency. So then it gives you an idea of how much you're actually spending and it's a good way to keep track. So that's something that we do. And if possible, you know, if you're gonna want to tip, and I know this comes up quite a lot, then that's quite often now you can actually tip by kind of tapping. Quite a lot of the tour guides have a little thing you can tap on if you want to tip that way so you don't again have to use cash. And if you do want to use cash, then you know that that's, I'm sure that's perfectly

acceptable, by most tour guys. I'm sure they'll be quite happy to have a tip, that way. But yes, I know that's often what we're asked about. If I want to have some cash because I want to tip, then yeah, that's fine. Get few notes or a few coins in a local currency if you're going to do that, I'd recommend just getting it from the ATM or another thing I do want to say as well, if you're going to use any banking apps or your card apps on your phone, is make sure to use a vpn, which is a private network, network, virtual private network on your phone. So that it means that, you're using your own private network. Because if you're using a public network, it's very easy for somebody to hack in and that's not secure. So we'd recommend that. So I will put a link in the show notes for a VPN provider that we work with when we're traveling all over the world. But, I think those are my

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tip number seven, eight and nine. so my tip number ten.

## **This is the Global Travel Planner podcast. Thank you for listening**

Now I, I always end my podcast with the same question, which is what is the number one tip that my guest would share for a first time visitor to their particular destination? So obviously I have to end this podcast with exactly that same question. So what is the number one tip that I would share with you? Planning a trip in 2025. And that tip is to follow our podcast. So the Global Travel Planner podcast. The UK Travel Planner Podcast. If you plan to visit the uk, join our groups. There's a global travel planning group. Melissa and Shelley have groups as well, so do join their groups. I will link in the show notes and take a look at our websites because we are destination experts as well



as having a expertise in global travel. Now, next week I have guest Jo, who is a specialist on all things France. So if you are planning to Visit France in 2025, I would highly recommend that you tune into that episode next week where, Jo will share her knowledge and expertise. some practical tips about things to think about if you are planning to visit, one of my favorite countries in Europe and one I previously lived in for a few years as well. So it's going to be. It's always great to talk about France. So tune in next week to learn all things French. French travel, I should say. So until next week. Week that just leaves me to say. Happy Global Travel planning.

Tracy: Thank you for joining us on this episode of the Global Travel Planning Podcast. For more details and links to everything we discussed today, check out the show notes, [@globaltravelplanning.com](https://globaltravelplanning.com) Remember, if you enjoyed the show, please consider leaving us a.

Tracy: Review on your favorite podcast app.

Tracy: because your feedback helps us reach more travel enthusiasts just like you. And that leaves me to say, as always, happy global travel planning.

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