



Text by Betty and Dan Orr

For most of us, in order to see some of the best dive locations in the world we have to leave home and travel great distances by car, airplane or boat. Even with the prospect of incredible diving opportunities, right now—with scary diseases that may or may not be readily transmittable, civil and political unrest, economic instability, bad weather systems and much more that I only think about when I have to stay awake all night—travel might not be at the top of your must-do list.

In all honesty, there is always something happening somewhere in the world that may give us pause in our travel planning and the fear, real or imagined, of bumping into it should not drive us into a locked room in our basement. The best way to address these fears is to fully research the travel destination, looking at all the available travel advisories found on the relevant government and travel websites and make an informed decision about the risks associated with travel to that location or region of the world. Once educated and decisions made to

travel or not to travel, as we discussed previously, fully prepare to enjoy your adventure and look forward to coming home to brag about the things you have done and the wonders you have seen.

### Financial risk

Once you've made the decision to travel and have fully researched the site, it is important to consider the option of reducing your financial risk if something were to go terribly wrong. Trip or travel insurance is a great way to protect your travel investment and many of these

programs provide an array of additional benefits that may be very important to the traveling diver.

Entry-level and generally low cost coverage will usually only reimburse you if you can't travel due to weather issues (hurricanes, typhoons, tornadoes, tropical storms, floods, tsunamis, etc.). But if you want broader and more comprehensive coverage that would take care of you canceling a trip for any reason, expect to pay as much as 20 percent of the value of your trip.

Do your homework and as part of your

complete preparation for the trip, read the fine print of the proposed travel insurance policy. Do your research into travel insurance so you understand what is covered and what is not before you put your deposit down on your trip.

For the best coverage that your insurance dollars will purchase, buy it at the same time you put your trip deposit down. That is because many pre-existing medical conditions may be covered if you purchase your coverage at the time your deposit is made. Also, named storms, such as hurricanes, will only be

covered if the travel insurance is purchased prior to storm being named by the weather service. In other words, you can't buy car insurance after the car is wrecked (although it would be very convenient and many people have tried).

### Health risk

Next, consider reducing your health risk. Check to see if any immunizations are recommended or required for your destination and make arrangements with your health care provider to get the shots you need. Flu shots may not be on the list, but



# To Travel or Not To Travel...

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you should make sure that is current as well.

Once you have all your required or recommended immunizations, it is a good idea to put together a personalized first aid kit that includes anti-emetics and anti-diarrheal medicines. As careful as you may be, eating foods or drinking liquids in a foreign country could seriously disagree with your digestive tract. Ask your physician if they can recommend any additions to that kit. Nothing beats a professional's opinion.

If you do carry any prescription medications out of the country, make sure

you have them in the original bottle with the pharmacy and physician information clearly labeled on the bottle. Any unknown or suspect medications could be confiscated by customs agents as contraband.

### Wash your hands

An often-overlooked illness preventative mechanism is simply washing your hands often and thoroughly. Carry hand sanitizer to use in addition to soap and water.

While your hands may be clean, surfaces you come in contact with during travel may not. Considering all

the people using public and commercial transportation, you never know what someone did who sat in your seat previously. Plus, planes and other forms of public transportation are turned around so rapidly these days that they are given only the most cursory cleanings between trips. Disinfecting wipes are essential to clean arm rests, tray tables and other often touched surfaces before using them.

### Medical evacuation

Now, let's consider what you would do if you were injured or taken ill during a trip and you required emergency medical evacuation. Without considering the logistics involved if you were in a very remote dive or travel location, it is important to make sure that you have some

sort of financial coverage for medical evacuations. For instance, Divers Alert Network (DAN) provides medical evacuation coverage for its members, and even though they may constitute a very active diving population, the vast majority of medical evacuations are non-diving related.

Medical evacuations from even the most popular dive or travel location can be financially catastrophic if you do not have proper coverage. In many exotic locations, there may be no operational recompression chambers or even a rudimentary clinic, so divers and travelers may have to rely on medical evacuation services to get comprehensive medical care.

If the injury is diving-related, the injured person may require evacuation in a specialized aircraft capable of maintaining cabin pressures approximating 1 atmosphere as well as a specialized medical team. Emergency medical evacuation to the nearest appropriate medical facility can cost tens of thousands of dollars.

Most diving accident insurance and even some of the major credit cards may include some form of medical evacuation coverage in their benefit package. Just be sure that the one you have will evacuate you for any illness or injury, not just scuba diving. Make sure you know what coverage

you have before traveling and understand any and all exclusions.

Some evacuation coverage may be restricted to specified distances away from home or may exclude certain regions or countries. It is up to the consumer to know the limits of their benefits or coverage.

Many do offer broad coverage that you may not be aware of because they are in the fine print (sorry). The old adage, "large print giveth and small (fine) print taketh away" is certainly true with travel insurance/assistance benefits.

Know what coverage you've got and know how to use it. Hopefully, you'll never need it but it is better to have it and not need it than the alternative. This is all part of being fully prepared to fully enjoy what the wide world of diving has to offer. It's hard to put a value on peace but when you are far from home, it's just about priceless! □

*Dan and Betty Orr are consultants with over 80 years of combined diving industry experience. They provide diving safety and emergency management consultation, product review and evaluation, product and services marketing and educational expertise. For more information, visit: [www.dan-orrconsulting.com](http://www.dan-orrconsulting.com) □*



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Edited by  
Scott Bennett

## Going about getting some airport shuteye

You may be asking yourself one (or all) of the following questions: Can I really sleep in an airport? How do I do it? What should I bring with me?

### Get paid for cancelled flights

It's happened to us all: travel plans disrupted by delayed or canceled flights with seemingly nothing to be done. AirHelp, however, believes travellers are entitled to compensation. With five full-time lawyers on its 35-person staff, AirHelp helps travelers determine what they're entitled to when travel plans are disrupted. According to the company, 26.5 million travelers are entitled to monetary compensation each year, although less than two percent actually file claims.

"The problem is trying to figure out what your rights are," said co-founder Nicolas Michaelsen. Unless additional legal action is required, most claims are resolved within a period of six to eight weeks. "We'll follow through and take the airline to court," said Michaelsen.

"We've done that a lot of times," he added. To date, results have been mostly successful. Some 90 percent of their 50,000 users have been reimbursed, with an average payout of US\$600 before AirHelp takes its 25 percent share. □



If you are staying at a busy airport overnight, get there early to get a good spot, especially during peak travel periods. Airport officials may ask why you are there and not in a hotel and ask for proof that you really are departing the next day. Be prepared to answer all questions and present your outbound airline ticket. Dress in layers, with clothing that will make you comfortable if it is unbearably hot or bitterly cold in the airport. Pack a hat, gloves and blanket in your carry-on.

#### Be safe

Find out where the airport security office is and look for video cameras in the spot you decide to stay the night. They've probably seen many airport sleepers before and will direct you to a safe spot. If you are travelling alone, sleep near other travellers. A major concern is getting robbed while

you sleep! If you can't keep your bags in the left luggage office overnight you'll need to find a way to ensure undesirables can't access your bags. How you do this depends on where and how you sleep. Try sleeping with zippers facing either yourself, the ground or the wall.

#### Lounges

Flying first class is no longer necessary to receive first class service and comfort. There are now some wonderful pay-in lounges accessible to economy travellers for a relatively small fee. This includes buffet style meals, drinks (including alcohol), wifi, showers and comfortable chairs.

While one airport sleeping's objectives is to save money on hotels, you may want to bite the bullet and pay for a room. Before you go, it is good to know where the nearest airport hotels are located. Booking online can save some money. If you have a laptop or "smart" phone, start shopping for the best rate while in the terminal or while en route to the hotel. □

SOURCE: WWW.SLEEPINGINAIRPORTS.NET



## The perfect combination

Pairing a stay at Wakatobi dive resort with a cruise on the Pelagian provides the ultimate dive vacation experience.

Resort or Liveaboard? You can enjoy the best of both at Wakatobi. Begin with a stay at the resort, known as one of the world's best diving destinations. Here, you'll have daily access to more than 40 dive and snorkel sites, as well as unlimited opportunities to explore Wakatobi's renowned House Reef. Enjoy fine dining and the comforts of beachside villas and bungalows. Discover what five-star service means as the resort staff anticipates and meets your every need.

Next, expand your diving horizons on Pelagian, Wakatobi's luxury dive yacht. This luxuriously appointed 36-meter vessel carries a maximum of ten guests while venturing farther afield in the Wakatobi archipelago and the southern shore of Buton Island. A dedicated chef provides fine dining, and a one-to-one staff-to-guest ratio ensures the utmost in attentive personal service.

Discover the possibilities of a combination resort and liveaboard experience. Contact a Wakatobi representative at [office@wakatobi.com](mailto:office@wakatobi.com).

*"We spent the first week on Pelagian and the 2nd week on the island. The Pelagian was spacious and comfortable, like being in a 5 star hotel! Wakatobi resort was just as amazing - staff, accommodation, food, diving - all out of this world. Dive instructors ensured your experience was personal and you got the best out of your trip."*

Nicola Willis, August 2014



[www.wakatobi.com](http://www.wakatobi.com)