



GIRLS GUIDE *To* TRAVEL

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Hello Travelistas,

Ladies, I have been bit by the "Travel Bug". On July 12, 2017 I went on my first solo travel trip or shall I say my first trip abroad where no family lives. I went to Belize and it was an amazing experience. This year for my birthday I treated myself to a vacation, Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. I didn't go by myself

this year I took a friend with me which happened to be her first time out of the country.

I actually started writing this travel guide last year after my trip to Belize, but I'm not sure what happened. After my friend and I went on our adventure and we had a conversation about being single and living life I decided it was time to share. Now I know there are hundreds of videos out there about travel and traveling solo and I recommend you checking some of them out, but you have to watch multiple videos to get the information I have right here, which exactly what I thought, I just wanted a guide in one place sort of like a check list as to how to book and what to do once I've booked. On my way home from Belize I created this Travel Guide just for you, yep a whole year ago shame on me. Though this may not be as comprehensive as it could be, I am going to update the information consistently, but of course I'll let you know as I do, so don't forget to subscribe to my e-mail list for my Fantabulous updates.

Safe Travels!

Amelia LadyB



Let The Traveling Begin!

What's up ladies, In 2017 I went on my first official travel abroad trip by myself. I say official because I've traveled to the Bahamas by myself, but that doesn't count because that's family. So this trip was not a planned trip by me, I truly believe that it was a God thing. I was supposed to be going to the Bahamas, but plans changed and I just didn't feel like going when I realized it would just me, crazy right? So I planned a road trip with my sister – in – law and that fell through literally within a day.

I wanted to just cancel my vacation I felt so discouraged, then one night I started googling different destinations for the time frame I had off, cruises that were available were all to the Bahamas so I googled Caribbean vacation spots and Belize popped up and I was "wow" I looked up some packages and boom it was booked I was nervous excited I could press the 'Book Trip' button I closed my eyes and my sister –in-law did it for me, there was no turning back and I am so grateful for God allowing me to take such an amazing trip, He supplied the job, and the funds.

This year a month before my birthday week I decided that I wasn't going to do a staycation, but I wasn't sure what to do so of course I relied on my friend google. I searched for tropical Summer inexpensive vacations and Punta Cana, Dominican Republic popped up and I started my search for packages. I quickly realized that I didn't want to go by myself and my brother suggested that I ask a friend of mine from church and the rest is history.

****Disclaimer: I am not associated with any travel companies, nor am I an expert at traveling. If there are other resources that are out there feel free to use them in fact I did a lot of You Tubing so I suggest you do the same.***

Note: Travel sights normally give the cheapest tickets during the week like Tuesday & Wednesday because people normally start their travels Friday's and the weekend.

Choosing a Destination:

Some of you may already have a bucket list of places you would like to go and that is awesome because I do too, the crazy thing is Belize and DR were not on there. So you can either start with your bucket list or just do a google search. Here are some things you want to consider while choosing a destination.

"If it's not already, Google will be your best friend."

- **High & Low seasons** – High seasons are when that destination has a lot of travelers, low seasons means the season is dying down so there aren't that many tourists the downside to a low season especially if it is a Caribbean island you want to check out the weather and determine what their hurricane months are. This is also helpful if you are traveling in the winter, you might want to know about snow storms. Or If you are the outdoors type and want to go camping it all depends, do you like the rain or no?

Belize's low season is July and that is because of their weather, no I did not know this before I booked it I actually didn't see that until the following day when I decided to check the weather (you better know I prayed like no bodies business lol). For the DR late June (when I went) is high season because kids and teachers are just getting out of school. The airport was pretty packed both in the states and in DR and so were the flights. If you have a great travel buddy like I did trust me you wouldn't even realize the amount of people.

- **Political/Country Tensions** – Not to freak you out, but because of the world we live in we have to be aware of the issues. I do believe God is a protector, and I understand things can happen anywhere, but I believe in using the common sense that God gave us.
- **Excursions/Things To Do** – Check to see what things your destination has to offer, this way you can determine if it's the place for you to go.



I'm going to talk more about this in the booking section.

- **Money** – Determine the value of your money in that country, or what your expenses could be. If you are not going out of the country you still want to manage what your possible expenses could be and have wiggle room to spend more. In DR I did not exchange my money, now of course at the airport they have a money exchange stand and people are going to call you over to exchange and they will tell you it's cheaper to do it with them. I carried \$150 in cash with me for tips and random shopping needs, I did the same in Belize. My card was used for food and excursions.
 - Find out from your bank what they charge for international fees.
 - Call or if check the bank app to set your travel dates.

I'm going to talk more about this in another section.

Booking:

- **Travel Losicity**- I used this site because it will search your destination and the dates you've selected and provide the prices for other sites (ex. Expedia, cheap tickets etc). You are also able select a bundle if you need hotel arrangements. Even if you are not flying out of the country this is still a good way to book hotels and your transportation, unless you have the hotel hookup... When it comes to picking your seat try to pick seats closer to the front especially if you have a connecting flight that way you have a chance of getting on and off first.

Just an FYI if you so happen to get bit by the travel bug you should consider signing up for the airlines flyer miles. Even though you won't be able to reap the perks of the flyer miles club the miles you use on your trip will build up for your next trip. For example I flew delta for the first time I decided to sign up for their skymiles just in case I fly them again it take about 2,000 mile + to get to their silver medallion and guess what, my trip from Ft. Lauderdale to Atlanta to Belize and back gained me those mile. Perks range from free seat upgrades, using your miles to pay for all or a portion of your trips, and using their sky miles clubs at the airport so during layovers you can sit in a designated area and get free wifi, enjoy their snacks and other stuff (idk what stuff there is because I'm not a part of the club yet.

- **Roadtrips.com** – I told you I planned a road trip. During a google search I found this sight that gives you a road map of your travels and provides places to stop, and hotels along the way. When you select want to do it gives you the travel time it takes you to get to your destination. Once you have completed or you just need a break from planning you can save it and you e-mail to the person you are traveling with if you are traveling with anyone, that's pretty dope right?!
- **Amtrak.com** - If you want to travel by train by all means do so you may find it to be cheaper, but it does take much longer.
- **Excursions** – Once you've purchased your tickets on the online booking sites they will take you to a page called 'Things to do' and will give you the option to book your excursions ahead of time. No, I did not do this. I'm not going to say you should or you shouldn't to each your own. Some people like to plan to the tee and others just want to wing it and I absolutely understand both parties. Typically hotels/resorts have a place where you can book excursions so don't fret if you don't choose to book ahead of time.
- **Coupons** – Did you know there are coupons out there for travel? For my trip to DR I found a \$100 off coupon, dope I know! What prompted me to look for a coupon was the fact I realized at the end of the booking page when you're about to pay it had a box for apply coupon. So I google coupons for Travelocity and BOOM!

Hotel:

- **Check the ratings/reviews** first, this is very important especially if you are traveling alone. Also look at ask many pictures as possible. Sometimes they don't have much on the travel websites so I like to go to the hotel website.
- See if they provide **complimentary transportation** to and from your hotel, this typically applies to resorts and abroad hotels (I could be wrong). If you're traveling within the U.S. you may find it cheaper to use Uber or Lyft as your mode of transportation. If the hotel does not provide transportation then check out the recommendations during or after booking don't rush yourself. If after you paid for the trip you can still book transportation.
- **Charge it to the Room** – Check to see if your hotel does this, most do if they do this may eliminate you bringing cash on your trip (maybe, its up to you).
- **WIFI** – Please be sure to check they offer WIFI in the room. When I was booking for DR I realized that not all of the resorts offered it in the rooms so be mindful, I would hate for you to go to checkout and you have a ridiculous bill.
- **Food** – Most resorts have restaurants on site (In states and International) check to see if it's all inclusive or if there are packages that come with your booking. Again this is up to you, because it has a lot to do with what you want to spend.

Booked & Ready To Go:

Awesome so you've booked yourself an amazing trip what next?

What to bring:

- **Carry on vs. Checked bag** – This all depends on how long you are staying, and if you have a connecting flight and the who you are flying with. Carry-on bags are small they are the second suitcase that fits inside the big suitcase, or a book bag (travel book bag, yes there is a difference). If you are traveling to a Caribbean island, my sisters you don't have to bring 3 and 4 pairs of wedges. On an island less is better, now I'm not saying it's time to show your body what I mean is, swim suits, sandals, short, capris, sun dresses, this stuff is light and be tightly rolled in your suitcase.

What you bring all determines on your adventure. Just make sure you go onto your airlines website to see if they charge for checked bag. FYI, when I found out Delta charged \$25 for one checked bag I was like nope I'll make it a carry on, and I purchased approved carry-on items. Though carry on's are smaller you can bring the bookbag for overflow items again pack as light as possible.

- **Money Again** – Like I mentioned before try to determine what you may be spending, if you are out of the country determine currency value, also check with your hotel if you will be able to charge things to your room if so that will minimize the amount of money you will bring. However, I still think you should travel with money, I say that because your bank may charge a fee for using your card internationally (call and find out). When you go on excursions, your guides and drivers really depend on their tips besides it's always good to be known as a tipper especially with the waiters and other hotel staff.
- **Valuables** – Okay, here is where you use your logic, many say if it means a lot to you or is expensive don't bring it (i.e. a laptop, tablet). Look on your hotel/resort website or call them to see if your room will have a safe. Safes are typically small so they may not be able to fit your laptop (unless it's small) so this is up to you as to what to bring. If you want to take out travel insurance that is fine as well, again it is all up to you.

- **Traveling to the Caribbean** – Bring the following:

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| ○ Sunscreen | ○ Waterproof Camera |
| ○ Deep woods Off (You're Welcome) | ○ Selfie Stick |
| ○ Hat | ○ Watch (waterproof) |
| ○ Swim wear (one or two) | ○ Waterproof case for your phone |
| ○ Water shoes (You're Welcome) | ○ Small book bag or crossover bag |
| ○ Sneakers if you plan on being adventurous | |

I'm not certain what you will need for other trips, but be sure to prepare accordingly. If you are flying or going by train and you are a cold person bring a jacket/sweater it can get cold at the airport, on the flight, or train cart, also if you have a long flight/train ride one of those neck pillows will come in handy. Unfortunately I didn't have one I used my jacket as a makeshift pillow, but it's up to you it's small so you can attach it to your suitcase handle. If you go on a road trip be sure to bring a flash light and make sure you have road side assistance, in fact just get your car maintenance if renting asking them their road side policies.

Traveling can be stressful especially when things don't go as planned. Keep in mind that life happens, and you can't control everything so just go with the flow, and have fun, just think of all the fun stories you will have later.

Happy Travels!

P.S. Subscribe to my YouTube Channel- TheLadyBTV and follow me on social media



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