

# e BUBBLE *Life*

L a u g h • L o v e • L i v e

Your Authentic Lifestyle Magazine

38<sup>th</sup> Edition

## PREPARING TO TRAVEL AGAIN

**TRIMMING OFF THE FAT:** the behaviours now scientifically proven to help you lose more weight

**TIPS TO GET YOUR BODY PREPPED TO TRAVEL AGAIN**

Keeping in balance with goji berries

**BOARDING WILL COMMENCE SHORTLY**

How to plan your diving cuba vacation

WHY TRAVELLING alpine in the summer is a great idea!

WHO WANTS TO SEE A DENTIST WHEN ON HOLIDAY...NOT ME!

12 TRAVEL must-haves for the ultimate self-care





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# Editors Scribbles



Summer is well underway, and there has been some wild weather so far in this la ninia year. Our February issue “Preparing to travel again” explores the world as we slowly begin to open up. Begin to live a new normal and realign our lives.

If this pandemic has taught us anything it would have to be versatility, as often the most intricate plans can turn out to be useless.

Don't forget to look at our travel features this issue where you will travel from the highest heights to the deep oceans. There are more tips and tricks for your beloved moggy and in this issue we explore the Goji Berry, and how it can be used practically.

We invite you to read this issue and all our articles directly from the website at E-Bubble Life, where you can share articles and leave comments and ratings.

Keep looking after yourself, your family and friends, eat healthy and exercise daily.

Laugh, Love, Live  
**Kevin Kapusi Starow**

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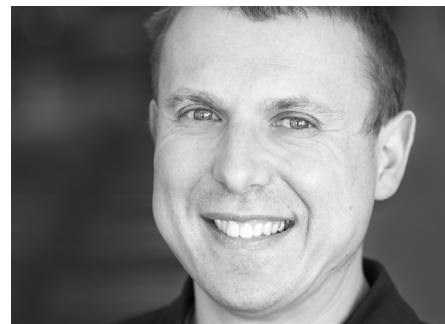
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# TRIMMING OFF THE FAT:

## the behaviours now scientifically proven to help you lose more weight



**W**heatgrass shots, deep breathing to calm the nervous system and aid digestion, only eating pureed foods.

Ever felt that no matter which diet tip you follow, you just can't seem to shed the kilos? Not to mention, keep them off?

The internet is overflowing with the 'best ways' to lose weight which seem to only make things more confusing.

Thankfully, research just in from the CSIRO, Australia's national science agency, has trimmed the fat off successful weight loss. Just in time for those new year's resolutions.

The research has revealed the three behaviours that, when put into practice regularly, have the biggest impact for people looking to make 2022 the year they get healthier and achieve their weight loss goals:

- Tracking food intake
- Following menu plans
- Weighing in regularly

The study (of nearly 11,000 CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet members) uncovered that those who weighed in regularly, followed the menu plan and tracked their food intake the most achieved a weight loss of 8.1 per cent of their starting body weight in 12 weeks, or an average of 7.5kgs.

Those who engaged in these behaviours the least achieved a 3.3 per cent drop in their weight (3.1kgs) – a difference of nearly 4.5kgs between the two groups!.

Before you get disheartened, however, it's not all strictness and sacrifice to see results. The research also found that individuals who displayed high diligence across just two of the three behaviours were still able to achieve above average weight loss, losing 7.5 per cent of their starting body weight.

CSIRO Total Wellbeing Dietitian, Pennie McCoy said "Many people feel they have to be really strict to see results. This pressure can lead to unrealistic expectations, which can become disempowering, so it's really exciting to see in the research findings that there is room for



and be flexible to adjust your expectations as you go.

2. **Utilise tools to keep you engaged and motivated** – use tools that work for you like the CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet's Hope to ensure you track your food intake, weigh in, and follow a sustainable, whole foods menu plan.
3. **Personalise your motivation** – tie your motivation for improving your diet, exercise or weight to something that defines you or your passions.
4. **Understand what's needed** – time for food shopping, meal planning, and fitting in exercise etc.
5. **Plan and reflect** – review your week and think about what worked, what didn't, and put strategies in place for the week ahead.



flexibility in a sustainable weight loss journey.”

## WITH KNOWLEDGE, COMES HOPE

This research has informed the development of the CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet's new artificial intelligence (AI) weight loss coach, Hope, which uses psychological techniques to prompt and motivate its members throughout their weight loss journey.

Shaped by over 100 million points of CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet member data, Hope predicts appropriate weight loss targets, tracks progress and provides timely feedback, using state-of-the-art machine learning, to support members to thrive on the 12-week program.

## TOP TIPS FOR STAYING MOTIVATED WHEN LOSING WEIGHT:

Alongside innovations like Hope, strategies such as following a program backed by evidence, planning and reflecting, and understanding what's needed are just some of the many tips and tricks at our disposal, says Pennie:

1. **Set realistic expectations up from the start** – weight loss takes time, but with the right tools and supports, realistic goals can be achieved. Find out what will keep you motivated within your weight loss journey

6. **Remind yourself of your bigger goals along the way** – it's easy to get bogged down in the steps but remembering what got you up and started in the first place is really important. This may include creating an inspiration board that includes visual references to keep you positively motivated such as a photo of friends and family, a special event invite you're looking forward to or a memory.
7. **Tap into support** – from Hope, or from health professionals or by connecting with your community. Those who regularly share their experiences via a forum or social media group are more likely to maintain motivation.
8. **Embrace learning from mistakes** – the program is designed to give you the skills, knowledge and tools at your finger-tips to help build your confidence to take charge of your health!
9. **Be kind to yourself** – don't forget life happens, you don't have to be perfect and the research shows that!

Available exclusively to CSIRO Total Wellbeing members, find out more about Hope by heading to [www.totalwellbeingdiet.com](http://www.totalwellbeingdiet.com)

Written by [Pennie McCoy](#)





# TO TRAVEL OR NOT TO TRAVEL:

## How to make the best decision for your mental health

**A**s I write this, my first domestic trip since the Melbourne lockdown came to an end is happening tomorrow, and my first international trip is taking off in less than 25 days. The feelings prior to any trips I have been on in the past have been very different to what I, and many other people, are experiencing now.

Usually, I can taste the cocktails and have my bags packed, but this time it seems very very different. The thoughts, the feelings and even the language people are using about these upcoming trips have all changed.

If someone asks me “what are your plans for the new year?”, I find myself saying “I am hoping to go to Fiji”. What is this word “hoping”? This word sounds like it is an unknown and a plan that hasn’t unfolded yet, when in reality the trip is booked, paid for, and less than 25 days away. In the past this word would never have been used. I would have said very confidently and excitedly, “I am off to Fiji in 25 days”.

It is completely normal to feel uncertain after the two years that we have all experienced. Rules can be changed at any moment and there seems to be a lot of hurdles to jump over before even getting to the airport.

Waiting for the Covid-19 test results was very anxiety provoking. I was so paranoid about contracting Covid-19, that I, like many others, cancelled social events and went into my own form of isolation. The night waiting for the

test result was a very restless night!

So why put ourselves through all this stress and anxiety! Are we all crazy trying to travel again?

What it comes down to is your reasons for the travel. For most it is about friends and family. Taking the risk seems worth it for those who have had distance between their loved ones and themselves over the last 24 months. Many have missed milestone birthdays, births and just time with the ones they love. For some it is the first time they can be with family to grieve the loss of family members. For others it is just to have that much missed hug.

Some will return to travel as they are craving the adventure that they haven’t been able to experience for a couple of years. For so many, travel is a life goal - exploring the world, living in other countries, visiting the lands of their ancestors, or partying on a beach in Europe. Whatever the reason, goals are often set years prior and thanks to the pandemic, the pause of achieving these goals has been very disappointing for many.

**For the ones of us who are willing to take the risk, what can we do to keep the anxiety at bay so we can enjoy this travel time?**

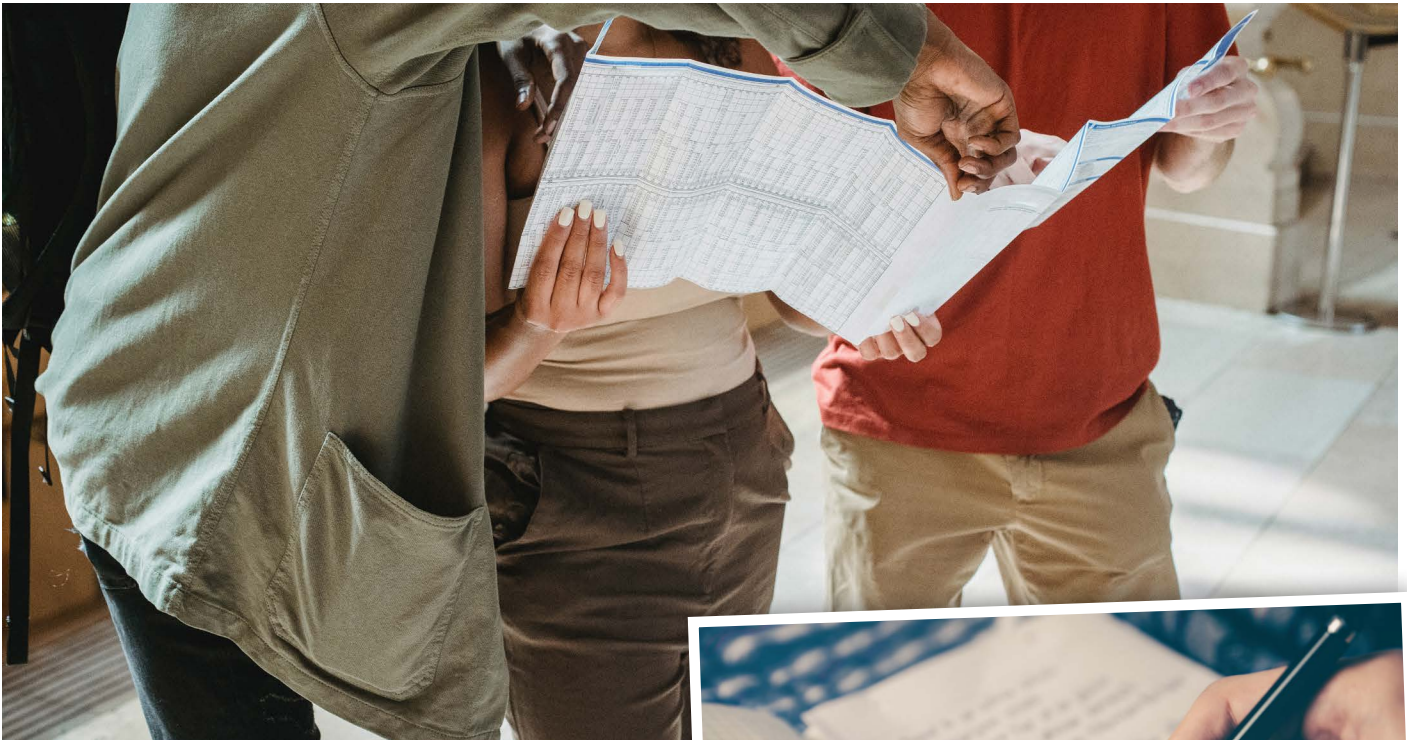
1. **Expect the nerves** - Even for the most seasoned traveller, this is not a travel world that any of us have experienced before. You will be worried about the trip

happening until you have safely landed and passed that last covid-test!

2. **Follow the rules** - Expect travel to be different and play by the rules. If you need to get tested, get tested. If there are extra lines and longer waits, just go with it. This is all part and parcel of the adventure that awaits.
3. **Plan for everything!** - This is the time to read the fine print for the flights, the hotels, and the insurances. Plans may change and it is important to understand this and be ready. Currently you cannot leave things

leading up to your travel adventure.

2. **Write a list of the new “to do’s”**- Plan it all out including the times, dates and locations for everything you need to do. Once your mind has it all written down and planned out, your brain can relax and focus on what you need to achieve each day prior to the trip.
3. **Allow yourself to get excited and pack!** - If something has to change last minute this will be out of your control. If it doesn’t change and you haven’t allowed yourself to feel the excitement of the adventure ahead it will be hard to get into “holiday



to chance. Planning for travel and having back up options has never been more important.

### WHAT IF I AM NOT READY FOR THE TRAVEL RISKS YET?

For those who find the thoughts of the new rules, restrictions, and possibility of sudden changes too stressful, then really consider if travel is right for you at this moment. Stress will mean that finding any joy will be almost impossible. Even if you arrive without anything going wrong, stressing about the return may result in the trip being a waste of energy for you. Leave it a few more months. Watch how it all plays out and then make your decisions when you feel ready.

### MENTAL HEALTH PREPARATION FOR THE TRAVEL ADVENTURE

1. **Look after your physical health prior to the trip** - Your body will be impacted by this additional worry and stress, so it is important to allow for this. Exercise, eat well and get your sleep in the weeks



mode”. A bit of positive thinking is not going to hurt, and if you need to sleep with your lucky socks on the week before you travel, that’s ok as well!

Whatever you decide, the most important thing is that one more part of our world and our lives is returning. We all need to see this to keep hope and to start planning for life again. For me, I am ready to jump back into it, take the risk and hope for the best....this Psychologist has been home bound for way too long!

See you on the plane and happy traveling.

Written by [Donna Cameron](#)



# Finally the time has come!

**W**e can finally travel again, finally pack our bags again! After months of lockdown, the need for freedom, pub visits and travel is greater than ever. This is also confirmed by surveys in the tourism industry.

“Where will we go when we can travel again?” Have you ever asked yourself this question? Corona has fundamentally changed the travel world! Since the pandemic has not yet been fought completely, holidays in your own country are at the top of the list. Many Australians would rather go on a home vacation than travel abroad.

Safety is paramount. While vaccination, masking, testing and the safety distance have become part of our daily living conditions to protect us, it is important to strengthen our immune system from within. Of course, this can best be achieved with a healthy diet. However, can an organic lifestyle also be attained when you are traveling?

## WHY YOU SHOULD EAT REGIONALLY AND SUSTAINABLY ON VACATION!

Eating regionally and sustainably - what does that mean? Anyone who wants to leave the smallest possible ecological footprint on the world should deal with sustainable nutrition.

This includes changing one's own consumer behaviour in such a way that the ecological and economic consequences remain as low as possible. Consumers are also concerned about their own health. More and more people want to know exactly where the food they consume comes from and under what conditions these products were produced.

## WHAT IS A SUSTAINABLE DIET?

Our usual consumer behavior has a number of consequences. These include increased greenhouse gas emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>), environmental pollution from pollutants, water shortages, species decline and overfishing of the seas. Our environment and our health are damaged by our food consumption. With a sustainable diet, however, you make sure that the natural and human foundations of life are protected.

You eat in such a way that your consumption and diet have little impact on the environment. You get information about production and delivery conditions, pay attention to environmentally friendly cultivation and protect natural resources. In doing so, you are also doing the best for your health. A good indicator of sustainability and your own health is, for example, the organic



certification on food or products.

## REGIONALITY PLAYS AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE PURCHASE DECISIONS

Shops at the farmgate are very popular and products from the region even occupy a large place in the advertising brochures of discounters. This trend is also reflected in tourism. Many tourists are curious about the specialties that are typical for the holiday region. Regardless of whether the travel destination is in Australia or abroad - there is a lot to discover from a culinary point of view in each region. Restaurants advertise that their kitchens use fresh products from the respective region, and guests are happy to accept the tempting offer and let themselves be pampered.

## WHY EAT REGIONALLY AND SUSTAINABLY ON VACATION?

Eating regionally and sustainably on vacation is a decision that everyone benefits from. Anyone who has ever harvested and consumed a sun-ripened tomato straight from the bush will appreciate the intense, delicious aroma and flavour.

It is no different with fruit, vegetables, fish, meat and almost all other foods. The shorter the transport routes from the producer to the consumer, the better the valuable ingredients and flavours of the food are preserved. Food prepared from such ingredients taste wonderful and is

particularly valuable from a nutritional point of view. Especially on vacation it is nice to benefit from it.

## BUY REGIONAL PRODUCTS WHILE TRAVELING AND SUPPORT LOCAL PRODUCERS

Vacationers who opt for regional products strengthen the regional economic cycle. Often it is smaller farms that have opted for organic and sustainable farming. They produce potatoes, grains, milk, butter, yoghurt, cheese, wine, honey and fresh herbs with great diligence and great care and market them directly or supply hotels and restaurants in the vicinity. Sustainable nutrition on vacation helps regional producers secure their livelihood.

At the same time, diversity in agriculture is promoted in this way. Instead of monotonous monocultures, ecological agriculture focuses on colourful diversity and environmentally friendly operations. Old animal breeds and types of fruit are being rediscovered, and the use of pesticides and herbicides is avoided as far as possible.

Organic farmers do a lot to produce sustainably by using products and processes that meet the needs of consumers, nature and wildlife. Then again, what exactly is sustainable agriculture?

- Cultivation methods and production methods that do not destroy soils but improve their productivity over the long term
- Minimizing harmful effects on the climate, air, water, soil, fauna and flora as well as human health
- Use of sustainable renewable energies



- Use of regional seeds and organic fertilizers
- Employ workers long-term and ensure decent wages, including decent working and living conditions

## RESPONSIBILITY? ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION? HOW CAN THIS BE ACHIEVED?

In addition to living and mobility, nutrition is one of the areas that play an important role in calculating the ecological footprint. Those who eat regionally and sustainably reduce their footprint considerably. Unfortunately, there is no label in Australia that makes carbon dioxide emissions clear. With a little thought though, anyone can find out which foods are more polluting. Anyone who buys seasonal and regional products and also eats a predominantly “organic” diet can enjoy with a clear conscience.

## TRAVEL SUSTAINABLY AND CONSCIOUSLY ENJOY ORGANIC FOOD, IS POSSIBLE!

For many Australians, traveling on vacation is one of the things that they definitely don't want to do without. So what should you pay attention to so that you don't have to go without a healthy diet even on holiday?

When traveling abroad, consumers cannot access the organic brands and certificates that have been tried and tested in Australia. The products have not been awarded the Australian organic certification label in other countries. However, in most parts of the world organically grown food exists. Organic food is comparatively easy to obtain in Australia and in other so-called western countries such as the EU, UK or the USA. Certified organic food is also available in most other countries in the world. As a consumer, you can inquire about the respective approvals from the official bodies or from the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement (IFOAM).

## ORGANIC VACATION IN AUSTRALIA

From an ecological point of view, it is certainly better to vacation nearby than to fly long distances. In this country there is an abundance of offers for organic holidays. The respective accommodations are based on the organic requirements and offer, for example, food from organic production. In other areas, too, the accommodations are concerned with environmental friendliness, health and sustainability. There is a wide variety of establishments such as hotels, guest houses or organic farms that offer holidays for the whole family.

Organic food is always good for our health and especially when we are traveling. Traveling can cause a lot of exhaustion, having organic food while traveling will keep you energized and healthy. On this note: Have a safe and healthy holiday!

Written by [Adrianna Krueger](#)



# TIPS TO GET YOUR BODY PREPPED TO TRAVEL AGAIN



**A**fter 2 years of heavy travel restrictions, Australians are finally, cautiously beginning to start travel or at least planning to travel once again. But, because our lives and often our fitness routines have been so disrupted, are our bodies ready to really enjoy the travel?

A common request from our customers are “I want to really enjoy my trip overseas, not just get through it”. So, the following two things are where you should start your fitness routine in preparing for your travels.

## IMPROVING YOUR STRENGTH

Unfortunately, just walking is not enough. The biggest aspects we have noticed with our clients as they return to their fitness routines is that they have lost a lot of strength during the lockdown periods and they are just not as strong as they were a few years ago, resulting in hip and back pain.

Step number one, work on your strength especially on the muscles around your hips and pelvis, your lower back and your upper body that controls your upper body posture. These muscles groups, are not just important to minimise

the load on your back and hips, reducing your risk of injury, but these are your major propulsion muscles, so it means that when you go for a walk, run, lift something heavy or walk up and down hills, the work is just easier if these muscles are stronger.

It takes about 3 months to build a good base of strength and muscle tone, so if you are planning to travel from the middle of the year onwards, this is a great time to start, but utilise as much time as you have available, just start, ideally at least 6 weeks.

As you start your strengthening routine, the first 6 weeks of your program is about improving the efficiency of the muscle contraction and how well your muscles activate. Although you will feel stronger, under the surface, it is too early for significant muscle grow, however, the improvements in strength will occur as a result of improved nerve connections in the muscle and within muscle tissue itself (improved blood vessels to the area and improved chemical interactions within the muscles.

The real growth occurs from 6 weeks to 3 months, where your muscles add more units and the physical changes



becomes my visually obvious. It doesn't mean you stop strengthening exercises at 3 months, you can continue and you will continue to see improvements up to about 12 months, however, at a slower rate of improvement.

Talk to your fitness trainer, physiotherapist/exercise physiologist or strength and conditioning coach about structuring as well balanced strengthening program to help achieve your goals. Tell them what kinds of activities you are planning to do on your trip, such as hiking, kayaking, rock climbing, or just walking through the cobblestoned streets of Europe, so they can design a program appropriate for your needs.

Finally, do not over do it with your strengthening program. More is not always better, but consistent and structure is best. Exercising everyday, or for hours on end will NOT give you results faster, but will slow you down as it will not give you enough time to recover between exercise sessions, so the muscles don't have the ability to grow and adapt from your workout and make you more prone to injury, slowing your progress.

**2-3 strength sessions a week, for about 30 minutes is the perfect balance for the best results.**

## IMPROVING YOUR ENDURANCE

Cardio and endurance training is important for fitness,

but my strong recommendation is to begin this when you have built a base of strength, usually after 6 weeks of your strengthening program. The reason why is because, the limiting factor in improving fitness is rarely truly fitness, but muscle strength to perform the task properly.

For example, if you want to improve your running fitness, start by improving the strength of the muscles that help with running, such as the gluteal muscles around your hips, the quadriceps muscles around your knees and the calf muscles around the ankles. If you increase your volume of running before strengthening these muscles, they are not strong enough to cope with the load of the increased workload or training, which either leads to damage to the muscle or tendon or increased load on the joints, such as the knee caps, causing pain and slowing your progress.

The ideal scenario is beginning fitness training for about: **2 -3 times a week, for about 20-30 minutes. About 6 weeks after starting your strengthening program.**

Again, speak to your fitness trainer, physiotherapist/exercise physiologist or strength and conditioning coach to structure the best fitness training program for you and enjoy and get the most from your long awaited holiday and travels once again.

Written by [Michael Dermansky](#)



# BOARDING WILL commence shortly

**T**he world is opening for travel again – now what?? The last two years have seen stressful times with unknown outcomes. We have had to adapt to ‘not knowing what is around the corner’ which is extremely nerve-wracking. Our normal has changed. If this has resulted in carrying more weight, the first thing you need to do is be kind to yourself. We have been living in such a state of uncertainty - give yourself a break!

## COVID KILOS – SO WHAT!

What we have all endured over the last two years must be recognised as traumatic and emotional. How do we learn to trust again? Having to change and cancel plans repeatedly has been the new normal. Watching government regulations for travel change overnight means we are constantly on our toes trying to keep up.

However, it is time to take off our stretchy pants and find some outfits to re-enter the world. No judgement on ourselves if half our wardrobe is now too small. If you can relate, I have some tips to guide you through your fashion re-entry to living again in this ‘new normal’.

## POST COVID WARDROBE

What does your wardrobe look like after two years of WFH and isolation? It is time for us to sort it out. I want everything out of there that doesn't fit you right now! If you feel that you might not stay your current size, then let us box up the smaller stuff and put it out of sight. Constantly staring at clothes that don't fit you is depressing. We have been through enough!!!! Personally, I am going to store my smaller clothes until the next season. If they don't fit then, I will donate them which is my preference. You could also sell them or gift them to friends/family.

Now let us get your wardrobe back into action! I believe we should embrace ourselves exactly as we are right now. Taking away the clothes that don't fit is a part of this process. Instead of reminding ourselves of what we are not, let us remind ourselves of what we are!

You are beautiful no matter what your shape or size. You matter even if your zip doesn't do up. You are more than the size of your clothes. Think about your best friends. Do you care when they are a bit bigger or a bit smaller? Do you even notice? I'm guessing you do not. This is because



you value them on their qualities that are not aesthetic. Kindness, laughter, empathy and understanding come in every size. That is what matters.

## FINDING THE GAPS

So now that we know what clothes we are left with, we can work out the gaps that need to be filled. The beauty is being able to travel again! I do my best shopping when I am away! I am not someone who likes browsing the shops on a regular basis. I put this down to either a lack of patience or a lack of time. Which truthfully probably go hand in hand! Now we can go places again we need to make sure we have what we need or know we can source it where we are going! Often the destination has the types of clothes available that suit the climate and type of location. Noosa has lovely linen dresses for the beach and the USA has big warm winter coats! I would probably not find very good coats in Brisbane to suit a New York winter!!

## FLEXIBLE PACKING

In our new normal I feel that packing simply and flexibly will help to adapt to changing circumstances. We don't know if flights will be cancelled or rescheduled; or plans changed at the last minute due to new imposed



restrictions. If we are toting four large suitcases it becomes a huge hassle to repack, reroute and lug all that junk around! Welcome back the capsule travel wardrobe!! Of course, your destination will be critical for packing suggestions, so I am not going to list them all here. Instead let us reintroduce the premise of less is more. A good idea is to think back to other trips you have been on. What did you wear the most? What did you not even take out of your suitcase? What did you wish you had brought but didn't? I have even been known to sketch out my outfits in advance to see what I can mix and match ahead of time! Yes, I am a total dork.

## THE DESTINATION

Hot, cold, casual or dressy or a combination? Work out the type of outfits you will need. Are you at an offroad beach without a fancy restaurant in site? Or In LA where all the cool cats are? Taking clothing that can be mixed and matched is essential to travelling light. Accessories are also small to pack but can completely change the look of an outfit. I usually get my itinerary and write it out day by day with am/pm and if there is an event. Then you can look at what you need plus when you have time or will need to do some laundry. This is highly effective to

not overpacking. Plus, I find it makes life easier when you are away as your outfits have been pre-planned. No more 'what am I going to wear today'!!

## TRAVEL OUTFITS

I have certain items I wear when travelling but not often at home because of their flexibility and ability to match everything. Comfort is key as sometimes there are days spent in Ubers, trains, planes, boats. I always travel in extremely comfortable but stylish clothing. I am from a family that always dressed up for plane travel. It is probably old fashioned but wearing active wear in an airport never felt right. We would take leggings or pyjamas to change into on the plane if it was a long-haul flight and would usually wear a well-cut fitted jacket that can be taken off when you are seated. This also gives you a stylish day travel outfit for in between cities that are not necessarily long-haul travel. I also find that wearing something with decent pockets is excellent for plane travel so you can keep certain items handy without needing to go into your bag.

## HAVE FUN!

Most of us have had so many travel restrictions imposed lately that it feels daunting to be back out in the world again. Our new 'normal' has severely changed and the last two years feel a bit like a horror movie. However, if you have both a flexible attitude and travel wardrobe, I think we can take the world by storm and start living our lives again. Personally, I will be off to the US in March and am VERY much looking forward to it. I have severely missed the US outlets and will be filling the large gaps in my wardrobe over there. Some might say there is a silver lining to a few extra Covid kilos ☺.

All aboard!!!!

Written by [Susie Taaffe](#)





# 12 Travel must-haves for the ultimate self-care

Don't sacrifice self-care when you're traveling

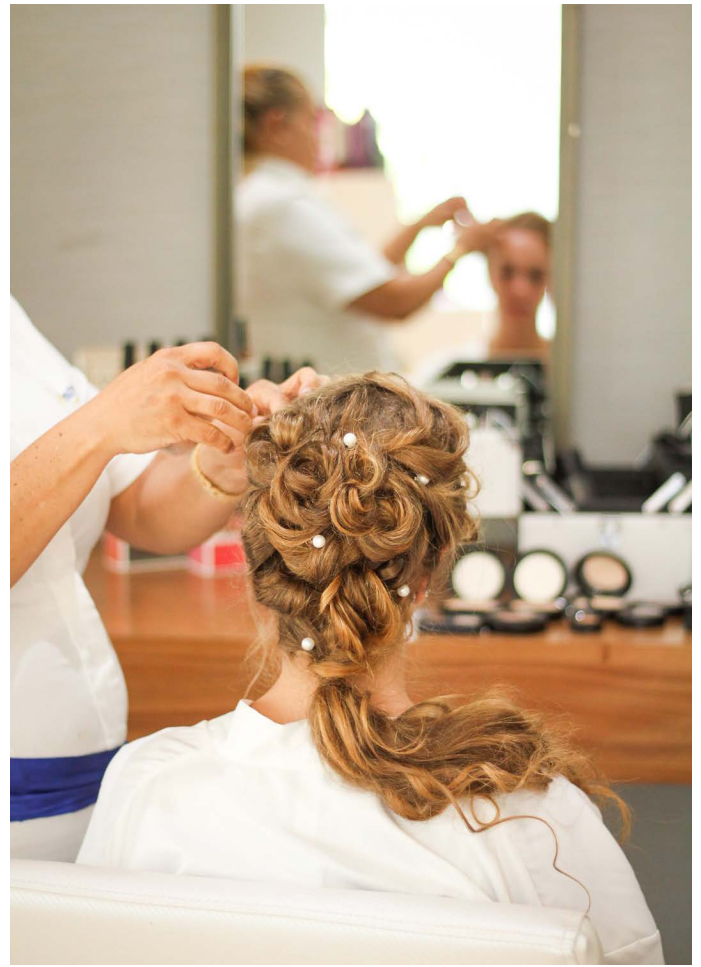


Even though travel continues to be challenging with Covid surging everywhere it seems, many of us are optimistic that we'll still be able to get out there in 2022 (including me – I have 3 trips planned, fingers crossed!). But it's time to think about our travel must-haves differently in light of our newly embraced self-care routines. There are great options for you to bring your self-care on the road and you don't need to sacrifice your luxury essentials. Just check out our list of some of our favorite things (all small businesses so you can feel good supporting them). These travel must-haves are sure to make you feel relaxed, recharged and reenergized on the road – whether you're looking to escape for a long weekend or a long awaited European vacation.

1. Just because you're on the road, doesn't mean you need to give up salon quality haircare. Pack MASAMI's luxury travel kit – perfect to keep your hair botanically hydrated and healthy, without frizz or any bad ingredients: no sulfates, parabens or phthalates. The luxury travel sizes of shampoo, conditioner, shine serum and styling cream will ensure you have a great hair day every day, no matter where you are. MASAMI works on virtually every hair type and texture and is

also great in humidity and heat.

2. Bring along an Isle de Nature Pagua Bay scent coin to make any hotel room, car or cabin smell luxurious and amazing (and eliminate any unwanted odors left behind by the previous travelers). The scent coin is a ceramic coin dipped in natural fragrance oils, inspired by the Caribbean island of Dominica. The scent is based on the bay tree (indigenous to Dominica) with floral and woody notes and will uplift your mood.
3. Treat your skin. Sunscreen is an absolute must-have, even if I'm headed somewhere where it looks like it will be rainy and overcast. Get Olita's mineral sunscreen, a clean formula without toxic ingredients. It's great to throw in your bag, as they make a small stick perfect for traveling. It's SPF 30, is made in the USA and is sustainable – plus Olita gives back a portion of their proceeds to the Coral Reef Alliance. So you'll be doing good for your skin and the planet.
4. Your lips need love too! Pick up a vegan lip butter from Melixir skincare. It's clean and sustainable so you won't worry about the 9 pounds of lipstick a woman is



estimated to eat in her lifetime. A no-brainer!

5. Opt for a stylish hat for a bit of extra protection (in our opinion, you can never have enough UV protection). We love these hats by Wallaroo. They are female founded, sustainable and will have you looking stylish – and keep your skin protected – while you are out and about. They even have hats that are easy to fold up and pack, so it's super easy to throw one in your bag. You'll be happy you did.
  6. Get comfortable. If you plan on being active (yes, walking counts too!), bring a comfortable pair of socks, like Comrad Compression Socks. There's nothing worse than achy feet or blisters when you want to get out and explore. Comrad socks are daily compression socks for all day energy, support and comfort, not to mention they are quite stylish. Your feet (actually your whole body) will thank you.
  7. Secure your jewelry. Traveling with expensive jewelry can be stressful but with Chrysmela, you can rest assured that your earrings are safe. If you've ever lost an earring because the back came loose, you'll understand the frantic search and stress it can cause (especially if it's a high quality or sentimental piece). Chrysmela earring backs are high quality, made in Japan and will give you much needed peace of mind.
  8. A good night's sleep is essential for a great trip. Sleep well with Impact Naturals CBD Rest supplements, designed to be faster-acting, longer lasting and more predictable than tinctures, gummies or gel capsules. Think of this as a little bit of insurance to keep your energy up and your trip active by guaranteeing your 8 hours of sleep.
  9. Get organized. These functional, sustainable Cadence capsules will help you bring along any staples you don't want to donate to TSA (Cadence Capsules are .56 oz, leakproof, waterproof and airtight). They are great for storing jewelry, skincare or medications without taking up much space.
  10. Hydrate! We all know how important it is to stay hydrated but sometimes it's not that easy to do. We like bringing along the Hidrate Spark 3, a 20 ounce water bottle that's durable and tracks your water intake on an app, making it easy to get your fluids wherever you are.
  11. Don't let your period get you down. Pack a Cora menstrual cup, simple to use and sustainable so you only need to pack one. Plus, Cora is female founded as well!
  12. Last but not least, pack a Blure translucent powder in your bag. It's a one-trick wonder that will leave your skin flawless. Plus, it's clean, sustainable and female founded and works on every skin tone. Once you start using it, you'll wonder how you ever did without it.
- We hope these travel must-haves give you some inspiration to continue your self-care wherever you go. With a bit of planning, you'll be the most savvy traveller around.

Written by [Lynn Power](#)



# Who wants to see a dentist when on holiday...not me!

With most interstate borders now opening to some degree, in time for the holiday season and hopefully, international travel likely to resume in the near future, it's time to be prepared to look after our health within the context of the complex and forever changing rules that have now become part of our lives. The rules related to mask wearing, social distancing and especially vaccination status, vary considerably from one jurisdiction to another. In addition, we have already witnessed on many occasions, that the rules can change dramatically with very short notice.

However, the situation can be even more confusing even if we travel within our own state or territory or even just an hour or two away from home, as some governments will impose rules for some local government areas.

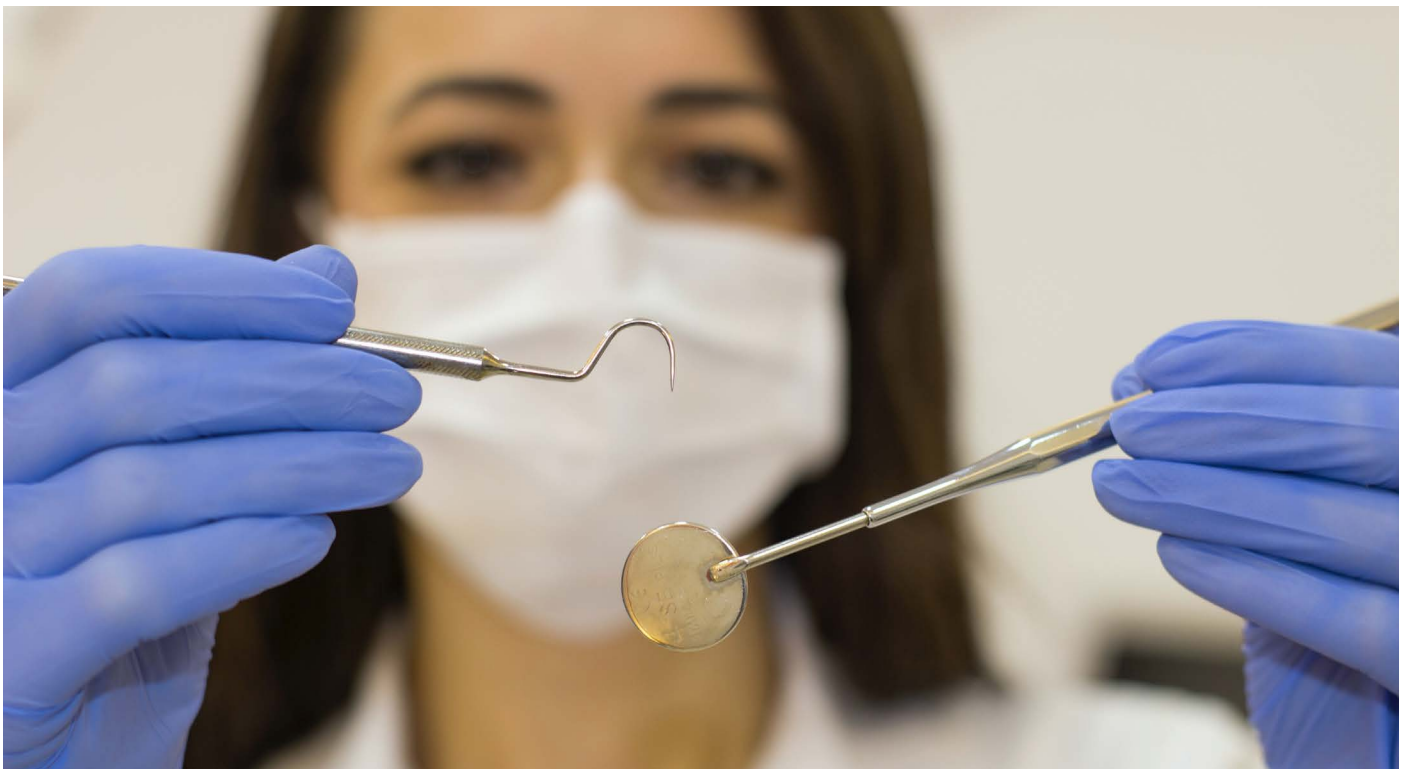
Furthermore, individual business owners, corporations, venues, and other facilities may have their own COVID-safe rules as they interpret their requirements for their unique working environment. Healthcare facilities are a common example where rules will differ depending on the nature of their work.

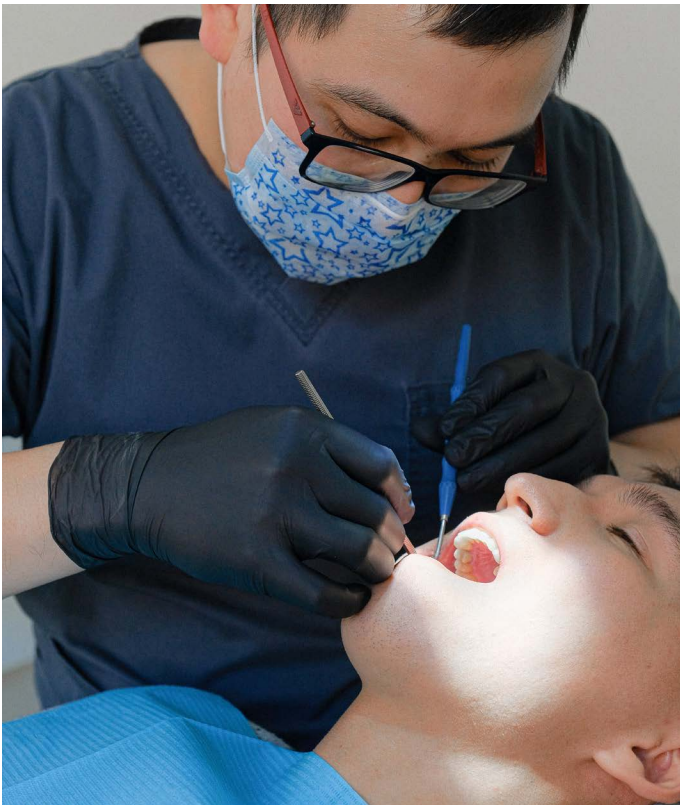
I have personally experienced differences in the rules related to visitors and accompanying carers in hospitals and clinics. Some clinics will not treat people who have

travelled from interstate hotspots until they can show a negative COVID PCR test. A rapid antigen test is not acceptable for some operators. Too bad if you have a raging toothache.

In the context of the COVID pandemic, make sure that you have plenty of good masks. Some locations won't accept home-made masks as being suitable for clients to wear. Also ensure that you have your vaccination certificate handy to show proof of your vaccination status. I would suggest carrying a paper copy of the certificate as a back-up although it may not be accepted at some locations due to the ease of producing a forgery. These days it's always a good idea to practice social distancing wherever you can and wear a mask if you can't socially distance. Carrying a small bottle of hand sanitizer for personal use is also worthwhile.

But putting the COVID pandemic issues aside, the best way to be prepared for healthcare including dental care while you travel is to ensure that all is well before you travel, to try to avoid visiting a strange dentist while you are away. I would recommend visiting your dentist before you leave to have a general check-up including x-rays and a clean if required. I would suggest making this appointment several weeks before you leave if possible so that the dentist has time to schedule an appointment or two if some further treatment is required.





If you're travelling overseas, it's a good idea to take out travel insurance as dental treatment in many countries is very expensive and difficult to access. Some countries have now mandated that travellers have travel insurance and these policies need to include coverage for the treatment or management of COVID-19.

These countries won't issue a visa until proof of purchase of insurance is produced. Most policies would include dental care as part of the healthcare coverage, but you do need to read the fine print. You need to ensure that the insurance company can help you find a dentist if needed but also that they will honour a claim from a dentist of your choice if that is your preference. Some companies will give a rebate on each item number whilst others will pay back the total fee less an excess if applicable. Total limits for a claim may also be part of the policy schedule. Comparing policies and finding the right one for you, can be very difficult

When claiming on travel insurance, many insurers will request a report from your regular dentist at home to ensure that your dental health was good before you went on your trip. They may even request to see a copy of your x-rays and all of your treatment records. Often there is a cost associated with your dentist providing this report and this cost is not covered by the insurance policy.

All insurance policies also have many exclusions, some of which are very obvious, such as cosmetic procedures, the treatment of tooth decay and the treatment of any pre-existing conditions. Other exclusions such as excluding all care except providing what they define as emergency care only, can make the process very confusing. Making a successful claim on travel insurance can be very difficult.

However, even the best prepared people have accidents and dental care may become an urgent matter. This recently happened to my brother who broke a tooth while eating an olive that should have had the pip removed. He was interstate and was stuck because the interstate border was closed. Normally he would have come home to have his dental treatment performed by me, especially because it's free! With no hint about when the border was going to open and the fear that if the tooth was left, it may deteriorate and then need a root canal treatment or extraction, he needed to see a dentist quickly.

### **So how do you select a good dentist when you're away in a strange place?**

Clearly, we all want to see a dentist who is experienced, knowledgeable, friendly and can see us with a minimum of delay. The dentist also needs to be willing to provide a report including a copy of any x-rays to support your claim. It's also a good idea to have photos of your affected tooth to include in your claim documentation.

Firstly, as a general rule the cheapest dentist is not necessarily the best dentist so shopping around for a dentist based on price may cost you more in the long term.

Your travel insurance company may recommend a dentist but invariably their choice is based on price and not experience or knowledge. Some of these dentists are contracted to the insurance company and are incentivised to provide the lowest cost treatment which is not necessarily in your best interest.

I have always found that the local doctor or pharmacist can give you a good recommendation by simply asking "Which dentist do you go to?" It is highly unlikely that they would go to a sub-par dentist.

Another good idea is to contact your dentist at home, to discuss your immediate needs and they may know a dentist who can see you or they can make contact with people who can make an appropriate recommendation.

If you need to make a "cold" selection, then look at the qualifications of the dentist. Did the dentist study at a good university? Do they have any additional qualifications such as a masters' degree or a college fellowship? Are the premises clean, and modern-looking? Are the staff friendly and helpful? Does the dentist or a member of the staff speak English or have an interpreter available? Do they have good reviews? (I am somewhat cautious about social media reviews). Do they have a COVID-safe plan?

Finally, you always have the option of seeking a second opinion if you are not confident with your chosen dentist, but you may find that your travel insurer will not pay for a second opinion unless they have requested it.

Wishing you all a safe and healthy new year.

Written by [Dr Jeffrey Kestenberg](#)





# Tips for a purrfect transition

**W**elcoming a four-legged family member into our homes is an exciting time. However, what we have to remember is that initially our new little moggie may not share the same sentiment.

It's important that we remember that cats aren't creatures that adapt to change easily, and that the period after adoption can potentially be a stressful time for your new cat. As a rule cats don't tend to adjust readily to change and new environments, their new homes can have unfamiliar sights sounds and smells that can be frightening to them.

Your job is to help your new companion feel safe and secure while he or she adjusts to their new world and there are ways that you can minimise the stress by preparing a special space just for them.

Here are some top tips to ensure a smooth transition for your furry friend:

## **1. PICK A SMALL, QUIET ROOM FOR YOUR CAT TO STAY IN FOR THE FEW DAYS**

A bathroom or laundry is the perfect room to choose as your cat's safe space. Remember that your new cat has been living in a confined space while he or she has been at our Shelter. Opening up an entire home can be overwhelming to them. Some cats will adjust faster

than others so you will need to become aware of their temperament and how quickly they seem to settle into their new environment.

Don't be alarmed if the cat is less affectionate, eats and drinks less, hides or even acts somewhat hesitant and apprehensive when you first bring them home – they are simply stressed. Give them time to get used to you and your home.

Try offering some food to stimulate their appetite. However, if your cat is not eating, drinking or defecating within the first 48 hours it is best to contact your vet.

It's also important to slowly build trust with your new companion. Let your cat determine when they would like contact, and don't force attention. Put your hand out in front of your cat and see if they will approach you and rub their head against your fist. Your cat needs to learn to trust you and this may take some time.

## **2. SET YOUR CATS ROOM UP WITH A LITTER BOX, FOOD AND WATER, BEDDING AND TOYS.**

By setting up your cat in this single room, they will know where to find their litter box, food and water. It will also decrease the chances of any litter box related accidents.

Getting to know your kitty is really important to enable a

bond to be created so interaction should take place during the times when it feels naturally active and appears responsive.

Visit the cat regularly throughout this adjustment period. If there are children in the home, be sure to monitor their interaction with the cat and remind them to keep calm and quiet around the cat. If your cat is confident enough playtime and cuddles are a must while settling in, if a more nervous cat then encouraging quiet cuddles will help them settle in.

### 3. PROVIDE YOUR CAT WITH PLENTY OF HIDING PLACES.

All cats enjoy hiding places. This can be under furniture, a cardboard box or a special cat bed (an igloo bed is perfect for shy cats).

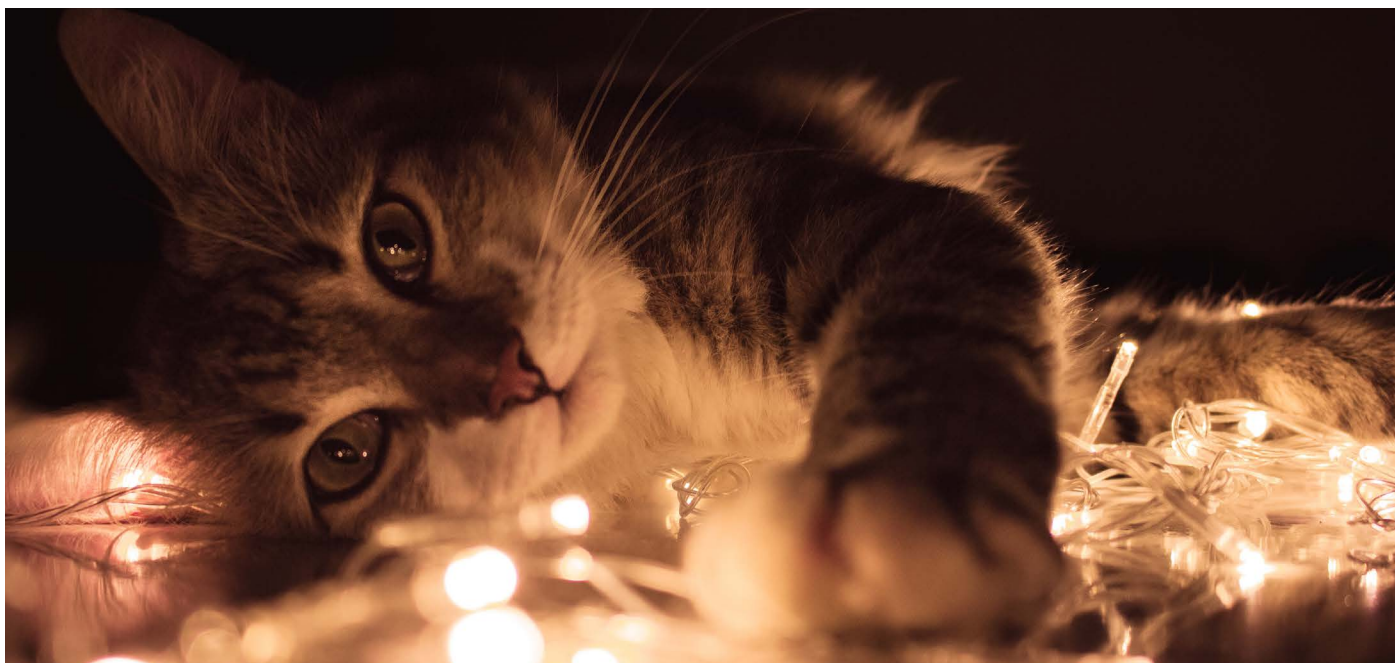
Don't be alarmed if your new cat hides for most of the day

their family. Cats can be companions, playmates and help enrich each other's lives, however, introducing a new cat to an existing cat can take time and patience.

Throwing two cats into one environment without proper consideration of their positions is just asking for trouble. But, with a carefully planned introduction, cats can ease into accepting one another and may just become lifelong friends.

It is important that your process of integration of your new family member should be slow and gradual. At first, start the newcomer in a room that is not one of the core areas for the existing cat.

Set up this separate room with a litter tray, food, water bowl, comfy bed and scratching post. This way, your new cat can relax into his/ her surroundings before facing the challenge of meeting your other cat.



when you first bring them home, just make sure that they are eating, drinking and going to the toilet regularly and give them time to adjust to their new home. Be sure to let children know to leave the cat alone whenever the cat chooses to hide or have sleep time.

### 4. SLOWLY BEGIN OPENING UP YOUR HOME TO THE NEW CAT ONCE THEY ADJUST TO THEIR ROOM.

Do not force the cat to explore the rest of your home. It is important to let the cat become comfortable at its own pace. Keep the litter box, food and water in the original room so that the cat knows where to find those items. Be sure to keep another litter box available in the home just in case your cat needs it while exploring. This is another way to reduce the chances of any litter box-related accidents.

### 5. FOR THOSE WITH AN EXISTING CAT HERE ARE WAYS YOU CAN INITIATE THE INTRODUCTION.

Many cat-loving households have more than one cat in

As cats rely heavily on scent for communication and identification you should begin the process of introduction by swapping scent between the cats. You can exchange food bowls, toys or bedding and when the cats can tolerate the scents of each other you can gradually progress so that they can see each other. Throughout this process the presence of the other cat should be associated with something positive such as a food treat, play or attention.

Remember you will need patience as the process could take anything from a few weeks to a few months. But your patience will be rewarded.

It may take time and a bit of patience but your efforts have a good chance of being rewarded in the long run when your cats become content companions in your home for life.

Written by [Lisa Agius](#)



## Ingredient Feature

# Keeping in balance with goji berries



**Y**ou may have heard of Goji berries sometime over the past 5 or so years as one of these superfoods, “you bute” cure all ingredients. Which seemingly popped into existence, pretty much overnight.

### SO, WHAT IS THIS NEW HEALTH-FOOD BERRY?

Well actually the goji berry or wolfberry has been a staple ingredient within Asian homes since at least the 3rd century AD. As both a food ingredient and medicinal ingredient.

The berry is a fruit, from the nightshade family and has been prized throughout Asia for its medicinal properties. Commonly use throughout China, Korea and Japan

Then in about 2000, it became popular in the west, with some very extreme health benefit claims used to market the product. The name Goji berry and Wolf Berry was invented, as the Chinese name Pinyin was just not sexy enough.

Then almost overnight these berries were popping up everywhere from snack foods, to granola bars, and even in yoghurts. Many of these health benefit claims are unsupported by research. They are, in many cases highly exaggerated, in an effort to sell more product. This profit

drive unfortunately tarnished, what is a special fruit.

### WHAT ARE THE HEALTH BENEFITS?

In Chinese medicine, the goji berry is prized for having many health benefits. Being considered a neutral ingredient, it is neither warming or cooling for the body. Making it perfect for daily consumption.

It is said to help maintain youth, improve the quality of your sleep, and help to maintain balance within the body.

For the full effects of this or any health food ingredient you need to consume it with a healthy diet. It is my belief that the combined influence of health properties from a variety of foods will be beneficial to your health. Certainly not one cure all elixir of life proffered to you by slick marketing agencies.

### HOW DO YOU COOK WITH THEM?

Traditionally the stalks and leaves of the plant have been uses as a leaf vegetable, similar to spinach. They are fried up with a selection of aromatics, and served as an accompaniment to a protein and or with rice.

The berry, because of its sweetness has tended to be used in desserts or as part of a beverage, either hot or cold.

Here is a great recipe for you to try at home that is both delicious, and packed with health benefits:



## Goji Berry, Ginger Mint Tea

Time 40mins | Servings 5

### Ingredients

50gm	Goji Berries
100gm	Ginger, sliced- skin left on
½ bnch	Mint leaves, fresh
700ml	Hot Water
	Maple Syrup

### Method

1. Wash the berries several times in cold water, discarding the water each time. I prefer to use organic berries, though the choice is yours.
2. Bring the water to a boil, or just below boiling point.
3. Add the berries, ginger and mint, then allow to steep for 25 to 30 minutes.

4. Add as much or little maple syrup as you like, you may just prefer a little less than what I like, it is upto you.

I prefer to leave all the ingredients in the pot, as the colours are vibrant, and I just like it that way. If you prefer you can strain the liquid off prior to serving, again the choice is yours, and you need to be happy with it.

Written by [Kevin Kapusi Starow](#)





# HOW TO PLAN YOUR DIVING CUBA VACATION

**A**re you excited about international travel returning? I have to say I am looking forward to being back in the warm waters of the Caribbean. Crystal clear, great visibility, no dangerous currents and plenty to see both above and under water. For divers who are looking for something truly unique, the underwater world of Cuba should be at the top of mind to visit. With an abundance of life and pristine waters that have been untouched by humans for centuries, this island nation will take you on a journey through unimaginable beauty!

The Cuban archipelago is situated in the northern Caribbean where three major oceans come together to form one of Earth's most unique and exciting habitats. It is home to the second largest coral reef, that features long drop-offs, what locals call "the Grand Canyon". Then there are over 50 species of coral, bright colorful corals in various shapes and sizes on the reef, on shipwrecks, on walls and more. If the untouched, plentiful reefs with spectacular marine life wasn't enough, there are caves in

the sea, and ones that come out in beautiful cenotes. Want more? You can even dive with sharks, plenty of them and not just one kind, if you keep calm enough these inquisitive creatures love to come up close to check out who is visiting their waters.

If this doesn't all convince you that diving in Cuba is a must, I am not sure what would?

I know, you are thinking, it's on the other side of the world! It is well worth the travel, the good news is that there are quicker routes now than there have been before. What are things that you should consider when planning your diving Cuba vacation?

## WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO VISIT CUBA?

One of the biggest reasons people dive is to experience the unique and inquisitive marine wildlife. The thing about wildlife – especially of aquatic variety – is that they are







very nomadic and often unpredictable.

If there is something specific you wish to see on your diving trip to Cuba, drop us a line. Yunion is an enthusiastic diver, with great connections and insights, so we can give you an idea as to what time of year to visit to give yourself the best opportunity to see the animal your heart is set on. It's never 100% guaranteed on any given day that you will succeed, but by getting insider knowledge you are giving yourself the best possible chance to create the most magical moment of spotting the creature of your dreams.

The next thing to consider is the weather as depending on what's going on above the water, it can affect your visibility below it. Technically speaking, you can dive all year round, but due to the large number of cyclones that hit Cuba in October and November we advise you against traveling that time for a diving vacation. With our safety first approach, we do not run diving tours at this time of the year.

For best visibility and most comfortable swimming temperatures, December to April is the optimal time.

### **TO BRING OR NOT TO BRING MY OWN EQUIPMENT?**

This is an infamous query, there isn't a straight forward answer I can give you.

There are several logistical questions to answer to start when it comes to making this decision. Such as, how far do you have to travel to get to Cuba? Will your luggage go straight through? How long are you staying for? How many dives are you planning on doing - if you travel with us, there will be quite a few! What is the cost of

equipment rental, again when you travel with us, this is already included. Is the diving centre reputable? Do they have relevant accreditations and experience? Do you have enough luggage space and the list goes on...

So here is what I'd recommend, as a very bare minimum, bring your mask! As whilst the diving centres will provide these for you, perfect fit is not a guarantee. There is nothing worse and annoying than water seeping in as you are trying to enjoy the sights below water level.

Another point for consideration is that diving is a high risk sport, and whilst we go through diving centres with relevant qualifications and experience, you may want to consider to have your own diving computer and regulators. That way you can have 100% peace of mind that everything is in as good a condition as you'd like to have them.

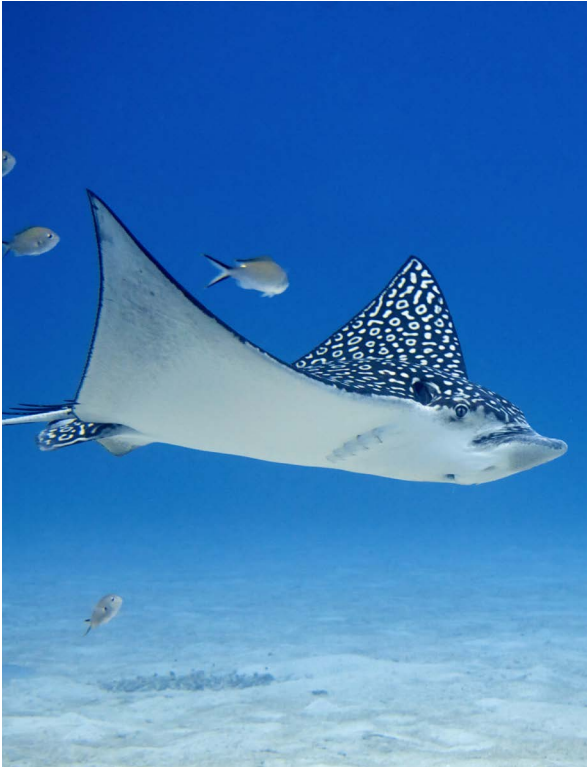
### **HOW ARE YOU GETTING TO CUBA?**

No, it's not a trick question and I'd say 99% of the time, this will be by plane and as air travel affects our bodies, whether you realise it or not. So as a diver, this is not something you can overlook.

Even though commercial airplanes have pressurized cabins, divers still are at risk for decompression sickness as the cabin pressure is still lower than ground-level atmospheric pressure. Effects can be the same when you ascend from your dive too quickly. Make sure you have sufficiently off-gassed before you board your flight.

There are a few reputable dive organizations that have different dive-fly recommendations, each one hinging on; the number of dives, depth, and decompression dives. I'd say work toward the conservative side and leave plenty of





buffer between your last dive and your flight home, it is part of smart dive planning.

Lucky for you, our local diving guide has planned the itineraries of our dive tour to ensure that we do not take you to or even through high altitudes after diving, and that you have at least 24 hours off diving before you head to the airport! Safety first is something we take seriously.

## SKILL LEVEL REQUIRED FOR THE DIVES YOU ARE PLANNING

We pick sites that all skill levels can attend to, but there are options around Cuba that may require you to have certain ticket or level of experience, also keep your level of awareness up and don't put yourself in the face of danger.

In Cuba there are certain cave dives that can be scary and tough on even the most experienced divers, so if you are a beginner, do not risk going in there. Not only would you put yourself at danger, but others who are in your group also.

Do your research of your diving sites, if you are unsure, ask the questions before your dive. Also make sure you read the signs!

## PLAN YOUR TRIP AROUND YOUR DIVES

Lucky for you, when you come on a small group tour, it is easy to plan! Each diving day, we will head out to the sea in the morning and will have the afternoon/evening to explore Cuba!

We have arranged some activities around your dives and even on days where we haven't you have your local tour guide on hand who knows the place like the back of his hand. He can help you create some fantastic experiences,

anything from salsa dancing, to cooking classes, to attending museums, markets, cave discos and more. All you need to do is tell him what you would be interested in and he will get you sorted.

Also, if you are joining us on our diving photography tour, you can take this time to learn more from our experts, like how to process the pictures you have just taken under water.

The options are limitless really, it's your choice how you want to make the best of your experiences.

## CHECK INCLUSIONS

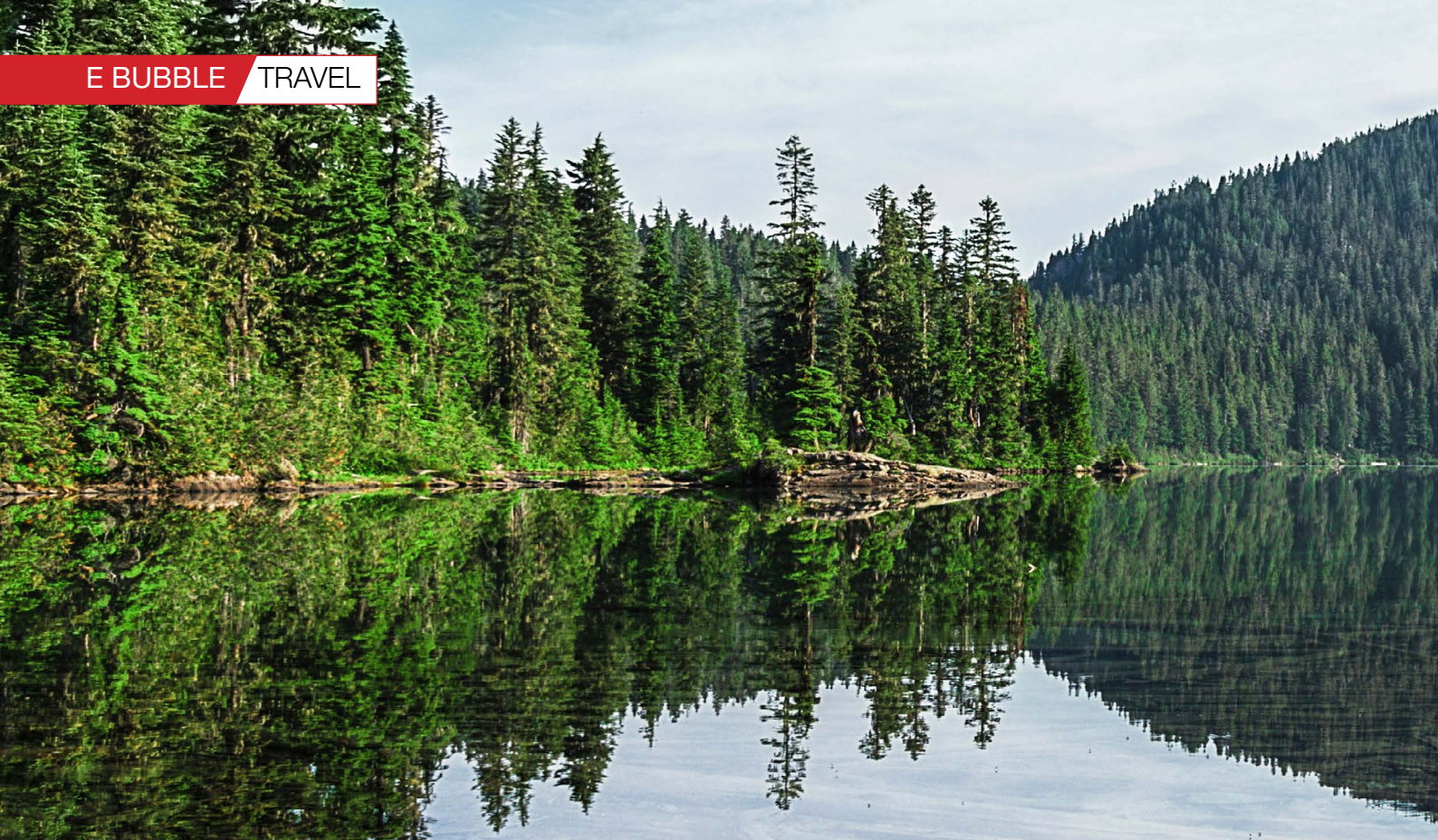
It is important to understand what is included in your dive trip. Often marine fees are an additional charge, and sometimes a dive guide is not included. On some diving tours you also only get a chance to visit one area. So when you travel independently or even with some tour companies, it is something you will have to account for.

When you choose to travel with Simply Cuba Tours we have already included your dive fees, ensured that you have a dive guide and on occasions, you may even have your tour guide diving with you. Yunior is a diver himself and has prepared his dream dive trip for you.

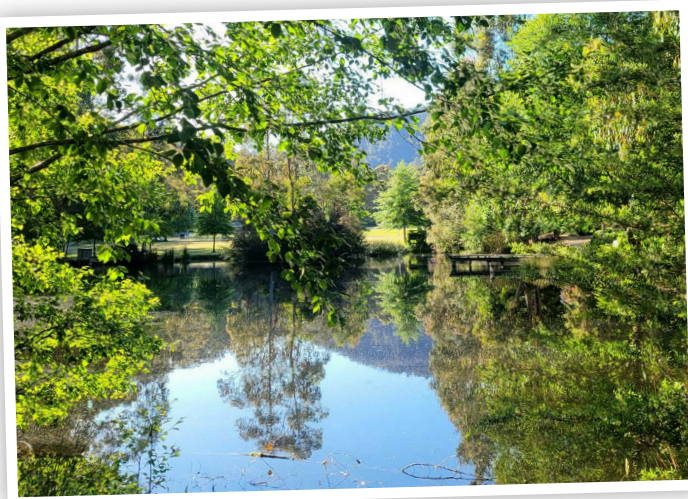
Planning a diving vacation to Cuba can seem like an intimidating process, but it doesn't have to be. Before you even start packing your bags, take some time to plan for the trip making informed decisions every step of the way. We want this blog post on how to plan your diving Cuba vacation to help you with all aspects of planning so that when you get there, nothing will stand in your way!

Written by [Orsolya Bartalis](#)





# Why travelling alpine in the summer is a great idea!



**T**ravelling to the alpine region during summer may seem counter-intuitive, but there are so many reasons why families should head to the mountains during the sweltering season!

Summer provides the opportunity to view the alpine region with a whole new perspective and experience it in a unique way. With stunning landscapes, plenty of outdoor activities to try, and an opportunity for bonding like no other, we share all the reasons why heading up the mountains should be high on your family bucket list.

## VIEW THE LANDSCAPE FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

Picturesque views and landscapes with mountains layered in the snow is what we envision when thinking of alpine regions; however, summer offers a whole new perspective. Think relaxing waterfalls, serene open green spaces, incredible mountains with an abundance of greenery to behold, and endless fresh air.

## SWAP THE SNOW BOOTS FOR HIKING BOOTS

Warmer conditions allow for dry terrain perfect for hiking in. Alpine regions offer extensive hiking trails for aficionados or shorter trails with easy access to views for those who prefer to soak in their surroundings slowly. Once you've got your hiking boots on, get ready for incredible lookouts and lovely picnic spots for the family.

## GO FOR A RIDE

Are you an avid cyclist? Keen to jump on a mountain bike? The Alpine regions have spectacular riding trails. With trails ranging from highly challenging to leisurely, local information centers can guide you on which trails are suitable for families and individuals based on your





experience and preferred level.

## CAMP IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Take in the landscape like no other by camping amongst the natural landscapes. With many alpine regions offering commercial campgrounds, free camps, and campsites on public lands, you'll be spoilt for choice in these beautiful areas. If camping on the ground isn't your thing, some alpine regions offer tree-top Eco-Glamping!

## HEAD OUT ON THE WATER

One thing you can't even imagine during the snow season is cooling off in the crisp water with some family fun water activities!



Alpine regions provide some amazing bodies of water to head out onto for swimming, kayaking, canoeing or paddleboarding. Speak to the local information centre to find out the best spots for a tranquil dip or water sport fun.

## LET THE SUNSET ON YOU

Unimaginably experience the sunset from atop lookouts offering expansive landscape views. While some areas require a bit of walking for the best sunset views, other alpine regions offer hospitality venues situated in the perfect location for a drink on a deck with the sun setting around you.

## FRESH LOCAL PRODUCE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

The alpine regions are known for their delicious offerings, from slow wining and dining at local vineyards to taste-testing local produce at incredible venues. If sitting back and relaxing isn't your thing, some areas are perfect for catching dinner or heading to the local farmers market, where there is a wide selection of local delicacies.



# HOSTING AND ENTERTAINING GUESTS

As we begin to think about returning to more of a regular lifestyle, we often think of traveling and leaving our homes. Along with the joys of traveling away from home, we are also beginning to prepare for hosting and entertaining guests in our homes. Let's talk about how to make our guests feel as comfortable as possible as we welcome them into our homes.

## KEEPING A CLEAN SPACE FOR GUESTS

The very first thing we should keep in mind as we welcome family and friends into our homes is preparing by cleaning and sanitizing before and during their visit.

Start by freshly washing all bedding, bath towels, hand towels, and linens of any kind. Even if you washed these items since you had your last guests over, it might be nice to freshen them up if it's been a bit of time. It might also be a good idea to stock disposable hand towels in the bathroom so you can ensure that your guests have a fresh towel to dry their hands with each time they wash them.

I always like to do a deep clean of my house before having any guests over, especially if they are staying with us overnight. Sanitize all countertops, door knobs, light switches, and any other highly touched areas of your home. Always sanitize the guest bathroom sinks, counters, shower, and toilet area. While you're in the bathroom, make sure that extra bathroom supplies like toilet paper and soap are easily accessible to your guests.

It's a good idea to keep your cleaning supplies fully stocked during the visit. This way you can do little bits of touch-up cleaning through their stay and will have extra supplies on hand if your guests should need them at any point.

## SELECTING ACTIVITIES

Everyone has their own levels of comfort when it comes to traveling, activities, and entertainment right now. Be sure to have an open conversation with your house guests prior to their arrival to discuss what each person is and is not comfortable with. This will help you get a good feel of where to start in planning activities.

Some will feel most comfortable in outdoor settings, while others don't mind being indoors or in more crowded



spaces. I recommend making a list of several options of how to spend the visit so your guests will have options when selecting which activities work best for them and their comfort levels.

Try to avoid surprise activities and have a few backup ideas in the event of changes like poor weather or cancellations.

## PREPARING FOODS

Food selection and preparation can be tricky these days. Not only do we want to make sure that our guests enjoy the food that we make for them, but we want to make sure we are keeping any food allergies, sensitivities, or preferences in mind when we are entertaining. It is always a good idea to touch base with anyone you might be cooking for or providing food for so that meal time can be safe, fun, and delicious, rather than a time of worry.

Prior to their arrival, be sure to ask your guests about any food allergies, sensitivities, or dietary needs they might have. Not only will this help you avoid any foods that they might not be able to eat, but they will most likely feel extremely grateful that you took the time to ask!

One of my favorite things to make when I am entertaining is a plant-based charcuterie board. You can select your favorite fruits, vegetables, nuts, crackers, and anything else you love to snack on. This is already a vegan recipe, but can easily be made to accommodate a gluten-free diet, and many food allergies by simply swapping foods in and out.

You might also want to keep some snack foods on hand so that your guests have something to eat during all times of their visit. Make things easy by keeping a bowl of fruit like apples and bananas, and granola bars on the kitchen table for easy access. These food items will also be easy to grab and take along on any activities, or for them to have during their journey home.

## SUMMARY

As we all start thinking about hosting and entertaining guests in our home again, we want to be as prepared as possible to make the visit both comfortable and fun. With these tips and guidelines, we can spend time planning in advance to make the most of our visits with our friends and family.

Link to original recipe: <https://plantedinthekitchen.com/vegan-charcuterie-board/>



# Plant Based Charcuterie Board

Serves 6

This plant based snack board is filled with healthy and

delicious whole foods. It's easy to make and perfect for entertaining!

## Ingredients

1 cup	strawberries
1 cup	raspberries
2 cups	grapes
½ cup	blueberries
½ cup	hummus
1 cup	pita chips
1 cup	celery
1 cup	cucumbers
½ cup	almonds
1 tablespoon	agave nectar

## Method

1. Wash and dry all produce.
2. Arrange all ingredients on your board.
3. Garnish with fresh herbs.



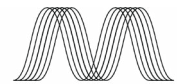
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