

# Extended Holidays: The Ideal Way To Unwind



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Since the 1980s, air travel has become ever more popular and today, jetting off to New York for a weekend or Paris for the day is commonplace. Even with the global economic recession squeezing household budgets, families are still making time to visit far away (but still affordable) places. Yet how much can you really see of a country in a few days, or even a week? In destinations as vast and culturally diverse as India and China, for instance, even three weeks might not be enough to get a well-rounded taste of what the country offers.

If you're really hoping to absorb a foreign culture, a long stay is well worth considering. Planning extended bouts of travel may seem daunting, but if you know what you want to get out of a trip - and you've got like minded company along for the ride - a long holiday could be one of the most enjoyable experiences of your life.

## **Extended holidays are not just for gap years**

Whether you're 40 or 60, it's often possible to arrange a sabbatical from work in order to enjoy an extended holiday overseas. Some companies actively encourage such expeditions and may see it as part of enriching the skill set of their workforce. What's more, if you've recently been made unemployed and hope to spend some time out of the job market before diving back in, a long holiday could be just what you need. This could be especially true if you're single and you've collected a significant amount of money in your savings account which isn't benefiting from today's low interest rates.

Of course, if an extended holiday is something you want to pursue but you're unprepared or simply unable to embark on one just yet, it might be something that's worth considering for your retirement. Many retired couples spend six months of every year travelling abroad and see it as the ideal way to spend their old age.

Extended holidays can take on a variety of forms. Perhaps you've always harboured a desire to traverse every corner of Russia; taking two months away from work to experience the Trans-Siberian Railway from Moscow to Vladivostok would be the realisation of a dream. On the other hand, you could spend four months backpacking across South America, from Venezuela and Brazil to the very tip of Argentina and Chile.

Alternatively, if you'd like your extended travel experience to possess a wider purpose, there are plenty of groups who organise charity work camps in developing

countries, from South Africa to Sri Lanka, where you could be doing anything from building wells and schools to helping AIDS orphans.

### **Your long holiday check list**

However old you are when you take your extended holiday, it's crucial to remember the essentials. For starters, double check your passport's expiry date: you need at least six months left on your passport in order to travel, and if you're planning to be travelling for several months, you will need at least a year. Next, make sure that you obtain the correct visas for the countries you intend to travel to. If you're planning on visiting a country, leaving it and then re-entering, ensure that you request a multiple-entry visa.

At the same time, you'll need to find out whether you need to receive any injections or medication before embarking on your trip - for instance, travellers in India will most likely need to ingest anti-malarial tablets at regular intervals. You should also be sure you opt for specialist [long stay travel insurance](#), so you can reclaim the costs of any medical support you might need, as well as any belongings you should happen to lose.

Before you leave, it's a good idea to give your house keys to a neighbour or family member, so they can check up on your home at regular intervals. After all, there would be few things worse than enjoying a tranquil extended holiday and returning to the UK to find someone has broken into your home.

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