

Tips for Traveling With Hearing Loss

By Shari Eberts

Traveling when you have hearing loss can be challenging, but that's no reason to miss out on discovering new locales. Follow these tips to have a safe and rewarding adventure.

Prepare in Advance

Before booking a hotel, ask about available accommodations for people with hearing loss. Many hotels, especially in developed countries, have rooms with specific amenities for people with hearing loss (e.g., flashing lights for the phone and doorbell) if you request them in advance. If you are traveling with a tour company, alert them to your accommodation needs. They may be able to help.

Many museums in large cities provide hearing loops or other assistive technology if you request it. The same goes for theaters and other performance spaces. Send an email to the venues for up-to-date information.

Learn about your destination before you go. Familiarize yourself with the names of places, important historical figures and the like. That way when you hear these names, they will sound more familiar and be easier for you to understand.

Use Technology for Logistics

Whether you are traveling by plane, train, or automobile, download all relevant apps onto your smartphone before you go. Most airlines and train company apps include timetables and provide alerts for gate changes or delays. Practice using the apps before you go so you are prepared if you have trouble on your trip.

Advocate for Yourself

Inform your tour guides and fellow travelers about your hearing loss and provide specific suggestions on how they can help you hear your best. Tell your guides that you will stay close to them so you can better hear and see their face for lipreading. Kindly request them ahead of time to speak clearly and only while facing the group whenever possible.

Have an assistive listening device (e.g., pocket talkers or FM systems) handy in case you'll need to transmit the guide's voice directly to your hearing aids, blocking out background noise.

When dining out, request for quiet corner tables at restaurants or sit outside when the weather is nice. Ask your hotel concierge to suggest quieter restaurants so you can reserve a table.



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Remind People What You Need

People often forget about hearing loss because it is invisible, so don't be shy about reminding others of your needs. A gentle prompt like holding your hand behind your ear often works well and does not disrupt the flow of dialogue. Save non-critical clarification questions for a quiet moment or break, but be sure to ask them. When logistical information is provided, request it in written form. Carry a notebook and pen in your bag to make that an easy process.

Bring Ear Protection

Traveling can be loud! In cities, traffic and construction noise are everywhere. Attending a musical performance is a great way to experience a new place, but the volume can be unsafe. Don't be afraid to turn down or remove your hearing aids and wear ear protection when needed. Bring extra earplugs to share with your traveling companions.

Pack Extra Batteries and Chargers

Your devices won't work without power. Be sure to bring a sufficient supply of batteries and extras. Replacement batteries may be harder to find in unfamiliar locations. Pack a supply of batteries in different travel bags in case one gets misplaced. Check that all your chargers are working well and bring an extra if available.

Have a Back-Up Plan

Having your hearing aids on the fritz can be troubling at any time, but when you are far away from home and your audiologist—in another country, for example—it can feel like a disaster. Set a back-up plan before you go and test it out so you can easily implement it if needed. Examples include using a pocket-talker, an FM system, or connecting a high-quality headset to an app like EarMachine on your smartphone. If you have spare hearing aids, bring those too. [\[1\]](#)