

## Ottawa Journal by David Tilson MP ? Planning a spring break getaway?

It's that time of year again, when our thoughts often shift to spring break getaways, especially following the very long and cold winter we've been experiencing this year.

For those who are planning escapes just over the border or further south to even warmer, sunnier climates, there are many things to take into consideration when planning a vacation. This can be a very busy time of year for Canadians travelling and by taking a few preparatory steps, spring break getaways can hopefully be stress-free and relaxing.

Global Affairs Canada has many helpful tips and information to guide Canadians as they plan for their spring break getaways to ensure they are prepared for anything that may arise during their travels. This includes:

? Travel advice and advisories, which are available at <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>. They provide detailed information on the country where you're travelling. It is recommended to check this website when planning your vacation and before you leave for your travels to receive the most up-to-date safety and security information;

? Visit a health care provider or a travel health clinic preferably six weeks before your departure to ensure your vaccinations are current and to receive additional guidance on guarding against illness and injury;

? If travelling with children, ensure you read Tips for healthy travel with children (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/children>), Children and travel (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/children/children-travel>) and Taking children on a plane (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/children/taking-children-on-a-plane>), and take a consent letter (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/children/consent-letter>), if necessary;

? Take the time to register yourself with Registration of Canadians Abroad (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration>), to ensure you may receive important information from government officials, should an emergency arise in your destination country;

? Obtain the best travel insurance you can purchase, as your Canadian health insurance will not cover you when travelling outside of Canada;

? Register for Travel.gc.ca's Travel Smart app, Twitter, and Facebook accounts to learn of important travel-related information and updates;

? Check your passport to ensure it is still valid and if you need to renew it, take the necessary steps by visiting <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-passports.html> (or visit either of my constituency offices for the necessary forms) and take note of the processing times;

? Prepare a travel health kit (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/kit>) to take with you and review other health tips (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety>), including Eat and drink safely (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/food-water>), and Insect bite prevention (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/insect-bite>) before your planned departure;

? Include an extra supply of your prescription and/or over-the-counter medications in your luggage in the event you are delayed in returning home. Take the time to review Travelling with medication (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/medication>) and Travelling with a medical device (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/medical-device>) for more information;

? Review Global Affairs Canada's page on Alcohol, drugs and travel (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/drugs>) and ensure you know the risks;

? Prepare a travel checklist (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/publications/travellers-checklist>); and review Global Affairs Canada's publications, such as Bon Voyage, but?. Essential Information for Canadian Travellers (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/publications/bon-voyage-but>), Her Own Way ? A Woman's Safe-Travel Guide (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/publications/her-own-way>), and Well on Your Way ? A Canadian's Guide to Healthy Travel Abroad (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/publications/her-own-way>);

? If travelling by plane, visit Global Affairs Canada's Air travel page (<https://travel.gc.ca/air>) for information on what you may bring on a plane, pre-boarding identification requirements, the airport screening process, etc. You may also wish to check the airport security screening wait time (<http://www.catsa.gc.ca/waittimes>) for the international airport you'll be using before leaving home;

? If you are driving to your destination, Global Affairs Canada advises to be aware that border traffic volume will be greater and, therefore, aim to avoid peak travel times. Time may be saved by reviewing the Canada to U.S. border wait times (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/border-times-us>) and check U.S. to Canada border wait times (<https://travel.gc.ca/returning/border-times>) when returning to Canada to make for a speedier return home.

In taking the recommended steps provided by Global Affairs Canada to prepare for travel outside of Canada, you can ensure you have the most enjoyable and stress-free spring getaway possible. Whatever your travel plans may be for spring break 2018, I wish you safe travels.

If you're planning a ?staycation? and taking in the many wonderful sites and activities that can be found here at home, enjoy!

