Prep for take-off

Sky TV's 24/7 Travel Channel launches on May 1. We asked some of the presenters for their best travel tips and favourite destinations.

GARETH DAVIES
Travel Today
Favourite destination and why?
At the bottom of Florida, as the Atlantic dries its toe into the Caribbean, is my little piece of heaven. Key West is the one place I can unwind and leave the stress of London behind. This is a community where folks walk past one another on the street and say “Hi”. I love the old Southern houses surrounded by bougainvillea, and the glorious year-round heat. There’s nothing like spending Christmas by the pool.

Worst destination and why?
I’ve been on South-East Asia. OK, to be honest, I’ve only been once. I visited Malaysia where the constant humidity absolutely floored me. Others sat by the pool while I sat in my bedroom watching CNN. I’m a dry-heat guy.

Best travel tip
Always use your ATM card. I never bother with changing currency. You’ll always get the best rate using your card in an ATM.

Essential travel accessory
Eye drops, the sort that lubricate your eyes. I wear lenses and my eyes really dry out in-flight. Using eye drops helps me feel fresher and stay awake at my destination.

HENRY COLE
World's Greatest Motorcycle Rides
Favourite destination and why?
Has to be Route 66. I’ve ridden it three times and am returning this summer for a Travel Channel two-part special. There is no other route in the world that has the history, the culture, the roads, the landscape and the musical iconography like “The Boulevard of Dreams”. If you’re a biker and haven’t done it, you simply have to. It will ingrain itself on your soul, all 2000 miles of it.

Worst destination and why?
Ameria again, specifically New York. Never ride a hideous American chopper through New York. They’re noisy, the traffic is horrendous and aggressive – no New York driver seems to have ever seen a brake. Couple that with riding it at night, in rush hour, in a thunderstorm and I’m lucky to be alive.

Best travel tip
Don’t plan your trip from your armchair, leaving no room to be flexible. There’s nothing worse than having no spare time when travelling because you’ve made a tight itinerary. Great things happen when you actually get on the ground. Allow time to enjoy them.

Essential travel accessory
My helmet. Without it I can’t find the way to my own front door.

GEORGE KOUROUNIS
Angry Planet
Favourite destination and why?
I love New Zealand and Iceland because of the diverse geography and friendly people. You can go to waterfalls, volcanoes, glaciers and more, all within a few hours of each other. Since I document extreme forces of nature, these two spots are high on my list.

Worst destination and why?
Goma in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This city has been the epicentre of so many terrible things: years of civil war, refugees from the Rwandan genocide and in 2002 the Nyiragongo volcano erupted and poured a river of lava through the city cutting it in two. When we climbed the volcano, we had to have armed security guards with us.

Best travel tip
Enjoy the ride. Travel is great but the actual travelling part of getting from point A to point B can be a real chore. I typically spend about 100 days per year travelling and if you can find ways to make airports fun, you’ll be able to keep yourself amused.

Essential travel accessory
I never leave home without my universal power adapter, or my evo mask because you never know when you’ll find a place to sleep and my laptop. A camera is rarely out of arm’s reach as well.

VARUN SHARMA
Inside Luxury Travel
Favourite destination and why?
That’s a bit like asking me which is my favourite pet. I have one pug, two kittens and two lambs. I don’t actually have just one. However, the Sonora Resort in Vancouver, The Four Seasons Tented Camp in the Golden Triangle (Thailand) and The Royal Malewane in South Africa spring to mind. They offer total seclusion, amazing vistas, stunning flora and fauna, peace, tranquility… and the greatest night-sky spectacles in the world I would happily breathe my last in those places.

Worst destination and why?
Home in London – because I am not abroad, exploring.

Best travel tip
After a long flight, always have a massage, it works wonders with jet-lag. If you release the “flight tension”, you’ll be more alert the next day.

Essential travel accessory?
I have two - satchels of Heinz Ketchup that make the worst food (including anything I could taste acceptable and a personal deodorant for commercial flights). This gadget keeps the air around your head clean – helps fight colds, with sleep and jet-lag too.

* The Travel Channel launches May 1 on Sky channel 77; www.travelchannel.co.nz