

101 things to do before you go

(in no particular order)

- Get appropriate missions training (Bible College?)
- Start learning the language
- Rent/sell your house
- Investigate education options for your children
- Involve your children in the decision-making process right from the first moment
- Have a full medical
- Arrange sustainable long-term finance for your ministry and allow for the unexpected
- Go to your GP's travel clinic and get all the necessary injections ☺
- Sell or give away your belongings or put them into storage
- Ensure you have appropriate travel/health insurance including repatriation if necessary
- Have a psychological profile/ do a personality indicator test
- Recruit prayer partners
- Make a will
- Hand out photos/fridge magnets/prayer cards to your friends and supporters
- Redirect your post to someone who is authorised to deal with it
- Hand in your notice at work in good time
- Join a sending agency
- Make sure that if you're planning to rent out your house, it doesn't contravene the terms of your mortgage or insurance policy.
- Check whether you need an International Driving Licence
- If you're going somewhere remote, get a copy of *Where There Is No Doctor*
- Sign up for a secure email address if you're going to a Creative Access Nation
- Discuss your plans with your church leaders at the earliest opportunity
- Read up on your host country's culture and history
- Read books about preparing to go
- Make arrangements for paying National Insurance while you're away
- Sell or give away your car
- Make someone at church your 'ambassador' to remind people to keep supporting you
- Pack some winter/summer clothes away at a friend's house for when you return
- Cancel subscriptions to gym/golf club/magazines
- Arrange for a friend to send you your favourite magazines/dvds
- Break the news gently to your parents/adult children
- Study the theology of missions
- Get up to date travel advice from your government (if you're British it's www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)
- Get hold of an anti-venom kit or mosquito net where relevant
- Make sure you have internet banking with a very complex password

- Do a trial visit to the country you're planning to go to
- Arrange a commissioning service in your church
- Top up your professional training with some relevant study (e.g. nurses take a tropical medicine course, preachers study cross-cultural contextualisation)
- Take some of your favourite sweets with you as a treat
- Say goodbye to your friends and family, especially elderly relatives you may not see again
- Find new homes for your pets if they can't come with you
- Get supplies of prescription medicines to take with you
- Join Oscar's online missions community at www.oscar.org.uk
- Ship belongings you can't live without (but remember you might be able to buy new ones locally for less than the cost of the shipping)
- Take your library books back
- Set up a prayer support group
- Tell people how they can communicate with you
- Find out whether you will have to register your arrival with the local police
- Use your existing contacts to find out if there's anyone in the country who can help you when you arrive
- Make sure you have postal and email addresses of your friends and supporters
- Find out what the weather's going to be like when you arrive so you can pack the right clothes. Remember it can get very cold at night in some 'hot' countries
- Pack a photo album to remind you of your favourite people
- Arrange Voluntary Development Worker rates for your National Insurance if appropriate
- Take one or two 'comfort blankets' to help you transition
- Consider how much personal freedom you are ready to sacrifice for the sake of the Gospel
- Check your passport is still valid and apply for a visa well in advance
- Take some souvenirs from your home country to give to new friends
- Read books by missionaries
- Make sure you have an emergency evacuation plan, and a ready supply of cash to pay for your way out of the country
- Consider getting a new laptop, unless you know it's going to be cheaper and more reliable where you're going
- Find out if your host country has a double taxation agreement with your home country
- Find out what a double taxation agreement is
- Start a newsletter or blog
- Book your flights through a missions supporting travel agent to get extra baggage allowance
- Ask someone to send you church bulletins or cds of the sermons if they're not available by podcast
- Make sure your family and executors know what you want doing with your body if you die abroad
- Make arrangements to continue paying into a pension fund while you're abroad
- Check your credit card will be accepted in the country you're going to

- Take chocolate or Marmite with you as a treat for your new colleagues
- Check you don't need a transit visa if you're changing planes in a third country
- Make a memorandum of understanding with your church and sending organisation so everybody knows what they've committed to
- Arrange temporary accommodation in your host country
- Make sure people know how to communicate with you securely if you're in a Creative Access Nation
- Leave behind anything you cannot afford to lose
- Find out if you need to take malaria prophylactics, and research which are the best
- Study the lives of the great missionaries
- Get the address of your country's embassy and make sure you have a contact there
- Find out the power voltage where you're going, and take enough adapters to run your appliances
- Learn the blood group of everyone in your family and know who can donate blood to whom
- Pack your children's favourite toys so they can have a nice surprise when they arrive
- Consider how adaptable you are in cross-cultural situations
- Reflect on how you cope with stress and whether your coping strategies are likely to work in another culture
- Ensure you've communicated your mission effectively to all of your church
- Make sure you know the mobile number of your pastor/mum/best friend and not just have stored in your phone (in case you lose it)

There is more detailed information about many of these issues in our regular blogs, our Guide pages and our Briefing Papers.