Organizing Your Travel Planning Information: Tips to Help Organize Your Vacation Plans

by Humberto Ruiz, PassPorter Guest Contributor

I consider the planning process of a vacation to be as important and as much fun as the vacation itself.

During the planning of a vacation you get to visualize the places you'll visit and all the things you'll do. But at the same time, that planning can become stressful and get out of control if you don't have an organization system for all the information you will collect. I do almost all my research online, so I need a centralized place to store and organize everything I capture for future reference.

That might sound complicated, but it isn't. All you need is an application like Evernote. Evernote is a free notepad-like software application that can be accessed using your web browser; as an iPhone, iPad, Android, Blackberry, Palm, or Windows Mobile app; and as a standalone application on Mac and Windows computers.

Every time my family and I start planning for a Disney trip we end up with an information overload. We collect tons of information and pictures of things that we consider important. It might be an interesting blog post about a restaurant, a tip in PassPorter's forums, an article in our local newspaper, or maybe a picture of a dessert that we want to try. The amount of information that you can find on the Internet might be overwhelming if it's not properly organized, making the information useless.

Many people prefer printing-out hard copies and saving them in paper folders. We prefer everything to be stored digitally, because it's easier to search and find. For every trip I create a notebook in Evernote where I store everything I find interesting and important for my future trip. I tag each item captured, to assign a category like restaurant, ride, tour, or tip. Those tags help to classify the content and help when searching for a specific type of information. This simple content capture process offers the convenience of having everything in a single place instead of having it spread across the web.

When, like me, you are subscribed to at least 12 Disney related blogs, participate in three forums or more and receive at least five newsletters, the amount of good information is huge. That's why you need to have a central hub for content storage that is accessible no

matter where you are or what type of gadget you use.

For those who prefer to work with pen and paper, or simply find themselves with a lot of papers and no way to scan them into a computer, a simple folder or notebook is a lifesaver. Keep all your papers together in one, central location so you can find everything easily. This is also where you'll want to keep your hotel confirmation letters, Disney's Magical Express documents and tags, cruise documents, related financial records, and so on. The world is not paperless yet, and it's easy to accumulate quite a stack! If you prefer to keep your print guidebook with your papers, PassPorter's Walt Disney World -- or a simple a PassPorter binder and a set of pockets -- is a winner.

Another way of organizing and planning your travel is to use a large whiteboard, or simply a large poster board with sticky notes. You can put the board up in central location in your home so everyone can share in your planning. Use it to create an itinerary, record dining preferences, post tips, display notes, and get excited about your trip!

Finally, let's not discount one of the simplest ways to keep your travel information in one place -- your e-mail box! The best way to do this is to create a special folder or label (as it is called in gMail). When you get something trip-related, move or copy it to your special folder, or place your special label on it. Find something online? Mail it to yourself and organize it. This way you can access your e-mail from nearly anywhere. If you happen to have an e-mail account that isn't easily checked online, sign up for a free gMail account and you'll be able to check it anywhere you have Internet access.

There's really so many ways to organize and plan -- have fun finding the way that works best for you! Happy planning!

About The Author: Humberto Ruiz lives with his family in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He is a first time contributor to PassPorter News.

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