



Toolie's Business Travel Newsletter

November 2004

Toolie's Samples and Previews CD

If you're a event or meeting planner, Toolie can create a custom travel guide you can distribute to your event attendees to smooth and enhance their travel experience to your event. Toolie now has a no-cost mini-CD of samples of her work that you can request by email. Included on that disk is a 24-page sample of a Custom Travel Guide, two of her newsletters, and a 12-minute preview of her new web seminar "What You Need to Know to Travel Internationally."

To get your mini-CD, send your full name, email, and mailing address in an email to <mailto:JocelynG@ToolieTheTravelGuide.com>, or request it when you chat with me online. Your mini-CD will be sent promptly by US mail.

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This Month's Travel Tip: Surviving Holiday Travel

Greetings from Hong Kong! I'm writing this newsletter from my perch above what I think is the most amazing harbour in the world, Victoria Harbour. Last evening I came back from the Kowloon side on the world-famous Star Ferry, and about a dozen buildings of 30 floors or more had animated Christmas lights from top to bottom on the side of the building facing the harbour. Hong Kong Island looked like a giant group of Christmas packages waiting to be opened.

This month I'm going to wander just a bit from my normal focus on business travel because holiday travel issues affect both professional business travelers and non-professional (leisure) travelers. By the way, if you know of someone who might need the following advice, please forward this email to them!

In the United States, the Thanksgiving holiday just past is one of the busiest travel times in that country. Thanksgiving is a national holiday that began with a religious basis, but all Americans celebrate it, so that holiday in the US has the highest concentration of travelers during the typically 4-day weekend. Since Thanksgiving is always on Thursday, many people take the Friday after Thanksgiving as a holiday. Some Americans begin their vacations the weekend before, and that habit is not lost on the airlines. Airfares tend to rise starting the Friday BEFORE Thanksgiving to make the most of that entire travel period.

Holiday travel is for the majority of people a once- or twice-a-year event, so they don't usually do it often enough to be good at it. Many business travelers do what they can to avoid leaving town during the holidays, since for them staying home IS a holiday, in addition to being able to avoid all the non-professional travelers!

I'm not going to tell you to skip traveling during the holidays – that is impractical, not to mention how much trouble you'll be in if you miss spending time with family and friends! What I have instead is a list of things you can do to minimize the hassle of travel during this very busy time of year.

Ship Your Gifts Ahead of Time

Getting your shopping done early and shipping gifts ahead of time requires discipline and planning, but it can be done. Airlines have become very sticky about excess and overweight baggage, and will charge you fees (more than it would cost you to ship the gifts!) For attempting to take too much with you. It's also a pain to drag all that stuff around, so do what you can to bring the minimum along on the flight.

If you do take gifts along, don't bother wrapping them prior to your flight – the security personnel will want to open and look at your gifts, and they'll destroy your lovely wrapping job in the process. Instead, leave time to get out and buy wrapping paper once you reach your destination.

Personally, I'm on a first-name basis with the folks at my FedEx shipping office. I long ago set up a free online account with them – you can too (<http://www.fedex.com>). I create and print my shipping labels at home using their website, and everything is billed to my credit card. All I have to do is walk in with the packages and drop them off; no standing in line or putting my credit card number on a multi-part form. If you're willing to pay a bit extra, FedEx will even come and pick them up from your house! Imagine eliminating the shipping hassle from your holiday....

Families: Prepare Your Children for Travel

My family always traveled by car when I was a kid, so I didn't encounter the joys and sorrows of air travel during the holidays until I was an adult. By contrast, many children these days experience their first flight before the age of 5. For these little people, it's a pretty overwhelming experience. There are lots of things in the airport to look at, big spaces to run around in, and lots of waiting time, which is probably the hardest thing for them to understand. Even teens get bored waiting around, so the pressure is on for parents to keep everyone under control.

The best thing you can do for children as early as age 2 is to start talking about what traveling will be like well before you leave so they know what to expect. Explain that they must stay close to you (to be safe), and have things for them to do while you're waiting. Rehearse the travel situations if you think that will help (waiting in lines, going through security, getting onto the plane, sitting for long periods with seat belts on, etc.). All of these are experiences well out of the normal activities of children, so preparing them as much as possible will keep you, the parent, from losing your patience. Don't forget to talk about the noise level on the plane. You can't really simulate the experience of takeoff and landing, but you can help them know that the sudden rise in noise level is normal.

Help your children pack their things, and also make sure they don't accidentally take any sharp items or questionable toys that might be confiscated at security screening. Having a toy suddenly taken away at the beginning of your trip is NOT a good way to start your time away. Once you reach the gate, ask about early boarding if you think your family would benefit from the additional time to get settled.

If your minor children will be traveling without you, get information from the airline on their requirements for unaccompanied minors. I recommend that you do similar preparations for those travel situations until you feel that they're comfortable with the process of flying.

Go With The Flow

Achieving a peaceful travel mindset is the apex of the travel experience. I was not good at this in the beginning; in fact, it took me years to figure out that I would be happiest if I just surrendered to the travel process and didn't waste any emotion on it. The line ahead of me was not going to move faster if I got mad about it, and that if I went ahead and smiled and struck up conversations with strangers, my travel would be a friendlier experience.

I also learned the value of getting to the airport early, and figuring out ways to be productive when I had to wait. You know that I'm building an entire business on the concept of productivity during travel, and now know what prompted this idea! Getting to the airport early was also a lesson I had to learn the hard way (thank you McAlister), but once I appreciated how much lower my stress level became, I made it a regular practice. This concept is never more valuable than when you're traveling during the holidays. Think about all those other travelers who might not have read this email! If you get there early, you'll be ahead of them in line.

Have a Good Time on Your Trip

Please don't let the process of traveling overshadow the reason you're going. Have a wonderful time at your destination, and stay relaxed on the way home. In case I forget to say it, have a wonderful Holiday Season and travel safely.

[Follow-up Regarding Filtering Water Bottles](#)

Last month I promised that I would update you on my use of the Katadyn Exstream XR Bottle Purifier for travel, <http://www.katadyn.ch/site/us/home/>. As I mentioned last month, this water bottle is intended for use by backpackers who are hiking in the middle of nowhere, using streams as a water source. This bottle has top-of-the-line filtering capabilities, and certainly can handle filtering any foreign tap water source, which was the reason I bought it. There are 3 parts to the filter system. The purified water coming out of the bottle with the filters in the normal order had a mild iodine taste that I disliked.

I contacted the Katadyn company and was told that I could change the order of the filters to put the carbon filter as the last one in the chain, and that doing so would improve the taste. I have the bottle with me on my current trip, and indeed the water does taste better. It's not as perfectly tasty as the water I get from my Brita water filter at home, but given that I'm no longer spending US\$4 to \$8 per day on bottled water, I think the water tastes fine, and that this bottle is well worth my initial US\$26 investment. There are other bottles of similar quality and capabilities out there, but this is the one I own and have personally tested.

[New Service: Chat or Ask Questions Online](#)

If you haven't been to my website lately, you're missing the newest service I have added. In the middle of the top of each page is a new button you can click to chat with me in real-time. When I sign onto the Internet and to this service, the button is automatically updated with a message reflecting my online status. If you visit my site, and the button says 'Questions? Click here to send email to Toolie', you'll know I'm not online, but you can still use the form that pops up when you click the button to send me a message. I welcome the following inquiries, whether in live chat or by email:

- General questions on travel procedures
- Questions about specific destinations
- Productivity ideas and needs during travel
- Questions about my speaking, writing, or travel guide services
- Feedback about my newsletter and (soon) my products
- General customer service needs

I plan to make myself available for a few hours during my business day when I'm at home. I'll log on whenever I'm traveling, but I might not be on the same time zone as you are, so the hours might seem a bit erratic. Here is the link to my site: <http://www.tooliethetravelguide.com>. Try it now, and say Hello if you see that I'm online. I love to hear from my subscribers anytime!

[Recent Presentation to NSA Northwest](#)

I had a great time presenting to the Northwest Chapter of the National Speakers Association on November 13th in Bellevue, Washington. My talk was about using technology to increase productivity during travel. I demonstrated 4 levels of technology-enablement, from bare minimum to deeply geeky (I am a self-identified geek, thank you!), as well as the minimum items you need to travel internationally. I brought out all my travel gadgets, and demonstrated both the software and hardware I use in my own business whether I am at home or I'm traveling.

If you'd like me to make a similar presentation to your group or association, please contact me at JocelynG@ToolieTheTravelGuide.com.

[Toolie's Travel Plans](#)

My visit to Sydney went well, though it was uncharacteristically cloudy 4 out of the 6 days I was there. I stopped in Singapore for the last few items and stayed at the newly opened Fullerton Hotel <http://www.fullertonhotel.com/>, which is right on the edge of the Financial District. It's a beautiful refurbishment of what was for years their main post office, and the hotel is wonderfully convenient to the majority of business offices in Singapore. I will finish up my Hong Kong work on Monday, then head home. This trip brings me to the end of my international travel for the year. I have to get my passport renewed for the first time. I'll be reporting on that process to you next month!

A short visit to San Francisco in January will complete that guide, and then I'm chaining myself to my desk at home until all 10 guides are done and ready to ship. Thanks to all of you who have checked in on my progress and are expectantly anticipating these releases.

Remember, I can also provide Custom Travel Guides written for your Convention Center, your corporation, or your event (large or small). Contact me at JocelynG@ToolieTheTravelGuide.com for more information.