

TOP 5 TIPS FOR POTENTIAL EXPATS IN 2014



The ultimate step for any travel fan is to take the leap into living abroad, but often being far away from home, especially when you're alone, can be lonely and stressful. Whether you're moving for love, work or just seeking a new adventure, here are some top tips for becoming an expat.

Plan, plan & plan some more

Make sure to do all your homework before you go! Find out how much things cost, where the best areas to live are, transport and local customs. The Foreign & Commonwealth Office's [foreign travel checklist](#) is a great place to get you started with the essentials. Buy a few guidebooks and become familiar with your destination's lifestyle, history and food - the more you prepare, the better you'll be able to navigate big hurdles such as finding somewhere to live.

Calculate the unexpected costs

Always have more cash than you think you need, because you never know what might surprise you - will your daily essentials cost more than at home? Seek out advice from established expats who have already made the move and written about their experiences in blogs or forums.

Learn the language

Sure, many places are full of people who speak English but that shouldn't be an excuse not to make an effort to learn the local language! Sign up for lessons or enrol in an online course before going out there and practising. Even learning the basics can open up doors and help you show respect for the locals. Watching local TV can help you get used to the flow of language and regional accents.

Network

There are plenty of expat networking groups out there where you can easily make new friends. However, never limit yourself to just making friends with fellow expats, make sure to mix with the locals as much as possible. If you don't have a work visa it can be difficult to meet people who live and work in the city. Consider volunteering with a local charity to get of the house and gain valuable experience!

Enjoy yourself!

Adjusting to your new life might seem daunting at times and it can be easy to fall into the habit of wasting your weekends on Skype contacting your old friends and feeling homesick (which is perfectly normal). Although you should never lose contact with back home, always be open to new experiences and make the most of what your new adopted country has to give. Get into a routine and make a commitment to say 'yes' to as many opportunities as possible - try the food, visit the sites and have fun!

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