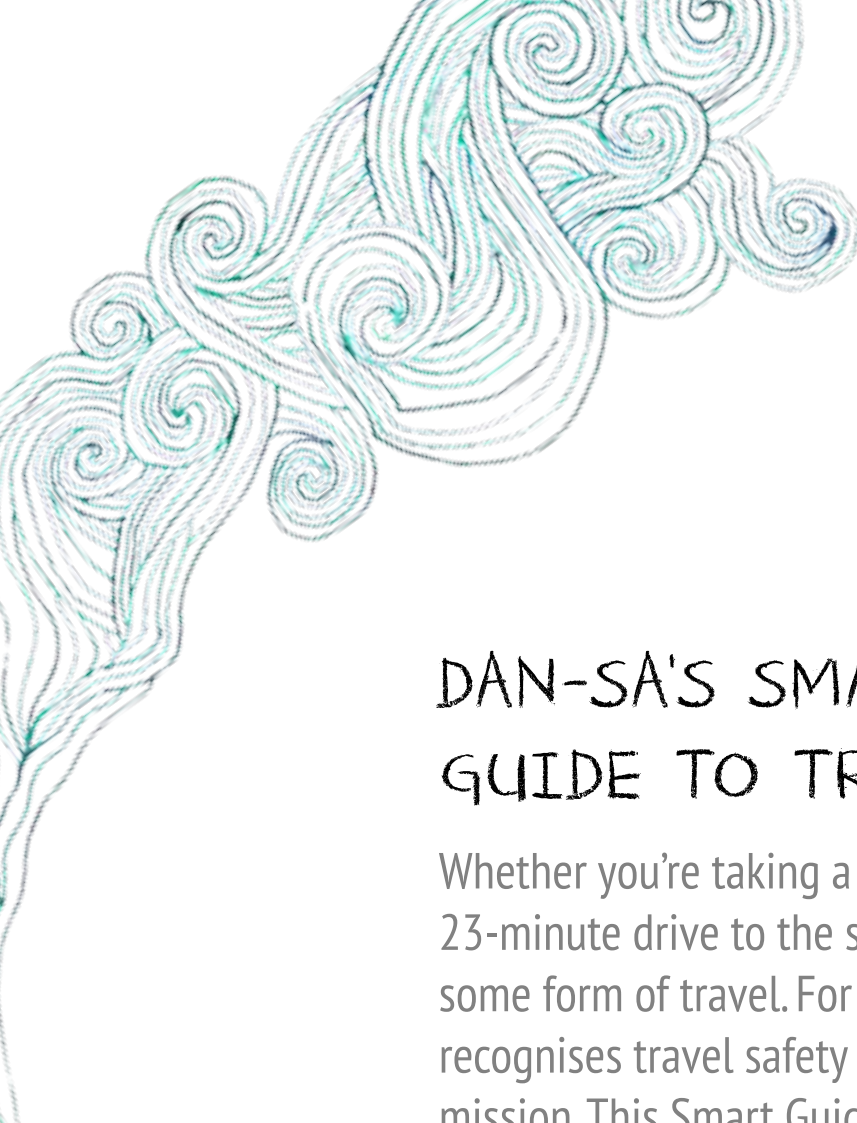


# DAN-SA'S Smart Guide to Travel

## **KNOW BEFORE YOU GO: How to Plan Your Dive Trip**

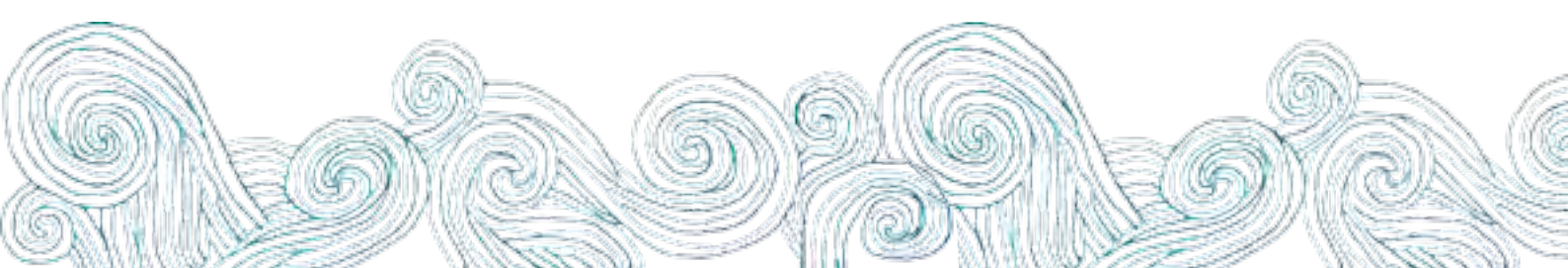
- Dive Travel Packing Checklist
- Travel Preparation Timeline
- Tips for Health and Safety
- Gear Care Guidelines





## DAN-SA'S SMART GUIDE TO TRAVEL

Whether you're taking a 24-hour flight to Fiji or a 23-minute drive to the shore, all diving involves some form of travel. For this reason, DAN-SA recognises travel safety as a key aspect of our mission. This Smart Guide is a quick and easy reference tool to help you prepare for your dive travel to local and international destinations.



# BASIC PACKING CHECKLIST

The following checklist is not comprehensive. It is intended to provide a foundation, allowing you to customise the list according to the specific details of your trip. Copy, scan, or retype and customise this list, adding in any specialised equipment you need, as well as your clothing, toiletries, and other personal items necessary for your trip.

## Essentials

- Certification card (C-card)
- DAN-SA membership card
- Medical aid and/or travel insurance card
- Cell phone/radio with charger and waterproof bag
- Hat
- Nutritious snacks
- Sunscreen
- Water
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Gear

- BC/BCD
- Booties/fins
- Cutting tool or dive knife
- Dive computer
- Exposure suit
- Gear bag
- Gloves
- Hood
- Lights
- Mask
- Reels
- Regulator
- Snorkel
- Surface signal
- Cylinder(s)
- Weights
- Whistle
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Specialised equipment (optional)

- Camera and other photography equipment
- Diver propulsion vehicle (DPV)
- Oxygen unit
- Rebreather
- Speargun
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## “Save-a-dive” kit

- Batteries
- Clasps
- Defogger spray
- Duct tape and waterproof adhesive/sealant
- Fin buckles and straps
- Lighter
- Mask strap or extra mask
- Multi-tool (including an adjustable wrench and hex key)
- O-ring kit (including O-rings for high- and low-pressure hoses, an O-ring pick and silicone grease)
- Regulator mouthpiece
- Snorkel keeper
- Weightbelt or buckle
- White dustbin bag (or another white working surface)
- Cable ties and bungee cord/shock cord
- Zipper wax
- Dive tables
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## First-aid kit

### Basics

- Nitrile (hypoallergenic) gloves

- CPR barrier (orinasal device or face shield)
- Tweezers
- Safety pins
- Scissors
- Soap (or antiseptic solution or wipes)
- Insect repellent
- First-aid guide

## Dressings and bandages

- Adhesive bandages
- Gauze pads and rolls
- Triangular bandages
- Elastic bandages
- Medical tape

## Accessory items

- Vinegar
- Sterile saline solution
- Irrigation syringe
- Hot and cold packs

## Medications

- Prescription medication
- Malaria medication (where applicable)
- Aspirin
- Panado
- Neurofen
- Scopex/Buscopan
- Anthisan cream
- Nasal decongestant
- Swimseal/Aqua Ear/Vosol ear drops
- Mylocort/Biocort/Dilocort cream
- Antibiotic ointment
- Cyclizine/Valoid/Stugeron
- Imodium
- Eno
- Rehydration sachets
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



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# DOMESTIC TRAVEL

One of the benefits of domestic travel is that it can be more spontaneous and cost efficient than international travel. Knowing how to be prepared for even a short ride to the nearest coast, lake, or quarry can help make your local trips easier, safer and more enjoyable.

## Get prepared

- Create a packing checklist based on your typical dives.
- Maintain your gear so you can grab it and go.
- Assemble a first-aid kit and a save-a-dive kit.
- Keep your relevant certifications up to date.

## Before you hit the road

- Research the weather, currents, and water temperatures at your destination.
- Customise your packing checklist for this specific trip.
- Check – and if necessary replenish your first-aid kit.
- Tell someone where you are going.
- Remember to bring plenty of water and healthy snacks.



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# INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

## 2 Months before travel

- Ensure your passport is valid for at least six months after your last intended date of travel.
- Determine whether you need a tourist visa.
- Find out whether you need any vaccinations.
- Complete RSTC medical form and have a copy of your physician sign off if needed.

## 1 Month before travel

- Check your destination country's laws about your prescription medications.
- Acquire your destination country's currency and talk to your bank about international ATM arrangements.
- Find out if there are foreign transaction fees associated with your credit cards.
- Register on ROSA (Registration of South Africans Abroad) on the Department of International Relations and Cooperation's (DIRCO) website, [www.dirco.gov.za](http://www.dirco.gov.za). The information travellers register on ROSA allows DIRCO to assist South African citizens in the event of an emergency abroad.

## 2 Weeks before travel

- Customise your packing checklist.
- Set up a global calling plan.
- Inform your credit card companies of your intention to travel abroad.
- Make sure you have purchased or renewed your travel insurance.
- Make two copies each of your passport (colour copies are preferred), driving licence, credit cards, itinerary, accommodation confirmation and visa (if you need one). Leave one set of copies with someone at home and pack the second set someplace separate from the original documents. Also scan all these documents and save them to your Cloud, Dropbox, device, or somewhere where they can be accessed electronically while you are travelling.
- Pack everything you won't need before your trip.

## 24 Hours before travel

- Check in to your flight, and make sure you have an assigned seat.
- Run through your packing list again and make a copy to help you pack for the return trip (so you won't forget your toiletries, chargers, medications, etc.).
- Notify someone of your travel plans.





# AIR TRAVEL WITH GEAR

Looking forward to invigorating days of diving is sometimes the only way to get through the headache of travelling with dive gear, which can be clumsy, cumbersome and difficult to explain to airport security. Use the following guidelines to streamline the process.

## Check before you check in

If you're planning to bring your gear with you, think about what you have to check in and what you should bring in your hand luggage to make sure you can dive immediately even if your bags don't make it. Remember also to research your airline and destination country's baggage allowances.

### Carry on

- Regulator
- Dive computer
- Mask
- Swimsuit

### Carry on or check in

- BC/BCD
- Fins
- Snorkel

### Check in only

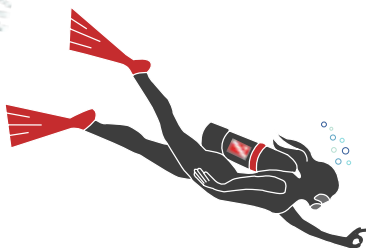
- Cutting Tools
- Spearguns
- Cylinders\*

## Rental gear

If you choose to forgo the hassle of travelling with your gear, find a dive operator that offers gear rentals. The quality of rental gear varies, so make sure you thoroughly research the dive shops at your destination. If you choose to rent gear at your destination, you'll still want to bring a few items.

Items widely available for renting	Items that may or may not be available for renting	Specialty items to consider renting
Wetsuits	Snorkels	Cutting tools
Drysuits	Fins	Surface marker buoys
Gloves, hoods and booties		Light
Cylinders		
BCs/BCDs		
Regulators		
Weights and weight systems		

\*When travelling with cylinders, ensure you remove the valves. Read the following article to ensure you comply with the rules governing the safe transport of cylinders:  
[https://alertdiver.eu/en\\_US/articles/how-to-transport-a-scuba-tank-rules-to-comply-with](https://alertdiver.eu/en_US/articles/how-to-transport-a-scuba-tank-rules-to-comply-with)





# DIVE SITE REGULATIONS

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Rules differ depending on where you dive. The site can regulate everything from what gear you can use to what hours you can dive. Before you go, ask these questions:

## **Does my training match the dive site requirements?**

Not all dive sites allow open water recreational divers. In fact, some dive sites – such as cavern and cave diving sites – require a high level of training. Make sure you either check online or call the local dive operator to determine certification and training requirements.

## **What equipment is allowed?**

Some sites require you to bring special equipment such as surface marker buoys or spare air. Other locations prohibit the use of certain items such as diving gloves or spearguns to protect the marine environment. Learn what is necessary and what is restricted before you pack.

## **What are the site's access requirements?**

Protected dive sites or sites located next to private property may require you to purchase a ticket or tag to dive. You may also find out that entry is limited to specific locations. Don't show up to a site only to be turned away. Do your research.

**Good diving etiquette dictates that divers should follow the rules no matter where in the world they travel. Remember that diving regulations are in place to protect your safety, the safety of the marine environment, and the local customs and laws of your travel destination.**



# HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

Most divers are accustomed to thinking about maintaining fitness to dive, avoiding the bends and minimising the risks of marine life injuries. But all divers are also travellers and should be aware of travel-related medical conditions.

## Dehydration

### **What is it?**

Dehydration is the depletion of water and other bodily fluids. It can impair the body's ability to carry out normal functions.

### **Why does it affect travellers?**

Whether you are travelling by car, bus, train, air, or boat, you may lack convenient access to drinking water. Air travel is particularly dehydrating because the air on planes is very dry.

### **What to do**

Prevent dehydration by carrying one or two bottles of water in your hand luggage. While travelling, check your urine. If it is dark, drink some fluids right away. If you notice extreme thirst, lack of urination, withered skin, dizziness, or confusion, refrain from diving and seek immediate medical care.

Prevent dehydration by carrying one or two bottles of water in your hand luggage.

## Deep vein thrombosis (DVT)

### **What is it?**

Deep vein thrombosis is when blood clots form in the body's deep veins, usually in the legs. It can lead to life-threatening conditions such as pulmonary embolism or stroke.

### **Why does it affect travellers?**

Long periods of inactivity inhibit normal blood circulation.

### **What to do**

Whether you're driving or flying, make sure to get up and stretch your legs from time to time. If you know you are at increased risk for DVT, wear compression socks and consult with your doctor about taking clot-preventatives. See DAN-SA's online library for more information.

## Foodborne illness

### **What is it?**

This occurs when food incubates bacteria, transmits disease from person to person or animal to human, or carries other toxins (as with poisonous fish). It can be fatal or cause life-threatening symptoms in extreme cases.

### **Why does it affect travellers?**

According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), travellers' diarrhoea is the most common illness affecting travellers and may occur in up to 50% of international travellers. It often results from consuming improperly handled food or untreated water.

### **What to do**

Avoid raw or undercooked meat and seafood as well as raw fruits and vegetables, untreated water and ice cubes, and any food you suspect may have been prepared in unhygienic conditions.



## Vector-borne diseases

### **What are they?**

Vector-borne diseases are illnesses transmitted by mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, and other insects. These diseases include chikungunya, dengue fever, malaria and others.

### **Why do they affect travellers?**

They are endemic to certain areas of the world.

### **What to do**

Find out whether your travel destination carries a risk for vector-borne disease and take appropriate precautions, which may include vaccination, insect repellent, or avoiding certain behaviours or environments.

## Flying after diving

Flying to a destination near sea level before diving poses virtually no risk. However, flying after diving increases decompression stress since the pressure in an aircraft cabin is lower than ground-level atmospheric pressure. DAN-SA recommends you allow for at least a 24-hour pre-flight surface interval after your final dive. Please remember that any post dive ascent to a higher altitude – even using ground transportation – increases your decompression stress.

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## QUICK TIP

Research any endemic diseases or special conditions to which you may be exposed, especially if you plan to travel internationally. These can range from malaria to heat stroke. The CDC's website provides comprehensive information on current alerts and common diseases in your destination - visit [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list/](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list/)

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“ Flying to a destination near sea level before diving poses virtually no risk.



# Calling the DAN-SA hotline

## What you need to know

### WHEN SHOULD I PHONE THE DAN-SA HOTLINE?

- All diving emergencies
- Non-diving medical emergencies
- Diving medical information, such as fitness to dive, medication, and travel medical advice and enquiries
- Travel notifications and advice
- Diving medical examiner contact details
- International medical centres or doctors who want to confirm DAN-SA memberships

### WHAT DO I NEED TO HAVE READY?

- The caller and/or patient's name and contact number
- The nature of the emergency
- The patient's DAN-SA membership number, if applicable or known
- The patient's travel insurance information, if applicable
- The patient's medical aid information (many medical aids also provide international travel benefits)

! If the caller is not at the scene, at least one local contact number should be provided in order to reach the person that is in need of assistance, or those who are in charge of their care.

### WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I HAVE LOGGED THE EMERGENCY?

DAN-SA makes a conference call to one of the on-call diving medical officers (DMOs) when an emergency call is received and the nature of the event has been established. The DMO will provide specialist diving medical advice regarding how and what should be done immediately and will also make decisions concerning the further management of each case, depending on the situation.

i The DAN-SA hotline provides emergency medical assistance to injured divers. We encourage you to call early, even when you are uncertain, rather than wait until the situation has become critical as the opportunity to assist becomes more restricted.

### WILL I GET EVACUATED BY AIR?

Aeromedical resources, such as helicopters and air ambulances, cannot be dispatched unless authorised by the DMO. It may take longer to activate an air ambulance than it would take to mobilise emergency medical services via a ground ambulance. Several factors, aside from costs, will determine aeromedical evacuation.



#### THE AVAILABILITY OF TRANSPORT

Is an air ambulance or a helicopter available?



#### THE NATURE OF THE INJURY

How urgently does the patient need advanced life support and should they be moved to intensive care?



#### THE LOCATION OF THE PATIENT

What are the optimal logistical considerations for efficiently and safely moving the patient to a place where they can receive medical assessment and appropriate medical care, with appropriate medical support, during the transfer?



#### VARIOUS ASPECTS REGARDING THE LANDING ZONE OR AIRPORT

Are these appropriate for a helicopter or a fixed-wing air ambulance? Are these open, particularly at night? What are the customs or immigration requirements? What are the implications of getting the patient to the landing zone or airport, or the crew to the patient?



# GEAR CARE GUIDELINES

As divers, we're all familiar with the demands of travelling with dive gear. Luckily, routine maintenance and careful storage of gear can not only make your diving safer, but it can also make your trip planning easier. The following guidelines will help you make sure your gear is ready to go when you are.

Item(s)	Before you dive	After you dive	Storage	Professional servicing
Mask, snorkel and fins	Keep well organised to minimise the risk of their being kicked, stepped on or tripped over.	Rinse and dry well.	Pack and store carefully so they're not crushed by heavier gear.	Not applicable.
BC/BCD	Test before you dive.	Rinse the outside and flush the bladder with fresh water. Hang to dry.	After drying, partially inflate jacket for storage.	Have professionally inspected annually; remember the low-pressure hose and dump valve.
Regulator	Test function as soon as you set up your gear.	Rinse and clean while still connected to cylinder and pressurised. Leave out to dry.	Keep dust cap in place and secured. Store in a regulator bag.	Service at least once a year.
Wetsuit, boots, gloves and hood	If necessary, lubricate zippers.	Rinse, turn inside out, and hang to dry. If wetsuit has an unpleasant odour, use wetsuit shampoo in post dive rinse.	Store in the shade, as neoprene is susceptible to UV damage.	
Dive computer	Check battery icon.	Rinse and dry.	Store in a dry, cool, ventilated area.	Service every one to two years, or per the manufacturer's recommendation.
Cylinder	Handle with extreme care, as a pressurised cylinder presents a risk of explosion. Secure tightly for transportation.	Rinse thoroughly and let dry. Regularly remove cylinder boot to prevent a build-up of salt and debris.	Never drain completely of gas. Reduce pressure to the lowest reading on the pressure gauge. Keep a clean, dry dust cap on cylinder valve.	Send for a visual inspection once a year. Ensure a hydrostatic test is performed every five years





# Exclusive DAN-SA Member benefits

Dive safety should be taken seriously. When you join DAN-SA, your exclusive member benefits ensure you have access to invaluable resources including:



## **24-Hour emergency hotline 0800 020 111 (SA) or +27 828 10 60 10 (int.)**

Help is just a phone call away anytime, anywhere.



## **Emergency evacuation benefits**

We organise your evacuation in a medical emergency when you travel more than 100 km from home or when you are on a dive trip. This includes non-diving, emergency medical expenses when you are traveling outside your country of permanent residence.



## **Dive accident cover**

You get access to premier dive accident membership benefits. This includes the cost of hospitalisation, medical and hyperbaric treatment, and certain other costs associated with diving-related accidents.



## **Medical information line**

You get access to the latest medical information for the prevention, identification and treatment of diving injuries.



## **Alert Diver magazine**

DAN-SA's members-only magazine features dive-related medical and research information, underwater photography, dive travel and marine environmental issues. Plus, your DAN-SA membership supports the ongoing research, medical programmes and education that promote the awareness of dive safety and ensures the availability of medical resources if and when you need them.

## **Learn more at [dansa.org](http://dansa.org)**

Rosen Office Park, Matuka Close  
Midrand, 1685, South Africa

### **Phone:**

+27 11 266 4900

### **DAN-SA Emergency Hotline:**

0800 020 111 (SA) OR +27 828 10 60 10 (int.)

## **Join us at [DANSA.org](http://DANSA.org)**

### **Acknowledgments:**

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Dive Safety Since 1997

DAN-SA is trusted by more than 7 000 fellow divers  
and over 400 000 international divers.

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SOUTHERN AFRICA