

Travel Tips for People with Hearing Loss

Sound Advice by Advocate Ruth D. Bernstein

This is a much-requested travel tips blog post from the Sound Advice series by Ruth Bernstein, updated July, 2023 and July, 2026.

Despite the passage of time, travel rules of the road have not changed for people with hearing loss. We encounter the same problems all the time. The good news is technology has improved a lot, making it easier to cope. We have access to captioning apps on our smart phones (e.g., [Google's Live Transcribe](#), [Apple's Live Captions](#)). Airline apps notify travelers online when flights are delayed. There are captioned movies on some flights. Hopefully, onboard announcements will be captioned soon.

My last trip was in June, 2024, when I went to Israel to attend my grandson Aaron's wedding. Although I was already using a walker, the trip was comfortable and easy because I followed the suggestions for making trips as stress free as possible. The key is to **always** identify

yourself as a person with a hearing loss and ask for help from the beginning to the end of your trip.

My new granddaughter in law's mother smoothed the trip for me. She is a retired El Al stewardess. She informed the cabin staff of my needs. I was grateful for all the attention personal I received.

Travel Tips for People with Hearing Loss

1. Tell everyone involved in your trip you are hard of hearing/deaf, including the travel agent, ticket clerk, airline representative, group coordinator or cruise ship operator. You may want to ask to have this information put on your ticket.
2. State your needs in writing and request written confirmation of all arrangements at least two weeks ahead of time. Click [here](#) to see a sample hotel reservation letter.
3. Take ID showing your name, address, phone number(s), the fact you have a hearing loss, and the names and addresses of your emergency contacts and medical providers.
4. Pack copies of your ID information, itinerary, ticket(s), passport, license, credit card(s) and a list of the medications you take separately from the actual documents and leave copies with a responsible person, on your desk, and on your computer.
5. Put your personal affairs in order.
6. Check the website or call the carrier you are using to find out about identification requirements and baggage restrictions. Click [here](#) for packing

instructions from the Transportation Security Administration. Click [here](#) for information about traveling with a hearing loss. For flight information, check your airline and visit www.fly.faa.gov.

7. Take ALDs, assistive listening devices, including an FM system, phone amplifier, a small battery tester and flashlight. Remove batteries from devices you are not using on your flight and put them in checked luggage. The FAA ruled it is OK to take the ALDs you need to communicate in your carry-on luggage. Be prepared to explain what they are for. To learn more about assistive listening technology, click or contact the [Center for Hearing and Communication](#) at info@chchearing.org.
8. Keep pencil/pen and paper, the low tech HAT (hearing assistive technology), handy at all times.
9. At the airport, tell the person at the check-in desk you have a hearing loss and have trouble hearing the PA system. Ask them to come and tell you if there is any change in the flight. Sit where you can be seen.
10. When you board a plane, immediately tell the stewards you are unable to hear the public address system and will need explanations in an emergency. If you are traveling alone, ask your seat mate to help you.
11. When you travel with a group, explain you are hard of hearing/deaf, demonstrate the hearing assistive technology you use, tell people to make direct eye contact when they talk to you and ask them to help you when necessary.

- 12.If you have communication problems during the trip, speak to the person in charge and explain your needs calmly and clearly. Try to keep your sense of humor.
- 13.After the trip, write thank-you letters or letters of complaint.
- 14.Take responsibility for yourself. Be flexible and have a good time!

Now that I am 93 and need a walker to get around, I am enjoying being able to travel online. Once every two weeks, I take a trip to the National Gallery in DC to attend a one hour discussion at the Art of Looking:<https://www.nga.gov/calendar/art-looking-henri-matisse-pianist-and-checker-players?evd=202608071700>

The Bloomberg Connects app provides captioned guides to museums in the United States and all over the world. On a recent visit to the Metropolitan Museum's Cloisters, I found detailed descriptions of the major art being displayed. As a result of Covid cultural organizations that had never been accessible now, provide access. Youtube is a treasure trove: <https://www.youtube.com/youtube> Do a search for your local cultural organizations. You may be pleasantly surprised at what is available.

The bottom line: you can travel wherever you want, whenever you want online. Although it is not a 3D

experience, you are only as limited as the next click on your computer.

For the best experience live and online, ***always*** identify yourself as a person in need of hearing access and ask for what you need. Have fun traveling in person and online.

Warm regards,

Ruth D. Bernstein