

Strategies and Resources: **Travel (part 1)**

So, you've decided you want to go on holiday/travel! Fantastic! The Leeds Autism AIM team have created this helpful guide to support you plan your holiday, with accommodations in mind that will make your holiday more enjoyable and less stressful.

Our guide has been broken up into smaller parts to make it easier to read and find the resources you are looking for.

Part 1 will cover lots of areas of your holiday, including how to narrow down choices, plan your holiday, budgeting for your holiday and booking your holiday.

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Deciding to go on holiday



Going on holiday can be fantastic – it can revitalise you; it can give you wonderful memories and great photos.

But for autistic people, there are extra considerations. Below are some things to help you make the decision about whether you want to go on holiday, and if you do decide to, tips on how to make it a good experience.

Going somewhere new, by its definition, is going to be different. This is something you are going to have to accept to an extent if you want to go away on holiday. It's perfectly fine to have a staycation if you want to. There's a section on staycations later if you feel that is the best for you.

When thinking about holidays, ask yourself the question, how much difference are you ok with?

That could shape where and when you would be best for you to go on holiday. For example, Iceland is almost completely different between winter and summer.

Some of us really like our routine and don't like straying from that; this is perfectly fine.

Everywhere is going to have something different but some of us don't mind and are willing to go places that the average neurotypical doesn't even know exists – let alone know how to spell it!

You may find that your holiday plans change, or you may want to travel to somewhere you may never have thought about before - your preferences in life, how you are, and what you want to do can change across your life.

Maybe you've done big travel trips and now you just want something smaller. This is your holiday, so do what you would like to do.

Choosing and narrowing down where you'd like to know can be a fun but long process if you like to do a lot of research! Consider what type of holiday you would like – whether it's a sunny beach holiday, a walking holiday in the countryside, a wintry wonderland, an inner-city experience, a relaxing ferry on the sea or a mixture.

Have you been somewhere before you enjoyed? Or does anyone you know have any good recommendations. Sometimes for new or anxious travellers, it's good to start with somewhere you may be familiar with or can speak to someone about to learn how their travelling experience was.

Budget



Before looking into anything, what is your budget for your holiday? The amount of money you can spend on a holiday varies a lot. It is something it's best to plan this, so you don't overspend.

When budgeting for a holiday, the **two biggest expenses** are:

- Travel to wherever you are going, plane and train tickets, taxis etc...
- The hotels or the place where you are staying

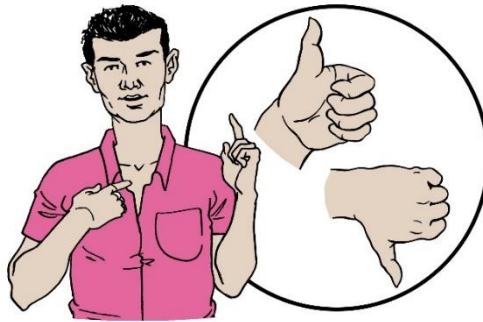
The **smaller expenses** are:

- Food
- Holiday spending money for souvenirs
- Activities e.g. museum visits, guided tours, going to the beach
- Extra clothes you might need to buy – some places where the weather is hotter or colder might need something different
- You need to have some money available for emergencies. Have you planned to have some safety money in case of an emergency or if you run out sooner than you think? It is always good to have some money left in your bank account that you don't plan to use for the holiday

Some countries are a lot cheaper than others; you need to do your research! Some places may have cheaper food or travel, and some maybe more expensive.

How much will it cost you in total? We have some usable sheets to help you keep a track of your spendings and budget along your way in a separate document.

Planning and Booking



Types of holiday bookings

There are three main holiday types you can book on:

- **Staycation** - A staycation is a holiday where you stay at home and do what you want. You could go on day trips to museums, art galleries, the seaside, long walks. You could even stay at home if you wish.
- **Package holidays** – Holiday companies put on deals where you can book your travel and accommodation in one. Depending on if you book for a holiday abroad, these often include: The accommodation, the transfers to and from the airport at your destination, the flights and baggage.
- **Package Holiday Board Types** – Holiday companies put on package holidays which include food while you are on holiday. These are the types of board:
 - **Self-catering** - The cheapest option is self-catering, where no food or drink is included.
 - **Bed and Breakfast** – With this option, you will get breakfast only.
 - **Half board** – With this option, you will get breakfast and an evening meal, no drinks are included.
 - **Full Board** – This means you get breakfast, lunch and an evening meal. No drinks are included.
 - **All-inclusive** – The more-expensive option, you will get breakfast, lunch, evening meal, as well as drinks and snacks are included (sometimes you are limited on how many drinks and snacks you can have included per day, but you can check this with your accommodation).
 - *Sometimes, you can find deals that makes some board packages cheaper*

- **Guided tours holidays** – Depending where you book, guided tours are package holidays with activities included. With the tour company, you can select what activities you would like to do, prices for these types of tours are often pricier and come with extra charges for different or more activities.

These are great tours for people who would like to be led by someone who knows the place well, show you the best bits, teach you about the place and culture and be with other people who are also travelling for the same reason as you.

Booking separately yourself – This option allows you to book everything yourself and comes with more options. But, for this you will need to plan, schedule and book everything separately from your accommodation, how you will get to and from the airport, bus, train, ferry or coach station on both sides, what activities you will do, what you will eat etc.

This option can sometimes be cheaper if you can find good deals as you can shop around to find what suits you, but will take more research, thought and planning to get everything in order.

Thinking about when to travel can help. Some times of year e.g. Christmas and the summer holidays are busier than others.

We have a planning document that will help you plan your holiday and keep a record of what you have booked, costs and what the times are for flights, check in, activities and more.

Guided tour holidays Q&A



Going on a tour means you have a tour leader; you will be with a group and your itinerary is set. You stay with these people for much of the holiday; there can be free periods where you can be away from the group.

Tours come in many forms, from coach tours to small group adventure tours.

Are tours right for you?

This will vary a lot depending on the tour.

How are you with new people?

Depending on the tour, you could be alongside anything from 12 to 30 people you will have never met before.

Different tours appeal to different types of people; a coach tour will have a lot of older people; adventure tours will attract younger people. If you can find a tour that interests you, chances are the people who go will be similar to yourself.

How confident are you with travelling to that destination?

Certain parts of the world such as Western and Central Europe, North America, Australia etc are easier to travel to on your own. They have more western tourists; they use the Roman Alphabet. More people speak English and you're less likely to encounter problems.

Further afield, things become tougher. Fewer people speak English, the signs could be in another alphabet you are unfamiliar with. Transport options might become restricted. Here, travelling on a tour might be the only option - the local knowledge the tour leader can provide could be crucial.

How are you with regular travel?

What we mean here is that tours will regularly move from one location to another. You will only spend at most a few days in a location, you will regularly be sleeping somewhere new. There is a mentality you will need to cultivate; you will need to keep your items and bags organised. As you could be packing and unpacking every day, you need to keep track of your possessions.

If you know you struggle with this sort of organisation, then you could run the risk of leaving something behind. The impact of leaving behind your supply of medication could leave you vulnerable.

What happens if I am feeling ill/sick during a guided tour?

If you are sick during a tour, you should let the tour guide know. Then, the best thing to do is going back to your accommodation and resting until you are well again. If needed, check that you have health insurance and get in touch with the nearest hospital/surgery.

Before you go



Before you go, here are some things to consider:

Research

Research the place you are going on your holiday. What are some things you'd like to do or go see? What amenities are there where you are staying, like local shops and restaurants?

Are there certain things on specific days that you'd like to go to – like local markets or events?

Write down a list of 'must-sees' and what day would be best to do them on. We have a schedule page within our guide to help you plan your holiday. It's best not to plan things too close together and give yourself relaxation time to unwind.

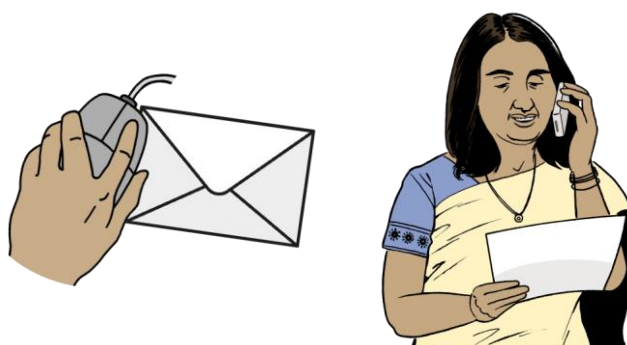
It's a good idea to save these ideas and plans to somewhere you can easily access – such as putting them on your phone or carrying a small notebook with you.

Write down the times you are travelling and other important information. Work out how far you need to travel – apps such as Google Maps, Bing Maps and Moovit can help with that, calculating distances from where you are to your destination. They calculate travel times and distances by foot, car/taxi, train, plane and bus.

Contact Us

This guide is Part 1 of three. Please refer to our website guides for other parts of the travel series.

This guide was co-produced by **Leeds Autism AIM** and Jonathan Byfield, a volunteer at AIM, as part of The Advonet Group. We are a free service co-led by and run for autistic adults (aged 18+) in the Leeds area.



- Email us at leedsautismaim@advonet.org.uk
- Call The Advonet Group's office on **0113 244 0606** and ask for someone from our team
- Follow us on Facebook at [@leedsautismaim](https://www.facebook.com/leedsautismaim)
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