



Make the most of your holidays

15 December 2025

It is the time of the year when most people take their holidays in the Southern Hemisphere. Many businesses close, and generally things slow in pace. Not for everyone of course, but for many people. Holidays are something we look forward to. Well, I hope you do, because if you don't then you need to look at why. No one can work and experience stress and be under pressure constantly. We all need time out. Our bodies and our brains need time out. And during this time out you want to have fun, feel good, and rest and recover from what has been a tough year.

So, how do you make the most of your holidays. I know someone who recently came back from holiday and announced he needed a holiday to recover from the holiday. It turns out this was a camping holiday, and nothing went well. Accommodation was a mess, the weather didn't play ball, bookings were incorrect, and his partner fell ill. You don't want this. You don't want to come back to work feeling even worse than when you left to go on holiday.

What are some pointers to bear in mind that will help you enjoy your holiday time.

1. Unplug from work. Turn off emails and don't take work calls. If you really and truly have to check in to work and you cannot find someone else who could do it, then set a specific time for checking in and only check in then.
2. Avoid overscheduling activities. You don't have to schedule activities. Because most of our work life is run according to a strict and demanding schedule, it is fine if you are very spontaneous on holiday. If you are someone who likes order and there is the possibility that some of what you want to do could be unavailable unless you book, then schedule those activities you want to do. But don't over-schedule. A general rule is schedule for half a day only. You will need to do some chores and want to relax, and other actions will come up. If you are on a tour, you may have a strict schedule to follow, but ideally you don't want too much to remind you of a typical workday.
3. Don't overspend and come back worried silly because your finances are in bad shape. Make sure that the holiday you select fits with your budget and current financial situation. There is no one you need to impress that is worth you getting yourself into debt for.
4. A change of environment is always good. Even if you are having a stay-at-home vacation, you can still go and visit various places. Day outings can be fun. Mentally, a change of scenery is good for you.

5. Pay attention to your travel companions. If you are with people you don't like, the chances are good your holiday will be unpleasant. If you are not good at saying "no" to invitations from people you really don't like, then practice. Unpleasantness, arguments and conflict are not a recipe for a relaxing vacation.
6. If you are going to an interesting location, you probably want to take a lot of photos to remember your holiday. But don't focus so much on taking photos that you forget to enjoy your time.
7. Embrace imperfection. If you are a perfectionist and everything must be run like clockwork you could be miserable quite a bit of the time. This is not a serious project that needs detailed attention. You are on holiday. If things go wrong then let them. Let things be and sometimes more fun can be had when you let things unfold as they do. Trying to overcontrol your holiday will just make it terrible for you and probably for others. Human beings are imperfect. Things will go wrong. Go with the flow and enjoy yourself as much as you can.
8. Don't do nothing. Although you don't necessarily want to overschedule, you don't want to do nothing all holiday. It might sound nice if you are particularly exhausted from this year, but after a few days you will get tired of doing nothing. So have a loose plan for the holidays.

We have holidays in order to reduce our stress levels, relax, and have fun. When you come back from your vacation you want to be less stressed, more creative, and more productive. Research has shown that when you have a good holiday, you can achieve all those. If next year is like the past few years then it will be tough. You want to come back ready for it. So, make sure you have a really good holiday, and that means eliminating the things that stress and upset you.