**Holiday Travel Tips: Preparing for Airport Screening**

Thanksgiving and Christmas are times of year when many Americans take to the skies to visit far-flung friends and family. In fact, the Wednesday before Thanksgiving is traditionally the busiest day of the year at U.S. airports. Here are some tips to help make things go smoothly once you get to the airport.

Stay calm.

Yes, the security line is long but it’ll move faster than you think. And if you know the rules, you can help keep the line moving. Then before you know it, you’ll be on the way to your destination.

Keep 3-1-1 in mind.

The Transportation Security Administration allows each passenger one quart-size bag of liquids, aerosols, gels, creams and pastes in carry-on luggage. That includes toothpaste and gel deodorant, shampoos, lotions and similar personal-care items. Each item must be 3.4 ounces or less. Medication, infant formula and juices for infants or toddlers are exempt from the rule, but keep them separate from the items in your one-quart bag. They may require alternative screening by security personnel.

When in doubt, leave it out.

One way to make the security screening go faster is to keep prohibited items out of your carry-on bag. That 20-ounce bottle of water or soft drink in your carry-on is going to hold you up and get tossed out. And remember that in general, you’re prohibited from taking sharp objects on the plane with you. The rules allow scissors with blades smaller than 4 inches and small needles carried for special medical purposes. If you’re unsure, check the TSA website before leaving home. But it’s best to err on the side of caution.

Bring your ID and have it handy.

Passengers over age 18 must show valid identification at the airport security checkpoint. That can include a passport, driver’s license or other state photo ID card issued by a Department of Motor Vehicles or equivalent agency. Children under 18 are not required to provide identification when traveling with a companion. If you forget your ID, don’t panic. The TSA has other ways to confirm your identity, such as using publicly available databases, so that you can reach your flight.

Be prepared to take laptops out and shoes off.

Laptop computers, full-size DVD players and cameras that use video cassettes must be removed from their carrying cases and submitted separately for X-ray screening. (Small and portable items, including smartphones, tablets and portable games, don’t need to be removed from their cases.) Don’t forget, you’ll have to remove your shoes and belt and put them in the plastic bin that goes through the X-ray screening. The only exceptions are passengers who are 75 and older and children 12 and under. They can keep their shoes and a light jacket on. (Of course, if you’re participating in either Global Entry or TSA Precheck, you’ll be able to avoid the longer lines and skip having to remove shoes and items from your bag.)

Finally, if you have any concerns about the security screening when you get to the airport, ask a TSA officer or supervisor if you can speak with a passenger support specialist. That individual will be able to provide assistance on the spot.

For help planning a trip around the holidays, or at any other time of year, contact your travel agent.