



Be Self-Reliant

Unless a corporate travel office is handling your travel arrangements, build self-reliance into all your plans. Your hosts shouldn't have to tend to things you can easily handle for yourself.

- Once the date and time of the visit are set, tell your host that you'll make your own hotel reservations. Or if your company has a travel department or an affiliation with a travel agency, leave the reservations to them. If your host insists on making them herself, let her do so; the hotel chosen will no doubt be a place convenient to you both, which is what you want.

- Don't overlook the fact that many large hotel chains offer special rooms for business travelers. Amenities range from data ports for laptops to two-line phones to highlighters and Post-It pads. Another hotel amenity is the on-site business center, equipped with copiers, fax machines, computers, and Internet access- all for the benefit of businesspeople. Ask the reservationist about special services of this kind and any other perks. You might find that the hotel caters to solo business travelers by setting aside group tables in the restaurants; a few even organize wine tastings.

- If you're going to meet a client at your hotel, arrange in advance for the use of a meeting room. A note of caution: Having a business meeting in your hotel room is generally considered too personal these days.

- If the journey is a long one, plan to arrive in town the day before the meeting, so that you'll be refreshed and at your best. If you have an appointment scheduled for the day you arrive, book a flight that leaves plenty of room for unexpected delays. The same holds true if you're driving: Get an early start.

- Make your own arrangements for traveling from the airport to the hotel. If you must go straight from the airport to your meeting, think twice about taking a taxi; the line at the taxi rank may be long on a busy day. A safer alternative, if cost permits, is to arrange for a car service; the driver knows your destination in advance and will be waiting when you arrive.

- If you're scheduled to give a presentation, plan on arriving the day before. Take any visual aids with you, including equipment for presenting them, or send them ahead or arrange for them to be available to you. Don't assume that the office you're visiting has, say, an overhead projector for your slides.

- When all of your arrangements are final, prepare an itinerary for your host, your office, and your family. Include the following:

- Your flight schedule, with flight numbers and times of departure and arrival
- The name, address, and telephone number of your hotel

- The times and locations of your meetings, with telephone numbers where you can be reached
- The name and telephone number of the contact person in the office you're visiting.

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