



Traveling and Sleep

I think every parent I ever talk to about sleep wants to know how to navigate traveling and sleep. It can be stressful! So here are my top sleep travelling tips:

1. Pray. Unfortunately, I'm not joking here people! To a huge extent, all bets are off when you combine babies, toddlers, sleep and travelling. There are SO many factors when travelling that are beyond your control, such as whether the flights are on time, whether your child's ears hurt on the plane and he doesn't sleep a wink, whether your luggage arrives on time, etc. And once you arrive at your destination, your child might take some time to adjust to his new environment. If your child is easy-going, things will probably be smoother. However, if your child isn't so adaptable, you might have a tougher time with sleep while you're away. That's why you really need to pray and hope the stars are aligned.
2. Stick to your sleep schedule as much as possible. Remember that throwing your child's schedule out the window will usually lead to overtiredness, and overtiredness leads to poor sleep. So do your best to work your activities around naps and bedtime. That might mean allowing little one to nap on the go in the stroller, car, or carrier if necessary—doing this sometimes while you're on vacation is fine. If you have an easy-going child, he might

allow you to veer from the schedule and won't make you pay the price in terms of overtiredness and poor sleep. But if your baby isn't so easy-going, I wouldn't bend the rules too much. Generally speaking, the older your child is, the more you might be able to bend the rules. **Smaller babies are typically more sensitive than their older siblings and become overtired VERY quickly—so keep that in mind.**

3. Recreate your child's sleep environment and bedtime routine. Bring everything with you that your child sleeps with. So bring the white noise machine, loveys, blankies, bedtime music and books, and anything else that your child associates with bedtime and sleep. You're also going to want to bring travel blackout blinds with you, such as the GRO Anywhere Blind. This is a fantastic product you can bring anywhere with you, and the blinds attach to the windows with suction cups. At the end of the day, you want her to feel as comfortable and familiar with her surroundings as possible so that she feels like she's at home.
4. If there's a time change, what you should do depends on how dramatic the difference in time is. If you're travelling overseas and there's a huge time change, you're definitely going to want to switch the baby onto the new time as quickly as possible. So if you're at your new destination and it's morning and your baby is sleeping, wake him up to get his day started and help him adjust. Remember: the whole 'never wake a sleeping baby' thing is garbage, throw it out the window. Also, try to expose your baby to lots of natural light in the morning to help set her biological wake-sleep clock. Light is a powerful tool that can indicate to her body when it's time to wake up and when it's time to go to sleep.

But let's say that you're not travelling overseas, that you're going somewhere that's **1-3 hours ahead, then feel free to keep your baby on his normal schedule.** For example, if you're traveling to a time zone that's 2 hours ahead of you, that means that if your baby is waking up at 7am, it becomes a 9am wakeup in the new time zone. So feel free to keep your baby on this schedule and not change a thing! Just time the naps appropriately.

5. **And last but not least, my most important advice for traveling is to get your child back on track once you arrive home.** Again, remember that some bumps in the road are often unavoidable when you combine babies, toddlers and traveling, so a bit of a sleep regression is sometimes inevitable. Be very vigilant about getting your child back on her schedule when you're home. And if any poor sleep habits were picked up along the way, **re-sleep train if necessary** so that you get things back to the way they were before you went away. Otherwise, these new habits can become your new reality very quickly.