The budget trip checklist

Everything I check before (and during) a budget trip, solo or not. Print it, tick it, and go.

Before you book

- [ ] Dates built around a public holiday, so your **leave goes further**.
- [ ] Set a daily budget: **bed + food + transport + one paid thing**. Multiply by the nights, add 10% for surprises.
- [ ] Passport valid 6+ months. Visa and entry rules checked on the official government site.
- [ ] Flight price compared **with** the bag you actually need. The lowest fare rarely is.
- [ ] Stay booked in a safe area, and the safest way to get there figured out.
- [ ] Travel insurance that covers medical, theft and cancellation, bought the day you book.

Money

- [ ] Two cards from different banks, kept in different places. One with no foreign fees.
- [ ] Card machine asks "pay in your currency?" Always choose the **local currency**.
- [ ] Cash from bank ATMs only, never the airport exchange desk.
- [ ] A small emergency stash hidden away from your wallet: around 50 in euros or dollars, more in pricier places like the US or Canada.

Phone and papers

- [ ] eSIM bought and installed at home, switched on when you land.
- [ ] Offline maps of the city downloaded, with your accommodation pinned.
- [ ] Photos of passport, insurance and bookings saved in the cloud and emailed to yourself.
- [ ] Your plan and addresses shared with one person at home. Check in with them daily.

Staying safe (especially on your own)

- [ ] Land in daylight when you can. If not, transfer booked in advance.
- [ ] Hotel or hostel with a 24-hour reception, so a late arrival never leaves you stuck outside.
- [ ] Local emergency number saved in your phone (it's not 112 everywhere).
- [ ] Trust the feeling. Leaving a place that feels wrong is never a waste of money.

Spending less on the road

- [ ] Free walking tour on day one: you learn the city and tip what it was worth.
- [ ] Make lunch your main meal. Lunch menus cost a fraction of dinner.
- [ ] Some places are nicer from the outside. Check the entry ticket is worth it before you pay.
- [ ] Refillable bottle, where the tap water is safe to drink.
- [ ] Write down what you spend every evening. Two minutes, no nasty surprise at the end.

My trip numbers

Where to _____

Nights _____

Daily budget _____

Total + 10% _____

Emergency number _____

Who knows my plan _____