Your Digital Nomad Journey: A Timeline

READY TO START YOUR LIFE AS A DIGITAL NOMAD? NOT SO FAST. WRAPPING UP LOOSE ENDS AT HOME AND PREPARING FOR THE JOURNEY CAN TAKE SEVERAL MONTHS. HERE'S A CHECKLIST OF WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE AND WHEN.

BY SANDI SCHWARTZ



illions of Americans live as digital nomads, traveling domestically and/or abroad to experience intriguing places and cultures while making a living online. Taking the leap to this unique life-

style requires extensive research and planning.

According to Andrew Jernigan, CEO at Insured Nomads, there are several factors to this preparation process: "Getting debt free, learning how to manage a budget, getting emotionally stable to tackle the unknowns of new cultures and being away from your support system, and having the funds to pay for the lifestyle, emergencies and medical insurance, internet and technology resources."

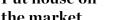
The following timeline will help aspiring digital nomads prepare for their journey, a process that typically takes about one year.

8 MONTHS BEFORE

Research and plan itinerary

Once you know what type of budget you are working with, you can start planning travel details. Choose destinations that are the right fit for you, while keeping costs, availability, laws and safety in mind. Do your own research and even consult a professional regarding rules about passports, visas, health insurance, taxes and other legal requirements.

"Researching and planning out an itinerary of destinations and places to stay could take a couple weeks, or it could take a few months," notes Brittany Betts, travel expert at Florida Panhandle. "I always like to be fully prepared, so I personally would put extra time in the research and planning process."



3+ MONTHS BEFORE

Put house on the market

Deciding whether to sell your home is a big decision. If you want to, Betts advises, "List the house with the contingency plan to have it closed when you are ready to start your journey. Another way to do it is to list the house while you are traveling and have it sold while you are gone." If renting out your home is more appealing, list it via Airbnb or with a realtor to maintain income while traveling. Consider the local market and your long-term plans when deciding if and when to rent or sell.

1-3 MONTHS BEFORE

Book travel

Give yourself plenty of time to book travel—especially plane tickets and accommodationsonce you know your first couple of destinations. You can do this a year, a few months or even just a couple of weeks in advance. Keep in mind that the best deals tend to be available about three months in advance. Finally, research how you will get around once you arriveseveral locations have options including buses, trains, taxis, e-bikes and other viable, affordable options.

1 MONTH BEFORE

Set up new systems Probably the trickiest part

of transitioning to a digital nomad lifestyle is setting up new systems to be able to work from anywhere in the world. "Get a virtual mailbox and an international legal assistance plan," Jernigan suggests. Choose an online banking system that works overseas and a reliable credit card with no foreign transaction fees. Ensure fast and reliable internet by downloading the SpeedTest App to help you determine connection speeds wherever you go. Finally, download a good VPN (virtual private network) to ensure you can access all websites and set up a virtual phone like Google Voice, Skype or MySudo.

THE WEEK OF **Pack**

As the big day approaches, it's time to start packing. Jernigan advises to "Pack light; try to set a goal to live from a carry-on if possible, and pack less than you think vou need." Betts adds: "Extra cash is always important to have. Of course clothes, any passports or travel papers, a light and easy-to-carry backpack, SIM card for your cellular device and any extra goods, like a book or speakers."















NOW!

Depart for first destination

Bon voyage! ◆



1 YEAR BEFORE

Make a financial plan

Once you commit to the digital nomad lifestyle, the first step is to determine how you will make money online while traveling. The amount of time and effort this part of the process takes depends on whether you ask your boss for approval to go fully remote or you are starting your own online business from scratch. No matter what, it's important to get your finances in order. Experts over at Digital Nomad World recommend saving a minimum of three months' worth of expenses before your departure date.

4 MONTHS BEFORE

Gather key documents

Don't delay in gathering all the critical documents you need to travel outside the country. You'll want to have a valid passport that is not set to expire while abroad Depending on the destination and length of your stay, you may need a visa, so do that research ahead of time. Make copies of and take along your driver's license, social security card, health insurance card. medical records and other important documents.

2-6 MONTHS BEFORE

Purge belongings

Betts recommends "slowly selling possessions anywhere from a few months to a couple of months out." Organize a garage sale and/or list items on Craigslist, Ebay and Facebook Marketplace. Donate belongings to Goodwill, Salvation Army, Dress for Success or local charities. Keep sentimental items like photos, family heirlooms, important papers and artwork in a rental storage unit. "I don't recommend putting massive amounts of belongings in a storage unit; only keep essentials you will regret not having in the future," Jernigan suggests.

1 MONTH BEFORE Visit doctors

"Visiting your primary care physician before you venture off is essential to ensuring that you are in good health." Betts advises. Get all necessary immunizations and refills on medications. Pack enough medication and confirm that you will be able to refill prescriptions while traveling. Also, take overthe-counter medications you know you'll need in case they are difficult to find abroad. Finally, consider a telemedicine membership to easily receive consultations and prescriptions.

FEW WEEKS BEFORE Sell vour car

If you plan to sell your car, wait as long as possible to ensure you can still get around to your doctors' appointments and errands, like dropping off donations. Another option is to store your car at a friend's or family member's home until you return.

> **SCHWARTZ** IS THE AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR OF FINDING ECOHAPPINESS AND A FREELANCE JOURNALIST SPECIALIZING IN WELLNESS, LIFESTYLE. HOME AND

GARDEN, AND SUSTAINABILITY.

48 | SUCCESS+ MAY 2024