

How to Stay Healthy While Traveling Without Ruining Your Vacation

Turn out you *can* still indulge while keeping up with your healthy commitments and fitness goals.



By [Emily Abbate](#) | Apr 14, 2018

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Last month, I went way outside of my comfort zone and booked a trip to Italy—*alone*. A month out from running the Boston Marathon, I refused to let my lofty athletic goals deter me from indulging and enjoying my foreign travels to the fullest. Because when Italy calls, you answer the phone. Cue all of the pizzas. Fresh-made pastas. Prosciutto. Mozzarella. Chianti. Gelatos galore.

Which is why I was flabbergasted (big word necessary for big feelings) the day after I got home and stepped on a scale. I managed to brave 10 days of solo travel with a net weight gain of two pounds. *Two*. I was dumbfounded. Two pounds? I gain and lose two pounds every single day! Moral of the story: Yes, I indulged, but I managed to keep it all in check by making smart choices throughout the vacation.

Want to know how to stay healthy on vacation without turning it into a total buzzkill? Here are six tricks that worked for me that I think will work for you, too.

1. Get out and run.

Yes, I went abroad with running on my mind. Still, I swear that logging miles is without a doubt the best way to cover the most ground in a foreign place. Because your pace is faster than a casual sightseeing tour, you have the opportunity to get in more sights on your must-see bucket list. Almost every morning, I'd wake up, lace up, and get out for my run. Some mornings, it was 3 miles. Others, it was...a lot more. [Tackling my longest training run in Florence](#), I saw 12 miles of the city (two times over) within one jaunt. I prioritized adding that run into my daily routine just like I prioritized consuming equal parts chocolate and jelly-filled croissants.

2. Bring a miniband.

Small [resistance bands](#) are the simplest thing to pack in either your suitcase or your carry-on. Having recently seen a physical therapist who suggested I add a variety of hip-strengthening moves to my regular routine, bringing it along was a no-brainer. It didn't matter that I didn't have access to a gym while on my trip. I'd get back from my regular run and do some hip work, then move on to other full-body toning moves, like kneeling single-arm biceps curls or squats. Pick four exercises you like, and add 14 reps of each into your morning routine right after you brush your teeth. Four sets later, your body will thank you

for taking the extra few minutes in the morning to give it some love. (Related: [The LIT Method Mini Band Butt Workout That'll Light Your Glutes On Fire](#))

3. Be smart about portion control.

Italy is a food mecca. There's a must-eat sandwich with fresh parmesan around every corner, and a gelato stand every couple feet. I didn't say no to any of it, but I was also sensible about how I went about trying absolutely everything. For instance, one of the most popular sandwich shops in Florence, [All'Antico Vinaio](#), serves sandwiches that rival the size of a small child for just five euros. Did I get the sandwich? Of course. But halfway through I listened to my body, stopped eating, and saved the rest of it for the following day (lucky for me, I was staying in an apartment with a full kitchen).

4. Pack smart.

I brought a large roller suitcase however, I also packed my go-to [MZ Wallace tote](#), which I was able to use for overnight travel on a two-night stint to Venice. Walking around the city trying to find my hotel, I was consciously swapping which side of my body I was carrying the bag for a makeshift farmer's carry of sorts. It sounds silly, sure, but two hours of bringing that bag around and my abs were on fire. Thank you, fashionable fitness.

5. Put on those sneakers.

I only wore heels on one day of my trip, during an Airbnb experience I booked to snap some photos with a local photographer (highly recommended). Otherwise, I made sure all of my outfits included a pair of [sneakers](#). I packed two different pairs—one for all that running and one on the more fashionable side—so I had to nix the "my feet hurt" excuse from my repertoire. I'd go out in the morning with everything I needed for the day and arrive back home just in time to change before aperitivo, having walked the entire city. With the right footwear, I never felt like I needed to press the pause button, and also found it easy to skip snagging a cab from a taxi stand. (Related: [Training for a Half Marathon Was One of the Most Memorable Parts of My Honeymoon](#))

6. Strategize your eats.

I made a complete list before heading to Italy of all of the restaurants and eateries that were a must-try. By getting suggestions from friends, family, and locals (my [Access Italy](#) tour guide grew up in Venice, and knew the best of the best places to go for everything from cicchetti to tiramisu), I didn't bother with the not-as-good stuff. This meant that every bite was special and totally worth it. Trust me, there's absolutely no guilt involved sampling the deconstructed tiramisu at Il Palagio at the [Florence Four Seasons](#). And you know what? I'm better (and race ready) for trying it all, taking the trip, and keeping my health in mind while on the move.