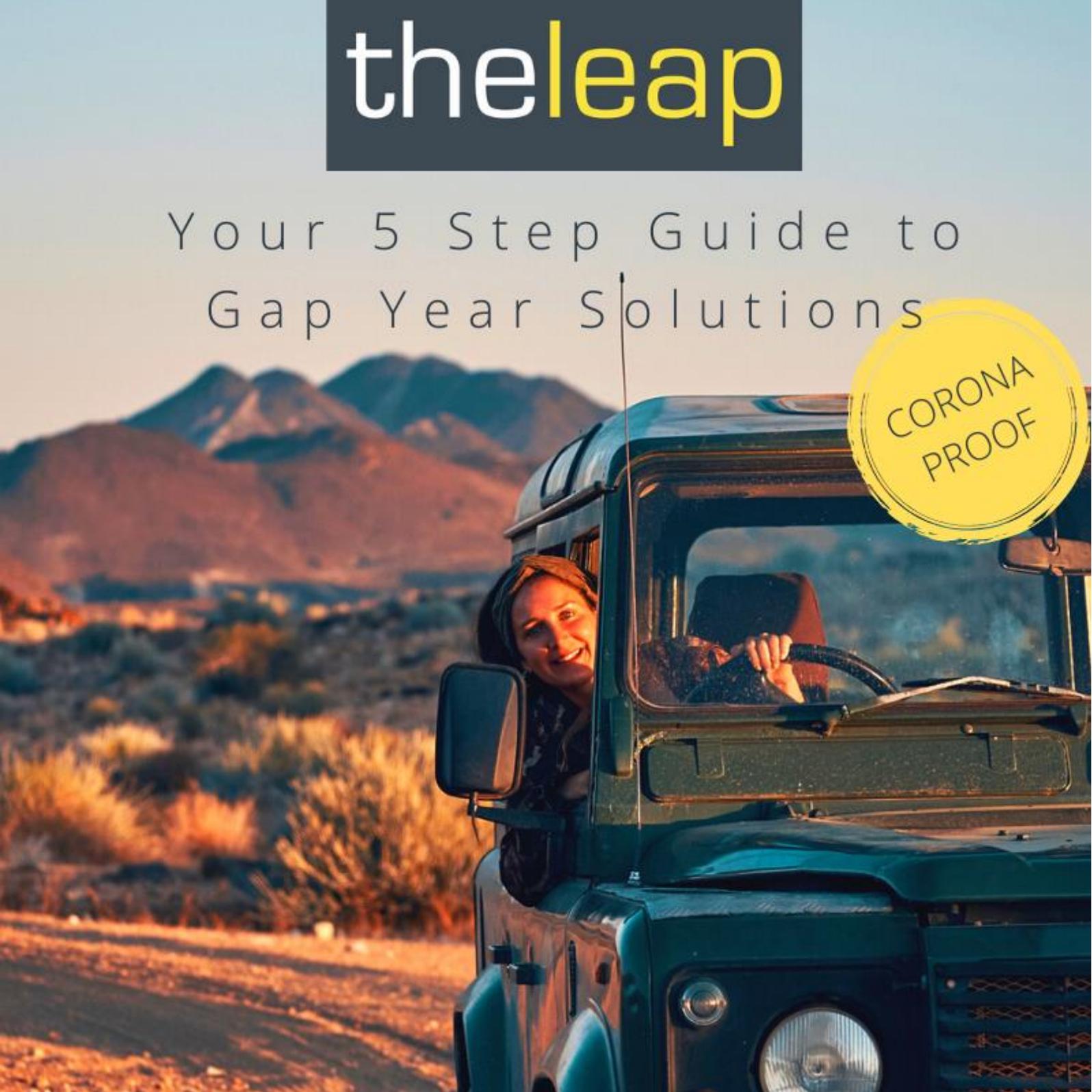


# theleap

Your 5 Step Guide to  
Gap Year Solutions

CORONA  
PROOF



Dear Leapers,

Thank you for downloading your guide to discover our corona proof gap year solutions. This guide will help you navigate these uncertain times, so you can travel safely and responsibly as an independent traveller or as a Leap volunteer.

My name is Milly and together with my team at The Leap we have been advising and organising gap years for nearly 20 years. Clearly navigating this pandemic has been a unique challenge for us all. For parents, maybe you are tearing your hair out, sick of cooking endless meals and are now looking down a rabbit hole of “now what” for your gap year kids who are bored stiff at home and in all honestly losing their belief that anything good is going to happen for them as yet another thing gets cancelled. (I’m so on this page).

As a gapper you are probably sick of being at home, bored of your play station and lost in the search for “what can I do” as we know the FCO advice is totally confusing, the travel rules are ever-changing and the access to corona proof insurance is, quite frankly a minefield.

So, with my mother and gap year hats combined we have beavered away through the last 6 months to find you safe and responsible travel solutions to make sure your gap year is a success. And solutions we have found..

Firstly we have nailed the insurance issue which caught so many people out back in March. Corona is now included in our policy and we can insure you despite FCO restrictions. This has opened up the world for you and allows you to now travel if borders are open. Coupled with our risk assessments, backpacks are being packed and gappers are now heading off to [Costa Rica](#), [Kenya](#), and [Cuba](#) either through a **Leap program** or independently through our **Leap VIP resource**.

**Leap VIP** is indeed our very exciting travel knowledge hub area to help all gap year travellers navigate the new rules about where and how they can travel. We have basically downloaded our black book of travel tips and contacts to give you the confidence and know-how to once again travel. This includes overseas contacts, insurance, incident support teams and so much more....

So, our message is simple behind every great adventure is [Leap VIP](#) – find out more,

Milly



GAPPER CONUNDRUMS

# The Covid Gapper Travel Conundrums

We've all heard of the stories of stranded travellers in Peru and other global hot spots – not a flight in sight for months...getting everyone home was indeed a scary time, even for us. In fact, one of our emergency repatriations took a team - 5 flights, 5 countries and 5 days to get back chasing closing borders in South America. Seeing them at Heathrow (my son included) was celebratory moment.

And insurance – everyone was caught out as a pandemic was never considered possible and a hidden clause in one's policy, nightmare.

## **Roll on 6 months:**

We are all losing confidence, feeling overwhelmed by our everchanging reality and quite honestly there is a void of up-to-date guidance out there.

## **Solution: Therefore to help out we have put this guide together to help you find out:**

- Insurance and travelling safely
- Where can you go
- How you should travel
- Travel admin to consider: safety, flights, ATOL's and QR codes



# INSURANCE + RISK ASSESSMENTS

# Step 1. Insurance and Risk Assessments

I know we are starting off with the dullest of topics but these, my friends, are the willie wonkers golden tickets to secure your safe passage!

So, brace yourself and take this in...

## Insurance

You simply cannot leave home without right now and the key message is the policy must insure you regardless of the FCO travel advice. Pre-Covid the fact was – if the FCO say don't go there no one could get insurance.

Until now...thankfully Guy is of a tenacious breed and he spent lockdown persuading insurance companies to insure us as a company and all our Leapers despite the FCO advice. He thankfully nailed it and a company who are used to insuring war- torn journalist saw our gappers as a walk in the very low risk park. Coupled with our own Covid risk assessments you are good to go.

## Covid Risk assessment

Nearly there, and I promise we are not going to bombard you with the Covid statistics per country or indeed the number of fire escapes in each of our camps. Right now, we're interested in the countries logistics, infrastructure and contacts asking questions such as these:

Hospitals/facilities – how many and how equipped are they for a Covid or other emergency?

Flights – how many airlines are flying in right now? This has a bearing on how fast we could get Leapers out if there was an emergency.

Internet/phones – again how reliable and efficient are they to assist in repatriation out or to reach a hospital which could cope with a Covid case.

Government – how reliable/dependable are they? Looking back at last year how fast did they lockdown and how did they look after trapped tourists?

If there was a problem in-country – who would look after our travellers?

So, now do you get my drift? You need to think about the above before you head off into the sunset



WHERE CAN YOU TRAVEL?

## Step 2. Where can I go

So, with the above all squared away – this part of the problem can easily be solved and is growing by the month. And one of the interesting things to mention here is – right now, it's not easy to travel between countries – so forget the cross Asia hostel hopping extravaganza or the Top Gear style race from Argentina to Colombia. Now is the time to choose one country and do it well – which I think will be positive – slow down and take it all in.

So, here goes – focusing on the gapper favourites, if you want to know anywhere else, call us.

### As of November 2020:

**Australia:** NO (not going to be open until next year)

**New Zealand:** NO (not going to be open until next year)

### Asia

**Thailand:** NO Thai government still not letting us in.

**Cambodia:** YES, but we wouldn't advise it as you have to arrive with \$3000 and stay in a government hospital for 2 weeks.

**Vietnam:** 14-day quarantine in very basic premises. Best avoided. Country borders closed with China, Cambodia and Laos to tourists.

**Laos:** YES, but some admin to do. No visa on arrival, need certificate of health, health declaration form, free Covid test, if positive you will be admitted to hospital, if negative quarantine for 14 days. Best avoided at present.

**Myanmar:** They say we can go, but no commercial flights at present.

**Philippines:** No, British nationals will no longer be able to receive a visa on arrival and will not be able to enter the Philippines until further notice.

**Indonesia** (inc Bali): All foreign nationals are barred from entering and transiting through Indonesia.

**The Maldives:** YES, you need a PCR test no older than 96 hours. Encouraged to download the Trace Ekee App.

## South and Central America

Important to note - you cannot travel between these countries just yet.

**Brazil:** You can fly into some airports, but there is so much Covid there we would suggest you go to somewhere safer.

**Argentina:** NO, borders closed.

**Chile:** NO, borders closed.

**Bolivia:** Kind of. It's now possible to enter and leave Bolivia by air on commercial flights, but you must have negative test results for COVID-19, certified by a Bolivian consulate - which is a tricky process. Covid cases quite high 30<sup>th</sup> on the worldometer with 137,107 cases.

**Peru:** From 5 October, [international flights are permitted to operate](#) between Peru and other Latin American countries, including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Panama, Uruguay and Mexico. Flights with other countries will resume at an unspecified later date. BUT you have to comply with their mandatory 14-day quarantine. So, is it worth it, just yet?

**Panama:** YES, open to foreign tourists. You need proof of a negative COVID test no older than 48 hours.

**Costa Rica:** YES, if you are doing a Leap program you will need a negative Covid test - test and results within 72 hours pre-departure, government insurance and your Battleface insurance. If you are travelling independently you do not need the Covid test.

**Ecuador:** YES, Ecuador has resumed international flights. If visiting Ecuador, you will need to sign a declaration form on arrival declaring your itinerary and local contact details. If you have a negative PCR test on arrival no older than ten days, then you will not need to self-isolate. But we are watching this country carefully as it may be closing again.

**Colombia:** YES, Colombia is open to tourism. You will need a negative PCR test no older than 96 hours before flying. You will not need to quarantine if you have proof of a negative test. You must fill in [this form](#) before flying and you must follow the rules on the [CoronApp](#). Be aware that land and sea borders are still closed. However, be mindful - the Covid rate - currently 6th worse hit country in the world...we are not opening our program here just yet. <https://apps.migracioncolombia.gov.co/pre-registro...> and take note of this app: <https://coronaviruscolombia.gov.co/Covid19/aislami...>

**El Salvador:** The International Airport has now opened. Before entering, you will need proof of a negative test no older than 72 hours.

**Guatemala:** YES. Arrive with a negative covid test. Hospitals in Guatemala fall into the OK category. Talking to our ground team- advice is don't rush in.

**Cuba:** YES, but foreign tourists can only visit certain places in Cuba: Cayo Coco, Cayo Cruz or Cayo Guillermo, Cayo Santa Maria and Cayo Largo del Sur. On arrival in these places, you will have your temperature checked and a PCR test. Anyone showing symptoms and anyone that tests positive will be hospitalised. From 29 August, Cuba was added to the list of countries where self-isolation on return to the UK is not required.

**Mexico:** YES, and very easy to enter the country. Visa on arrival.

## Africa

**Kenya:** YES, easy entry requirements. Good to go with a negative covid test and health registration form. [https://ears.health.go.ke/airline\\_registration/](https://ears.health.go.ke/airline_registration/)

**South Africa:** Not to anyone in the UK.

**Namibia:** YES, but don't recommend you go just yet as you have to quarantine on arrival for a week and we are moving into their peak summer, so temperatures reach boiling. You will need proof of a negative COVID-19 test no older than 72 hours. You will be tested for COVID-19 five days after your entry, and get results after 7 days, so in theory you will need to stay in Windhoek for at 7 days.

**Botswana:** NO.

**Malawi:** NO.

**Mozambique:** No but it could change and if it does, I would highly recommend visiting Francesca out there (see podcasts).

**Tanzania:** YES, easy arrival admin with temperature test on arrival.

**Madagascar:** NO, it opened, then closed again...

**Zimbabwe:** YES, but subject to 14 days quarantine on arrival – best avoided.

**Zambia:** YES, but under tight screening. Tourist visas are now available. Those arriving in the country need proof of a COVID-19 test no older than 14 days. Anyone entering Zambia with a body temperature equal to, or above 38.0 C will be tested. Any other arrivals may be randomly selected for testing.



WHAT TYPE OF TRAVELLER  
ARE YOU?

## Step 3. How should we travel?

Again this is where I have both my mum and worker bee hat on and the conversation I'm having right now over our kitchen table is you can travel (clearly) but please go with a group of friends or on an organised program where friends are part of the deal.

Clearly this is for your safety but as important for your social life as right now the hostels are not going to be buzzing so you need to take your fun with you.

So the question here is what type of person are you?

### **The free spirit**

Loves to go with the flow and travel with utter freedom, making decisions on a daily basis and changing them on an hourly basis. Will be a pro at hostel hopping and making friends pool side. A free spirit will not be flustered by being stranded, staying in dodgy places or not showering for days on end.

Pre lockdown the free spirit was heading off with a one way to Asia. Now they are sitting there thinking all will come right and making no plans which in turn is driving mum mad.

### **Things to consider:**

If this is you or you are parent of...you can travel, free as bird BUT you just need to focus on one country and do it well. The question I want to drop in here though ...is do you really want to just hostel hop? Why not try a spot of volunteering on your way round – just give something back? Projects post lockdown are desperate for help. J putting it out there. The benefit of volunteering is you get to be so much more than a tourist. Leap VIP gives you a list of contacts you can call direct.

### **Stay safe and don't leave home without:**

Our Insurance policy

In-country contacts to help if borders close

Incident support for 24/7 backup

Project contacts

### **The structured pack animal**

The pack animal needs the camaraderie of others for support. Pack animals love meeting new people from all walks of life but walking cold into a hostel night after night isn't their thing. They need more structure, a plan and in the perfect world a ready-made family of friends to make them happy. The structure gives confidence and comfort for both the gapper and the parents left at home.

#### **Things to consider:**

Pre-lockdown there was so much choice but now the structured gap year program is struggling as many companies can't cope with the Covid demands and risks involved. This is making the demand outstrip supply so my message here is don't dilly dally – get organised and put your name down on whatever you can find. Again, look for programs which include adventure with a spot of giving back – projects need you.

#### **Stay safe and don't leave home without:**

Make sure you like the company you have booked a trip through

Clarify who your point of contact is while you are away

If you can't go can you get a full refund or slide to another program



COVID TRAVEL ADMIN

## Step 4. Covid admin

The admin ...ahhh – now we were admin guru's before lockdown but not like this...it's a minefield of exploding bombs to push us off course through every working day. So brace yourself. The message is everyone is going to learn to be super flexible – expect your flight to be changed 101 times and every cold bear in an exotic place is a bonus.

### **Flights**

We recommend using Trailfinders and can give you the Leap VIP business access. Personally I need to speak to a human being. DO NOT what ever you do book a flight through the cheapest dodgy flight company you found on sky skanner. Buy cheap, buy twice! Being a memebr of ATOL is key now – as we saw with STA going into administration.

### **Incident suport teams**

This was really interesting back in March – we were helping as many people as we could to repatriate kids from far away places and I know how this personally feels as my son and his friends were rescued from Bolivia. So my message here is do not leave home wthout signing up to one.

## Step 5. WHAT NEXT ?

**1. Talk to us – we can help guide you.**

Diarize a free gap year consultation with Milly Whitehead to start the ball rolling:

<https://calendly.com/millywhitehead/gap-year-consultation-1>

**2. Crack on and book yourself on one of our programs**

[Visit open programs](#)

**3. Join Leap VIP -** our travel advice hub to help gappers navigate this new world and give them confidence to travel once again.

<https://www.theleap.co.uk/leapvip/>

Joining Leap VIP costs £100 for a year subscription but is redeemable of so many things the other side – you will win it back whilst finding out:

- Where you can travel to
- Latest travel admin required for entering a country
- Insurance
- Incident support teams
- Travel Alerts
- Leap endorsed overseas project
- Flexi-Flights
- In-country contacts and itineraries