



The Complete Guide to Getting Dental Treatment Abroad

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The Complete Guide to Dental Treatment Abroad
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When I first heard about dental tourism, I thought it sounded like the perfect solution. How could it get any better than relaxing on a beach after saving thousands of dollars on a complex dental procedure? However, after a bit of Googling, I was finding more questions than answers: Where should I start? What country should I go to? What will the conditions be like? How much will everything cost? and How do I find a good dentist?

If this sounds like your situation, you've found the right guide.

Let's jump right in:

Complex dental procedures such as dental implants are quite expensive in many countries - especially those in North America and Europe. This is prompting an increasing number of people (such as yourself) to consider treatment abroad.

A quick Google search of "dental treatment mexico" (for example) will reveal many tempting deals on implants, veneers, crowns, etc. with the promise of a vacation thrown in for good measure.

While there are huge savings to be had, dental tourism is not without its risks. Factors such as language barriers, legal protection, health regulations and scheduling all present their own challenges. On top of all that, finding the right dentist can be a daunting process.

Thankfully, there is an effective way to address these challenges and give your treatment the highest possible chance of success.

Now:

It does require some work – this isn't a one-click solution. That said, I think you'll agree that saving thousands of dollars on quality dental care is definitely worth a few hours of your time.

The key is simply to follow in the footsteps of people who have already had success. "How do you do that?" you ask? Read on:

This guide was compiled from the successful (and some less-than-successful) real-life experiences of Dental Implant Cost Guide readers. It is an in-depth introduction into the world of dental tourism (with an emphasis on dental implants) that outlines the primary benefits, risks and considerations that every person considering dental care abroad should factor into their decision.

The last section has links to several interviews that we've done with dentists in Egypt and Romania and patients who went to India, Mexico and Costa Rica so you can learn from their experience and advice.

Included In This Guide

- [What is dental tourism?](#)
- [Benefits of going to a dentist abroad](#)
- [Potential risks](#)
- [Staying safe in a foreign country](#)
- [Popular countries/destinations](#)
- [Calculating and comparing the cost of treatment](#)
- [How to research, compare and choose a dental clinic](#)
- [Questions you should ask](#)
- [Interviews with patients and dentists](#)
- [10 step dental tourism checklist](#)
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What is Dental Tourism?

Definition: [Dental tourism](#) (also called dental vacations or commonly known as dental holidays in Europe) involves individuals seeking dental care outside of their local healthcare systems, which may be accompanied by a vacation.

A person's choice to seek treatment abroad is typically price-driven, but other factors such as the quality, accessibility and transparency of dental care in their home country can also influence their decision.

Dentists who practice in emerging economies are able to take advantage of lower overall costs, particularly for labor, rent and insurance. As for quality, there are many experienced and skilled dentists who have graduated from well-respected schools of dentistry in Europe or North America.

Benefits of Going to a Dentist Abroad

The benefits of dental tourism include:

- **Lower treatment costs** – Up to 80% cheaper, especially for those without coverage
- **Transparent pricing** – Many clinics will give you the prices of their treatments/procedures upfront

- **Memorable experience** – Enjoy a short vacation alongside dental treatment in an interesting foreign country by visiting local restaurants and attractions
- **Quality service** – Dental clinics abroad can be more caring, attentive and personable as their businesses rely heavily on attracting foreign customers through referrals from happy patients
- **Convenience** – In most cases there is no waiting list for treatment and clinics will work around your schedule, not the other way around.

Risks of Going to a Dentist Abroad

All that said, there are a number of risks associated with traveling to a foreign country and trusting them with your dental health. They include:

- **Lack of legal protection** – malpractice lawsuits against foreign dentists may not be admissible in US courts
- **Long way from home** – it can be a long trip back if you need to get something fixed (or to take advantage of a guarantee)
- **Exposure to disease** – chance of contracting a disease that isn't common in your home country
- **Inexperienced dentists** – some countries have a lower standard of training and education compared to North America
- **Low quality materials** – materials might be cheap or incompatible with North American equipment, making repairs difficult

Medical tourism has received bad press in the past as a result of the disreputable and dishonest doctors and dentists who moved to Mexico (where regulations weren't as strict), set up clinics a stone's throw away from the US border and enticed people with low prices on what turned out to be poor quality treatment.

Standards are much higher nowadays, but it is still important to be vigilant as there are bad clinics in every country.

Is the money you'll save worth the potential risks? Unfortunately, we can't answer that question for you because every person's situation is different.

The most important piece of advice is to research the process and each dentist thoroughly, but you already knew that though since you're reading this guide. ;)

Staying Safe in a Foreign Country

Here are a few tips on how to stay safe in another country:

Travel with a friend.

Take a relative or friend along for the trip so you have someone to enjoy it with.

Keep the address of where you're staying handy (on paper or your phone).

You might not speak their language, but locals will be able to point you in the right direction.

Make several copies of your itinerary, passport, tickets, driver's license, credit cards, etc.

This will make it easier to recover if any of them are stolen. Emailing copies to yourself is also a good idea.

Try not to look like a tourist.

Rent a modest vehicle, don't be flashy with expensive items, jewelry, or gadgets and leave the fanny pack at home.

Stick to public, well-lit areas.

Don't walk alone at night. If you feel as if you're being followed, stop to ask security for help or enter a public place such as a restaurant or hotel that's not yours.

Get vaccinated if necessary (or even if recommended).

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) provide recommendations for vaccinations and other travel health precautions for your trip abroad.

Know what number to call in an emergency.

Have the contact information for the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate where you are going. Consular duty personnel are available for emergency assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at U.S. embassies, consulates, and consular agencies overseas.

Make sure you're covered by your travel/health insurance.

If you're not covered by your existing insurance, considering buying a short-term policy that will.

Popular Destinations

The list of destinations that can offer quality, affordable dental treatment is growing. Mexico is extremely popular with Americans and Canadians because it is relatively close and they can

easily cross the border. Costa Rica is also accessible and treatment can be half the cost of that in the US. Europeans don't need to travel very far to access cheaper dental care as it is readily available in Romania and other Eastern European countries.



Mexico

Mexico is renowned for its affordable private dental care. It is popular with Americans because of its proximity and Mexican clinics generally have English-speaking medical staff. The number of high-quality dental clinics has risen substantially, which is partly due to an increase in the popularity of dental tourism and partly thanks to the increase in the number of middle-class Mexicans who can afford private health care.

Some of the newer clinics in Mexico are comparable to the best in the world. They employ highly trained dentists who can provide tried and trusted dental procedures or the most up-to-date/recently approved treatments. It's possible to receive dental treatment on a day trip from the US or you can combine dental care with a vacation in Mexico, taking advantage of the good weather and beautiful beaches while recuperating.

[Mexico on Wikitravel](#)



Costa Rica

Costa Rica is a peaceful country in Central America with Nicaragua to the north and Panama to the south. It is renowned for being one of the most bio-diverse countries on the planet as it is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna and many rare and unique species.

It is a very popular destination, particularly for those travelling from the US. Costa Rica is easy to get to and most visitors are not required to get a visa. The official language is Spanish but many clinics employ English-speaking staff. The best time to book treatment is during the dry season between December and April. The hottest time of year is the rainy season between May and October.

[Costa Rica on Wikitravel](#)



India

India is fast becoming a top destination thanks to the growing number of clinics that offer visitors low-cost but high quality dental treatment. It is also an attractive country to visit thanks to its rich culture, world class beaches and numerous historical sites. Most dental only take a

few hours over the course of a couple days, leaving plenty of time to see the sights. Many of the dentists practicing in India studied in Western countries and English is widely spoken.

Many private clinics in India are equipped with state-of-the-art technology and hygiene levels are very good. Most will offer package deals that include treatment, flights, transfers and hotels in addition to a vacation. Patients can also choose to take advantage of ancient practices of [Ayurvedic medicine](#) to help them recuperate. The best time to visit India is between October and March since the monsoon season is between May and September.

[India on Wikitravel](#)



Romania

In Romania, dental procedures can cost a fraction of the price compared to countries in Western Europe and North America, even when the cost of travel and accommodation are taken into account. Romania is a diverse country with beautiful countryside while the capital of Bucharest is close to numerous historical and cultural attractions. This country has a third of Europe's natural thermal springs and minerals pools and there are over 70 spa destinations, many of which also offer alternative therapies to help aid recuperation.

Dental tourism is a rapidly growing industry in Romania and there are a number of high-quality clinics to choose from that use the latest techniques and technology. The clinics in Bucharest and Transylvania are particularly high quality. Some clinics offer packages that include treatment, accommodation, flights and even sightseeing tours.

Romania is particularly popular with Western Europeans as dental treatments can cost as little as a quarter of the prices charged at home.

[Romania on Wikitravel](#)

Calculating & Comparing the Cost of Dental Treatment Abroad

The cost of dental treatment abroad can be up to 80% cheaper for some people, such as those living in North America and the UK. These savings are thanks to a lower cost of living, lower overhead/labor costs, funding of public healthcare, lower insurance fee, cheaper education/training and less government intervention. Countries such as Hungary, India and Thailand offer the cheapest dental treatment.

Most of the tight regulatory requirements and “red tape” that affect the “developed world” don’t affect clinics abroad which helps reduce prices across the board. However, this also means that it can be harder to take legal action against a dentist or clinic if something goes wrong.

Dental Implant Cost by Country	
United States	\$4000
UK	\$3500
Spain	\$2750
Italy	\$1800
Mexico	\$1600
Lithuania	\$1400
Romania	\$1250
Costa Rica	\$1000
Turkey	\$1000
Hungary	\$900
Thailand	\$900
India	\$850
Croatia	\$850

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Factor in All Costs

As with any major purchase, it pays to get quotes from several different clinics.

Many dental clinics work with travel agencies to put together a package that includes travel, accommodation and treatment. The challenge of comparing the prices of these packages is that they can vary significantly from clinic to clinic and some may even be customized for your specific situation.

When comparing quotes from several clinics, it’s important to make sure you are comparing apples with apples and taking all of the associated costs into consideration. Ask each clinic you’re interested in for a complete breakdown of the costs that includes all possible extras such as x-rays, CT scans, anesthetics, take home medication and materials. This makes it easier to determine which package is the best deal and which ones are missing key services or benefits.

The final calculation should take the following into consideration:

- How many visits to the country are required
- Flight(s) (book with Easyjet or Ryanair to save money)
- Food (check Lonely Planet for local prices)
- Transportation to and from the clinic

- Hotels/Accommodations (check TripAdvisor for rates)
- Time taken off work (if not on a paid vacation)
- Insurance

Ask about the Quality of Components Used

Treatments can wildly vary in price depending on the components used. The best known implant systems (Straumann, Nobel Biocare, Bio Horizons, Zimmer) are more expensive as they have been extensively researched, tested and have proven themselves thanks to widespread use for decades. While lesser-known systems may still be good quality, one thing to keep in mind is that it can be trickier to get repairs or restorations for them in your home country as local dentists may be unfamiliar with the type of implant and less willing to help.

It pays to choose the clinic where you'll get the best value for your money instead of the one that offers the cheapest quote. The cheapest clinics will often cut corners to keep their prices low in order to attract more customers (or there will be "extra charges" on the final bill). Choosing the lowest priced option could increase your risk of developing problems down the road which are often costly to correct. If a clinic is substantially cheaper than its competitors, ask yourself if the price is too good to be true.

Remember, you'll be saving money at the end of the day anyway, so try to optimize price vs. quality.

How to Research, Compare and Choose a Dental Clinic

The first step in choosing a dental clinic is to understand the type of dental treatment you require. Visit your local dentist and ask for their advice. It's always best to have a proper consultation and diagnosis by a dentist you already know and trust before visiting a clinic in another country.

Equipped with the information provided by your dentist, you can begin your search online.

The next step is to decide on your priorities. If you are interested in obtaining the lowest possible price then look for dental clinics in countries that aren't the most popular holiday destinations and offer lower cost care such as: Hungary, India and Thailand. If instead you would like to combine dental treatment with a vacation, then location is more important and countries such as Costa Rica, Mexico and Italy may be more appealing.

Now you can begin compiling a short list of clinics. Look for clinics that provide detailed information about the clinic and its staff members. Read these sections carefully and make sure

the dentist is licensed or accredited within that country.

When comparing clinics, be sure to consider the following factors:

- Convenience and cost of the packages offered
- Background and qualifications of the dentist or oral surgeon
- Age and cleanliness of the clinic's facilities and equipment
- Reputation of the dentist(s), including testimonials from previous patients
- Local regulations
- Success rates for the particular procedure

Collect References and Testimonials from Previous Patients

Once you have a short list of clinics that you're interested in, contact them and ask for references and testimonials from previous patients. If possible, get in touch with a few of these patients (preferably those who had the same type of treatment you require) by phone or email so you can ask them directly about their experience with the clinic, the success of their treatment and any challenges they had along the way.

Also be sure to ask each clinic to provide before and after photos of patients who had the same procedure(s) done.

Read the Fine Print

Once you have chosen the clinic and dentist and have thoroughly checked their qualifications and registrations, be sure you spend some time going through the contract very carefully. It's quite common for dentists who treat foreign patients to include a clause in the contract that states any litigation will be under the laws of their own country and subject to their own justice system.

What this means is that it can be very difficult (or impossible) to claim any compensation for poor dental work via a malpractice lawsuit. Patients from North America and the UK who pursue legal action against a dentist will find that the legal systems of other countries are far less comprehensive than the one they have at home. This limited ability to make a claim should make it clear just how important finding a reputable dentist is.

Dentist's Professional Associations, Accreditations and Licenses

Many dentists working abroad have been trained and qualified in other countries and should be listed as members of one or more professional associations. Some may hold international memberships or credentials. These qualifications aren't necessarily a guarantee of skill or quality, but they do show the dentist adheres to international standards and practices.

If a dentist is reluctant to show you their qualifications or licenses then don't hesitate to move on to the next clinic on your list. Reputable dental surgeons will be more than happy to prove they are qualified and highly skilled professionals.

Check Local Regulations

Most countries have a national dental association. For example, dentists in the UK are regulated by the General Dental Council while each province in Canada has a dental regulatory authority. These associations handle patient complaints and ensure dentists adhere to ethical practices and codes of conduct.

When researching dental tourism in a particular country, check that membership of a dental association actually counts for something and that the association aims to promote high standards.

Also check whether membership is compulsory or voluntary, as dentist who have chosen to voluntarily comply with one or more national organizations show they are committed to best practices.

Insurance Considerations

Nobody can guarantee that a dental procedure will be successful, not even the most well-regulated and highly skilled dentist. A [number of things can and occasionally do go wrong](#), causing a small percentage of procedures to fail. It's worth making sure you have sufficient liability insurance to cover the potential costs of failure.

It's also worth finding out who is responsible to pay the bill for any additional treatment, travel and accommodation required if something goes wrong. A quality clinic should provide a written contract that outlines these responsibilities and liabilities in detail.

Some dental clinics offer a form of "guarantee" in their contract/agreement stating that if

something does go wrong, that they'll cover the cost to put things right. Read the document in detail and find out how long the guarantee lasts, whether or not it includes corrective treatment in your home country, and what complications/situations are excluded.

Travel Insurance

It is unlikely that standard travel insurance will cover you if you have a problem with your treatment and it may even be void if the purpose of your trip is dental tourism. If you want to be fully covered, look into purchasing specialized insurance for medical travel.

It might also be worth considering medical complications insurance which will cover you against any extra costs incurred if the procedure doesn't go as planned. Dental clinics are required by law to have liability insurance in most countries, but you may want to ask to see a copy of a clinic's insurance certificate.

Trust Your Instincts

When you have finished gathering all of the important details about the best dentists and their clinics, it's likely to come down to personal choice. While raw data can reveal a lot about a clinic and help rule out the worst ones, it is worth listening to your instincts. A well-qualified dentist and immaculately equipped dental clinic can sometimes simply "feel wrong". This could be because the dentist dodges questions, doesn't provide a written contract, makes unrealistic promises or is unresponsive to your messages and phone calls.

In this case, it's best to walk away. There is always somewhere else to go. A clinic that makes you feel relaxed and confident is more likely to provide a successful outcome.

Other Important Considerations

Some people find dental tourism too stressful, and those with asthma, heart problems or other serious medical conditions may be negatively affected by getting dental treatment abroad. If you have any medical problems that could interfere with your dental treatment, make sure your dentist talks to your doctor before the final dental treatment plan is written up.

Also think about what you will do if a restoration or treatment fails after you return home, as you will either need to travel back to the clinic or get the problem fixed by your local dentist. The dental clinic may offer repairs free of charge or at a reduced rate, but you will still incur traveling costs.

Ask a Lot of Questions

Here are a few examples of the questions you should ask:

- Who will be responsible for my treatment?
- What are their qualifications?
- How much experience do you have with doing a particular procedure?
- Are you insured?
- What is your success rate? Examples of failure? Why did they fail?
- What are your post-operative infection rates?
- Do you provide any sort of guarantee on your work?
- Can you provide references or testimonials from previous patients?
- Do you collect complaints? Can I see a few negative reviews?
- How long have you been in business?
- How many procedures have you done?
- What brand of implants/type of technologies do you use?
- How much does the procedure cost?
- What payment methods do you accept?
- When is the best time to travel to your country?
- Can people in the area and your staff speak my language?
- How many trips to your country will be required?
- How long will I have to stay on each trip?
- What if I have a problem afterward? Can follow-up care be done at home?
- Who can I contact for advice after the treatment?
- Where should I stay?
- Where should I eat?
- What is there to do in your city?
- What are the country's health standards?
- Are you regulated by a professional organization and are you registered with them?

Each question you get an answer to is another variable removed from the equation, which reduces your risks even further.

Interviews With Patients and Dentists

Here are interviews we've done with patients and dentists who have experienced dental tourism first-hand and were kind enough to share some of their knowledge and advice.

Mexico

[Lloyd who got implants in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico](#)

[Implant Dental Center Tijuana, Mexico](#)

Costa Rica

[David G. – Crowns in Escazu, Costa Rica](#)

Ecuador

[Find Health in Ecuador Clinic](#)

Romania

[Dr. Raluca Gurban in Bucharest, Romania](#)

[Dr. Adin Talasman in Bucharest, Romania](#)

[Pomadent Dental Clinic in Romania](#)

[Velvet Dental Clinic in Bucharest, Romania](#)

[GS Clinic in Sibiu, Romania](#)

[Super Dent in Constanta, Romania](#)

India

[Linda who got implants in Mumbai, India](#)

[Nanda Dental Clinic in New Delhi, India](#)

Egypt

[Dr. Samy Aboelyazied in Sohag, Egypt](#)

Honduras

[Dr. Roland Aplicano in Tegucigalpa, Honduras](#)

Hungary

[Josh who got implants at Amfidental Dental Clinic Budapest, Hungary](#)

[Platinum Dental Budapest, Hungary](#)

Hungary

[Bangkok Smile Dental Group in Thailand](#)

[Silom Dental Building, Bangkok, Thailand](#)
[Dental World Clinic Chiangmai, Thailand](#)

10 Step Checklist

1. Read this guide.
2. Read other people's experiences you find online.
3. If possible, contact a few of these people and ask them some of the questions above.
4. Research the top rated dentists/clinics that people have mentioned.
5. Go to your current dentist and get a detailed diagnosis, including x-rays if possible. Ask them about dental tourism and whether they'd be willing to do repairs if needed.
6. Contact the best clinics based on your research and ask them for references. Get details about cost, flights, accommodations, etc. You may want to send them details of your diagnosis.
7. Call or email the references they provide and discuss their experiences.
8. Pick the clinic and country you want to go.
9. Contact them to schedule an appointment and iron out the details.
10. Book your flights, hotel, travel insurance, tours, etc.

Here's What to Do Next

- 1) Send me an email at alex@dentalimplantcostguide.com to let me know what you think of this guide.
- 2) Pat yourself on the back. You just finished a 17 page ebook. ;)

Questions?

Have a question about a particular country or procedure? Ask Ali!



To have your questions answered by Ali, our experienced dental professional, please [join our forum](#) and then [post a topic](#). Problems can be quite difficult to diagnose, so please provide as much detail as you can. :)