

Insulin & Travel

Everything You Need To Know



Disclaimer

The information contained within this eBook is based on my own personal experience, coupled with some further research/discussions with other diabetics where necessary.

Though I believe it to be relevant and correct to the best of my knowledge, I cannot guarantee you will have the same results as me. I have no diabetic medical training and I am not a healthcare professional, this is advice and nothing more.

Before taking any trip away, I recommend strongly that you speak to your DSN and diabetic support team. In this sense, I cannot accept any responsibility for any accidents or emergencies that occur whilst you are away.

This eBook is subject to revisions over time as more information and developments in diabetic care come to light. If you believe that any of the information contained within is inaccurate or incomplete, then please contact me via thatdiabeticgirlblog@gmail.com.

Alternatively, if you have any queries regarding the information supplied in this eBook and would like further advice, then please also get in contact and I will be more than happy to assist you.

As always, my personal diabetes blog <https://www.thatdiabeticgirl.com/> is a great place to discover more information.

Better still, you can check out my complete guide on travelling with diabetes. More than 130 pages filled with everything you need to know regarding diabetes and travel, or join our [Diabetes travel Group!](#)



Insulin & Travel: Every thing You Need To Know

People often ask me how I travel so much with type 1 diabetes. And the reason is, I work hard, I stay motivated and I try my best to navigate my diabetes in a variety of circumstances.

People tend to ask me three main things when it comes to travelling with type 1 diabetes.

1. How on earth do you keep your insulin cool for long periods of time?
2. How much insulin should I take with me on my trip?
3. How do you count new carbs and calculate insulin?

So, to help make your diabetic travel life a little easier, I am going to tell you exactly how to keep your insulin cold and how to become a carb counting king or queen!

How Do You Keep Your Insulin Cool?



Insulin is only meant to be kept out of a fridge for up to a period of 30 days (depending on the type of insulin you use).

So naturally when you want to travel for longer periods of time, or even take your insulin on a plane journey, you wonder how on earth do I keep it cool!?

The answer is an insulin cooling case. These come in a variety of forms and I've spoken extensively about them in the past, but my favourites are Breezy Packs and Frio bags.

They both work in a similar way, and I use them both a lot, so I can vouch for their reliability.

A Frio bag works by keeping your insulin cool at the necessary temperature outside of refrigeration. It prevents it from getting too warm, or too cool.

You can use a Frio bag to keep your insulin cool on long plane journeys, on bus journeys, if you're camping, at the beach, or even if your hostel/hotel has no fridge.

When you travel with a Frio bag, the rule I follow is, always keep your insulin in a fridge, when it's NOT in a Frio bag and vice versa.

So when I arrive at a hotel, I pop my insulin in the fridge, and when I'm on the move again, I put it into my Frio bag.



One thing to note: when you are putting your insulin a fridge, you do NOT put your whole Frio bag in a fridge. This will damage it.

Take out the wet/sponge layer of your Frio bag and keep that with you, and just keep your insulin in the cover of the Frio bag.

You simply activate your Frio bag by putting it cold water (the length of time varies depending on the size of your Frio bag, but it will say on your instruction manual)

If your hotel doesn't have a mini fridge in-room, then you can ask to leave your insulin in their "kitchen" fridge.

There is a risk that your insulin could freeze in someone else's fridge, and I have had that happen before.

So if your budget allows, you could also bring a 4ALLFAMILY USB mini fridge, and that way when you get to your hotel, if it does not have a mini fridge, you can use your USB powered mini fridge.

Nowadays, if I'm doing a longer trip and need access to a fridge, I make sure I book a property with a fridge.

The Breezy Packs work similar to a Frio btw, it's basically a small pouch that you put your insulin in, and you do NOT have to precool it in water, and you can put it directly in the fridge!





How Much Insulin Should I Bring On My Trip?



This little table will help you decide how much insulin to bring on a trip. This is based on **1 bottle of insulin vial would last 10 days**. It can last people more or less, but that's what this is based on!

If you are using pens, you can also use this as a guide, but be aware of differences in quantities.

Duration of trip	Amount of Insulin	Spares	Total
City Break (3-5 Days)	1 vial	2 spares	3 vials
1 week holiday	1 vial	2 spares	3 vials
2 week holiday	2 vials	3 spares	5 vials
1 month trip	3 vials	4 spares	7 vials
3 month trip	9 vials	5-6 spares	14-15 vials
6 month trip	18 vials	6-8 spares	24-28 vials

So, the most common trip I take is 3 months and I usually have around 15 bottles with me. On my first EVER trip I had 22, but I realised this was too much (it's all trial and error)

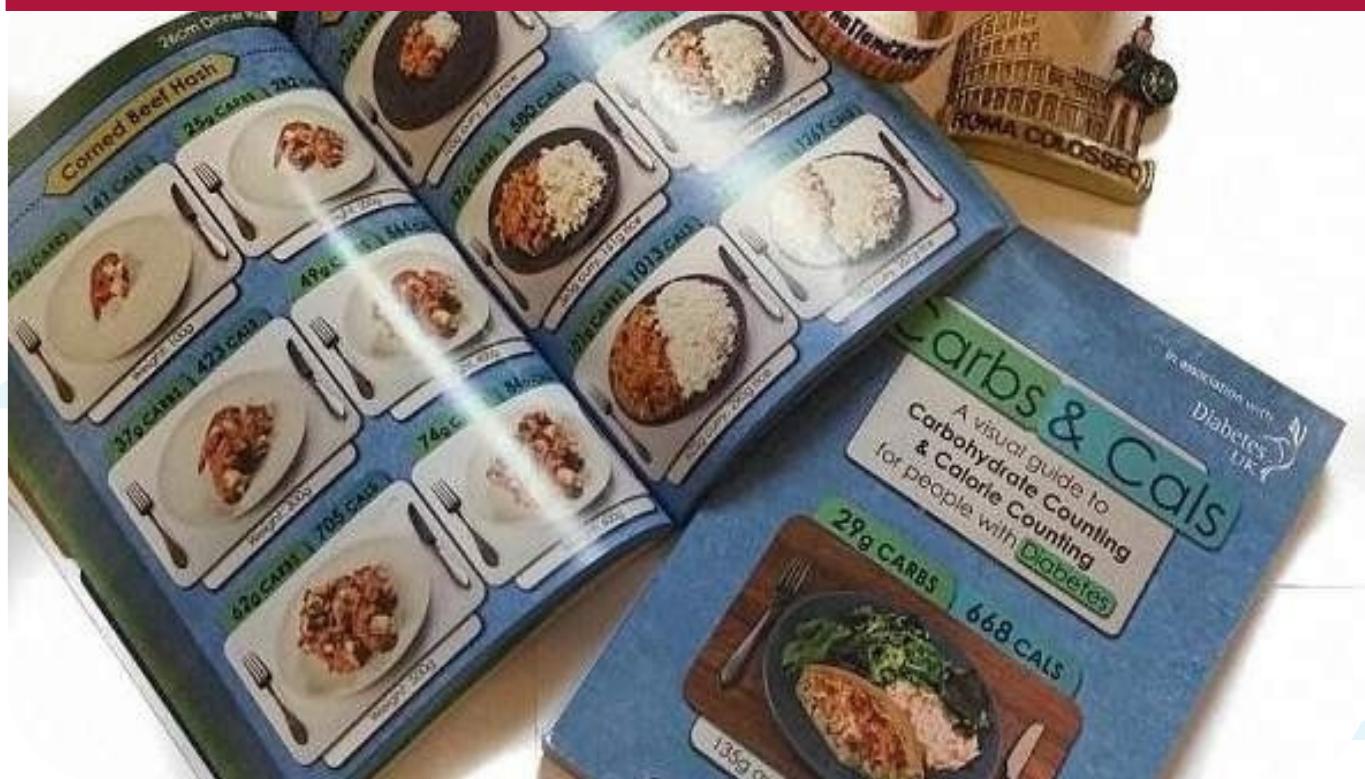
It's always good to have spares in case of damage, dropping, or even bottles going missing.

You can source insulin on your travels if you run out, or you just don't want to carry lots.

I wouldn't carry any more than 6 months worth. If you are traveling for longer, you will need to source insulin on the road.

If you're wondering, I use 2 extra large Frio bags on my 3 month trip and it carries all my vials and 3 Humalog insulin pens and 3 Lantus pens.

Counting New Carbs: Top Tips



Counting new carbs is no easy task, but it's not impossible. You just have to know some tips to get yourself started!

From years of travelling, I've learnt these few tips.

1. Practice before you go: if you're going to Asia or India, then you'll know you'll be consuming more rice and noodle based dishes. It's these you need insulin for. So practice at home by working out how much you need for rice and noodles (in different portion sizes), then use that as a guide on the road. Same applies to any country.
2. Download fitness apps: My Fitness Pal and Calorie King are really good apps. When you type in any food, they'll give you an estimate carb and calorie count. Use this as a guide.
3. Limit your carbs: If you're truly not confident, then opt for lower carb food. Instead of rice swap for vegetables etc. I often do this for convenience more than anything.
4. Integrate light activity: If you feel like you're eating a high carb food, then take on a form of exercise after your meal. Go for a brisk walk or something similar. If you eat then simply rest, you may find your insulin "sits" for a while before it acts.

Exotic Foods From Around The World

Asia and South/Latin America have been continents I've visited extensively, so I've made a list of some of the most common foods there to help give you an idea of the carb count.

Remember all these carb suggestions are only approximate and I can't give you the "right amount of insulin" to take to cover them as it will depend on your own body and the surroundings.

But, use this as a guide and take notes of how much insulin you gave, and if it was too much or too little and you can use it to perfect your dose the next time around.

Chinese Food

Type of food	Serving Size	Grams of Carbs	Notes
Cooked rice	1 cup	45 grams	
Egg noodles (cooked)	1 cup	30 grams	
Udon noodles (thick/cooked)	1 cup	45 grams	
Vermicelli	1 cup	45 grams	
Chow Mein noodles	1 cup	50 grams	
Mantou	1 large	45 grams	
Pineapple bun	1/2 bun	20 grams	
Chinese pork bun	1 bun	30 grams	
Dumplings	3 dumplings	15 grams	
Wontons	5 Wontons	15 grams	
Egg roll	1 large	20 grams	
Rice balls	2 pieces	20 grams	This is a common sweet dessert
Fortune cookies	1 cookie	7 grams	Usually anything less than 10g (on its own) doesn't need insulin
Durian	1/4 cup	15 grams	Popular in Sri Lanka too!



Indian & Sri Lankan foods

Type of food	Serving Size	Grams of Carbs	Notes
Roti	6 inches wide	15 grams	Kottu Roti (Sri Lankan dish) is "chopped up" rotti, you can ask your server how many are used.
Paratha	6 inches across	28 grams	
Puri	5 inches across	8 grams	
Naan	8 inches across	45 grams	Cheese or garlic won't add extra carbs
Dosa	8 inches across	15 grams	Breakfast, Lunch and dinner dish
Veggie Rice	1/2 cup	20 grams	
Rice Vermicelli	1/2 cup	20 grams	
Lassi	1 cup	25 grams	Comes in wide range of flavours (like a smoothie)
Dal/Lentils	1/2 cup	15 grams	
Beans	1/2 cup	15 grams	
Pakoda	1 piece	6 grams	
Vegetable Samosa	1 piece	27 grams	Meat won't add to the carbs
Plain Yogurt	1 cup	14 grams	Masala based curries have yogurt as their base.



South & Latin America

Type of food	Serving Size	Grams of Carbs	Notes
Enchiladas	1 piece	25 - 45 g	Smaller is less carbs , larger is higher carbs
Tacos	2 shells	27 grams	Meat contents won't affect carbs
Wraps (Fajitas)	1	30 grams	Wraps are also used in other cuisines
Gallo Pinto	1 cup	40 grams	Breakfast dish
Choripan	1 sandwich	25 grams	Popular in Chile and Argentina!
Plantain (Fried)	1 medium	57 grams	It can be a mashed too
Chuchitos	100 grams	20 grams	
Peanut Soup	1 cup	20 grams	Popular in Bolivia
Empanada	1 portion	20 grams	The bigger the Empanada the higher the Carb
Arepas	1 portion	33 grams	



Please be aware that I am not a doctor and this information is only to be used as a guide. I do not take any responsibility for your health and wellbeing, and you should always consult with a doctor before making changes to your diabetic regime.