

## Q&A: Life-hacks on travelling with Bryan Habana

Few people know the world of travel better than veteran Springbok rugby-player Bryan Habana. He grew up steeped in sport and is named after Manchester United footballers Bryan Robson and Gary Bailey. He scored eight tries in the 2007 Rugby World Cup, equalling the record of All Blacks juggernaut Jonah Lomu.

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The 1.8m, 94kg Springbok, who's raced against a cheetah and a British Airways Airbus A380 and who regularly outpaces some of the planet's fittest athletes, also spends a lot of time on planes. He divides his time between his home in Cape Town and the French city of Toulon, where he plays on the wing for the club of the same name.

Bryan's spent a lot of time in Britain, so we asked him for his life-hacks on travelling in comfort, and of enjoying your destination once you arrive.



### ■ *What makes London such a great place to enjoy sport?*

**Bryan Habana:** London, I believe, offers sports fans one of the world's best all-round experiences. It has fantastic stadia, countless pubs and sports-bars where fans from all over the world come together to enjoy the experience, and hip-and-happening nightlife. The good, reliable public transport makes getting around so simple. Because I've been playing on most of the occasions that I've been to London for sport, I haven't quite really favoured a pub or venue to watch live sport yet, but I've heard that the Cabbage Patch and the William Webb Ellis pubs in Twickenham have a great vibe.

London and especially Twickenham hold a special place in my heart as that was where I made my test debut for the Springboks and with it came scoring a try with my first touch of the ball in international rugby.

### ■ *How do you stay loose and limber when travelling, either before a match, or on business or on holiday?*

**Habana:** Travelling, for me, no matter to where or for what reason, has to be embraced with a degree of patience. You need to make sure that you control what you can: make sure all your documentation is in order and check in online with the BA app to save time at the airport. If things do go wrong, staying chilled makes travelling that much easier. Take things along that keep you occupied, whether it's a great book or a relaxing playlist. I'd also recommend taking as many photos as you can!

It's also good to wear layers of comfortable, breathable clothes with lots of pockets when you fly, and to embrace your down-time: use your time in the lounge to catch up on mails and enjoy a glass of something nice. Once you're in the air and the seat-belt lights are off, move around a bit so you don't stiffen up, stay hydrated with plenty of liquids. Remember that if you're travelling with your kids you can pre-order your meals. Freshening up with a shower in the lounge when you arrive also helps ease out the kinks after sitting for hours.

### ▣ ***Any preferences in entertainment when in the air?***

**Habana:** I enjoy comedies and action films. The length of international flights means I can usually fit in two or three movies, which is pretty cool. In the early days of my career, I liked getting pretty psyched by my music, so there were plenty of rock and upbeat tracks on my playlist.

As I head toward the latter part of my career I've mellowed out a bit and although there are one or two songs to get the blood pumping, my playlist tends toward easy-listening.

### ▣ ***Meal choices when traveling?***

**Habana:** If I'm travelling to a game, I'd definitely have some salmon for starters, pasta and chicken for mains and I'd probably skip dessert. But if I'm travelling for leisure I'd definitely have dessert as well.

### ▣ ***Tips for travelling with children?***

**Habana:** With my son having just turned one, he's at a stage where we interact with him a lot and he's pretty busy. So packing toys in that stimulate him and keep him occupied helps make the long flights more bearable. Also, not weighing yourself down with too much carry-on luggage for him helps and getting a pram that's small, lightweight yet durable and easy to use makes a big difference. We have got the BabyZen Yoyo that can be folded up and taken on as carry-on so that there's no waiting for your pram at baggage-claims on arrival.

### ▣ ***You love your gadgets and devices. Any tips for travelling with them and do you have any favourite apps that help you arrive relaxed and rested, or for staying entertained?***

**Habana:** Being prepared, especially when it comes down to devices and chargers ease your journey. Make sure all your devices are charged before beginning your journey. Do some research about your destination beforehand so you know what type of international adapter plug you'll need. Try to cut down on the device/charger clutter to save packing space in your carry-on and I'd advise taking along a portable charger.

There are so many apps that make discovering London fun and easy. The Tube Map London Underground app means you never get lost and the Official London City Guide app and Citymapper London apps are also good. To stay entertained, I create a good playlist to listen to on the Tube or download one of my favourite magazines to read. If I'm in the mood for games, Candy Crush or Words with Friends are my favourites.

### ▣ ***What should you pack when you're off to support your boytjies?***

**Habana:** The new Springbok jersey, a beanie and gloves (even in summer some of those stadia still get cold), a set of small binoculars and some snacks. You can't take naartjies and biltong through Customs, but you can buy them at [www.buysouthafricanonline.co.uk](http://www.buysouthafricanonline.co.uk).

### ▣ ***Any especially memorable moments in the UK?***

**Habana:** Making my Test debut at Twickenham and scoring a try against the then World Champions at the home of rugby with my first touch of the ball in international rugby was pretty special. Racing a BA Airbus A380 was definitely one of the craziest moments.

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