

5 Top High-Tech Travel Gadgets

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From a rugged camera to a GPS device, our top 5 handy high-tech gadgets actually enhance the planning, safety and sharing of your travel adventures — so you can feel free to roam.



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KAREN CATCHPOLE AND ERIC MOHL OF THE TRANS-AMERICAS JOURNEY

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1. Emergency alerts and real-time location sharing

We've used a [Spot Satellite Messenger](#) since the beginning of our Trans-Americas Journey road trip through North, Central and South America. It sits on the dashboard of our truck and tracks us as we drive, creating a map on our website that shows exactly where we are in real time. We also carry it when we hike or snowshoe or raft into remote areas, where the [Spot Satellite Messenger](#) continues to track us but can also be used, with the push of a button, to send an emergency signal with our GPS coordinates if we run into trouble (from US\$149.99).



2. Capture the action like a pro

There's a reason you're seeing small, silver squares on the foreheads, helmets or wrists of more and more skiers, rafters, sky divers, kayakers, scuba divers, dog mushers...you name it. The [GoPro Hero HD video camera](#) has become the hottest adventure accessory since Cliff Bars because it's a small but powerful way for everyday adventurers to take point-of-view footage of their escapades — something that used to be the domain of pro extreme film makers only.

We've used our [GoPro](#) (from US\$199.99) during our Trans-Americas Journey road trip through North, Central and South America to capture us rappelling, spelunking, white water rafting and more. We also use our GoPro in its photo mode to take a picture every 10 seconds through our windshield while we're driving. We then edit the images into time-lapse video of our road trip driving route, which we share every month in [Where](#)

We've Been posts on our blog.

3. A camera as tough as you are

This year, just about every brand that makes a tough digital camera released new models. However, the rugged star is still from Panasonic.

The petite **Panasonic Lumix TS4** is shock-resistant to drops of up to two metres, won't freeze at temperatures as low as -10° Celsius and is dust-proof. The **Panasonic Lumix TS4** is also waterproof to 12 metres, whereas most competing models are only waterproof to 10 metres. A Leica lens helps deliver high-quality images, even underwater. It's also got a built in GPS with compass, an altimeter and a barometer. Other tough cameras have some, but not all, of those functions (US\$399.99). Did we mention that it also takes video?



4. Maps in the palm of your hand

These two apps put the current, reliable, detailed road and trail information you need in the palm of your hand. **GPS Kit** lets you choose to view different types of maps, including cycling maps and terrain or topo maps. With the push of a button, you can also share your current location via Facebook or Twitter. And we love the squawk feature, which acts like a walkie-talkie — a big plus if you're involved in a group activity such as bike riding, in which participants might travel at different speeds and become separated (US\$9.99 on iTunes).

However, **GPS Kit** is only available for the iPad or iPhone. If you want a great map app for Android, go with **Gaia GPS**, which has a comparable range of functions, including a backcountry navigator function and trail maps (US\$9.99 on iTunes). We hear makers of the **Gaia GPS** will be rolling out even more features soon.

5. Keep it all safe

Now that you've got your tech tools, you need a tech tool box. Made of waterproof, crush proof polycarbonate, the **OtterBox 3510** is completely airtight (so dust and humidity stay out, too) and waterproof up to 30 metres. Foam inserts can be removed and replaced to create customized spaces that cradle your gadgets (US\$30.95).



Look for **Karen**

Catchpole and Eric Mohl's Just Add Adventure! series every Wednesday and Friday all summer long on Travel and Escape!

KAREN CATCHPOLE AND ERIC MOHL OF THE TRANS-AMERICAS JOURNEY



In April of 2006, journalist Karen Catchpole and photographer Eric Mohl left their jobs and apartment in New York City and embarked on the **Trans-Americas Journey**, a 200,000-mile working road trip through all 23 countries in North, Central and South America. After many years on the road they are still nowhere near their goal of Tierra del Fuego at the tip of South America where the road literally ends. Until then, their slow and steady overland exploration of The Americas continues.

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