

Tips to Travel Safely Abroad

- **Get Travel Insurance:** I know this sounds like a no-brainer, but you'd be surprised by how many people get too caught up in their trip itinerary plans to think of travel insurance. If you don't already have it, you most definitely need it; safeguard against lost luggage or canceled flights can save you big bucks in the long run and give you peace of mind.
- **Research the country you are going to before you go.** The best and fastest way of researching is to [search on the Internet](#) for legal information and things you should know well in advance of traveling to that country. View travel advisories from reputable sources such as the [US](#) and [UK](#), and take note of any potential issues you may encounter. A streetwise traveler should also know emergency numbers, and at least a bit of the language (like the word for "help").
- **Make three copies of everything before you leave.** Make copies of your passport, travel itinerary and tickets, credit cards, driver's license, and any other important documents. Copy the back of everything, as well. This can make it easier for you to recover if any of your documents are stolen, but keep the copies in separate locations, and keep them *safe*. You can also consider making scans of your documents and e-mailing them as attachments to yourself to be printed when and if needed. You may be able to store your important documents in an online "safe" for more security.
- **Contact the US Embassy.** Get the addresses and phone numbers of your country's embassy and any military bases (if applicable) before your arrival to the foreign country. Contact your country's embassy (or closest embassy) upon arriving. Advise them of your location and your name, especially if you are in a politically turbulent foreign country.
- **Call your credit card and cell phone providers** to advise them that you will be leaving the country.
- **Check to see if drinking water is safe.** When drinking bottled water make sure the cap is still attached to the ring.
- **Safeguard your room.** Ask for a room that is not on the ground floor or near the elevator or fire stairs. Bring a door wedge. Use your do not disturb sign when you are out of the room.
- **Keep your personal information secret.** No one but you need to know where you are staying, where you are going, and when you are doing it.
- **Carry your documents strategically.** Do not place your credit cards, cash, ID cards, and passport all in the same place.
- **Carry a fake wallet** in case you are mugged and have to give it up. To be extra safe, prepare a mugger's wallet.
- **Keep the address to your accommodation.** In both English and the native tongue written in both your phone's notes (or snap a photo) and in a little notebook (phone batteries die). Everyone in your group should do this as reality is, you might lose your friends.

- **If you're going to be driving, check in to the rules of the road.** Do some research prior to driving in the location you are traveling to,

- **Walk facing the traffic.** It has been reported that thieves on scooters could snatch handbags as they drive past. Keep your handbag/suitcase on the side of your body that is away from the traffic. By doing this, you can also minimize the risk of any accidents, which could arise from not seeing the speeding cars behind you.

- **Be alert when using public transportation.** If using taxi's have the hotel or restaurant or store attendant call a taxi for you.

- **Avoid looking like a tourist** Do not wear excessive or expensive-looking jewelry. No fanny packs. Do not carry tote bags with tour group logos.

- **Take a photo of taxi, limo or uber car showing the license plate.**

- **Never get into a car with a stranger.** If it is a certified taxi driver, then make sure by asking for identification. If you find out too late that you are in an illegal taxi driver's car, break away through windows or the door.

- **Never accept a drink from a stranger.** If you don't see the bartender make the drink, do not drink it. If you set a drink down and lose track of it, do not drink it. Get a new drink. If drinks are provided in your hotel room they need to be sealed.

- **Enroll in STEP, Smart Traveler Enrollment Program.** You will receive the latest safety and security information for your destination country, so you can make informed decisions about your travel. The information you provide enables the U.S. embassy or consulate to contact you in an emergency.

- **Avoid Oversharing Online:** Posting photos or checking in on social media sites advertises your absence from home. Real-time updates can be tempting, but wait until you return safely home before sharing your adventures.

-