

Take-Off to Safe Travels Abroad

Amid the bustling summer travel season, consider these tips to enhance your vacation experience and ensure a safe return!



Flight Pre-Check

- ✔ Make copies of your passport. Take a copy with you, but keep it separate from your actual passport; upload a copy to your secure online document storage for easy access and/or leave with a family member or close friend; ALWAYS keep your passport on your person or locked in a safe.
- ✔ Leave your itinerary with a family member or friend (not traveling with you).
- ✔ Check travel.state.gov/destination for general information (ex. exit requirements, visas, laws/customs, medical care, safety of using public transportation). Confirm if there are fees to enter or leave the country.
- ✔ Read the travel alerts for your destination and check www.usembassy.gov for the latest security messages.
- ✔ Research if special vaccinations or other health considerations are required: wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel.
- ✔ Enroll in STEP (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program) <https://step.state.gov/step>: In an emergency, they will send you alerts, contact you, and help family and friends get in touch with you.
- ✔ Make sure your health insurance covers active travel and is valued outside the United States; carry your medical profile and insurance card on your person at all times.
- ✔ Consider obtaining travel insurance; determine if things such as air ambulance, medical bills and pre-existing medical conditions are included.
- ✔ Get a letter from your doctor for any medications you intend to bring (including over-the-counter medication). Be aware that some medications such as cold medicine are not sold over-the-counter in certain countries.
- ✔ Create laminated cards listing any severe allergies such as food allergies and any important medical alerts in the language of the country you are visiting.
- ✔ Call your credit card company and let them know the place(s) and dates you are traveling; make sure your credit cards will work in the country and ask about foreign transaction fees. Save a copy of your credit cards to your secure online document storage in case of loss.
- ✔ Look up the currency conversion rates before you go, and do your math before you travel.
- ✔ Consider getting an international SIM card from your phone carrier, which will allow you to access the internet anywhere. This will be particularly helpful in ensuring access to GPS.
- ✔ Parents traveling alone with a minor, should consider taking custody documents and/or notarized written consent from the other parent.

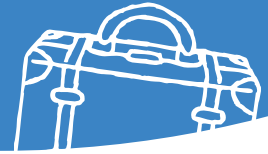


Pack Smart



Pack items in your carry-on luggage that you will need in the event your checked luggage is lost or stolen: identification, money, valuables, medication, contact lenses or glasses, and a change of clothes.

- ✔ Keep valuables, such as jewelry, in the bottom of your bag, away from the opening.
- ✔ Consider purchasing a wallet with RFID-blocking technology. Put your wallet in an inner pocket to make it more difficult to steal.
- ✔ Hide a few bills in the pages of a book or magazine as most thieves will not steal reading materials; or hide extra cash or a traveler's check between your phone and its case.
- ✔ Pack lightweight, wrinkle-free clothing that is also fast drying in the event it needs to be hand-washed.
- ✔ Carry copies of any prescriptions, including eyeglass prescriptions, but pack them separately from your medicine.
- ✔ Place an AirTag or Tile in your luggage and bags to enable you to track them.



Boarding Pass to Politeness

MASTERING AIR TRAVEL ETIQUETTE

As you navigate the bustling airport terminals and settle into your seat, remember that a little courtesy not only minimizes stress for you, but also contributes to a more pleasant experience for everyone on board. So stow your baggage, fasten your seatbelt, and let's explore the art of flying with grace!

- ✔ Avoid holding up the line at security. Have your boarding pass and ID ready and speed up the process by removing your watch, belt, laptop and shoes.
- ✔ Hold your carry-on items directly in front of you as you board the plane to avoid bumping into others.
- ✔ Maximize room in the overhead bin by placing your bag vertically and only put one carry-on in the bin.
- ✔ Avoid or minimize the use of perfume, scented lotions, aftershave or anything else with scent.
- ✔ Respect your limited space.
- ✔ Converse with caution. Be mindful of the cues your fellow passenger is giving.
- ✔ Avoid bringing on smelly food.
- ✔ Disembark calmly. Be courteous of other people's belongings and unless you are about to miss a connecting flight, exit row-by-row.



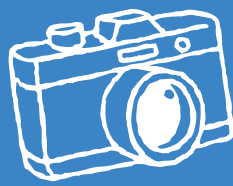
Beyond Check-In

NAVIGATING HOTEL SAFETY AND COMFORT

Selecting the ideal hotel involves more than just browsing online reviews; it's about finding a balance between security, convenience, and a good night's rest.

- ✔ Know the area you are staying in.
- ✔ Choose a reputable hotel with good customer reviews and ratings for safety and security.
- ✔ If possible, reserve the room under your first initial and last name to keep your name private.
- ✔ Request a room on a higher floor.
- ✔ Plan out in advance how you will get to your accommodations and familiarize yourself with the route.
- ✔ When you arrive, be aware of your surroundings and who and what is around you.
- ✔ If others are around take your time getting to your room, strangers do not need to know where you are staying.
- ✔ Identify emergency exits.
- ✔ Inspect the door lock, peephole and deadbolt to ensure they work properly.
- ✔ Utilize a doorstopper of some kind as an extra barrier.
- ✔ Put something near the door that makes noise.
- ✔ Always keep your doors locked. Use the door chain/latch when in your room.
- ✔ Lock your windows and close the curtains.
- ✔ Verify the identity of anyone knocking at your door. Call the front desk to verify hotel staff.
- ✔ When you leave your room, leave the TV and light on.
- ✔ Don't be afraid to ask for an escort to your room if you are feeling unsafe.
- ✔ Do not share your location with strangers or post on social media.

Tourist Tips



Try NOT to look like a tourist! Keep a low profile; observe local standards of dress. Avoid flashy jewelry, expensive electronics, and cameras.

- ✔ Be aware of your surroundings; avoid areas of town believed to be unsafe and DO NOT wander through unfamiliar areas alone, especially at night.
- ✔ Stay vigilant. It is a common tactic for thieves to distract their targets. Research typical con games of your destination.
- ✔ If traveling alone, try not to look alone. Ask the hotel for an annotated map of the area before exploring.
- ✔ Try to maintain confidence when walking in busy areas. If you get turned around stop in a coffee shop to discreetly and get your bearing.
- ✔ Get a sturdy bag with thick straps that cannot be grabbed or ripped. If using a backpack, wear it front-facing.
- ✔ Attach a whistle to your bag so that it is easily accessible to signal for help or deter unwanted attention.
- ✔ Secure your valuables, including electronics, in the hotel safe. Do not hide items under the mattress.

- ✔ Carry only as much cash as needed for the day. Use a money belt or keep cash in an inside pocket.
- ✔ Wear pick-pocket proof clothing.
- ✔ Keep credit cards, cash, ID and checks in different spots on your person. DO NOT put anything in your back pocket.
- ✔ Use cash instead of credit cards at internet cafes to avoid being a victim of identity theft.
- ✔ Be smart when using unsecure Wi-Fi. Only log into websites that hold personal and confidential information such as your bank account when on a secure Wi-Fi network. If possible, put a VPN on all your devices.
- ✔ Keep local emergency numbers on hand and pre-program important numbers into your phone. (i.e. your accommodation; the consulate's office)
- ✔ Beware of strangers; DO NOT share your personal details or information. Someone being overly friendly or helpful may be looking to rip you off or rob you. This includes individuals offering "discounted" admissions or fares.

Hitch-A-Ride

Having your hotel business card to hand to the driver helps to avoid language barriers or directional issues. Be wary, safety and reliability of services such as Lyft and Uber can vary by destination. Taxis are often the safest way to travel at night.

- ✔ Only use taxis clearly identified with official markings; avoid unmarked taxis or drivers soliciting passengers in train stations or airports.
- ✔ Try not to put your bags in the taxi before you get in to avoid having your bags hijacked.
- ✔ Have a general idea of how long your trip should take. Map it out or ask hotel staff.
- ✔ Use GPS to ensure they are taking you to your destination and not elsewhere.

When using trains and buses, plan your route ahead of time.

- ✔ Know the fares and how to signal the driver to stop.
- ✔ Never accept food or drink from strangers.
- ✔ On a night train, lock your compartment; sleep in shifts or try to stay awake; if sleeping, strap your valuables to your person.

On The Road Again

When renting a vehicle, try to blend in and choose a car that is common on the roads.

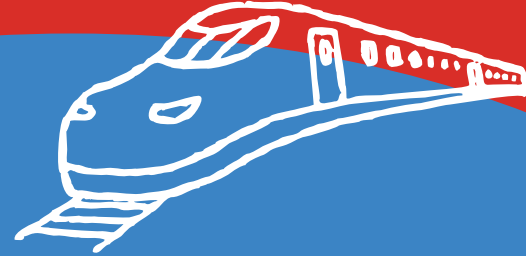
- ✔ Check your auto insurance for coverage while abroad.
- ✔ Check with the embassy to confirm that a US driver's license is valid; International Driving Permits can be attained from AAA or the National Automobile Club.
- ✔ Be familiar with local laws and driving culture.
- ✔ Keep bags and purses out of sight in the locked trunk.
- ✔ Keep doors locked at all times.
- ✔ Have a way of accessing a navigation system.
- ✔ Be aware of your surroundings: Attacks often occur in high crime areas, lesser-traveled roads, intersections where you must stop, isolated parking lots, traffic jams or congested areas.
- ✔ If someone hits you from behind or tries to alert you to a problem with your vehicle, only pull over when you reach a safe place.



Paint The Town Red

Nightlife in some cultures may have more conservative dress customs; do your research to avoid embarrassment or standing out in a crowd. Remember that partying abroad requires vigilance and smart choices.

- ✔ Have your ID with you, different countries have different drinking ages.
- ✔ Drink responsibly to reduce your risk of becoming a victim of crime. Alcohol content of some beers and liquor may be significantly more than the drinks in the US.
- ✔ Never leave your drink unattended and do NOT accept drinks from strangers.
- ✔ Ensure you bring enough currency to take a cab or access transportation when ready to head back to your hotel at the end of the night.



Well, I Do Declare

When transporting goods across national borders, be aware that they may be subject to a Customs Duty — a tariff or tax. To avoid confiscation and fines, understand what you cannot take out of other countries and what you cannot bring back into the US. Importantly, refrain from bringing back wildlife or wildlife products, as this can lead to trouble.

Before buying those must-have animal print shoes, consider asking these questions:

- ✔ What is this product made of?
- ✔ Where did this product come from?
- ✔ Does the country I am visiting allow the sale and export of this product?
- ✔ Do I need permits or other documents from this country or the US to bring this item home?

For some helpful information, see the Buyer Beware brochure provided by the World Wide Fund for Nature, www.tinyurl.com/wwfbuyer beware.



BON VOYAGE!

Traveling involves common-sense considerations, but a few strategic steps can transform your vacation into a dream rather than a nightmare. Begin by thoroughly researching your destination. Compile a list of emergency contacts and share your travel details with a family member or friend. Blend in with the locals to avoid standing out as a typical tourist, and always trust your instincts. Lastly, create unforgettable memories and have a safe journey!

Resources

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/your-health-abroad.html>

"International Travel Tips: Things To Do Before Traveling Abroad", www.familytravelmagazine.com

"How to Pack Your Carry-On", Alina Bradford, Cnet

7 Things You Must Do Before Your Next International Trip, NEA Member Benefits. <https://www.neamb.com/travel/international-travel-checklist.htm>

<https://www.etiquetteschoolofamerica.com/the-best-airplane-etiquette-tips-to-make-flying-less-stressful/>

<https://www.journohq.com/blog/20-tips-for-hotel-room-safety-security/>

<https://www.tripgiraffe.com/travel-blog/travel-tips/hotel-safety-tips-for-travelers-your-comprehensive-guide>

<https://jessieonajourney.com/17-safety-tips-for-solo-travelers/>

<https://www.nerdwallet.com/article/travel/solo-female-travel-tips>

"21 Tips to Staying Safe Abroad", Stephanie Be, Huffington Post

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/pages/buyer-beware>

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