



International Travel Seminar — Travel Tips

****Please review the National Travel Seminar – Travel Tips document****

The following tips are more specific to the international travel seminar.

- **Money.** Bring some U.S. currency in small denominations (1s, 5s and 10s) to cover tips, food at the departure airport, in-flight costs, and for your return flight. Most vendors in the countries we will be visiting accept U.S. dollars, but only if the paper money is in good shape (bills heavily used or with tears often will not be accepted). ATM machines are available in all major cities. Many vendors do not always accept traveler's checks, so they are not particularly useful. You are encouraged to keep your extra currency and travel documents in your hotel room safe.
- **Local currency.** For the rural areas, you will want to exchange U.S. dollars for the local currency. Most of the hotels, restaurants and shops accept American credit cards for purchases.
- **Electrical and electronic devices.** Many countries have specific electrical systems and sockets that differ from the U.S. You'll need to determine the electrical system (plug type and voltage) for the countries you are traveling to. Before leaving, purchase an adapter plug and possibly a voltage converter and transformer as well. Consider purchasing a plug-in with dual-voltage capacity or using battery-operated devices. For more information and to see a world electricity guide, visit REI's website at <http://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/world-electricity-guide.html>.
- **Medicine.** To avoid problems when passing through customs, keep medicines in their original, labeled containers. Bring copies of your prescriptions and the generic names for the drugs. If a medication is unusual or contains narcotics, carry a letter from your doctor attesting to your need to take the drug. If you have any doubt about the legality of carrying a certain drug into a country, consult the embassy or consulate of that country before you travel.
- **Passport backup.** Pack an extra set of passport photos along with a photocopy of your passport information page to make replacement of your passport easier in the event it is lost or stolen. Leave behind copies with a family member as well.
- **Document carrier.** It is recommended that you bring a document carrier for your airport documents and passport. A small bag or backpack is handy for carrying daily items.
- **Other items to bring.** Bring business cards, class photo cards, California postcards, and personal photos to share with local people you meet.
- **Internet / E-mail access.** This may be available in some of the hotels you will be staying at. In most other cases you should be able to locate nearby Internet cafes.
- **Use the hotel safe.** Your passport, cash and credit cards are most secure when locked in a hotel safe. When you have to carry them on your person, you may wish to put them in various places rather than all in one wallet or pouch. Avoid handbags, fanny packs and outside pockets that are easy targets for thieves. Inside pockets and a sturdy shoulder bag with the strap worn across your chest are somewhat safer. One of the safest places to carry valuables is in a pouch or money belt worn under your clothing.

- **Food and water.** When you are not sure of the quality of the water, always drink bottled water, preferably carbonated mineral water sold in bottles. Meat, fish and vegetables should be well cooked, and salads should be avoided unless the greens have been washed with purified water. Fruit you peel is the safest; drinks with ice can be a problem unless the ice was made with bottled water. If you need regularly spaced meals, please bring along sufficient between-meal snacks.

- **Upset stomach and other issues.** While on the seminar, some travelers suffer from diarrhea caused by bacteria to which their bodies are not accustomed. For minor cases, Pepto-Bismol is recommended, supplemented with bananas and clear liquids. Some have found that Bactrim is helpful for diarrhea, but check with your doctor. The use of Lomotil, Paregoric and Kaopectate is discouraged, as they can be dangerous in infectious diarrheas. An anti-diarrhea over-the-counter medication that has been receiving very positive response is Diasorb, which seems to avoid the disadvantages of the Lomotil-type drugs. Several herbal teas -- such as raspberry, peppermint, ginger root, black, bancha and chamomile -- are also thought to aid in the treatment of diarrhea. Garlic capsules or heat-resistant acidophilus capsules (available in health food stores) can be helpful in preventing digestive problems. *(This information provided by the Center For Global Education, a program of Augsburg College)*

- **Travel concerns.** Some of you may have concerns about traveling in certain regions. Please be assured that we are taking all precautions available, and have checked on the issues of safety regarding the areas we intend to visit. Our intent is not to alarm you, but to make you aware that we will not hesitate to change the order of the itinerary or revise the schedule should something occur making it appear unsafe to travel to a specific area.

- **Safety and common sense.** Use the same common sense traveling overseas that you would at home. Be especially cautious in (or avoid) areas where you may be more easily victimized. These include crowded subways, train stations, elevators, tourist sites, market places, festivals, and crime-ridden neighborhoods.
 - Don't use short cuts, narrow alleys or poorly lit streets.
 - Do not travel alone at night.
 - Avoid public demonstrations and other civil disturbances.
 - Keep a low profile and avoid loud conversations or arguments.
 - Do not discuss travel plans or other personal matters with strangers.
 - Avoid scam artists by being wary of strangers who approach you and offer to be your guide or to sell you something at bargain prices.
 - Beware of pickpockets. They often have an accomplice who will: jostle you, ask you for directions or the time, point to something spilled on your clothing, distract you by creating a disturbance.
 - Beware of groups of vagrant children who create a distraction while picking your pocket.
 - Wear the shoulder strap of your bag across your chest and walk with the bag away from the curb to avoid drive-by purse-snatchers.
 - Try to seem purposeful when you move about. Even if you are lost, act as if you know where you are going. Try to ask for directions only from individuals in authority.
 - Learn a few phrases in the local language or have them handy in written form so that you can signal your need for police or medical help.
 - Make a note of emergency telephone numbers you may need: police, fire, your hotel, and the nearest U.S. Embassy or consulate.
 - If you are confronted, don't fight back – give up your valuables.