

S·Y·T·A



STUDENT·YOUTH
TRAVEL ASSOCIATION



The **VOICE** of Student and Youth Travel SM

Travel Safety Tips

www.syta.org

Advice And Current Information On Safe And Enjoyable Travel

Travel is an exciting experience that will introduce you to new places, new people and new cultures. A trip can create memories that will last a lifetime. However, there are certain precautions parents, students and college age travelers should take to make sure that their trip goes smoothly and safely. While part of travel is experiencing the unexpected, advance preparation can insure against unpleasant experiences.

The following are travel guidelines and reminders about safety that will help you avoid many possible problems. While this brochure is helpful and following it will eliminate many problems, obviously it cannot provide a guarantee against all problems.



General Protection

- Do not carry too much cash. Traveler's checks are preferable as long as you have proper ID. You can also access cash from A.T.M. machines in the U.S. and abroad.
- Bring an extra pair of prescription glasses and/or contact lenses in case of loss or damage.
- Wear a waterproof, inexpensive watch and do not wear expensive jewelry. Expensive items can be lost, stolen or damaged, plus they can make you a target for thieves.
- Find out if your family's health care plan will cover you abroad. Ask your tour company about purchasing travel insurance (which may also cover you in case of theft and more).
- Pack a simple "first aid" kit containing adhesive bandages, first aid or anti-biotic cream and pain relievers, etc.
- Keep any prescription medication in its original container, and bring a photocopy of all current prescriptions (medication, glasses, etc.) so they can more easily be replaced if lost.
- Alert trip leaders of any medication you may be taking.
- Bring disposable or inexpensive cameras.

Questions Parents Should Ask

Parents, do you know:

- The phone and fax number(s) of the hotel(s) being used on the trip?
- The 24-hour contact information for your child's travel provider that you can use in case of emergency?
- If the travel provider is experienced in youth and student travel?
- How many chaperones are accompanying the trip, and who they are?
- If the hotel has 24-hour security?
- If the tour director/group's escort(s) will have a cell phone on them at all times to use in case of emergency?
- Exactly what is included in the price (meals, admission to attractions, etc.) and what additional costs should be expected on tour (special options, certain meals, fees, etc.)?
- If the company is a member of a professional travel association such as SYTA?

Preparing For Travel

Preparing for Air Travel

- Pack all valuables, medications, toiletries, travel documents and trip-related information in your carry-on bag.
- Place film in your carry-on baggage* or request a hand inspection. Equipment used for screening checked baggage will damage your undeveloped film.
- Do not lock your luggage as it can be removed/broken by baggage checkers; or use special Transportation Safety Administration "TSA-approved" locks which can be opened by airport staff using special tools without damaging your lock.
- Clearly identify your luggage with your name and address, but use covered tags so strangers will not easily see your contact information.
- Verify departure terminal location and number in advance to avoid delays.
- New security measures can cause delays at airports. Be sure to arrive well in advance of your departure time. Be aware that most electronics will be examined at the airport.
- Avoid wearing shoes or accessories containing metal.

Preparing for Travel Abroad

- Apply early for your passport and visa(s). Be sure to fill out the back page of the passport (emergency contact page) before you depart.
- Keep photocopies of your airline tickets, passport and visas on you (but separate from the originals). Leave additional copies at home with family in case you need them. You can also email information from these documents to yourself so you can access it online while abroad.
- Pack an electricity converter for all appliances (hair dryers, etc). Using a North American plug in an international outlet can cause damage and/or shock and possibly start a fire.
- Check with the U.S. State Department or the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs for reports, travel warnings and other announcements regarding travel to the countries you will be visiting. For up to date information, log on to: www.travel.state.gov (in U.S.) or www.voyage.gc.ca (for Canada). These sites also provide passport application procedures and Consular Information Sheets with useful information regarding travel to specific countries.
- Visit the SYTA website: www.syta.org and go to the "Travel Resources" tab for additional information and related links.

Preparing for Travel Abroad Alone

- Learn about the local laws of the countries you are visiting (drinking age, customs, curfews, drug laws, etc.). As a foreigner, you are not immune to a country's laws and can be arrested.
- Familiarize yourself in advance with the language and customs of the country you are visiting to help avoid offending its citizens. Pay attention to customs and laws regarding attire for both sexes.
- Let family members know where you will be staying and provide contact information. If you will not be sure of your plans until you are abroad, send contact information via email as soon as possible.
- Find out in advance the address and phone number of your country's embassy or consulate in the country you are visiting. The consulate can assist you in the case of illness, loss of passport and other emergencies while abroad. For extended stays, it is a good idea to register with your country's embassy or consulate. In case of emergency, your family can send messages to you via the consulate or embassy.



*Carry-on screening equipment might also damage film if the film passes through more than 5 times.

Safety Tips While Traveling

By Motorcoach:

- Remain seated. Most accidents occur when passengers are standing in the aisles.
- Listen to emergency procedures and know how to use emergency window exits.
- When off the coach, know how to contact the motorcoach driver in case of emergency.
- Stand well clear of the door when waiting for it to open.

By Airplane:

- Keep your seatbelt on at all times: it may be annoying, but in the case of turbulence or loss of cabin pressure, you could be injured if not seatbelted.
- Pay attention to the pre-flight safety demonstration and make sure you know where your nearest exit is.
- If you wear contact lenses, bring glasses for the airplane. The recycled air can dry out your eyes and make you uncomfortable.
- If you're on a special diet, order a special meal well in advance of your trip.
- Pack any prescription medications and all toiletries in your carry-on bag.
- Alert the airplane staff of any suspicious behavior of other passengers.

In Hotels:

- Keep door locked and chained and never open your hotel room door to a stranger.
- Refuse any unexpected deliveries to your room.
- Read the fire instructions on the back of your room door, and know where the nearest fire emergency exit is located on your hall.
- In case of fire, never get into an elevator.
- Never leave your valuables or passport in your hotel room while you are out. Use the hotel safe for all valuables when possible.
- Make sure you know how to contact the front desk, and your group chaperone's room.
- Never give out your room number or phone number to strangers.
- Never enter your room if it is unlocked or if you are alone and someone is following you down the hall. Let them pass you before entering.
- Keep any medication near your toothbrush as a reminder to take it when you brush.



While Touring:

- Do not travel alone at night or accept rides from a stranger.
- Keep the name, address and phone number of your hotel on you at all times, as well as your tour company's 24-hour hotline.
- Keep a small amount of money in your pocket to pay for small purchases (drinks, snacks souvenirs, etc.) so you don't have to open your wallet in a busy place.
- The best place to keep your wallet is in a zippered pocket on the inside of your jacket or in your front pocket (never in a back pocket). Avoid carrying a purse. If you use a waist pouch, be sure the pouch is in front.
- Use only authorized agents when exchanging money to avoid violating local laws.
- Be aware that traffic laws vary in different places and look both ways when crossing the street.
- Do not leave your luggage unattended in public areas and never accept packages from strangers.
- Travel with a partner at all times and don't stray from the group on your own.
- Be especially respectful of temples, mosques, churches and synagogues and other religious sites. Some are off-limits to foreigners or those of different faiths. Ask permission before taking photographs of religious artifacts or buildings.
- In some foreign countries you can be detained for photographing such things as police, military installations, and government buildings. If you are in doubt, ask permission before taking photographs.
- Avoid public demonstrations or other civil disturbances.
- In some countries, it is advisable to avoid raw vegetables, unpeeled fruit, and unpasteurized milk and dairy products and drink only commercially bottled and sealed beverages or water.
- Resist the temptation to buy food from street vendors.



Choosing A Travel Provider

One of the most important aspects of planning a trip is the reliability of the travel provider. You should determine how long the company has been in business (under its current name) and how long it has been conducting trips for students/youth. Find out if they have general as well as professional (errors and omissions) liability insurance and a risk management plan. Ask them what financial safeguards are in place to protect their customers. It is also a good idea to ask for a reference from a recent traveler or youth group in your area.

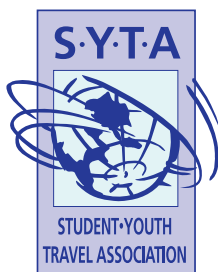
You can check the company's reliability by contacting:

- The Better Business Bureau (to see if there have been claims against the company)
- In the U.S., check with your state's Consumer Protection Office

- In Canada, check with the Canadian Information Gateway or with Industry Canada's Strategis website

You should also find out if the company is a member of SYTA (the Student and Youth Travel Association of North America). SYTA is comprised of companies that specialize in youth and student travel and enforces a strict code of ethics as well as a stringent membership criteria, which means members are committed to providing the highest quality trips for young people. SYTA members must maintain insurance, must conduct their business with honesty, integrity and offer full disclosure of all terms.

- To see a list of SYTA members visit www.syta.org



The VOICE of Student and Youth TravelSM

www.syta.org

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