

Travel is one of life's great adventures no matter what your age – exploring another culture, meeting people and having wonderful new and exciting experiences. Sometimes, though, it helps to have some direction – and inspiration.

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office and Lonely Planet have teamed up to give you both – practical and safer travel tips and advice, as well as destination-specific information to help make the most of your trip abroad.

This guide is packed with insights and useful tips from the experts at Lonely Planet to help you choose your destination, plan your trip and know what to do if things come unstuck. Whether you're young at heart or a seasoned traveller, we've given you the knowledge – but how you choose to execute your adventure is up to you. Enjoy.

www.fco.gov.uk/travel



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WORLD WISE

FOREIGN & COMMONWEALTH OFFICE
TRAVEL SAFE

therefore I travel





Support For British Nationals Abroad: Helping us help you stay safe overseas.

Falling sick, being a victim of crime or facing an emergency are traumatic events under any circumstances. When these problems happen abroad they can be even more difficult. Support for British Nationals Abroad summarises some of the main ways in which you can help yourself to stay safe abroad, and make sure that you are covered in case things go wrong. However, if you do get into difficulty, it is important to know what help we, The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, can provide and how you can get it.

To order your FREE copy please go to www.fco.gov.uk/travel then go to 'our publications' and follow the ordering instructions.



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Travel is one of life's great experiences. It's never too late, and it's never been easier to see the world.

Most holidays leave nothing but happy memories, but sadly this isn't always the case. A minor accident, lost camera, unexpected illness or worse can leave a dent on your travel experiences, but a few simple steps can help you get the most out of your trip.

World Wise, produced by Lonely Planet and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), is packed with tips: from helping you avoid accidentally causing offence when meeting the locals to what preparations you should take to be really ready before you go away. We'll show you some great destinations and help ensure your travels have a positive impact on the places you visit.

A passport is your most important travel document. Without it, you can't even get on a plane out of the country. For many countries outside the European Union, you may also need a visa to enter.

Passports

Everyone needs a 10-year passport, but make sure it has at least six months to run from the date of travel. If you're applying for or renewing a passport do it with plenty of time to spare – the time taken to issue one can vary and there's a bit of paperwork to organise. You can get advice from the UK Passport Service website (www.ukpa.gov.uk) or call them on 0870 521 0410.

Visas

Although some countries issue visas (for instance at the airport or border crossing), in most cases it's best to obtain a visa before you travel.

Always check visa requirements with your travel agent or contact the Consulate or Embassy in the UK of the country you plan to visit (most have websites) well in advance of your trip.

Look After Your Passport!

- Take a photocopy of your passport. Note the passport number, date and place of issue, and keep this in a secure place separate from the original (the safe at your hotel, for example).
- Write the full details of your next of kin in your passport.
- If your passport is lost or stolen overseas, report it to the local police immediately and get a statement about the loss. Also contact the nearest British Consulate for advice immediately.

Card-Carrying Checklist

- Make sure your debit and credit cards aren't about to expire.
- Make a note of card details, plus the phone numbers of the card issuers you will need to contact in an emergency.
- Make sure the credit and debit cards you are using are accepted where you're going – look for ATMs with international signs.
- If you plan to hire a car, a credit card is usually essential.
- Check what fees your home bank charges for international ATM withdrawals.
- See the British Bankers Association website (www.bba.org.uk) for more tips on using your credit card abroad.

Carrying money needn't be a headache. A mix of cash, debit and credit cards is best.

You'll be able to use a debit card at ATMs abroad just as you do at home – provided you have your PIN. Another option is a travellers' cheque card, which acts like a prepaid debit/credit card and can also be used at many ATMs. Before you go, load it up with funds in your destination country's currency; funds are guaranteed if the card gets lost or stolen. The best way

to carry cash and cards is in a moneybelt worn under your clothes. Take care when taking money out in public – keeping some cash in a pocket or wallet is a good idea. Bumbags are a bad idea – they all too readily identify you as a tourist. In the developing world, US dollars are almost always the most useful currency to have. Euros are increasingly welcome, too.

No matter how careful you are, things can go wrong on holiday. Your luggage could be lost or stolen, you might get ill or need to fly home in a hurry.

The cost of an accident, illness or theft can be covered by taking out travel insurance. Put it at the top of your pre-departure checklist – don't leave home without it.

However, don't assume you're covered for everything just because you've got some insurance. Coverage can vary depending on the country you're visiting, your age, pre-existing medical conditions, or

the type of activities you want to do. Always read the fine print and check for exclusions with your insurer or travel agent. It's best to shop around among reputable travel insurers – some offer special policies for those over 50.

Do not be tempted to lie about your age, or fail to declare previous medical problems. If you do, and you need to claim, your policy will be invalid.

Travel Costs

Getting back to the UK in the event of an emergency isn't cheap without insurance. Here are some typical costs:

- £30–35,000: Air ambulance from the US east coast to Britain.
- £15–20,000: Economy-class flights, with medical escort, from Australia.
- £9–12,000: Scheduled club-class flight with nurse escort from the west coast of the USA to Britain.
- £1800–4000: Scheduled flight, seated economy with a doctor escort from Mediterranean destinations to Britain.



The EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) entitles you to free or discounted medical care in many European countries.

The EHIC replaced the old E111 form, which is no longer valid. It is valid in all European Economic Area (EEA) countries, plus Switzerland. For a full list of EEA countries, go to www.dh.gov.uk/travellers.

Producing a valid EHIC entitles you to the same state-provided healthcare as the nationals of the country you're visiting. This doesn't mean you'll be entitled to the same standard of medical care offered by the NHS in Britain, but you will get what's generally on offer to locals. EHIC is no substitute for travel

insurance, so make sure you have sufficient medical cover. Note that you won't necessarily be covered for all medical costs or for the money it costs to get you back home if necessary.

An EHIC is free – apply online at either www.dh.gov.uk or www.ehic.org.uk, by telephone on 0845 606 2030 or by picking up a form from the local post office. Visit the Department of Health website (www.dh.gov.uk) for more information. When on the road, carry the document and a copy – and leave another copy with someone back home.

Case Study

A traveller suffering from cancer correctly completed an EHIC form which she took on her travels abroad. Unfortunately she suffered an illness that was unrelated to her cancer and was admitted to hospital for 11 days, while a member of her group remained behind to keep her company. She was evacuated back to the UK in an Air Ambulance. Her EHIC form did not cover the costs and because she had no insurance it cost her family £6600.

Look out for ATOL, ABTA or other recognised bonding agents when you book your trip through a travel agent.

Your travel organiser should be able to provide sufficient evidence of security for getting you back home or your money refunded in the event of insolvency. (This doesn't apply if you book direct through an airline.)

This security must be in place by one of the following:

- Holding an Air Travel Organisers Licence (ATOL)

- Bonding with an approved body such as ABTA, ABTOT, AITO, BCH or FTO

- A relevant insurance policy
- By holding consumer pre-payments in a trust account such as TTA

Bonding is not a substitute for a travel-insurance policy for any problems you may personally run into when abroad.

Protecting Your Holiday

ATOL (Air Travel Organiser's Licensing; www.atol.org.uk) A protection scheme for flights and air holidays, managed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA; www.caa.co.uk). ATOL protects you from losing money or being stranded abroad if an operator goes bust.

ABTA (Association of British Travel Agents; www.abta.co.uk) Members of the ABTA are required to provide financial protection for their customers.

AITO (Association of Independent Tour Operators; www.aito.co.uk) In the event of insolvency, all AITO bonded member companies are required to protect the money of customers resident in the UK at the time of booking their trip.

Further information on financial protection organisations can be found on the FCO website at www.fco.gov.uk/travel.

Most of the health problems travellers worry about can be easily prevented by taking some basic precautions before you go away and while you're on the road.

Before You Go

Visit your GP or a specialist travel clinic at least six weeks before departure to check if you need any immunisations or other medicine – anti-malarial tablets, for example, before you leave. For longer trips, it is also a good idea to visit your dentist and optician before travelling.

For more information, check out the Department of Health website (www.dh.gov.uk/travellers) or the National Travel Health Network and Centre (www.nathnac.org).

Taking Medication

Check with the Embassy of the country you are visiting that the medication you are taking is legal and find out whether you

will need to take a doctor's letter along, too.

Pack enough supplies of any medication you regularly take in your hand luggage and also take any prescription documents with you. Keep medication in its original packaging for easy identification.

Vaccinations

Chances are you've had all the standard vaccinations, and if you're holidaying in, say, Australia or the US, it's really not an issue. However, you may need booster shots or new vaccinations if visiting certain parts of Asia, Africa and South America. Travel-health clinics are the best place to get advice. Possible shots you may need to get include those

for Hepatitis A & B, typhoid, diphtheria and rabies. If visiting parts of South America or Africa, you'll need a yellow-fever vaccination and proof of it to enter other countries.

In Transit

Flying is statistically safer than driving a car, but on long-haul flights you should be aware of dehydration – drink plenty of

water and avoid having too much alcohol.

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) is a relatively rare but potentially fatal condition associated with flying. It occurs when blood clots form in the legs due to prolonged immobility. To avoid it, try to do some simple leg exercises in your seat and move about the aircraft when you can.

Healthy Travel Tips For When You're Away

- Be safe in the sun. Avoid excessive sunbathing and wear a high-factor sunscreen, hat and sunglasses.
- Stay hydrated – be sure to drink plenty of water. If the local tap water is unsafe to drink, buy sealed bottled water to drink and to brush your teeth.
- Be cautious with street food in developing countries. Make sure your meal is freshly cooked by watching the vendor cook it while you wait.
- Avoid biting or stinging insects, including mosquitoes, by wearing insect repellent and covering up in the evenings.
- If you are planning on staying in one place for a period of time, find out the local number for emergencies and the address of the nearest hospital.
- Consider taking daily multi-vitamins to supplement your diet.
- Practise safer sex – always use a condom.

“Listen to your body — travelling can be tiring, so make sure you take time out to recover when you need it.”



TRAVEL HEALTH

While You Are There

Follow the travel health advice you've received from your doctor and remember that any problems you do have are likely to be made worse by dehydration, tiredness or excessive alcohol consumption. Listen to your body – travelling can be tiring, so make sure you take time out to recover when you need it. Allow yourself time to adjust to new time zones, climate changes and the inevitable changes to your diet.

Delhi Belly

A gurgling tummy, wave of nausea, weak limbs and a rush to the toilet is an affliction suffered at some stage by many travellers. Depending on where in the world you are, you might hear it called Delhi Belly (India), Montezuma's Revenge (Mexico), Bali Belly (Indonesia) or Tokyo Trots (Japan). If you are struck down, drink plenty of liquid to prevent dehydration (if it's severe, use an oral-rehydration solution), rest and avoid alcohol and spicy foods.

Medical Kit Checklist

A small medical kit can be invaluable on your travels. If your kit includes scissors, tweezers or syringes, don't carry it in your hand luggage on an aircraft. The following is not an exhaustive list, rather some items you might consider taking with you:

- plasters, bandages, gauze
- sterile needles and syringes if visiting developing countries
- antibacterial/antiseptic cream
- diarrhoea medication: oral-rehydration solution, diarrhoea 'stopper', and antibiotics
- paracetamol
- throat lozenges
- decongestant, such as pseudoephedrine
- antifungal cream
- travel-sickness or anti-nausea tablets



Travelling the world has never been easier and you don't have to go too far or spend too much to immerse yourself in a completely new culture.

Europe is right there on your doorstep, while the eastern seaboard of the US and Canada is a springboard for travels in North America. Feel like going further? Long-haul trips to Australia, Asia and South America will take you to a new hemisphere, time zone and new heights of adventure. Surveys show travellers are expanding their horizons in search of a real experience, and there are lots of choices depending on the type of holiday you want. Here we've picked just a few places we think offer a great mix of culture and adventure.

For the traveller, India presents a bewildering and remarkable array of things to see and do.

Tribal women in brightly coloured saris, Rajput men with turbans and handle-bar moustaches, majestic palaces, *havelis* (traditional, often ornately decorated, residences) and hilltop forts – the princely desert state of Rajasthan is quintessential India. Jaipur is known as the Pink City, Jodhpur the Blue City and Jaisalmer the Golden City – the sand dunes and bone-white hills contrast sharply with those colours. Udaipur, with its shimmering Lake Palace, is one of India's most romantic towns, while the holy village of Pushkar hosts one of the country's most colourful events, the Pushkar Camel Fair.

In nearby Agra, one of the world's greatest monuments, the Taj Mahal, is reason enough to visit India. The intricately

decorated white marble mausoleum, built by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan as a memorial to his wife Mumtaz Mahal, stands as the ultimate monument to love.

The capital Delhi encapsulates two very different worlds each presenting deliciously different experiences. Spacious and planned, New Delhi was built as the imperial capital of India by the British, while action-packed Old Delhi served as the capital of Islamic India. Visitors can effortlessly dip into both worlds, spending half the day soaking up history at the Red Fort, Jama Masjid and medieval-flavoured bazaars of Old Delhi, and the other half reviving themselves over a frothy cappuccino or ice-cold beer in one of central New Delhi's swanky restaurants or bars.

Tips for Avoiding Scams

Scams artists have existed in India ever since there were tourists but most are easy to spot if you know they're coming.

- Any offer for you to buy or export 'bargain' goods to sell at a profit (especially gems or carpets) is a pure scam. If it seems too good to be true, it almost certainly is.
- If a tout, rickshaw-wallah or taxi driver tells you your preferred hotel is closed/burnt down/rubbish, it's because they want to take you to another place where they receive a commission – don't believe it. Be firm and ask to be taken to your hotel; if they persist, change taxis.
- If you buy goods with a credit card, don't let the card out of your sight and check the slip carefully.
- Offers of food and drink on train trips are common and usually genuine, but travellers have occasionally been drugged and robbed. Solo travellers beware!
- Be extra careful around train and bus stations where all the best scammers hang out.



Big, bold and sunburnt, Australia may be a long way away, but it still tops the wishlist of many British travellers.

It is easy to be lured by 132,000km of coastline and beautiful beaches, but Australia's true heart is its Red Centre. Hire a car or camper-van and discover how big this place really is – it's the best and most comfortable way of experiencing an Aussie driving holiday. Touring to the centre you'll find Uluru (Ayers Rock) – a natural wonder with a spiritual presence that can't be overrated – quirky Outback towns like Alice Springs,

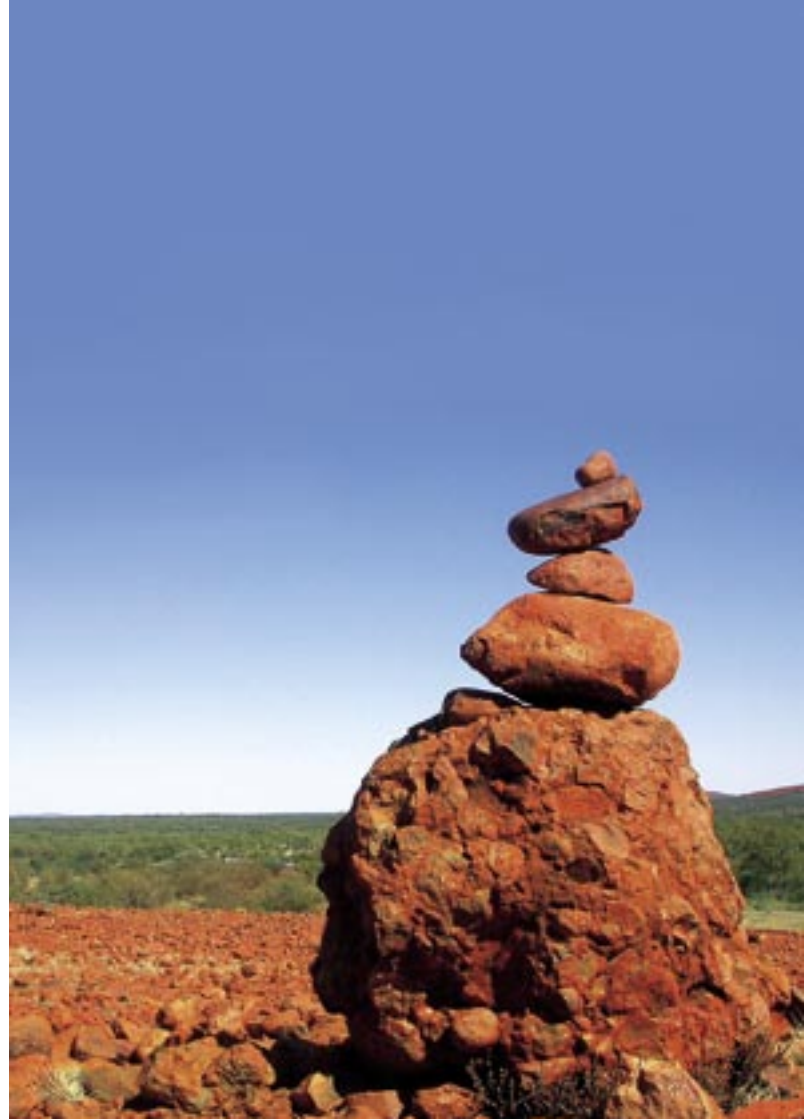
sublime ranges, waterholes, wildlife and Aboriginal culture. Driving north the desert climate gradually becomes tropical until you reach one of the world's great wetlands – Kakadu National Park.

Make sure you carry plenty of water with you and rest every couple of hours as distances in the Outback can be deceiving.

Casually raising a forefinger from the steering wheel is a nice way of acknowledging passing drivers.

Creepy Crawlies

Australia has a formidable reputation for scary creatures, but the truth is you're unlikely to get anything worse than a mosquito bite. There are lots of species of poisonous snakes and a few spiders, but they usually keep their distance. Wear sturdy boots and stick to tracks when walking. Saltwater crocodiles inhabit some waters in the Top End so most estuarine waters and rivers are unsafe for swimming – always ask the locals if unsure. Avoid swimming in the sea in the tropics from September to May because of box jellyfish.



DESTINATION CHILE

Long, narrow Chile packs a wealth of attractions between the Andes mountains and the Pacific Ocean.

Chilean delights include the 'Lake District', a bejewelled border region of lakes, fast-flowing rivers, volcanoes and mountains; the stunning Moreno Glacier; and the majestic Parque Nacional Torres del Paine in Chilean Patagonia. Many travellers arrive in the smoggy and fast-paced capital Santiago but quickly move on to the

countryside, coast or mountains. And, if you really want an impressive travel tale, fly out to remote tiny Easter Island (a Chilean territory), famous for its brooding *moai* (stone heads).

It's a good idea to learn a little Spanish before travelling to Chile, or carry a phrasebook, as Spanish is the only language for locals.

DESTINATION FRANCE

France is justifiably famous for its wine and food – which is reason enough to make the short hop by plane, train or ferry across the Channel.

Throw in historic Gallic villages, rolling hills of vineyards and orchards, miles of beaches, and the dramatic snow-capped Alps, and you have just about the perfect holiday destination. France is ideal for touring by car, or even bicycle. Once out of Paris, explore the wine regions of Champagne, Burgundy and then the Loire Valley – a region of grand

chateaux and architecture that has been raised to World Heritage status. Tour the spectacular chateaux around Tours and Blois.

To get to France you can put your car on the ferry, or take the train through the Channel Tunnel, but check out the cheap Internet flights offered by Ryan Air (www.ryanair.com) and EasyJet (www.easyjet.com).

Highlights

- Paris – the City of Lights is romance personified. Don't miss the Champs Elysees, the Louvre, Notre Dame and Sacré Cœur.
- Palace of Versailles – France's most famous chateau is truly opulent and crammed with reminders of France's monarchs.
- Bordeaux – explore this lovely wine-growing region, with its many chateaux and domaines.
- Mont St Michel – Normandy's remarkable abbey and fortress.
- French delicatessens are full of great food: pick up some baguettes, *fromage* (cheese), *charcuterie* (deli meat) and a good bottle of Bordeaux wine for an inexpensive picnic.

DESTINATION ITALY

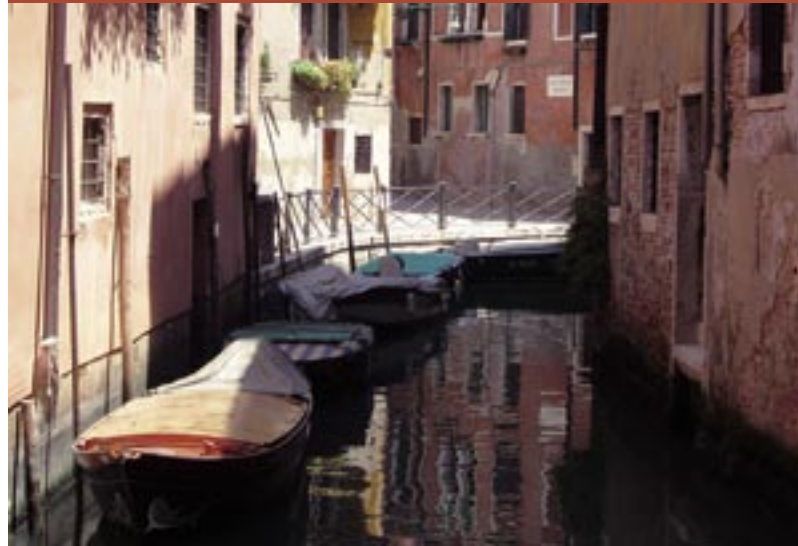
It would be a rare traveller that doesn't fall instantly in love with Italy. The country is a zesty patchwork of past and present, and the Italians themselves are charming and full of pride.

Whether it's the romance of Venice, the ancient sites of Rome, the artistic heritage of Florence or the sheer beauty of the Tuscan countryside, Italy has something for everyone.

Then there's the food. Italy gave us pasta, pizza, antipasto and gelati – a veritable feast that

changes with the regions – along with some of the best wine and olives in Europe.

Highlights of an Italian trip are many – consider the Cinque Terre, five tiny villages on the northern coast; Pompeii; the Alpine views of the Dolomites; or the fashion capital of Milan.



DESTINATION CROATIA

For years since the break-up of Yugoslavia, Croatia has been one of Europe's best-kept secrets.

With an ideal summer climate, a convoluted and sparkling coastline of islands, bays and beaches and historic fortified towns, Croatia leaves travellers in awe of its beauty.

Yet, for all the hype, Croatia's pleasures are more timeless than trendy. The jewel in its crown is undoubtedly the old town of Dubrovnik, a glowing harbour city of Renaissance architecture, cobbled streets and graceful squares.

Sailing or cruising by ferry on the Adriatic Coast between Split and Dubrovnik is another

highlight here. Don't miss the Venetian architecture, welcoming harbourside promenade and vibrant nightlife of Hvar, or the colour and spectacle of a *moreška* sword dance in the Korčula islands.

Also worth a visit are the spectacular turquoise lakes and rushing waterfalls of the Plitvice Lakes National Park, a Unesco World Heritage site.

Car ferries operate up and down the coast (more regularly in summer) or, for the ultimate in freedom, look into a yacht charter.

Travel Tips

- Post-war mine clearance is still going on in parts of the Croatian countryside – stick to main roads and areas declared safe by the government.
- If driving in Croatia, don't drink alcohol – the blood-alcohol limit here is zero.



DESTINATION CANADA

Few parts of the world display as much natural beauty as Canada. This, coupled with exceptionally friendly people and a delightful mix of cultures, make it a wonderful place to visit.

The world's second-largest country has plenty to offer but the west coast region of British Columbia is as good a place as any to start.

Vancouver is the capital, a heady mix of big-city lifestyle, outdoor energy (ski in the morning, sail in the afternoon), a great climate and picturesque location. The Rockies epitomise that artist's palette of sky blue lakes, green hills and dramatic mountain peaks.

The best time to visit Canada is from June to October, when the days are warm and long. If you are going skiing, January and February are the top months, while May and September are good times for whale-watching.

English and French are the official languages of Canada but the province of New Brunswick is the only officially bilingual part of the country. In Quebec a French dialect known as Quebecois is spoken.

Highlights

- Banff & Jasper National Parks – stunning scenery, mountains, glaciers, lakes and one of the world's best-located hotels.
- Wildlife-watching – grizzly bears, bald eagles, moose and big cats, such as lynx and cougars, can be seen in Canada's many parks and forests.
- Niagara Falls – these famous thundering falls shouldn't be missed.
- Skiing and hiking – British Columbia has some fabulous mountain resorts, including Whistler/Blackcomb, with adventurous terrain for those so inclined, as well as gentler options for those who aren't.

DESTINATION VIETNAM



Vietnam is fast becoming South-East Asia's newest must-see destination, a chaotic country of cyclists in conical hats, rice farmers and the legacy of Ho Chi Minh.

The faded French colonial charm of the capital Hanoi is the best place to start your Vietnamese adventure. Once you've exhausted yourself shopping and sightseeing in the city itself, head out to eye-poppingly beautiful Halong Bay

and spend a day or two sailing aboard a Chinese junk. The calm waters of the bay are punctuated by almost 3000 limestone islands and rock stacks, rising out of the surface to create a primal, almost unreal, scene.

DESTINATION NEW YORK

Just a short hop across the Atlantic, the 'Big Apple' is larger than life in every possible way.

Undisputedly one of the world's great cities, New York is perfect for a city break, with world-class museums, forests of tall buildings and a pace of life so fast it will make your head spin.

Exploration here can be as simple or complex as you make it. You can plan a thorough itinerary, with highlights that cover the museums, eateries and shows that the city has to offer. Or you can take a more

DIY approach, stumbling around the various neighbourhoods, known as boroughs.

For a snapshot of New York take the Staten Island ferry, visit the Statue of Liberty, admire the view from the Empire State Building and stroll through Central Park. Grab a bagel for breakfast, shop at markets in Greenwich Village and Soho and catch a Broadway show in the city that never sleeps.

Travel Tips

- Avoid the subway late at night and steer clear of near-empty carriages – the centre carriage (with conductor) is safest.
- Beware of pickpockets in crowds or on public transport and always keep a hand on your wallet or purse.
- Tipping is the norm in New York: \$1 a drink for the barman, \$1–2 for hotel bellboys and maids, and 10–20% of the bill for waiters and taxi drivers.
- Security is understandably tight in New York – expect thorough searches at airports, but also at museums and public buildings.





Knowledge and planning are the keys to safe travel — it pays to know before you go.

Reading up on guidebooks and the Internet are not only great ways to pique your interest for the trip but will give you a firm grounding in the customs, culture and potential risks of a particular country. Whether it's a short city break or a long-haul adventure, the tips, advice and contacts in the following pages will go a long way to making your travels less manic and more memorable.

In theory, you're no more at risk of being a victim of crime when travelling as you are when you're at home.

The difference while travelling is that you're probably carrying a digital camera, passport and other valuables. Naturally this means you should be on your guard, but don't be too paranoid – staying safe is a matter of common sense and simple precautions.

Most countries are safe to visit, but even well-known

destinations have some spots where you need to take greater care. Remember you're more likely to be a victim of personal crime than to be caught up in terrorism, riots or natural disasters. Take note of the FCO Country Advice website for the country you are visiting, and read up on any risks in a guide-book or online before you go.

Crime Abroad: Things You Need To Know

The responsibility for investigating a crime overseas lies with the police of that country. In exceptional circumstances, the British police may be invited to help them, but usually the local police will handle all aspects of an investigation. The same rule applies to the involvement of the British Consulate.

If you are the victim of a crime obtain a police report and notify your insurance company as you may be entitled to compensation under the terms of your travel insurance.

Tips To Travel By

- In cities, check which areas are regarded as unsafe, and stick to areas where there are plenty of people.
- Take taxis back to your hotel after dark, especially in an unfamiliar city, and avoid poorly lit streets.
- Keep an eye on your valuables at all times, use an out-of-sight security wallet, don't leave a bag at your feet and be extra careful when drinking alcohol.
- If you can't face losing something, leave it behind. Take what you need for the time you'll be out and about and leave the rest in the hotel safe.
- Carry a mobile phone so you can call for help if needed (check whether yours will work in the destination country).
- Avoid standing out like a tourist too much – walk with purpose and try to blend in.

If Something Happens

If something does go wrong, in the immortal words of Douglas Adams – Don't Panic! But you do need to act quickly on a few things:

- Report the crime to the local police and obtain a report from them. Make sure you get a reference number to use on any insurance claims.
- Contact the nearest British Consulate to organise a replacement passport.
- Inform your bank/credit card issuer if your traveller's cheques or credit cards have been stolen.
- Ask your bank to transfer emergency money for you to use.

While you might find in some countries that drug use is more obvious and accepted than at home, this doesn't translate into a tolerance of drugs by authorities.

In most places, particularly Asia, penalties for any type of drug use or possession can be extremely severe.

In 2004–05, 2764 British nationals were detained overseas, nearly half (1266) for drug-related offences. In many countries you won't be offered bail before trial, which will mean spending time in a foreign jail.

Most travellers are smart enough not to get mixed up in

drugs while they are abroad, but you should also be cautious not to unwittingly be lumbered with anything illegal. Stories of tourists having drugs planted on them are not uncommon.

If you want more information the FCO has produced a booklet called *Drugs – Information for Travellers*. To order a copy email FCOleaflets@accelerated-mail.co.uk.

Stay Safe – Tips From The FCO

- Pack all luggage yourself and make sure it's securely locked.
- Keep your luggage with you at airports and other departure points.
- Don't carry anything through customs for someone else.
- Be cautious when accepting gifts from people abroad – it's easy to hide drugs in items such as cosmetics and children's toys.
- Don't allow yourself to be persuaded or coerced into carrying anything you are uncertain about. Is it worth risking your life or spending seven to 20 years in jail for £2000?

Tourism has its downsides. You've probably heard about planes burning huge amounts of fuel and sending carbon into the atmosphere, or tourism harming indigenous cultures.

There are ways to minimise the negative effects of your travels and even make a constructive impact on the country you're visiting. It's about travelling with your eyes and ears open and making sure your visit has a positive social, environmental and economic impact.

The Travel Foundation (www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk), established in 2003, works in close partnership with the UK travel industry, governments, conservation and campaign groups to help reverse the negative impact of tourism on destinations.

Sustainable Travel Tips

- The carbon burnt fuelling your flight will do more damage to the environment than any other aspect of your travels. Organisations such as Climate Care (www.climatecare.org) have a carbon-offset program that can show you how easy it is to fly with piece of mind. Their website has a 'carbon calculator' which works out the cost of your flight's carbon emission; for example, it will cost £2.45 flying return from London to Rome.
- Use water, firewood and other fuel sparingly.
- Never leave litter – if camping, carry everything out with you.
- Where possible, shop at markets or local grocers and buy local products and ingredients.
- Learn about and respect local customs, traditions and culture (see page 37 for more information.)



LOCAL CUSTOMS

Meeting local people and getting to grips with a country's customs and culture is one of the delights of travel.

Most of us know not to show the soles of our feet when in Thailand, for example, but many a traveller has been left unserved and ignored due to the mysterious art of tipping in American bars. On the other hand, you'll get a lot of cups of tea bought for you by strangers in the Middle East, and may never work out how or when to buy any back in return.

Of course, some types of behaviour will be poorly received

universally – dressing inappropriately, loudly expressing political views and criticising your host country will never go down well. Good manners are always appreciated.

While local customs vary from country to country, the solution to any unwittingly delivered *faux-pas* is a smile and a polite apology. Most people you'll meet will know you're not versed in local custom and be pleased to gently put you right.

Thanking You

A smile and a 'thank you' works in any language. Here's how to say 'thanks' in some popular languages.

- **Arabic** – *shukran*
- **Cantonese** – *ng gòy*
- **Croatian** – *Hvala vam*
- **French** – *merci*
- **German** – *Danke*
- **Hawaiian** – *Mahalo*
- **Hindi** – *shukriyah*
- **Indonesian** – *terima kasih*
- **Italian** – *grazie*
- **Japanese** – *arigatō*
- **Portuguese** – *obrigado*
- **Russian** – *spasiba*
- **Spanish** – *gracias*
- **Thai** – *khàwp khun*
- **Turkish** – *teşekkür ederim*
- **Vietnamese** – *Cảm ơn*

LOCAL CUSTOMS

Sometimes you'll encounter surprising behaviour from local people directed at you. In China, foreigners are greeted with cries of '*Longwai!*'; in East Africa the cry is '*Mzungu*' and in Thailand '*Farang*'. The shouts are various terms to describe outsiders, foreigners and Europeans.

While these shouts are normally accompanied by big smiles it can be a challenge to remain good humoured. The best strategy is to treat such comments as a mixture of a joke, and a gesture of

recognition and curiosity – no harm is meant.

The best way to get in tune with the local customs is to immerse yourself and expect your first few days to be a bit of a culture shock. Before you go, get a handle on what to expect by reading Lonely Planet guide-books and contacting the FCO Travel website (www.fco.gov.uk/travel) or call 0845 850 2829. While it pays to be prepared, remember that discovering the richness of local cultures is one of the great joys of travel.

The Fine Art Of Haggling

Haggling, or bargaining, is an important part of shopping in many parts of the world, especially in Asia and the Middle East. In tourist areas shopkeepers may try to get away with outrageously inflated prices – the trick is to have some idea of local prices or at least know what you're prepared to pay for an item. Remember that haggling is not meant to be a battle to the death, and a little good humour and friendly bartering goes a long way. A few tips:

- Don't show too much initial interest in the item you want to buy.
- Shop at a few places before diving into serious negotiations.
- When the vendor offers a first price, halve it and work up from there.
- If you accept a price, you should not renege on the deal.

Did You Know?

- In Russia and Central Asia vodka plays a part in most social rituals – expect many toasts to be followed with a headache the next morning.
- In Madagascar it is considered *fady* (taboo) to point with an outstretched finger.
- In most Asian countries, never touch someone on the head (the highest part of the body) or point your feet (the lowest part) at anyone.
- Remove your shoes before entering temples, mosques or some one's home.
- If there's no cutlery, use your right hand only to touch food, and avoid passing anything to people with your left hand (in many countries, the left hand is reserved for toilet duties).
- Ask permission before taking photographs of people and respect their wishes if they decline.
- Leaving a pair of chopsticks upright in a rice bowl is bad manners in Vietnam because they resemble incense sticks which are burned for the dead.
- In many countries, the US especially, it's customary to tip for almost any service – restaurants, bars, taxis, hotel porters etc – ask a local for advice on the amount.

SOLO TRAVELLERS

Travelling alone can be both daunting and exhilarating in equal measure. The best thing to do is relax, and take some simple precautions.

On the upside, you don't have to compromise on your plans and you'll probably meet more locals and other travellers than you would travelling in a group. On the downside, costs are generally higher when you can't share hotel rooms or taxis, there may be lonely times when

you can't share your experiences with a friend, and solo travellers may be more vulnerable to opportunistic thieves or scam artists.

But don't be paranoid – travelling alone is challenging but it's the ultimate in freedom and adventure.

Tips For Solo Travellers

- Look for restaurants that are busy and where the seating arrangements make it comfortable to eat alone.
- Confident body language works wonders. If you know where you're going and what you're doing, you'll be less likely to draw unwanted attention.
- Avoid walking alone after dark or in deserted areas – take a taxi instead.
- Be wary of strangers striking up a conversation in the street.
- Avoid carrying lots of baggage with you – store it in luggage lockers if you're waiting for transport or looking for accommodation.
- When sightseeing where transport is involved, it often works out cheaper and is just as much fun to book on a small tour group rather than go it alone.



Support for British Nationals in difficulty abroad is provided by British diplomatic missions overseas and by the Consular Directorate of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office in London.

British diplomatic missions overseas take the form of British High Commissions or Deputy High Commissions in Commonwealth countries and British Embassies, Consulates General and Consulates in other countries. In some places there are networks of Honorary Consuls who can offer some limited help locally or direct you to the nearest Consulate.

If you need help in a country where there is no British diplomatic or consular office, you can receive consular assistance from the diplomatic or consular office of another EU Member State. Informal

arrangements also exist with some other countries, including New Zealand and Australia, to lend assistance to British nationals in some countries.

If you are intending to stay in a country for any length of time, register your details with the British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate. On the opposite page is a list of British diplomatic contacts in some of the most popular destinations. Check FCO Travel Advice for the country you're travelling to before you go.

See www.fco.gov.uk/directory for a full list of embassies abroad and in the UK.

Australia

Commonwealth Ave
Yarralumla
Canberra
(61) (2) 6270 6666
www.britaus.net

Brazil

Setor de Embaixadas Sul
Quadra 801, Conjunto K
CEP 70200-010
Brasília – DF
(55) (61) 3329 2300
www.uk.org.br

Canada

80 Elgin St
Ottawa K1P 5K7
(1) (613) 237 1530
[www.britainin
canada.org](http://www.britainincanada.org)

China

11 Guang Hua Lu
Jian Guo Men Wai
Beijing 100600
(86) (10) 5192 4000
[www.british
embassy.org.cn](http://www.britishembassy.org.cn)

Egypt

7 Ahmed Ragheb St
Garden City
Cairo
(20) (2) 794 0852
[www.britishembassy
.gov.uk/egypt](http://www.britishembassy.gov.uk/egypt)

France

35 rue du Faubourg
St Honoré 75383
Paris Cedex 08
(33) 1 44 51 3100
[www.amb-grande
bretagne.fr](http://www.amb-grande-bretagne.fr)

India

Chanakyapuri
New Delhi 110021
(91) (11) 2687 2161
[www.britishhigh
commission.gov
.uk/india](http://www.britishhighcommission.gov.uk/india)

Japan

No 1 Ichiban-cho
Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 102-8381
(81) (3) 5211-1100
www.uknow.or.jp

New Zealand

44 Hill St
Wellington 1
(64) (4) 924 2888
www.britain.org.nz

Peru

Torre Parque Mar
(Piso 22)
Avenida Jose Larco
1301 Miraflores, Lima
(51) (1) 617 3000
www.britemb.org.pe

Russian Federation

Smolenskaya
Naberezhnaya 10
Moscow 121099
(7) (495) 956 7200
www.britaininrussia.ru

South Africa

255 Hill St, Arcadia 0002
Pretoria
(27) (12) 421 7500
www.britain.org.za

Spain

Fernando El Santo 16
28010 Madrid
(34) 91 700 82 00
www.ukinspain.com

Thailand

14 Wireless Rd, Lumpini
Pathumwan, Bangkok
10330
(66) (0) 2 305 8333
[www.britishembassy
.gov.uk/thailand](http://www.britishembassy.gov.uk/thailand)

USA

3100 Massachusetts
Ave NW Washington DC
20008
(1) (202) 588 6500
www.britainusa.com



The British Consulate is there to help Britons who require assistance abroad, but it can't help in every situation just because you're British.

The British Government is restricted in the actions it can take in another country. Consular staff cannot replace specialist advisers such as lawyers. And like any government department the Foreign & Commonwealth Office has a responsibility to

use public funds effectively and efficiently. You should be prepared to pay for some types of consular support, for example, issuing an emergency passport. The FCO does not make a profit from these charges but instead uses the funds to help British nationals.

The British Consulate Can:

- Issue replacement passports.
- Provide information about transferring funds.
- Provide appropriate help if you have suffered rape or serious assault, are a victim of other crime, or are in hospital.
- Help people with mental illness.
- Give details of lawyers, interpreters, doctors and funeral directors.
- Do all they can to contact you within 24 hours of being told that you have been detained.
- Offer support and help in a range of other cases, such as child abductions, death of relatives overseas and missing people.
- Contact family or friends for you if you want.
- Make special arrangements in cases of terrorism, civil disturbances or natural disasters.

The British Consulate Cannot:

- Get you out of prison, prevent local authorities from deporting you after your sentence, or interfere in criminal or civil court proceedings.
- Help you enter a country – for example, if you do not have a visa or your passport is invalid – as the Consulate cannot interfere in another country's immigration policy or procedures.
- Give you legal advice, investigate crimes or search for missing people, although the Consulate can give you details of people who may be able to help you in these cases, such as English-speaking lawyers.
- Get you better treatment in hospital or prison than is given to locals.
- Pay any bills or give you money (in very exceptional circumstances staff may lend you some money from public funds, which you will have to pay back).
- Make travel arrangements or find you work or accommodation.
- Make commercial or business arrangements on your behalf.

Health & Safety**Fit for Travel****www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk**

NHS (Scotland) site providing country-specific information on vaccinations and advice for Britons heading abroad.

Hospital for Tropical Diseases**www.thehtd.org**

The only NHS Hospital dedicated to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of tropical diseases and travel-related infections. Includes tips on what to take with you when travelling.

Suzy Lamplugh Trust**www.suzylamplugh.org**

A national charity for personal safety, the site offers advice on staying safe when travelling.

World Health Organisation**www.who.int**

The best place to seek out up-to-date information on international travel-health issues.

Travel & Transport**Airline Quality****www.airlinequality.com**

Reviews and rankings of airlines from around the world.

Lonely Planet**www.lonelyplanet.com**

Lonely Planet travel website with destination profiles, and the Thorn Tree traveller's message board, with travellers' tips.

OANDA**www.oanda.com**

A useful site for working out exchange rates – the printable cheat sheets are invaluable when you begin to use an unfamiliar currency.

Worldwise Travel Information**www.brookes.ac.uk/worldwise**

A great source of practical information, contacts, and pretty much anything else you need to know in a hurry about any country in the world.

Travel Organisations**Access at Last****www.accessatlast.com**

Site devoted to travel for people with a disability. Has information on accommodation and transport around the world.

Tourism Concern**www.tourismconcern.org.uk**

An organisation campaigning for ethical and responsible behaviour in tourism – and a good place to learn more about travelling sustainably.

General**Age Concern****www.ageconcern.org.uk**

This site has sections and fact sheets on travel and planning a holiday.

The Association of Retired and Persons Over 50**www.arp050.org.uk**

Lots of informative links to websites of interest for pensioners and retirees.

UK Government**Foreign &****Commonwealth Office****www.fco.gov.uk/travel**

Travel advice, country profiles and links to embassies.

DEFRA**www.defra.gov.uk**

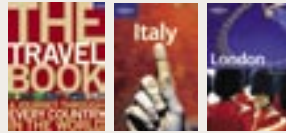
Information on import restrictions into the UK and the facts on travelling abroad with your pet.

Department of Health**www.dh.gov.uk**

Details on health risks when travelling, EHIC forms and help in planning a healthy holiday.

Passport Service**www.passport.gov.uk**

Everything you need to know about applying for or renewing a passport.



ENTER TO WIN For your chance to win a copy of Lonely Planet's *The Travel Book* or two Lonely Planet guidebooks of your choice, and a Zaptag Emergency Record, essential for a safe trip, simply post us your details using the tear-off section below to Iris Nation LTD, Iris Towers, 185 Park St, London, SE1 9DY or email to patrick.flynn@iris-london.co.uk. Only one entry is allowed per person. Each month a lucky winner will be picked at random.

Entry is only open to UK residents. The promotion starts 9.00am GMT on 16 October 2006, and closes at 5pm GMT on 30 June 2007. One lucky winner each month receives a Zaptag Emergency Record (approximate value £40) and can choose to receive either a copy of Lonely Planet's *The Travel Book* (approximate value £40) OR two Lonely Planet guidebooks of their choice (approximate value £38). Prizes will be drawn on the first day of each month. Prize winners will be notified by phone no later than three days after each draw. Your privacy is important to us, and your personal information will only be used to tell you if you've won or if you have ticked yes to question 8. For more information on FCO's privacy policy, go to www.fco.gov.uk/privacystatement.

Send Us Your Feedback

We are always interested in hearing from travellers like yourself. To help us ensure you get the best travel advice please complete the following questions.

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

1. Where did you pick up your *World Wise* travel guide?

2. Was the guide useful? Yes No
3. Is there anything you would like to have seen more of/less of?

4. What did you learn that you didn't know before?

5. If you have received support from the FCO, what did you think:
 - a. While abroad?
Good Bad Indifferent
 - b. If accessed in the UK?
Good Bad Indifferent
6. Would you visit the FCO website in the future? Yes No
7. We'd like to hear about your stories or experiences with your fellow travellers – drop us a line via email or post.
8. Would you be interested in receiving further information from or be contacted by FCO?
Yes No

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