

# Travel happy, travel safe, travel smart



*Traveling the world is easier than you think. These tips for staying safe while traveling will help make your experience the best it can be.*

by [David Haddon](#)

February 6, 2018

The travel industry is one of the fastest-growing industries in the world right now. The harder we work the harder we should play, and a lot of people are beginning to see the benefits of exploring the world we live in. With lowering travel costs and a middle class with more disposable income overseas travel is more accessible than ever before and that is not going to change.

Before you pack your bags and renew your passport take some time to learn about where you are going and what, if any, travel restrictions there are. Unfortunately, the world can be a scary place, but with some common sense and these tips for protecting yourself, you will not have any problems enjoying your international travel adventures.

The world has a lot to offer, such as beautiful destinations, [interesting cuisine](#), and fascinating people, so get out there and see it all!

## **Protect yourself**

People will warn you about the [dangers of traveling](#) with one scary story or another. While there are some legitimate concerns you need to be aware of when traveling, you can be sure you are safe with a little planning and common sense.

You may be able to claim a strong immune system at home, but there are lots of new diseases out there that you haven't come in contact with such as the Zika virus, Malaria, and of course, there is Montezuma's Revenge. When planning your trip, make sure to find out if there are any immunization requirements you need to follow in order to protect yourself from a nasty virus.

Each destination is unique and it's better to be safe than sorry. If a travel warning says don't drink the water, then don't drink the water. Thinking you're tough enough to handle it or you're just not paying attention can lead to days lying in bed in your hotel room while your friends are out having the time of their lives.

## **Protect your belongings**

Pickpockets and thieves love crowded tourist destinations. Lots of people paying more attention to the beauty around them and not to what's immediately in front of them is the perfect atmosphere for unscrupulous people. You could be looking up at the high walls of a castle in Ireland when someone bumps into you and politely excuses themselves.

You don't think anything of it and go about your day, only to find your wallet missing. You drop your bag at an outdoor cafe to relax and get caught up in sharing stories or posting your photos online when the next thing you know your bag is missing.

Don't let these thieves ruin your trip with something that can easily be prevented. When sitting down somewhere to eat, keep your bags under the table away from grabby hands. Better yet, wrap the strap around your wrist. Carrying a wallet full of cash? First off, don't! That's why we have credit cards and traveler's checks. Don't carry your wallet in easy to reach places like jacket pockets or your back pocket. Secure it in your backpack or purse, or if you have pockets that can button or snap closed, even better.

Don't make it easy for these common thieves.

## **Avoid common travel scams**

When you hear about someone getting scammed, your first thought is, "That would never happen to me!" well, you'd better be ready to tell your own "I got scammed," story if you think that. There are a lot of scams out there that you should be on the lookout for. With a little knowledge, you can avoid these scams and enjoy your trip.

Broken Taxicab meter - You finally arrive at your destination and head out to enjoy your stay. A friendly taxicab driver approaches you and offers you a ride to your hotel, which you accept. After getting in the cab and driving away from the airport the driver informs you the meter is broken and quotes you a price, which will generally be a lot more than what you'd actually pay.

This scam is common in Central America, like Costa Rica. Before you step foot in any cab, negotiate a price, or make sure the meter is working. Don't be afraid to ask. If they get confrontational, leave immediately and find another cab. If they say, "It's cheaper with the meter off," do the same thing, turn around and find another cab.

Free jewelry - Who doesn't love free stuff, but be warned, this scam has gotten a lot of people. Someone will come up to you and start chatting with you and all of a sudden they put on a friendship bracelet or hand you a flower. Your natural instinct is to take it, and then you will be hounded for some money, and they are not afraid to make a scene, playing on your good-nature to force you to give them some money.

When you're in a foreign country you tend to not want to cause a scene, which is one travel tip common sense, so when this scam happens, you're more inclined to hand over some money just so they will shut up and leave you alone.

Fake wifi hubs - These days, free wifi spots are more common than a few years ago, but just because your phone or tablet picks up an unsecured wifi signal doesn't mean you should jump on it. If you're at a cafe, ask an employee what their wifi name is so you can access the right one. Hackers will create fake wifi hubs that you can connect to. Once you connect, they have access to all of your information. If you are unsure of the connection is secure, wait to connect until you are back at the hotel.

Group photos - Arms and selfie sticks can only do so much. When you have a large group and want a photo that doesn't remind you of a selfie, what do you do? Most of the time you would ask someone nearby to take the photo for you. No problem! We've all done it with no terrible ending or chasing after your camera.

Well, that's not always the case in some of the busier tourist destinations. Someone walks up to you, offers to take a photo of you and your friends, you get ready to pose when all of the sudden you realize the guy who offered to take your photo is gone, with your expensive camera. There go all of the photos you took and now you get to look the fool for being so naive. If you want to get a group shot, you do the asking!

Find another group that's doing the same thing (there will be plenty as they are there for the same reason you are) and offer to take their photo if they take yours.

We have all heard some of the horror stories about traveling overseas, but keep in mind these are a handful of bad experiences out of millions of travel stories. For every bad vacation story you hear, you'll hear a dozen more saying how much fun they had and how they are already planning their next trip. Traveling is addicting and once you start, you won't want to stop. So be smart, travel safe, and have fun!