HOW TO BE A SAVVY TRAVEL

Whether this is your first time traveling outside the United States, or you consider yourself a world traveler, being a SAVVY traveler requires a lot of experience and listening to other travelers’ adventures and recommendations. It is essential to have a balance of preparedness and embracing ambiguity in order to have a successful journey—this is great advice to keep in mind during your travels and life in general.

**Airport Advice**

- Read this website to prepare: [www.tsa.gov/travelers/index.shtm](http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/index.shtm)
  - Weight restrictions, what time to arrive at airport, security process and restrictions, liquid rules, etc.
- Clothing:
  - Wear layers *(air conditioning/heating unpredictable).*
  - Be prepared for the weather of your destination.
- Carry-on baggage:
  - See “Very Last Minute Checklist” in this handbook for tips.
  - Should be light and manageable.
  - It’s possible your luggage won’t arrive when you do—bring a change of clothes and basic toiletries *(i.e. toothbrush, face wash & small towel)* just in case. Also handy on long flights.
  - Airport food is expensive! Bring snacks for long layovers.

**Plane Advice**

- Avoid caffeine & alcohol *(create lethargy & physical stress).*
- Set your watch to host country time & sleep accordingly.
- Eat well—don’t arrive hungry in the host country.
- Get up & walk around the plane from time-to-time.
- “Must haves”: IPOD, headphones, one book on country, journal, socks, sweater.

**Upon Arrival**

- Avoid tight connections if you can *(causes stress).*
- Listen to instructions on the plane upon arrival.
  - Which carousel will your luggage be on?
  - Listen for transfer info—especially because signs are different.
- Expect *ambiguity!* Things can & will go wrong!
  - Have the address of the host institution & phone number of the RD at hand & accessible. Also, have a few hostel options in your area, just in case.
  - Pre-Map out the city & metro or taxi system – know the route before you get there.
  - Lost Luggage: Report it – don’t leave it! Don’t panic.
How to Avoid Pick-Pocketing

- Keep wallet in your front pocket, and keep purses and backpacks in front of you in crowded areas.
- Don’t carry all credit cards with you – take out cash needed.
- Safer to leave most stuff you cherish at home & travel light.
- Don’t carry passport with you – bring a photocopy.
- Try not to look like you’re “hiding” your things—this draws attention.
- Don’t advertise the fact that you’re a tourist—do as the locals do.
- Don’t be LOUD when speaking in English!
- Keep your wits about you in unfamiliar locations (don’t be “too” anything—hungry, tired, or intoxicated). Use common sense—if something seems too good to be true, it probably is.

Avoid “Ugly American” Behavior

- Dress appropriately, as per the customs of the host country.
- Attempt to speak at least a few words in the host language. Challenge yourself to improve.
- Use body language with people who don’t speak English—avoid the temptation of speaking English more loudly or slowly.
- Avoid pushy and aggressive behavior in order to get your needs met.
- Avoid getting too intoxicated—this can been be seen as very disrespectful & can risk unfortunate situations.
- Show your appreciation with smiles and thank you’s (in host language).
- Keep your voice down in public places.
- Ask more questions about your hosts, and talk less about yourself.

General Advice

- Expect and embrace ambiguity! Inevitably, things can and will go wrong at least some of the time, and that is part of the experience.
- Don’t be afraid to make mistakes and get lost from time-to-time. That’s how you learn & grow.
- Keep a spirit of adventure. Step outside your comfort zone & get off the beaten track.
- Keep a city map on you at all times for the first month or so.