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
  - 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.
- 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.

Upon Arrival
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 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.