



HEALTH & SAFETY WHILE ABROAD

No matter your gender, use your best judgment and gut feeling in uncomfortable situations—“Street-smarts” are fundamental. Your health and safety are key components to your well-being and overall experience abroad. New environments bring great opportunities; however, since we are not accustomed, we can find ourselves in vulnerable situations. This doesn’t mean we should fear the unknown, it means we just need to be more prepared and attentive in new environments. Be observant of your surroundings and listen to trusted natives and locals of the host country.



Avoid Travel Theft

CARRY A LIGHT

Consider avoiding deserted streets after dark. If you can't, carry a small, heavy flashlight in your hand. Be careful on dark streets even if you have a companion.

SOME THIEVES PREFER CROWDED AREAS

Stay alert in places like bus stations and during street celebrations, where you're likely to be jostled (*thieves use these circumstances to grab your stuff*).

KEEP YOUR MONEY STASH SAFE

Sew pockets into your bra where you can keep some folded cash. If you do get mugged, having a secret stash will prevent from you being left helpless. A money belt works, too, but thieves know all about them. You can also stash a couple of bigger bills in a sock after dark. Avoid keeping anything of value in easily accessible pockets.

DON'T BRING THE BLING

Avoid ostentatious jewelry—you could be injured if a thief yanks a bracelet from your wrist or a necklace from your throat. Big bling will attract more attention.

LET YOUR BAG GO

Most experts say not to resist—let your bag go and then shout for help rather than risk assault. Opening your wallet and handing over your money may be enough for the thief and you can keep your bag. However, it also may make a thief think you're reaching for a weapon. Better to hand over the bag.

Consider Your Attire

Dressing well can make a thief think you have mounds of moolah in your bag. Women's dress can be a major issue in some countries. Until recently, Afghanistan women had to cover themselves from head to toe or risk legal repercussions. It's already pretty clear that you're a Westerner—avoid looking like a rich Westerner to avoid unwanted attention.

A solution... Dress like a local.

Learn the local dress code when you arrive—buy appropriate clothing locally if necessary. In some countries, typical American young women's attire, like a shirt that shows your belly may be offensive to local women, and an invitation for a come-on from the men. In Islamic countries, lay aside your own opinions and wear a head scarf to show respect of their culture.

