



Safety advice for female travelers

Many of the safety and security issues faced by travelers are generic and universal. However, female travelers – especially those traveling alone – must take extra precautions for their health and safety. It is important to be familiar with the customs and state department concerns of your destination country.

Accommodation

The choice of accommodation, and precautions taken while there, are essential aspects of remaining safe when traveling. Your choice of hotel should provide an extra layer of personal protection, not increase vulnerability to threats:

- Select a secure hotel in a safe part of town that is close to your office, meeting locations, the airport or emergency services
- Have reservation details printed out so you do not need to give information aloud on your arrival. Ask the receptionist not to say your room number aloud
- Ensure all doors and windows lock securely. Wedge a door-stop under the locked door for extra security and make sure you keep the door and blinds closed, to prevent views into your room
- Keep the door dead bolted or chained at all times. Do not open the door unless you are certain of the visitor's identity. Check with the front desk if someone claiming to be hotel employee arrives unexpectedly. Always use the peep hole and chain when opening the door
- Do not receive strangers or business contacts in your room, meet in the lobby

Personal safety

Exercising caution and taking additional steps to protect personal safety are important while traveling, as seemingly harmless actions can have significant consequences for security. Be ever aware of your surroundings, and suspicious of unfamiliar people or places:

- In many destinations the role of women and their place in society will be markedly different from the United States. Researching cultural and religious sensitivities, including local customs of dress, before traveling can offset culture shocks and avoid drawing unnecessary attention. Flashy jewelry, clothing, or possessions should be avoided. Abstain from drawing attention to your person or possessions.
- Avoid eye contact with unknown men, as they may take it as an invitation to engage you in conversation
- If you feel that someone is following you, walk to a populated area and look for a safe form of transport to continue to your destination. Change habits and routes, as to remain unpredictable. Always be aware of exits and escape routes
- Remain aware of your surroundings at all times and avoid unsafe areas, including areas which are sparsely populated or poorly-lit. Avoid traveling alone after dark
- Do not give out personal information and be mindful of others ability to eavesdrop on your conversation. Give your travel plans and copies of important documents to a few trusted individuals, but guard your itinerary
- If you must carry a bag, guard your bag against pickpockets by wearing a lockable cross-body bag with RFID blocking compartment or wallet. In areas of higher risk, keep your identification and a small amount of cash in a pouch belt under your clothing. Small and/or valuable items should be kept in your front pockets.
- Pack conservatively, and be sure to handle your own baggage when possible

Transport

Female travelers are at particular risk when using public transport, especially when alone or in an unfamiliar area:

- Use only licensed official taxis. If necessary, consult a travel agency for a recommendation. These are usually clearly distinguishable on a city's streets and can be hailed. However, it is safest to board at your hotel or order by phone. Make a note of the taxi's details before getting in
- Always sit in the rear of the taxi, preferably behind the driver. Do not discuss the details of your trip with your driver. Verify the doors are locked throughout your journey
- Exercise caution in traveling by public transport. Physical harassment is a problem in regions where gender inequality is a problem (Middle Eastern); use female only transportation if available and, if harassed, warn the offender not to do it again. If it continues, ask loudly for help