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## Women's Travel Tips



## How To Outsmart Thieves

- 1) Avoid becoming a prime target for thieves. Choose your travel wardrobe carefully, eliminating bright colours and fancy jewellery. The smart woman traveller wants to remain as inconspicuous as possible.
- 2) Be vigilant at airport check-ins and at train and bus stations. Always keep your luggage in front of you where you can see it at all times.
- 3) Carrying a laptop? Don't send it through x-ray security check until you're ready to go through yourself. Scam artists work in teams. The man in front of you holds the line up by deliberately leaving change in his pocket and setting off the metal detector. While you're waiting to go through, his partner is picking your computer off the conveyor belt.
- 4) Always carry a light scarf in your bag. It is perfect for tying your camera bag or your computer to your luggage cart. Imagine a thief's surprise when he tries to "snatch and run".
- 5) The ideal travel handbag has an inner zippered compartment and is only big enough to carry a bit of money with a few essentials. It should also have a long shoulder strap that's thick enough not to be easily cut. Wear the strap across your body with the purse in front, against your stomach. Get used to keeping a hand on your bag all the times. With that kind of body language, pickpockets will not even bother to come near you!
- 6) However, if someone tries to mug you, avoid harm by giving your purse up immediately. Because...you'll be carrying your real valuables--your extra cash, credit cards, travellers' cheques and bank cards under your clothes, next to your body, in a cotton money belt.
- 7) Always double lock your hotel room door. And if you can't do this where you're staying, then never leave your valuables unattended. It's no effort to bring your purse or money belt into the bathroom when you're showering. This way you know you are safe.
- 8) If you're travelling alone and arriving late at night, do not hesitate to ask a hotel staff member to escort you to your room and make sure it's safe before you enter.
- 9) Keep alcohol consumption down when you're out and about. If you don't have your wits with you, you become a vulnerable target or.. you might even leave your credit card behind at a restaurant and not know it's gone until you're in the next town.
- 10) Ninety-nine per cent of the people who offer a traveller food and drink are simply being kind. Be very wary of the remaining 1%. Drugging is always a possibility and you could wake up to find all your money and credit cards gone.
- 11) Never, never count your money in public. This is an open invitation to be robbed.
- 12) Want to fool thieves completely? At your destination, but something at the local grocers. Then use their plastic bag to carry your wallet and camera. No one will ever guess that you're toting money and a Nikon rather than milk and cucumbers.

### A few more know-before-you-go hints

- **Diversify your money** - take travellers cheques, credit cards, bank cards as well as cash (U.S. dollar is best because it's recognized in most places). Never carry everything in the same place.
- **Be prepared!** Before you leave home, record (in triplicate) the numbers on your travellers cheques, credit cards and bank cards. The same applies to all 800 numbers you might need to report a theft. Leave one list with someone at home, one goes to the money belt and one stays in your suitcase.
- **Be creative!** Hide your emergency money in strange places - a vitamin pill bottle with a few pills in it is great. The bottle isn't see-thru and thieves are generally not interested in your Vitamin C.
- **Be very sure** to check the restrictions on your credit cards. Did you know that some cards are not replaceable internationally if they're stolen?
- **Ask your bank** for an extra client card. If the first is taken, you still have the second one to withdraw cash with.

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