

A young boy in a grey t-shirt and blue shorts is captured mid-air, jumping into a river. The river is surrounded by lush green vegetation and trees. In the background, a dark, stormy sky looms over the scene. Several other people are visible in the water, some swimming and some standing on a small boat. The overall atmosphere is one of adventure and potential danger.

TRAVEL SAFE

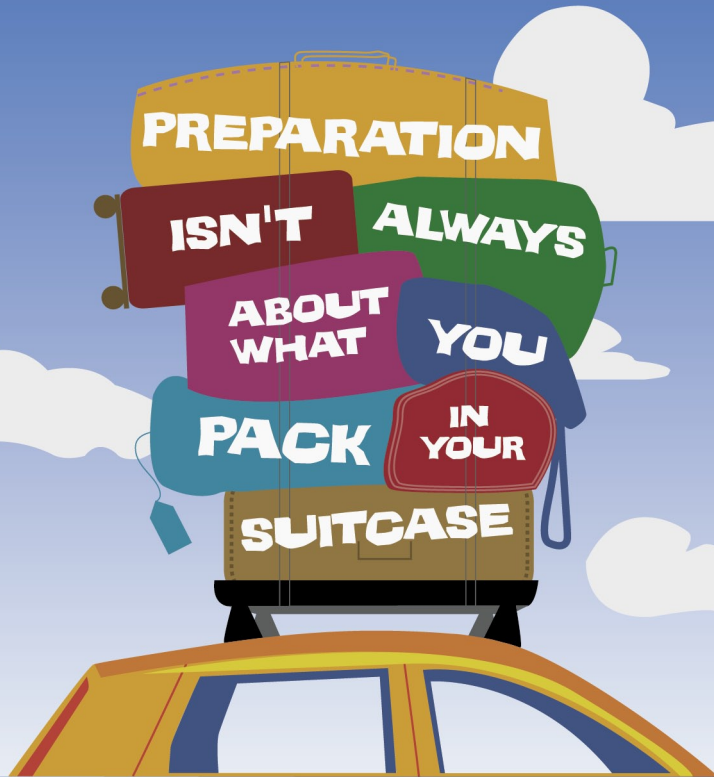
KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

therefore I travel

lonely planet

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Passports & Visas	4
Travel Money	5
Travel Insurance	6
EHIC	8
Travel Health	10
Working Abroad	12
Travel Organiser Information	14
Where in the World?	15
Europe	16
Africa	17
Middle East	18
Russia & Central Asia	19
Indian Subcontinent	20
Northeast Asia	21
Southeast Asia	22
Australia, New Zealand & the Pacific	23
North America	24
Caribbean	25
Mexico & Central America	26
South America	27
Sustainable Tourism	28
Travel Safety	29
Drugs	31
Local Customs	34
Women Travellers	36
More Tips For A Safer Trip	38
Who To Contact If Things Go Wrong	40
What Consulates Can Do For You	44
Useful Websites	46
Feedback	48



As well as your luggage, remember to take some travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office with you on your next holiday.

You'll find all you need before you leave online at www.fco.gov.uk/travel or call 0845 850 28 29. **Know Before You Go.**



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Travel Safe*, produced by Lonely Planet and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO). From budget city breaks to luxurious trips, paradise beaches to exhilarating mountain treks, the world is more accessible to us than ever before. British travellers are taking advantage of these opportunities and seeing the world, picking up memories, skills and experiences to last a lifetime.

Most holidays are nothing less than wonderful but sadly this isn't always the case. Recently tourists have been caught up in terror attacks and tragic natural disasters. To a less hazardous but still potentially serious degree, lots of travellers return from their dream trip with stories of a snatched bag or a picked pocket.

It's natural – and sensible – for you and those around you to take steps to ensure you have the safest possible holiday. That's where *Travel Safe* comes in. It's packed with tips for everyone from first-time

travellers to experienced old hands, gappers to grandparents, heading out on the trip of a lifetime. We'll tell you the best tips for keeping in touch with home, what to do with your valuables and who to contact if you do need help while on the road.

You'll find out how to avoid unwittingly causing offence when meeting local people and what preparations you need to take to be really ready before you go away. Just as importantly, we'll show you how to make sure your travels have a positive impact on the places you're visiting.

Enjoy the guide – and please, let us know what you think via the address given in the feedback section at the end.

The world is a wonderful place, and hopefully this guide will show you how to see it even more safely and enjoyably.



PASSPORTS & VISAS

A passport is your most important travel document. With it, the world is ready to welcome you. Without it, you won't even get on a plane out of the country.

Everyone needs a full, ten-year passport to travel abroad. Leave as much time as you can between applying for a passport and when you need to use it – the time taken to issue one can vary and there's a bit of paperwork to organise. In the UK, you can get advice from the UK Passport Service website or call them on 0870 521 0410 (lines are open 24 hours a day and calls are charged at the national rate).

Check your passport well in advance of any trip you're planning to take. Quite a few countries will require that your passport is valid for at least six months before they let you in. If it's falling to bits, get a new one before you travel. You can get your old one back as a keepsake for a small fee.

If you need to replace your passport when on the road, contact the nearest British

Consulate. Details for some of the most popular destinations can be found on page 41 of this guide.

Check visa requirements with your travel agent or contact the Consulate or Embassy in the UK of the country you plan to visit, well in advance of your trip.

Look after your passport!

- Make a note of the passport number, date and place of issue (or take a photocopy), and keep this separately in a safe place.
- Check the passport expiry date when you first start planning your trip – it may take time to organise a replacement.
- Write the full details of your next of kin in your passport.
- Leave a photocopy with a friend or relative at home.
- Take a second means of photo-identification with you.
- Keep your passport in the hotel safe and carry a photocopy with you.
- If your passport is lost or stolen overseas, report it to the local police immediately and get a statement about the loss. Contact the nearest British Consulate immediately for advice.

TRAVEL MONEY

Carrying your money needn't be a headache. A mixture of cash, debit cards and, depending on your destination, travellers' cheques is best. You'll be able to use a debit card in most places in the world combined with internet banking.

Opt for an out-of sight security wallet to keep most of your money and cards in. Take care when taking money out – keeping a few notes and coins in a button-down pocket is a better idea than rooting through all your valuables.

When travelling in the developing world, US dollars are almost always the most useful currency to have. Euros are increasingly welcome too. Hotels and hostels will normally let you leave valuables in their safe.

Card-carrying checklist

- Make sure your debit and credit cards aren't about to expire – you can sometimes get replacements when abroad but it's much easier and safer to do this before you go.
- Make a note of card details, plus any phone numbers of the card issuers you may need to contact in an emergency – leave a copy of these at home with your travellers cheque numbers and insurance policy details, but keep another with you on the road.
- Make sure your credit and debit cards are accepted where you're going. See also the British Bankers Association website (www.bba.org.uk) for more tips on using your credit cards abroad.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Things can go wrong on holiday. Luggage gets stolen, you might get ill or need to fly home in a hurry. Accidents happen not just on roads and ski slopes, but wherever you find travellers.

All these risks and more can be covered by taking out travel insurance. Put it at the top of your pre-departure checklist – don't leave home without it.

However, don't assume you're covered for anything that might happen just because you've got some insurance. Simply, your needs may well be different from

anyone else's – so read the small print. Exclusions vary from policy to policy. If you're planning on snowboarding, mountain biking or trekking make sure it's on the policy – it's worth paying more to get the right cover. Check with your insurer before you travel if you're not sure.

Arrange your policy with a recognised travel insurer and shop around for the best levels of protection. Credit card travel insurance policies generally offer very low levels of cover.

Did you know?

Getting returned to the UK in the event of an emergency isn't cheap. Without insurance, this could cost you or your family more than the finest First Class upgrade. Here are some typical costs:

- £30-35,000: Air ambulance from the east coast of the USA to Britain
- £15-20,000: Regular economy-class flights with medical escort from Australia
- £9-12,000: Scheduled club-class flight with nurse escort from west coast of USA to Britain
- £1,800-4,000: Scheduled flight, seated economy with a Doctor escort from Mediterranean destinations to Britain

Figures supplied by FirstAssist.

Case Study

"I'm a medical student and 18 months ago I went travelling to Tanzania with one of my friends. We had both prepared thoroughly, taking out full insurance, and were both equipped with medical kits. While we were abroad I became very ill and dehydrated and was unable to drink due to a kidney infection.

I was taken to a small hospital in the mountains but was still unable to drink or keep any water down. I then had to be taken by air ambulance to a hospital in Nairobi where I stayed for four days.

Eventually I was taken back to England and had my flight upgraded so that I was more comfortable. I am incredibly relieved that I was prepared and had taken out travel insurance which covered my air ambulance to Nairobi and my transportation home, otherwise this traumatic experience would have cost me and my family in the region of £50,000 – £100,000"



EUROPE & THE EHIC CARD

The EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) entitles you to free or discounted medical care in many European countries. On 1 January 2006 it replaced the old E111 form, which is no longer valid.

Where can I use it and what does it entitle me to?

The EHIC is valid in all European Economic Areas (EEA) countries plus Switzerland. For a full list of EEA countries go to www.dh.gov.uk/travellers.

Essentially what it entitles you to is the same state-provided healthcare as the nationals of the country you're visiting. This doesn't mean you'll be entitled to the same standard of medical care offered by the NHS in Britain, but you will get what's generally on offer to locals.

Private treatment is generally not covered, and you'll normally have to produce your EHIC to receive treatment.

Sounds good – what's the catch?

EHIC is no substitute for travel insurance. You won't necessarily be covered for all medical costs or for the money it costs to get you back home if necessary. See page 6 for an idea of how high these costs can be. The other thing to remember is that this card becomes useless once you step out of the countries covered by it.

Where can I get one?

An EHIC is free – get one by applying on line, by telephone or by picking up a form from local Post Offices. Visit the Department of Health (www.dh.gov.uk) website for more information.

EHIC - CHECKLIST

- Make sure you are fully covered in case of health problems under your travel insurance, even for short breaks to Europe. Few EEA countries pay the full cost of medical treatment even under reciprocal health service arrangements such as EHIC.
- Get an EHIC before you leave and take it and a photocopy of it with you – you may also wish to leave a photocopy behind in a safe place.

Case Study

A lady suffering from cancer thought it unlikely that she would get travel insurance. She correctly completed an E111 (now replaced by the EHIC) form which she took on her travels abroad.

Unfortunately she suffered an illness that was unrelated to her cancer and was admitted to hospital. Her stay totalled 11 days, and a member of her group remained behind to keep her company.

She was evacuated back to the UK in an Air Ambulance. Her E111 form did not cover the costs and because she had no insurance it cost her family £6,600.

Wherever you're travelling you need to take out travel insurance.

TRAVEL HEALTH

There's a lot you can do before you go away and while you're on the road to reduce the risk of catching anything more serious than Montezuma's Revenge. Most of the diseases travellers worry about can be prevented by basic hygiene precautions. Many of the more serious risks can be reduced by sorting out your vaccinations before you go.

Flying

For many of us, flying is the only way of getting from A to B. The main thing you'll notice is dehydration, but watch out for problems associated with sitting still for a longer period of time than usual.

Drink plenty of fluids and avoid too much alcohol, and try to do some simple exercises in your seat or move about the aircraft when you can.

Medical Preparations

Visit your local GP's surgery at least

six weeks before you go to check if you will need any jabs, or other medicine such as anti-malarials which you may need to start taking before you leave. Websites such as www.dh.gov.uk/travellers are also a good source of information for longer trips. It is also a good idea to visit your dentist and optician before travelling.

If you are taking medication

Pack enough supplies of any medication you are taking in your hand luggage. Keep medication in its original packaging and take any prescription documents with you. Check with the London Embassy of the country you are visiting that your medication will be legal in that country and find out whether you will need to take a doctor's letter with you.

While you are there

Follow the advice you've received and be aware of possible health risks during your trip. Remember

Before & after you go – tips from the FCO

Before you go

- Buy adequate and appropriate travel insurance.
- Check the Department of Health general medical advice for travellers.
- Check what vaccinations you need with your GP at least six weeks before you travel.
- Pack all medication in your hand luggage.
- If you are taking prescribed medication take the prescription and a doctor's letter with you.
- If you are travelling within the EEA, apply for an EHIC (see previous section on page 8) for reduced or free emergency care.

When you're away

- Be safe in the sun. Avoid excessive sunbathing, and wear a high factor sunscreen.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Practise safe sex – always use a condom.
- If you're staying in one place for a while, find out the local emergency number and the address of the nearest hospital.

that any problems you do have are likely to be made worse by dehydration, tiredness or excessive alcohol consumption. Listen to your body – travelling can be tiring, so make sure you take time out to recover when you need it.

WORKING ABROAD

Working in a foreign country is much harder than visiting on holiday. You'll have to jump through a few legal loopholes before the authorities will grant you permission to work overseas. However, living somewhere is a very different experience to simply passing through.

Europe is by far the easiest place to work. British citizens can work in any European Economic Area member country – that's the EU plus Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein – without restriction. Of course,

you'll normally need to speak the local language and demonstrate some other tangible benefit to the employer before you get taken on. It always pays to be enthusiastic, flexible and open-minded.

To work anywhere else you usually need to be sponsored by an overseas employer – which could be a different office of your current company. They'll normally have to prove they couldn't find a local person to do the job. Even then, getting the paperwork sorted can be a tedious and expensive process. For these reasons it's tough for British nationals to get work in North America and many parts of the developing world.

Fortunately many countries have specific immigration programmes that allow young travellers, graduates or professionals from Britain to take paid training positions with local companies. Most of these programmes must be arranged through a sponsoring organisation such as BUNAC and typically you have to be a graduate

Top tips on working abroad

- Be prepared – find out what paperwork and permits you need in advance. If you arrive in Australia without a work permit you'll need to leave the country to get one.
- Learn the language – few employers will hire you without a good grasp of the local lingo.
- Persistence – sometimes it's tough to find work, but don't give up. If you've got the skills and the right to work there's probably a job out there for you.
- If there's a chance of getting work through your current employer, put together a proposal. Demonstrate the value to them of transferring you overseas.
- If you're thinking about volunteering, find out as much as you can about the project you're applying to – who else will be there, what you will be doing all day and whether you can talk to people who did it before you. It's a big commitment so make sure you're armed with all the facts.

or have relevant work experience to qualify.

Australia, New Zealand and Japan offer useful working holiday visas that allow you to work and travel for up to a year. These schemes are designed for people who want to take on casual work while they travel to top up their funds.

If getting a paid job sounds too much like hard work, there are a wealth of volunteering

opportunities available around the world, from a few days to a few months and beyond. The commonest way to get a place on a project is to arrange it in advance with an agency in the UK. This can be a great way to see a country in depth and make new friends. The Year Out Group (www.yearoutgroup.org) is a great place to begin your research – you don't have to be on a gap year to volunteer.



TRAVEL ORGANISER INFORMATION

Look out for ATOL, ABTA or other recognised bonding when you book your trip. Your travel organiser should be able to provide sufficient evidence of security for getting you refunded or back home in the event of insolvency. This security must be in place by one of the following:

- Holding an Air Travel Organisers Licence (ATOL)

- Bonding with an approved body such as ABTA, ABTOT, AITO, BCH, FTO
- A relevant insurance policy
- By holding consumer pre-payments in a trust account such as TTA

Bonding is not a substitute for a travel insurance policy for all and any problems you may personally run into when abroad.

ATOL – Air Travel Organiser’s Licensing This is a protection scheme for flights and air holidays, managed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). ATOL protects you from losing money or being stranded abroad when a tour operator goes bust. To find out more information about ATOL or to check whether a firm has a licence visit the ATOL website at www.atol.org.uk.

ABTA – Association of British Travel Agents Members of ABTA – travel agents and tour operators – are required to provide financial protection for their customers. This means that you can book your holiday knowing that if an ABTA member fails financially while you are on holiday, you can continue your holiday as planned. To find out more information about ABTA visit the ABTA website at www.abta.co.uk.

AITO – Association of Independent Tour Operators In the event of insolvency, all AITO bonded member companies are required to protect the money of customers resident in the UK at the time of booking their trip. For holidays sold by AITO members that include flights, customers are protected by the member company’s Air Travel Organiser’s Licensing (ATOL) issued by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Further details can be found on the CAA website at www.caa.co.uk. To find out more information about AITO visit the AITO website at www.aito.co.uk.

Further information on financial protection organisations can be found on the FCO website: www.fco.gov.uk/travel.

WHERE IN THE WORLD?

The toughest decision of your trip is also the nicest one to wrestle with – where on earth to go? After all, there are a lot of places to choose from. Will hard-earned cash be spent slowly, seeing new corners of Europe; or quickly on a jet-set trip to the USA? Will you be heading for a night out in Rio de Janeiro or taking surfing lessons on Sydney’s Bondi Beach?

While the choice of destinations and routes can be bewildering, a little scientific method can be helpful. Make a list of everywhere you’d like to go, then split it into ‘must-sees’, ‘nice to see’ and ‘could drop if too expensive’. If you’ve only got a few days or a few weeks, pick one city, region or country and see it in some detail. If you have longer, a round-the-world itinerary may be for you.

Around the world in a year

- January** – New Year in Prague
- February** – Snowboarding in the Canadian Rockies
- March** – Cherry blossom season in Japan
- April** – Thai New Year, Bangkok
- May** – Culture in Russia
- June** – Trekking in Peru
- July** – Cycling in France
- August** – Sailing Alaska’s Inside Passage
- September** – Driving in Iceland
- October** – Autumn in New York
- November** – Riding the rails in New Zealand
- December** – Christmas on the beach in Australia



EUROPE

Packing in more than 30 national cultures on a modest landmass, Europe is a living museum, with modern architecture sprouting up alongside Roman ruins, and fairytale cities such as Prague a short hop from metropolises like Berlin.

Just as the European Union (EU) has expanded east, with 10 new countries joining in May 2004, so too has the gapper's itinerary. No-frills flights now reach as far as Ljubljana (Slovenia), Bratislava (Slovakia) and Tallinn (Estonia). Many other formerly communist countries – even those outside the EU – are opening up to tourism. As an extra bonus, these hot locations are among the continent's cheapest, which means that a trip to pricey Scandinavia or Switzerland can easily be evened out by sunbathing in Croatia or Bulgaria.

Thanks to the extensive airline, rail, bus and ferry networks it's possible to branch off in any

direction, jetting from one hub to the next rather than following a well-worn route. It's always a good time to visit the continent on our doorstep.

Did you know?

Many of Europe's great museums and galleries are free at least one day a month and others offer free guided tours or audioguides to help you get the most from a trip. See individual websites for full details.

Top 5 experiences

- Paris' Gare du Nord, many travellers' first stop on the continent
- Sun and snow: from Turkish beaches to year-round skiing north of the Arctic Circle
- Festival madness: the anarchy of Spain's Tomatina to Oktoberfest in Munich
- City-hopping using budget airlines
- Taking to the hills: the Alps, Pyrenees and the Carpathians

Africa will give your senses a slap. This is a continent with a legacy of ancient civilisations and with diverse cultures that demand your attention. It's a place of majestic landscapes, stunning wildlife and adventurous travel.

A largely rural continent, it's perfect for wonderful, intoxicating, overland journeys, exotic coastal hideaways and natural marvels.

Top 5 experiences

- Seeing the sunrise from the top of Kilimanjaro, the continent's tallest peak
- Spotting the big five while on safari: lions, leopard, elephant, rhino and buffalo
- Exploring the continent's great cities: from Cape Town to Cairo, Dakar to Djibouti
- Lazing on a beach on the island of Zanzibar, getting those dusty and bumpy mainland miles out of your system
- Trekking through steamy cloudforest to come face-to-face with a gorilla

AFRICA

Africa will challenge you. You've got to be up for the odd hard journey, and there are a few ugly and frantic cities. Africa is also home to the poorest people on earth, but from the medinas of Mediterranean cities to Soweto in South Africa, the honesty and vitality of Africa's people is second to none. Africa is enlightening, surprising and intriguing – and the rewards for travellers are as huge as the continent itself.

Did you know?

Tourism is a big contributor to the economy of many African countries and generates an estimated £7 billion every year for the continent – and this number is forecast to grow. For many local people it's a vital lifeline, – and a much-needed way for overseas funds to reach grassroots levels of society. But Africa also contains some of the world's poorest communities and most fragile natural habitats. Make sure your travel does more good than harm by following some of the tips on page 28.

MIDDLE EAST

From the summit of Mt Sinai and across the Red Sea to the hills of Jordan, the Middle East's landscapes of surprising natural beauty serve as landmarks to the great moments in history.

It was amid the shifting sand dunes and palm-fringed oases of Arabia that Islam was born. And from Damascus, down through Wadi Rum (Jordan) and then deep into the Arabian Peninsula, one of history's most controversial figures,

Top 5 experiences

- A stroll around old Damascus: a city seemingly unchanged for centuries
- The rose-red city of Petra in Jordan, real Indiana Jones territory
- Diving in the colourful coral waters of the Red Sea
- Waking at dawn to the sound of the call to prayer
- Seeing the still jaw-dropping pyramids in Cairo

Lawrence of Arabia, would write the story that would become legend.

Many of the great cities of antiquity – Cairo (Egypt), Damascus (Syria) and Jerusalem (Israel and the Palestinian Territories) – are to be found here and are now transformed into fascinating modern metropolises. There are the ancient monuments – including those of Egypt and Petra (Jordan) – which are among the world's top attractions. And the people are an important part of the region's appeal: their welcome and adherence to the ancient tradition of hospitality will live long in your memory.

Did you know?

It's possible to ski in the Middle East. Lebanon is best known for its winter sports resorts, but travellers have been strapping on skis in Iran too – you'd be welcome to join them.

RUSSIA & CENTRAL ASIA

Embracing varied landscapes from permanently frozen tundra to baking desert, the area described here is bigger than Africa and Australasia put together. Central Asia is about the size of Europe, while Russia spans half the globe.

You'll need patience, tolerance and a good sense of humour for travel in this unique and sometimes challenging region, but the former realm of the communist bogeyman, off-limits to foreigners for most of the 20th century, offers a world of opportunities for the adventurous traveller. History, mystery and the opportunity to take a voyeuristic peek at the outcome of the failed Soviet experiment lures thousands of travellers to the region. Rarely visited mountains, remote wilderness and the general quirkiness of the region attract many more. Some people are drawn to the sheer mystique of places like Altay and Tuva (Russia), Siberia and Samarkand, and some come here simply because no-one else does.

Did you know?

The Moscow to St Petersburg railway line is completely straight apart from a 17km bend in a seemingly random location. According to legend, when planning the project, Tsar Nicholas accidentally drew around his own finger on the ruler, breaking the straight line on the map. The planners were too afraid to point this out and so the railway was built with the line as it was drawn.

Top 5 experiences

- Explore the imperial cities of Moscow and St Petersburg in all their splendour
- Riding the Trans-Siberian, Trans-Mongolian or Trans-Manchurian
- Bukhara and Samarkand (Uzbekistan): Central Asia's most extravagant and densest collection of Islamic monuments
- Central Kyrgyzstan: Take a horse trek to gorgeous highland lakes and stay in a yurt with local Kyrgyz nomads
- Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula is an otherworldly string of live volcanoes, black-sand beaches and reindeer

INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

Travellers still come to India by the thousand in search of mystic experiences, iconic monuments, weird and wonderful wildlife and possibly the greatest food on the planet. The region's cultural depth and intensity is unrivalled.

Home to Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Jains, Sikhs and Christians the subcontinent gives travellers an exciting opportunity to learn the rituals and traditions of different faiths. There is something to see in every town, be it a temple, a holy lake, a historic mosque or a Buddhist monastery. Festivals in the region are incredible spectacles, with singing, dancing, exotic foods and sometimes animal sacrifices and bizarre acts of masochism. During the Hindu festival of

Did you know?

Indian Railways is the world's largest employer, with more than 1.6 million people on the payroll at last count.

Top 5 experiences

- Kathmandu: a great traveller hangout with lively nightlife and spectacular temples
- No other monument comes close to the Taj Mahal in Agra, India
- The long walk to the roof of the world on the Everest Base Camp trek
- Sri Lanka's southern beaches and big Buddhas of Gal Vihara
- Tiger-spotting in Ranthambore National Park

Holi, people throw around huge amounts of coloured powder and India becomes quite literally the most colourful place on earth.

Of course, there's more here than just India. Sri Lanka is a beautiful tropical island dotted with beaches, tea plantations and religious sites, Nepal is an activity playground that's home to the world's tallest mountains and Pakistan is fast gaining a reputation as an adventurous holiday spot.

NORTHEAST ASIA

Northeast Asia includes China, Japan, Hong Kong, Korea (North and South), Mongolia, Taiwan and Tibet. This is the land of Confucius, kung fu and karaoke, and its inhabitants' beliefs, traditions and cultures have captivated and perplexed Europeans for centuries.

The region is home to some of the world's most (Japan) and least (Mongolia) technologically obsessed nations. In China, the yin of Mao's fading revolutionary zeal is eclipsed by the yang of economic pragmatism. Beneath the gilded modernity of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan you'll find fascinating ancient cultures and traditions. Much is changing in this increasingly important part of the world but, along with the fantastic

food, incredible temples and shrines, unsurpassed architectural monuments and beautiful landscapes, an undeniable Eastern magic remains.

Sleep in a Mongolian yurt or a Japanese capsule hotel; fill up on Chinese dim sum or Korean kimchi; learn Chinese in Taiwan or teach English in Tokyo; earn or spend a fortune – it's up to you.

Top 5 experiences

- Exploring Tokyo, with its huge crowds, districts seemingly made entirely of neon and fascinating glimpses of an older, very different era
- Seeing booming Beijing and Shanghai, at the forefront of China's economic explosion
- Getting a glimpse of traditional Tibet at the immense Potala Palace in Lhasa
- Traditional wrestling, archery and horseriding contests at the Nadaam Festival, Ulan Bataar, Mongolia
- Peeking into the Hermit Kingdom of North Korea from the relative normality of the South

Did you know?

The circus is over 2000 years old in China and still going strong. Popular routines include balancing of porcelain bowls on the feet, the head, or both; and the trick of getting up to 14 people on one bicycle.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Vibrant and exotic, Southeast Asia is a poetic interplay of convenience and inefficiency, spirituality and consumerism, determination and tolerance. At the geographic centre lies Thailand, with a culture that adores fun ('sanuk' in Thai).

Off both Thai coasts, all the postcard stereotypes of paradise exist in jewel-toned, palm-fringed islands. Sliding south down the Malay Peninsula is a thickly spiced stew of cultural fusions that empties into big-city Singapore and Indonesia's thick jungles. Crowning the island chain is beguiling Bali.

Forming the bulk of mainland Southeast Asia are the survivors of war and turmoil – Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and now isolated Myanmar (Burma). History and perseverance are tangible forces in these

countries, where the adventurous traveller can cut a dusty trail into far-flung Cambodia, peep at napping Laos and brave Vietnam's tireless ambitions. Sitting at the rarely used front door to Southeast Asia, the exuberant Philippines boasts soaring volcanoes, coral-fringed beaches and a full calendar of Spanish-inspired fiestas. East Timor, the world's youngest country, is an underdog in the region's greatest-hits list and has yet to graduate into the leisure travel set.

Top 5 experiences

- The wonderful temples at Angkor, Cambodia, where the jungle is slowly and magically claiming the remoter ruins
- Swimming, surfing or just lazing around on the beautiful and peaceful island of Bali
- The French colonial treasures and lively history of Hanoi, Vietnam
- Long houses, long boats, long river journeys and orangutans on Borneo
- Buzzing Bangkok's exciting energy, nightlife and shopping

Did you know?

One of Thailand's most unusual festivals is Songkran, which marks the Thai New Year with an enormous water fight. Bring a water pistol and expect to get very, very wet.

AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND & THE PACIFIC

With vast red-dust expanses in the outback, the fantastic Lord of the Rings-tinged vistas of New Zealand, a laid-back lifestyle and sunny weather, it's no wonder Australasia is a well-trodden travel spot.

With a common British history, Australia and New Zealand are familiar enough to be fun, but different enough to keep you interested. From Sydney's stunning setting to bungee jumping in New Zealand, there's enough here for years of exploring. And you can still uncover the rich history of Aboriginal Australia, Maori Aotearoa (as its indigenous people call New Zealand) and the precolonial Pacific islands.

The vastness of the Pacific Ocean offers more subtle delights, as it is as big as all of the world's other oceans put together. But if you take it in slow sips like a perfect cocktail you can avoid it all blurring into paradise island stereotypes. The blend of coral reefs, dreamy beaches and

ever-smiling people can be so intoxicating you may be in too much of a stupor ever to leave.

Did you know?

Alice Springs hosts the annual Henley-on-Todd regatta, where locals stage 'boat' races by running along the dry riverbed carrying their vessels. It's great fun, very silly and very popular.

Top 5 experiences

- Black-water rafting on underground rivers near Waitomo, New Zealand
- Climbing Sydney Harbour Bridge to enjoy the incredible views of one of the world's finest cities
- Meeting the locals in Rarotonga, the island that's a beach paradise by any definition
- Watching dawn or dusk change the colour of beautiful and mysterious Uluru (Ayer's Rock) in Australia's Northern Territory
- Whale and dolphin watching off Kaikoura, New Zealand

NORTH AMERICA

North America is a fascinating mix of attractions, dominated by one country but with an unbelievable amount to explore and discover. One visit will not be anywhere near enough.

The US of A is the greatest success story of the modern world – a nation fashioned from an incredibly disparate population whose desire to choose their own paths to wealth or heaven forged the richest, most inventive and powerful nation on earth. It's a land blessed with some of the world's most vibrant cities and mind-blowing landscapes, and the place where anything feels possible.

However, arguably it's the natural wonders that are the real highlights: Niagara Falls; Yellowstone National Park; the Grand Canyon; Utah's red-rock deserts; the vast swamps of the Florida Everglades; Hawaii's volcanoes; and the fjords, islands and glaciers of Alaska's sublime Inside Passage.

The common foreign concept of Canada goes little beyond

appreciating its vastness and recognising its flag, but this nation has a complex three-dimensional character influenced by English, French (Québec is definitely more about croissants than hamburgers) and Native American culture.

Did you know?

The Mother Road, Route 66 can still be followed today. The historic 2500 mile two-lane highway still runs along much of the old route from Chicago to Los Angeles via the Midwestern states.

Top 5 experiences

- New York, New York, so familiar yet so exciting
- Fun in the snow around Whistler, Canada
- Vancouver Island's pristine wilderness, a short ferry hop from British Columbia's biggest and loveliest city
- The Grand Canyon: ditch your preconceptions, the Big Hole will blow you away
- Monument Valley's desert landscapes, the true wild west

CARIBBEAN

The Caribbean vibe is the perfect antidote to North American go-getting. Laid-back was invented here, but it is not all package-tourist purgatory. The Dominican Republic is a picture-postcard Caribbean paradise (white-sand beaches, impressive mountains, exotic fish and enigmatic wildlife), while Jamaica caters to all comers with empty beaches, and party-hearty resorts.

The Eastern Caribbean (the string of islands stretching from St Martin to Trinidad and Tobago), offers everything from private beaches and top-end resorts to fantastic trekking and tastes of the unspoilt Caribbean of old in Dominica and Grenada. The islands are beloved of yachties, aristocrats and rock stars, but there's something for everyone.

Did you know?

In the Caribbean, Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands are British overseas territories.

Cuba is unique in the region, and possibly the world. It's where communism rubs shoulders with cocktails, music fills the streets and wrestling is the national pastime. It's easy to tie in visiting Cuba with elsewhere in the Caribbean or Central America.

Top 5 experiences

- Habana Vieja: the Cuban capital's Old Town is as wonderful as it is surprising
- Snorkelling all over the islands, especially in St Vincent and the Grenadines
- Kicking back in the cafes of Turks and Caicos
- Deep red sunsets and nights out in Jamaica
- A slice of France in the tropics: eating, hiking and sleeping in Martinique

MEXICO & CENTRAL AMERICA

UK life may seem pedestrian and grey after a trip to this region. Once you experience its majestic scope and mingle with the vibrant, colourful residents – well, your local city centre just won't seem the same.

Mexico's magnificent Aztec heritage draws many visitors, who can also kick back on the white-sand beaches of the country's resorts or sample the cultural highlights of its sophisticated (and crowded) capital city. Southern Mexico, Guatemala, Belize and Honduras form the heartlands of the complex culture of the Maya. Many of the sites lie deep in jungles that teem with wildlife, including howler monkeys who screech each sunset.

Although Costa Rica is known as the area's most eco-friendly destination, other Central American nations have just as many spectacular landscapes and amazing creatures. The underwater vistas can be stunning too – the Honduran Bay Islands and Belize in particular are prized for their diving and snorkelling.

Other charms include perfectly formed volcanoes, picturesque old colonial towns, colourful religious festivals and tranquil volcanic lakes. On a gap year here you will inevitably hone your bartering skills in the region's kaleidoscopic markets. Be prepared also for the exhilarating, if slightly nerve-racking, thrill of bus travel, most probably to a whiny merengue or salsa soundtrack!

Did you know?

1.2 billion tortillas are eaten every day in Mexico.

Top 5 experiences

- Joining the Sunday strollers after church in the parks of Mexico City
- Climbing the dizzying steps to see the jungle views over the Mayan temples and rainforests at Tikal, Guatemala
- Seeing the huge Miraflores Locks in action on the Panama Canal
- Traversing the region via the Panamerica Highway
- Surfing the fantastic breaks in San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua

From the crashing glaciers of Patagonia to steaming Amazonian jungles, South America is so fantastically diverse and packed with adventure you'll forever wonder what's coming next.

Strap on your crampons and climb the snowcapped volcanoes of the Andes. Trek the Inca Trail to the awe-inspiring ruins of Machu Picchu, marvel at the colonial architecture of Cartagena, let loose to the hedonism of Brazil's Carnival, doze to frog songs in the Amazon and wake up to the thundering magnificence of Iguazu Falls. You can stay in jungle lodges, cloud-forest campgrounds or indigenous shelters. You can down an aperitif before a deluxe dinner in Buenos Aires or slide on your backside down a mountain.

Did you know?

Patagonia was home to several communities of Welsh settlers, who moved there in the 19th century. Travellers today may still hear Welsh spoken if they know where to look.

SOUTH AMERICA

What's more, South America is an incredible cultural kaleidoscope, home to people of dozens of nations and boasting food, music and passions to match. Whatever travel fantasy you can dream up, South America's got it.

Top 5 experiences

- Hiking the Inca Trail and catching first sight of magnificent Machu Picchu, Peru
- Nights on the town, amazing meals and wonderful wine in Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Trekking the Torres del Paine, Chilean Patagonia
- Cruising up the Amazon deep into the heart of the world's largest rainforest
- Spending a week cruising the Galapagos Islands meeting the incredible wildlife

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Tourism has its downsides. You've probably heard about planes burning huge amounts of fuel or tourism harming indigenous cultures. But it doesn't have to be this way – there are ways to minimise the negative effects of your dream holiday and even make an impact for good on the country you're visiting.

There's more to sustainable tourism than just respecting local people and the environment: it's about travelling with your eyes and ears open and making sure your visit has a positive social, environmental and economic impact.

Sustainable travel tips

- The amount of carbon burnt fuelling your flight will do more damage to the environment than any other aspect of your travels. Offset your carbon emission through organisations like Climate Care (www.climatecare.org) and Carbon Neutral (www.carbonneutral.com).

- Use water, firewood and other fuel sparingly. Always take all litter home with you.
- Where you can, shop at markets or local grocers and buy local products.
- Respect local customs, traditions and culture – always ask before photographing local people. Speaking at least a few words of the local language always makes a big impression.
- Hagglng can be fun, but don't be obsessed with getting the lowest price – a few pence to you may be a big deal to the seller.

The Travel Foundation

The Travel Foundation (www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk) was established in 2003 and works in close partnership with the UK travel industry, governments, conservation and campaign groups to change the practice of tourism. Visit their website to find out more, plus access some great tips for travellers.

TRAVEL SAFETY

You're as much at risk of being a victim of crime when travelling as you are when you're at home. While this means you should be on your guard, staying safe is more a matter of common sense and simple precautions.

You can do yourself a favour and stay safe by following a few easy guidelines.

Most countries are safe to visit, but even well-known destinations have some spots where you need to take greater care. Take note of the FCO Country Advice and Travellers Tips for the country you are visiting, and thoroughly read up on any risks in a guidebook before you go.

If you can't face losing something, leave it behind. Take what you need for the time you'll be out and about with you and leave the rest in the hotel safe. You'll be more of a target with a visible mobile phone, music player or digital camera.

Take taxis home after dark, especially in an unfamiliar city. As interesting as they may look,

hanging around (or getting involved in) demonstrations or disturbances is a very bad idea indeed.

Ask other travellers for their tips. Everyone will know a few stories – some more colourful than others – and swapping stories is a great icebreaker.

A bit of common sense goes

Crime abroad: other things you need to know

The responsibility for investigating a crime overseas lies with the police of that country. In exceptional circumstances, the British police may be invited to help them. Generally speaking this does not happen and the local police will handle all aspects of the investigation. The same rule applies to the involvement of the British Consulate in your case.

If you are the victim of a crime abroad you should find out from a local lawyer how to seek compensation. You should also consult your insurance company to find out if you are entitled to compensation under the terms of your travel insurance.

TRAVEL SAFETY (CONTINUED)

a long way. Keep an eye on your valuables at all times, use an out-of-sight security wallet and be extra careful when drinking.

To date, no British traveller has made any money out of buying gems, carpets or anything else and selling it on when back in the UK. If something sounds too good to be true, it is.

If something happens

Even taking every precaution, many travellers are the victims of crime when abroad at some point

in their travelling career, especially those on longer trips. If something happens you need to move fast on a few things:

- Report the crime to the local police and obtain a statement from them. Make sure you get a reference number to use on any insurance claims.
- Contact the nearest British Consulate about getting a replacement passport.
- Inform your bank/credit card issuer if travellers cheques or credit cards are stolen.
- Ask your bank to transfer emergency money for you to use.

The British Consulate can contact friends or family in the UK and help them send money out to you.

DRUGS

What you need to know

In certain countries you'll find drug use is more obvious and accepted than at home.

However, this doesn't translate into a tolerance of drugs by authorities in these countries. It's tempting to assume that if caught there'll be nothing more

than a token fine and at worse, deportation. In fact the opposite is often true and penalties for drug use can be severe.

In 2004/2005, 2,764 British nationals were detained overseas, nearly half (1,266) for drugs-related offences. In many countries you won't be offered bail before trial

Case Study

Sandra Gregory's Story

"In 1990 I went away on what I thought would be the holiday of a lifetime. Between 1991 and 1993 I was living in Thailand. I had several jobs and a large circle of friends in Bangkok. In 1993 after the military coup, I fell ill with amoebic dysentery, lost two jobs and contracted dengue fever. I started to run out of money very quickly – and was desperate to return home to the UK. Two years away from home felt like a lifetime.

Out of desperation I stupidly accepted a heroin addict's offer to smuggle his supply of drugs from Bangkok to Japan, in exchange for the money I needed to buy a plane ticket home. I was arrested at Bangkok airport and convicted of drug trafficking – I was sentenced by the court in Thailand to 25 years in prison. I served four and a half years of this in the notorious Lard Yao prison before being repatriated in 1997 to serve the remainder of my sentence in British prisons. In 2000 I was freed from prison after receiving a pardon from the King of Thailand.

The years I spent in prison were a traumatic and terrifying experience. I have served a long and punishing sentence which I undoubtedly deserved. I took an extraordinary risk for money and I ignored the price to be paid for smuggling drugs. I will live with the shame and consequences of what I did for the rest of my life".



DRUGS (CONTINUED)

and prison conditions can be every bit as awful as you've read about or seen on television. You will get a criminal record in the UK if caught with drugs abroad. And to top it off it'll be your last visit to whatever paradise you've taken drugs in – you're unlikely to ever be allowed to go to that country again.

This is one case where you're not helping the local economy, either. In fact, you're making things worse.

Penalties for those caught in possession or dealing in drugs are severe worldwide. Here's a few examples:

Cyprus – zero tolerance policy towards drugs and possession will usually lead to a hefty fine or even a long prison sentence.

Spain – possession of all recreational drugs is illegal and even the possession of small quantities can lead to imprisonment.

Greece – possession of even small quantities of drugs can lead to long terms of imprisonment.

Tunisia – possession of even a small amount of drugs could cost you a term in prison.

Jamaica – severe penalties for all drug offences. Possession of even small quantities can lead to imprisonment. All sentences are served in Jamaica, prison conditions are harsh.

Venezuela – arrests for drug trafficking are common and convictions lead to severe penalties, including long prison sentences (usually ten years) in harsh and dangerous conditions in Venezuelan jails.

Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Iran can impose the death sentence for some drugs charges.

Remember, if you get caught with drugs abroad, the British Consul CANNOT get you out of jail, or get you better conditions than are provided for local or other nationals, or give legal advice. If you get injured or ill as a result of drugs, your holiday insurance may be

invalidated and you may be refused a flight home by your airline or tour operator.

See FCO Travel Advice for country specific information on drug laws and penalties.

To order a copy e-mail: FCOleaflets@accelerated-mail.co.uk.

The Department of Health website (www.dh.gov.uk) provides specific information on the health risks associated with drugs.

Further information

The FCO has produced a booklet called *Drugs – Information for Travellers*.

Stay safe – tips from the FCO

- Pack all luggage yourself and make sure it's securely fastened.
- Keep your luggage with you at airports and other departure points to avoid having drugs planted in it.
- Be aware of approaches from people at airports – even seemingly innocent requests to look after someone's possessions can lead to problems.
- Don't carry anything through customs for someone else. If drugs are found you will be held responsible. Also don't cross borders with people you don't know or drive across borders with unknown companions.
- Carry a doctor's prescription for any medication you may need to avoid unnecessary delays at customs and immigration checks.
- Be cautious when accepting gifts from people abroad – it's easy to hide drugs in items such as trainers, cosmetics and children's toys.
- Don't allow yourself to be persuaded or coerced into carrying drugs. Is it worth risking your life or spending 7–20 years in jail for £2,000?

LOCAL CUSTOMS

Meeting local people and getting to grips with a country's customs and culture is one of the delights of travel. Most of us know not to show the soles of our feet when in Thailand, but many a traveller has been left standing at the bar due to the mysterious art of tipping in American bars. On the other hand, you'll get a lot of cups of tea bought for you by strangers in the Middle East, and may never work out how to buy any back in return.

Of course some types of behaviour will be universally badly received – dressing inappropriately, loudly expressing political views and criticising your host country will never go down well. Good manners are always appreciated.

While local customs vary from country to country, the solution to any unwittingly delivered faux-pas is a smile and a polite apology. Most people you'll meet will know you're not versed in local custom

and be pleased to gently put you right.

Sometimes you'll encounter surprising behaviour from local people directed at you. In China, foreigners are greeted with cries of 'Longwai!'; in East Africa the cry is 'Mzungu' and in Thailand 'Farang'. The shouts are various terms to describe outsiders, foreigners and Europeans, and may follow you around on your visit to the country. While these shouts are normally accompanied by big smiles it can be a challenge to remain good humoured. The best strategy is to treat such comments as a mixture of a joke, and a gesture of recognition and curiosity – no harm is meant.

The best way to get in tune with the local customs is to immerse yourself and expect your first few days to be something of a culture shock. Before you go you can get a handle on what to expect by reading guidebooks, chatting to other travellers and checking out FCO Travel Advice (0845 850 2829;

5 unusual customs

- In Russia and Central Asia vodka plays a part in most social rituals – expect many toasts and a headache in the morning.
- In Madagascar it is considered *fady* (taboo) to point with an outstretched finger.
- The popular Afghan sport of Buzkashi involves men on horseback battling for the carcass of a headless goat.
- Land diving, an early form of bungee jumping, was invented on Vanuatu in the South Pacific where men hurl themselves off a platform with vines tied around their ankles – all in the name of ensuring a good yam harvest.
- If you didn't know it already, you'll soon find out that ribbing Poms, normally about sport, is a national pastime for Australians and Kiwis!

www.fco.gov.uk). While it pays to be prepared, remember that discovering the richness of local cultures is one of the great joys of travel.



WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Women travellers aren't a novelty and gender is no barrier to having some wonderful experiences whether on a sunshine break,

gap year expedition or round-the-world adventure. Women travellers are very common even in very adventurous destinations,

Other tips for women travellers

Travelling Around

- The best response to unwanted advances is a polite but firm rebuttal. Keep cool and avoid confrontation.
- Confident body language and behaviour speaks volumes about you. If you've a good idea of what you're doing and where you're going you'll be less likely to run into trouble.
- Leave details of your plans with your hotel or guesthouse.
- Plan your route back to your hotel before you go out – at the very least make sure you have the address or a map of where you're staying on you. Never hitchhike or accept car rides from strangers.
- Take taxis recommended by your guesthouse after dark. Where possible, travel with a friend.

Hotels & Guesthouses

- Use only a first initial when checking in. Don't put 'Ms', 'Miss' or 'Mrs'.
- Never leave your key where someone can note your room number.
- Do not leave your window open if your room is on the ground floor.
- Use a door wedge on the inside of your hotel room door for extra security.
- Never open your room door to anyone – maintenance, flower delivery or whoever – without checking with reception to verify the service.
- If the guesthouse provides a safety box or safe – use it!

and women travelling alone or with other women can open doors closed to even the most intrepid mixed couple or male traveller. However, attitudes to women in other countries can be very different from the UK. The more you prepare yourselves, the better your travelling experiences will be.

Appearance is the most important thing to consider if you're travelling as a lone female or in a pair or group. As a general rule, you're always better off covering arms and legs – this keeps you protected from the sun and unwanted attention at the same time. A quick glance at what local women are wearing can give more guidance. Any clothes you source locally will be great souvenirs, too.

There are a few tricks of the trade. Dark glasses can help you avoid eye contact and attention from strangers but they can also be a barrier to genuine communication: take them off when talking to people.

A wedding ring, even if you have no reason to wear one, can help avoid harassment.

Avoid risky situations such as travelling or walking alone at night or drinking by yourself in a bar. Getting involved in drugs and alcohol with strangers in an unknown city is a recipe for trouble and best avoided. This doesn't mean don't go out at night, but do it with trusted friends and let someone where you're staying know where you're going.

Lastly, be wary of telling strangers where you are staying or giving out too many details of your travel plans.

MORE TIPS FOR A SAFER TRIP

Stay In Touch

While you're away having rip-roaring adventures, you can sometimes forget that there are people at home hanging on your every email or phone call. They will want to hear from you regularly.

The easiest way to approach this is to agree in advance to a weekly or fortnightly email or phone call. Do this and stick to it. If anything major comes up, like trouble in the country you're visiting, contact family and friends to put their minds at rest. Provide friends and family with a rough itinerary of where you're going, and encourage them to read up about your trip.

Security

While it's extremely unlikely you'll be caught up in any political disturbances or terrorist incidents, you should remain alert to the possibility. Here are a few tips to help keep you safe:

- Keep abreast of the local and regional political scene in the

media – tune into BBC World Service via a short wave radio and check the news online regularly.

- Keep a close eye on FCO Travel Advice, which can change quickly.
- Be prepared to change your travel plans at short notice – round-the-world tickets are flexible on both dates and destinations. Inform your friends and family of any changes to your plans.
- Be as alert to unattended baggage in public places as you are at home.
- Avoid political and other demonstrations or gatherings, however colourful, harmless or exciting they may appear.
- Check your guidebook, your hotel or tour guide for warnings on local scams.
- Should you lose your Hotel Key Card, bear in mind that information stored on it may include your name, partial home address, hotel room number, check in and check

out dates and credit card number and expiry date.

Local law

Wherever you're going, the best way of keeping out of trouble is by not breaking the law. Check your guidebook for details of any local legislation that may affect you during your stay. Wherever you go, taking photos of military sites or even important installations like dams, airports and railway stations should be avoided. If in any doubt about whether something is illegal, simply don't do it. Ask local enthusiasts for advice if in doubt.

Make sure your visa is in good order when travelling in the country. It can be simple to extend your visa and will save you problems if you're stopped when in the country and especially when leaving. If you do overstay your visa you're looking at a fine at best.

It's also important to respect local working regulations. Travellers working illegally are not looked

on kindly and fines, deportation or even imprisonment are some of the punishments handed down to those who do this. Find out about working holiday visas which are available to some travellers.

Buying local crafts and souvenirs is a great way to put money into the local economy, especially if you buy directly from local artisans. However, all that good work can be undone if you unwittingly purchase something made of endangered animals or plants or that's of historical importance. These objects are likely to be regulated or banned and you could get into trouble either leaving the country or returning to the UK. See CITES (www.ukcites.gov.uk) for more information.

Poste Restante

You can receive post anywhere in the world via *poste restante*, where post offices will keep mail for you for a short period of time. See Royal Mail (www.royalmail.com) for more information.

WHO TO CONTACT IF THINGS GO WRONG

Support for British Nationals in difficulty abroad is provided by British diplomatic missions overseas and by the Consular Directorate of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office in London.

British diplomatic missions overseas take the form of British High Commissions or Deputy High Commissions in Commonwealth countries and British Embassies, Consulates General and Consulates in other countries. We have used the term “British Consulate” to refer to these throughout this guide. In some places there are networks of Honorary Consuls who can offer

some limited help locally or direct you to the nearest Consulate.

If you need help in a country where there is no British diplomatic or consular office, you can receive consular assistance from the diplomatic or consular office of another EU Member State. Informal arrangements also exist with some other countries, including New Zealand and Australia, to lend assistance to British nationals in some countries. Where assistance is provided by other countries, you should receive the same level of assistance as they would provide to their own nationals.

Here’s a list of contacts in some of the most popular destinations. Addresses and numbers sometimes change so make sure you check FCO Travel Advice for the country you’re travelling to before you go, for full details of the British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate there.

Australia (Canberra)

British High Commission
Commonwealth Avenue
Yarralumla
Canberra
(61) (2) 6270 6666
bhc.canberra@mail.uk.emb.gov.au
www.britaus.net

Brazil

British Embassy
Setor de Embaixadas Sul
Quadra 801, Conjunto K
CEP 70200-010
Brasília – DF
(55) (61) 3329 2300
contact@uk.org.br
www.uk.org.br

Canada

British High Commission
80 Elgin Street
Ottawa K1P 5K7
(1) (613) 237 1530
generalenquiries@BritaininCanada.org
www.britainincanada.org

China

British Embassy
11 Guang Hua Lu
Jian Guo Men Wai
Beijing 100600
(86) (10) 5192 4000
consularmailbeijing@fco.gov.uk
www.britishembassy.org.cn

Cuba

British Embassy
Calle 34 No. 702/4 entre 7ma
Avenida y 17
Miramar
(53) (7) 204 1771
Britembcomm@enet.cu
www.britishembassy.gov.uk/cuba

Egypt

British Embassy
7 Ahmed Ragheb Street
Garden City
Cairo
(20) (2) 794 0852
consular.cairo@fco.gov.uk
www.britishembassy.gov.uk/egypt

France

British Embassy
35 rue du Faubourg St Honoré
75383 Paris Cedex 08
(33) 1 44 51 31 00
webmaster.paris@fco.gov.uk
www.amb-grande-bretagne.fr

Germany

British Embassy
Wilhelmstrasse 70
10117 Berlin
(49) (30) 20457 579
www.britischebotschaft.de



WHO TO CONTACT IF THINGS GO WRONG (CONTINUED)

Hong Kong

British Consulate-General
No 1 Supreme Court Road
Central
Hong Kong
(P O Box 528)
(852) 2901 3000
consular@britishconsulate.org.hk
www.britishconsulate.org.hk

India

British High Commission
Chanakyapuri
New Delhi 110021
(91) (11) 2687 2161
postmaster.NEDEL@fco.gov.uk
www.britishhighcommission.gov.uk/india

Japan

British Embassy
No 1 Ichiban-cho
Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 102-8381
(81) (3) 5211-1100
embassy.tokyo@fco.gov.uk
www.uknow.or.jp

Jordan

British Embassy
(PO Box 87) Abdoun
Amman 11118
(962) 6) 590 9200
info@britain.org.jo
www.britain.org.jo

Mexico

British Embassy
Río Lerma 71
Col Cuauhtémoc
06500 México DF
(52) (55) 5242 8500
consular.mexico@fco.gov.uk
www.britishembassy.gov.uk/mexico

Nepal

British Embassy
Lainchaur Kathmandu
(P O Box 106)
(977) (1) 4410583
britemb@wlink.com.np
www.britishembassy.gov.uk/nepal

New Zealand

British High Commission
44 Hill Street
Wellington 1
Mailing Address:
P O Box 1812
Wellington
(64) (4) 924 2888
PPA.Mailbox@fco.gov.uk
www.britain.org.nz

Peru

British Embassy
Torre Parque Mar (Piso 22)
Avenida Jose Larco, 1301
Miraflores
Lima
(51) (1) 617 3000
belima@fco.gov.uk
www.britemb.org.pe

Russian Federation

British Embassy Moscow
Smolenskaya Naberezhnaya 10
Moscow 121099
(7) (095) 956 7200
consular.moscow@fco.gov.uk
www.britemb.msk.ru

Singapore

British High Commission
100 Tanglin Road
Singapore 247919
(65) 6424 4200
commercial.singapore@fco.gov.uk
www.britain.org.sg

South Africa

British High Commission
255 Hill Street, Arcadia 0002, Pretoria
(27) (12) 421 7500
media.pretoria@fco.gov.uk
www.britain.org.za

Spain

Paseo de Recoletos, 7/9
28004 Madrid
(34) 91 524 97 00
madridconsulate@ukinspain.com

Sri Lanka

190 Galle Road
Kollupitiya
(PO Box 1433)
Colombo 3
(94) (11) 2437336-43
bhc@eureka.lk
www.britishhighcommission.gov.uk/srilanka

Tanzania

British High Commission
Umoja House
Garden Avenue
PO Box 9200
Dar es Salaam
(255) (22) 211 0101
bhc.dar@fco.gov.uk
www.britishhighcommission.gov.uk/tanzania

Thailand

British Embassy
14 Wireless Road
Lumpini, Pathumwan
Bangkok 10330
(66) (0) 2 305 8333
info.bangkok@fco.gov.uk
www.britishembassy.gov.uk/thailand

USA

British Embassy
3100 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington DC 20008
(1)(202) 588 6500
www.britainusa.com

WHAT CONSULATES CAN DO FOR YOU

The British Consulate is there to help Britons who require assistance abroad, but it can't and won't help in every situation just because you're British.

British authorities abroad can offer help which is appropriate to the individual circumstances of each case, including:

- issuing replacement passports.
- giving advice on transferring funds.
- providing appropriate help if you have suffered rape or serious assault, are a victim of other crime, or are in hospital.
- helping the mentally ill.
- contacting you within 24 hours of being notified if you have been detained.
- offering support and help in a range of other cases, such as child abductions; death of relatives overseas; missing persons; kidnapping.

- making special arrangements in cases of terrorism, civil disturbances or natural disasters.

Help is not available to:

- get you out of prison if you are detained, prevent the local authorities from deporting you after your prison sentence if that is their policy, or interfere in criminal or civil court proceedings.
- give you legal advice or investigate crimes (although staff can provide details of English-speaking lawyers).
- pay any bills or give you money. In very exceptional circumstances staff may lend you some money, from public funds, which you will have to repay.
- make travel arrangements for you, find you work or accommodation, help you obtain visas to visit or emigrate overseas.
- make commercial or business arrangements.

The limits of what can be done

The British Government is restricted in the actions it can take in another country. Consular staff cannot replace specialist advisers such as lawyers. And like any government department, the Foreign Office has a responsibility to make efficient and effective use of public funds. You may have to pay for some types of consular assistance, for example issuing an emergency passport (the FCO does not make a profit from these charges but instead uses the funds to be able to provide consular assistance).

If you are detained, you will not be able to get better treatment than the treatment that local people are given, though FCO officials will consider making representations to the local authorities if you are not treated in accordance with internationally accepted standards.

British officials cannot persuade local authorities to waive any fine or to give you

an extension if you overstay your visa.

No help is available in finding Britons somewhere to live abroad, a job or a work permit.

USEFUL WEBSITES

Health & Safety

Suzy Lamplugh Trust

www.suzylamplugh.org

A national charity for personal safety, the site offers advice on staying safe when travelling and publishes the Passport to Safer Travel, available online.

Hospital for Tropical Diseases

www.thehtd.org

The Hospital for Tropical Diseases is the only NHS Hospital dedicated to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of tropical diseases and travel-related infections. The site provides huge amounts of invaluable advice for travellers including tips on what to take with you when travelling.

World Health Organisation

www.who.int

The WHO is the best place to seek out detailed, up-to-date information on international travel health issues.

Scottish NHS

www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk

Provides country-specific information on vaccinations, immunisations and advice for UK travellers heading abroad.

Travel & Transport

Airline Quality

www.airlinequality.com

Reviews of airlines from around the world.

Lonely Planet

www.lonelyplanet.com

Lonely Planet website with country profiles, Thorn Tree travellers message board, author blogs and much more.

Worldwide Travel Information

www.brookes.ac.uk/worldwise

Great source of practical information, contacts and pretty much anything else you need to know in a hurry about any country in the world.

OANDA

www.oanda.com

Useful site for working out exchange rates – printable cheat sheets are invaluable when you begin using an unfamiliar currency.

Travel Organisations

ABTA

www.abta.co.uk

The Association of British Travel Agents – stop here for links to agents throughout the UK.

AITO

www.aito.co.uk

The Association of Independent Tour Operators, where you'll find small specialist operators.

Tourism Concern

www.tourismconcern.org.uk

An organisation campaigning for ethical and responsible behaviour in tourism – and a good place to learn more about travelling sustainably.

UK Government

Foreign & Commonwealth Office

www.fco.gov.uk

Travel advice, country profiles and embassy links.

DEFRA

www.defra.gov.uk

Information on import restrictions into the UK and the facts on travelling abroad with your pet.

Department of Health

www.dh.gov.uk

Details on health risks when travelling, EHC forms and help planning a healthy holiday.

Passport Service

www.passport.gov.uk

Everything you need to know about applying for or renewing a passport.

FEEDBACK

The FCO like to know what you think about any support you have received while abroad, or information you've accessed in the UK, whether you found it good, bad or indifferent. Your thoughts are relevant whether you've read travel advice, shared this guide with your friends or used the FCO's services abroad.

Pass on your views at:
Feedback
Policy, Communications and Training Group
Consular Directorate
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
Old Admiralty Building
Spring Gardens
London
SW1A 2PA

Phone: (0)20 7008 1500
Fax: (0)20 7008 0152
Email: feedback.consular.services@fco.gov.uk

Going on a Gap Year?

Remember to check out www.gogapyear.com, where you'll find handy hints and travel tips for gap year travellers that will help you on your way – leaving you to enjoy yourself, confident in the knowledge that you're well prepared.

Any comments, suggestions, stories?

We're always interested in hearing from the experts – yourselves. So if you found this guide useful or have any comments or suggestions on how we could improve it, or if you would like to share any of your stories or experiences with your fellow travellers please visit the GoGapYear website at www.gogapyear.com and give us your ideas.

Travel Safe

Produced by Lonely Planet in conjunction with Nikki Mayhew and the Know Before You Go Team
Published February 2006 by Lonely Planet Publications Ltd

Text © Lonely Planet Publications Ltd 2006
Design © Lonely Planet Publications Ltd 2006
Photographs by Lonely Planet Images (www.lonelyplanetimages.com): Richard I'Anson (p34), John Banagan (p40), Juliet Coombe (p7), Christer Fredriksson (p12), Jeff Greenberg (p48), Gareth McCormack (p15), Leanne Walker (p2), Bill Wassman (p30), Eric L Wheeler (cover). © Photographers as indicated 2006
Printed through Universal Document Management Ltd, Buckinghamshire
Business development: Matt Gibbs & Ushma Patel
Project managers: Laetitia Clapton, Paula Hardy & Ray Thomson
Layout designers: Nic Lehman (Lonely Planet) & Paul Phillips (Frink Design)

Lonely Planet, Lonely Planet Images and the Lonely Planet logo are trademarks of Lonely Planet Publications Party Ltd. Other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means, without the written permission of the publisher. Although the authors and Lonely Planet have taken all reasonable care in preparing this book, we make no warranty about the accuracy or completeness of its content and, to the maximum extent permitted, disclaim all liability arising from its use.



TRAVEL SAFE

Planning the trip of a lifetime, a gap year abroad, or just a relaxing break? Lonely Planet have teamed up with the Foreign & Commonwealth Office to produce this guide to safe travel. It's full of information, tips, and stories from travellers themselves to help you choose your destination, plan your trip and have a safe and above all enjoyable time while you're there.

