

Advice Sheet - Advice When Travelling Alone

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Categories: Security

Advice

Prepare your trip

- Gather as much information as possible on your destination, refer to our country page and our latest alerts on the platform.
- Be aware of the local culture and laws. Learn a few words in the local language to be polite and ask for help if needed.
- The trusted contacts you meet in the country you are traveling to are your best security. A person alone will always seem an easier target than someone in a group. If you can, plan your trip while ensuring you meet someone you know at every step. You should also have information on your accommodation, relevant embassies, and trusted local contacts easily accessible.
- If it is not possible for you to be accompanied by either friends, colleagues, or trusted locals, provide your friends, family, or colleagues with a copy of your travel itinerary.
- Consult a map of the city you are going to and make sure you know the location of the airport, your hotel, your meetings, your Embassy, etc. Get to know the city and which neighborhoods should be avoided.
- Make sure to know how to go from one point to another the safest possible way.
- Social media awareness; be aware of what you are posting on social media and any apps you may be using. Use a clean phone with no photographs, text messages, etc.

Once you have arrived

- Always be reachable and keep your cell phone charged at all times. Always carry with you the most important telephone numbers such as your Embassy, colleagues, driver, hotel, medical and security assistance hotline, etc, make sure they are registered on your cell phone but carry also a paper copy.
- Do not deviate from your itinerary. Avoid disreputable districts and dark areas at night. Be alert for pickpockets and thieves.
- Always carry with you an ID card or passport and emergency medical information. And store copies in a safe place and make sure you have digital copies available.

- Avoid discussing sexual orientation, personal, cultural, or politically sensitive issues.

At your hotel

- At your hotel, lock the door and any connecting doors to your room and use the chain or spy hole when receiving a visitor. Do not open the door to the hotel room, especially late at night, until the visitor's identity has been confirmed, meet strangers in the lobby.

When going out

- When in a taxi or Uber, do not sit in the front passenger seat.
- In some cultures, smoking might not be accepted, especially during a religious festival, avoid smoking in public.
- Avoid drinking alcohol, especially in Muslim countries. If you do so, only drink alcohol in your hotel and not in a public venue.
- During Ramadan, foreigners are expected to adhere to traditional practices while in public, including refraining from eating, drinking, or smoking in daylight hours.
- Avoid any public gatherings, protests, and rallies that present a dynamic and volatile environment.
- You should only travel with minimal non-essential valuable items, and valuables should not be displayed publicly. Vary routes and times and minimize travel after dark.

How to react

- Trust your instincts. If you enter a hotel or restaurant and feel the atmosphere is hostile, you're probably right. Don't grin and bear it, just walk straight out.
- Keep your distance, even innocent, friendly talk can be misconstrued as flirtation, as can any physical contact.
- Ignoring most verbal harassment is usually the best policy. Very few will persist following or cat-calling for more than a few meters if you act as if you haven't noticed them. Walk and act confidently; persistent harassers tend to latch onto those who look like they don't know what they're doing.
- For serious encounters and any incidences of physical contact, don't be afraid to create a scene.
- Ignore obnoxious comments, if you respond to everyone you'll wear yourself out, and public shaming seldom gets satisfying results.
- Police and local security services are not trustworthy in every country of the world. If something happens to you and the country you visit is in this category, first refer to your local diplomatic mission or embassy.

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