

Travel Advice

Before You Travel

Make sure that your passport is up to date. If you are travelling within Europe your passport must be valid for the full duration of your holiday. Outside of Europe some countries insist on 6 months or more. Check with the country's respective embassy web site for up to date information.

- Have you had your travel vaccinations?
- If you are on medication do you have sufficient supply to see you through your trip, and do you know what it is in case it goes missing and you need to replace it while abroad? Make sure you know both the brand and generic name for it. You will need documentary evidence that the medication is for your own personal use. Take a copy of any prescriptions.



- Have you got your **travel insurance**.
- Do you know the telephone number in the UK if you need help?
 - Are you adequately covered? Does it cover dental treatment? If you are taken ill or had an accident abroad and had to be flown home in an air ambulance it would cost you tens of thousands of pounds unless you were fully insured.
 - Do you need a **visa** to enter the country you are visiting? Make sure you apply in plenty of time. There are often long delays for visa applications. If you are unsure, check with the country's embassy website. Remember children with their own passports will also need a visa.

- Make sure you have a **first aid kit** you can take with you. If this contains sharp objects it should be packed in your hold luggage and not in your hand luggage.

While You Are Travelling

Do you suffer from **motion sickness**? Some of the symptoms are drowsiness, nausea and vomiting, fainting and cold sweats. More women than men are affected and particularly children. To help prevent motion sickness you should try lying down, keep your eyes fixed on something in the distance and don't look down and avoid reading. You might find that if you watch a film or listen to music or some other distraction that this will help. You should also make sure that you avoid stuffy atmospheres and especially where there is a smell of food.

You can get travel sickness medication over the counter from all good pharmacies, however if the problem is severe you should consult your GP.

If you are **flying** then you need to take the following precautions:

Drink plenty of liquids to stop dehydration and avoid alcohol, tea and coffee as this has the opposite effect. If you are not sure if you are dehydrated check the colour of your urine when you go to the toilet. If it's dark in colour then you are dehydrated. Drink some water.

If you wear **contact lenses** then remove them as the air in the cabin is dry and may well cause your eyes to become irritated.

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT), although not unique to air travel, can be a problem if you sit in the same position for extended periods of time. Rotate your ankles and exercise your leg muscles and if possible get up and walk around the cabin. If you suffer from poor circulation then purchasing a pair of compression stockings may help. If you are in doubt you should consult your GP.

If you are a **smoker** then you may find the fact you can't have a cigarette in flight a problem. Go prepared and take some nicotine gum with you and don't drink alcohol.

Do not drink excessive amounts of **alcohol**. Remember the airline has the right to refuse to take you if you turn up at the departure gate under the influence of alcohol. They also have the right to divert the plane for an unscheduled landing if the crew feel that you are abusive and drunk. This will result in a prosecution.

On a long flight you may also suffer from **Jet Lag** when you arrive at your destination. You will probably find that travelling west is tolerated better than travelling east. The effects of jet lag can be sleep disturbance, loss of appetite, nausea, bowel changes, tiredness and poor concentration. To avoid jet lag you should try and have as relaxed flight as possible, get as much sleep as you can, exercise and drink plenty of water. Jet lag is made worse by a hangover.

Finally you will not be allowed to take the following items into the cabin: Household cutlery, knives and blades, razor blades, tradesman's tools, toy or replica guns, scissors of any size, Hypodermic syringes (unless you can prove that you have a medical need for example diabetes), knitting needles, corkscrews, catapults, sporting bats like tennis or cricket and snooker cues.

Travelling by car abroad

If you are taking your own car to Europe then you need to make sure of the regulations that apply to the countries you will be visiting. For example all the countries in Europe insist that you carry a warning triangle to place behind the car in the case of a breakdown and in Spain, Portugal, Italy and Austria you must now have a reflective jacket in the car which you must wear if you have a breakdown and get out of the car.



Here are some more tips that you may find useful:

- Check that your **insurance** covers you taking your car abroad. Most insurance cover abroad is for 3rd party only. Make sure you contact your insurance company to extend it to comprehensive.
- Make sure you have **international breakdown cover**
- Take your insurance documentation with you and a **Green Card** if your insurance company issues one as well as your registration document from the DVLA.
- Carry your **driving licence** with you at all times. If you have a photo licence make sure you take the paper copy with you as well as the photo card.
- You will need a **GB sticker** for your car.
- Make sure you adapt your headlights to driving on the left.
- In most European countries you must carry a spare set of bulbs, a warning triangle and a first aid kit and in some countries a fire extinguisher. Check the regulations on www.theaa.com.
- Don't drink and drive. The alcohol limits in Europe and the USA are a lot lower than in the UK.
- Watch your speed!
- Drive slowly when you first leave the ferry, get used to driving on the 'wrong' side of the road. Many people devise a method to remind them that they are on the other side of the road.
- **Speed trap detectors** are illegal in Europe. Remove it from the car before you go. The excuse that it wasn't turned on will not work and you will get an on the spot fine.
- Plan your route
- Road accidents are a major source of injury. Remember when crossing the road the traffic will be coming from the opposite direction. To be certain always look both ways.
- Always familiarize yourself with the rules of the road in the country you are visiting
- Do not exceed the speed limit
- Finally a GB sticker on your car suggests there are rich pickings in the car so don't leave items on view when parked during the day or night. Lock them in the boot out of sight.

Visit www.theaa.com for up to date driving information on the countries you will visit.

Your Holiday

There are some simple rules to obey to make sure you enjoy your holiday and in warm climates.

Upset stomachs are one of the major reasons for a spoiled holiday caused primarily by contaminated food and water. Take these simple precautions:

- Always drink bottled water
- Don't have ice in your drink
- Don't drink excessive amounts of alcohol
- Don't sit in the sun for long periods and avoid the mid-day sun
- Don't eat the local ice-cream
- Don't eat salads or washed fruit. Fruit you peel is ideal.
- Drink plenty of water so that you don't become dehydrated
- Make sure that the local tea and coffee is made with bottled water. If in doubt don't drink it.
- Clean your teeth with bottled water
- Avoid eating shellfish
- Don't buy food from street vendors
- Look at a restaurant and more importantly the people working in it before you decide to dine there.

First Aid Kit

A first aid kit is an often overlooked but essential piece of kit for the traveller.

Your kit should contain the following items:

- Pain killers for headaches etc.
- Antacids for indigestion
- Anti-diarrhoea tablets
- Fluid replacement powders. Especially useful for children suffering from diarrhoea
- Fabric plasters, adhesive tape, gauze squares, non-adherent dressings for minor injuries
- Insect repellents and an antihistamine cream will help with insect bites
- Tablets to sterilise water
- Sun block, sun cream and after sun for sunbathing. Make sure you don't burn and remember it doesn't have to be a sunny day to get sunburn when you are abroad.

If you are travelling in areas where the medical facilities are not good then you may want to include some **antibiotics**, in which case talk to your GP about a broad spectrum one. You may also need **Malaria tablets** and a sterile pack for the prevention of blood borne infections.

Lastly don't forget to pack a good **first aid book**.

Accident Prevention.

Prevention is always better than a cure and therefore you should be aware of the possible risks and avoid predictable injuries.

- Take extra special care when walking barefoot on the beach and keep an eye out for those unfamiliar sea creatures like jelly fish.
- Alcohol and swimming don't mix and you should leave at least 1 hour after a big meal before going swimming.
- **Don't dive or jump** in the water until you have checked the depth.
- When swimming in sunny weather always apply a water repellent sun block. Remember that although you may feel cool in the water the beads of water on your skin act as a magnifying glass and cause burning.
- Beware of fast moving tides and if you are unsure ask a local about the conditions
- Avoid swimming alone
- Avoid using airbeds or inflatable dinghies in the sea. An off-shore breeze can quickly blow you out to sea. If you get into such a situation is often better to stay 'on-board' and shout for help. Trying to swim to shore can often cause exhaustion and hypothermia.

- If you are a **scuba diver** make sure you use a PADI registered dive company and don't fly for at least 12 hours after your last dive or 24 hours if you have done multiple dives. Further information can be obtained from www.padi.com
- In some countries spiders, snakes and caterpillars can be venomous and dogs and cats run wild and may be a source of **Rabies**. Do not approach and pet them. Even some parts of Europe have not eradicated rabies. If you are bitten or scratched by an animal then clean the wound immediately and apply an antiseptic cream and seek medical attention. If Rabies is left untreated it will always cause death.
- If you must hire a scooter always make sure that it is roadworthy and ensure you are supplied with a proper crash helmet. When hiring a car hire always hire from a reputable company with known brand name and always check it carefully before driving off.

Insect Bites

Insects are one of the main carriers of disease. They can result in unpleasant and occasionally serious skin reactions.

Mosquitoes spread Malaria, **Yellow Fever, Dengue fever and Japanese B encephalitis**. The bite is often painless but can be sore afterwards. To avoid getting bitten you should cover as much of your skin as possible and use an insect repellent. The use of a good mosquito net when sleeping in unscreened accommodation is essential.



You should also avoid unnecessary exposure to Blackflies, Tsetseflies and Sandflies.

Ticks are the carrier of **Lyme disease** and can sometimes be found in wooded areas of the UK however it is unusual to get bites from these insects if you are staying in developed tourist resorts. Ticks normally become attached to the skin or clothing after brushing against long vegetation. Ticks should always be removed as soon as possible ideally with tweezers hooked around the mouth parts. You should not squeeze the body of the tick. Seek medical advice as soon as possible.

Insect repellents are the best form of defence against being bitten. Never use a repellent over broken skin or a wound and don't apply to eyes or mouth. Never apply directly to your face, always squirt it into your hand first and then rub onto your face. Always read the manufacturer's instructions.

Cloths are the best protection against being bitten but remember that some insects can bite through skin tight fitting cloths so it's best to wear loose fitting ones.

Unsafe Sex

Casual sex and failure to use a condom with new partners can put you at risk of getting a serious infection including **HIV**. Make sure that you take precautions when having sex and also take a supply of condoms with you as many of those available in poorer parts of the world may not have been tested to the same high standards as in the UK.

The **contraceptive pill** can also be less effective if you have suffered from a stomach upset resulting in vomiting within 3 hours of taking the pill, in which case you should use a barrier method for seven days after it has ended.

Security

While abroad in unfamiliar territory always be on your guard to protect yourself and your possessions. If you are going out at night in areas where you feel you may be unsafe go in groups and do not wear any **jewellery** that will attract attention. Carry only enough cash for the evening and only one **credit card**.

Enjoy your holiday and have a safe trip