

RENAISSANCE TRAVEL TIPS

Be a Savvy Traveler with these Travel Safety and Security Suggestions from Ticket To Travel
"When you are ready to travel...Ticket To Travel is ready to help"

by Anita Pagliasso-Balamane

The following are excerpts are from Anita Pagliasso-Balamane's soon to be released book "Living Out of a Suitcase"

A little story: A friend of mine calls himself a "contrarian." When the housing market in California softened in the early 1990s, he bought a house. When his business slowed a few years ago, he took classes at a local community college to expand his knowledge. When the Dow Jones plummeted, he bought \$50,000 worth of stock - and has made a huge profit. When things seem the gloomiest, he only sees opportunities.

In a way, we must do the same. Yes, it's hard to remain positive in today's times. Yet travel is one thing we can do to brighten our lives, remain positive and help build for the recovery that will surely come:

Recently I took a flight to a travel conference in Las Vegas. Any apprehension I had completely went away when I saw the hoards of people on Las Vegas Boulevard having a great time. On the flight home I was totally relaxed. Being out there among people still carrying on normal lives and enjoying their travel experiences helps to counteract the media-magnified anxiety that has enveloped us recently. Your decision to continue to travel can make a powerful statement.

In giving you the following information it is important to remember that these suggestions are useful whether you are in Budapest or on the streets of San Francisco. Just be an aware and alert traveler!

From the Ticket To Travel Tipster

At the San Jose airport arrive 2 hours prior to departure to allow for extra security procedures. (I checked with Southwest prior to my flight to Las Vegas and they told me 1 hour... it was not enough time!)

Be careful of what you wear when you go to the Airport and go through the metal detectors. Don't wear big metal belt buckles, pagers or wear metal taps on your shoes or you can count on an extra delay. No scissors, tweezers, etc.

Electronic tickets are fine unless something goes wrong. If an airline goes on strike, cancels a flight or is delayed, electronic ticketing may not be honored by other airlines. If possible, carry a cell phone with you to check on availability on another airline with their 800 numbers while waiting in line.

Pay for purchases and travel by credit card, not a debit credit card that doesn't have the same consumer protection.

When making reservations, do not use a nickname. Use your formal name as is listed on your driver's license or passport. If newlywed, use maiden name unless all legal documents have been changed to new name.

Passports must be still valid six or more months prior to departure. For passport services on the Internet: <http://travel.state.gov/passportservices.html>.

In foreign countries, learn where the US Embassy is located and how to contact them.

Make copies of all-important documents before you travel: Driver's License, Passport, Airline tickets, Cruise documents, Tour documents, traveler's checks, credit cards. (Renaissance Travel will keep a copy of your passport in our "Passport Bank". You can contact us 24 hours a day and we can fax a copy to the Embassy for a faster replacement. We also keep copies of all your travel documents.)

To minimize inconvenience in the event that you lose your purse or wallet, don't bring unnecessary credit cards when you travel. There isn't a Sears or Macy's in Prague yet, so leave your store credit cards at home in a safe. If traveling with your husband, split your credit cards. You carry the Visa and he carries the Master Card. The same goes for extra keys. One house key and one car key is probably all you'll need.

Prepare a list of essential phone numbers such as emergency contacts, credit card companies, airlines and passport number. (Renaissance Travel will format this data to business card size and laminate it for you at no charge.)

Many insurance policies may not cover incident/illness that occur outside the U.S. For your own protection, make sure you have adequate insurance to cover all eventualities for your trip. (Renaissance Travel offers Med Trip Insurance for such emergencies as trip cancellations, trip interruption or medical emergencies, including a 24-hour advice nurse with a worldwide toll free number.)

Bring medicines in original bottles. If your bags are searched, you may be questioned or detained. Bring an extra copy of your prescriptions with you, both medical and eye glasses, in case of emergency. Bring a letter from your physician explaining any medical conditions. Example: drug allergies, heart disease, medical history, medications, physician contacts and health insurance coverage. Ask your health provider for any suggested vaccinations. This should be done 4-6 weeks ahead of time as some may require multiple injections.

State department travel warnings issues information sheets for every country with information on health conditions, unusual currency or entry requirements, public health problems, and locations of closest US consulate for 204 countries. <http://travel.state.gov>.

Keep a low profile; avoid flashy dress, bags, jewelry, and loud conversations. Try not to look like a tourist! Con artists with stories exist everywhere. Don't feel sorry for beggars.

A cell phone that works overseas is a MUST-HAVE for the savvy international traveler. In a recent edition of The New York Times**, international travelers were urged to "Take a wireless communications device... like a cellphone." Make sure you always have a way to keep in touch with friends, family, and business associates while they are overseas. Renaissance Travel can assist with the rental of international cell phones.

Don't get into the front seat of a taxi by yourself. Don't exit a taxi until you're sure you've arrived at your destination. Pay while still in the car so you can be sure you've received the proper change. Make sure the driver gets out with you at the same time for your luggage and check the trunk to be sure you have left nothing behind.

When traveling to a country where English is not the first language, type the name and address of your hotel on an index card or get a book of matches from the hotel. If your cab driver does not speak English, hand him the card or matchbook and you will get to your hotel with no hassle.

When traveling with children ALWAYS carry a current photo of each child. This will prove invaluable if you accidentally get separated. Also carry a set of fingerprints for each child that can be made with an inexpensive inkpad and then laminated.

Cruise vacations are an incredible value...and currently there are some unbelievable sales going on. Here are five reasons why choosing to cruise makes sense right now. Call us to hear about specials.

- **Cruises have the highest satisfaction rates of any travel experience.** That's precisely what is perfect right now: a journey that provides almost certain satisfaction.
- **Cruises allow you to get away from it all.** If you look at consumer studies several of the top motivators for taking a cruise could be combined together under the heading "to escape stress." And these are stressful times.
- **As with air travel, cruise bargains are plentiful.** Some of the lowest prices ever offered!
- **Cruises give a chance for a family to get away from it all.** Many observers have noticed that family travel is doing better than expected. The reason: In times of crisis, families want to spend quality time together in a pleasant, relaxing environment.
- **Today's fears, at their very deepest level, are about control.** Cruises provide the option of doing it all or nothing at all, or anything in between. On a cruise, you can shape the experience as you wish.

Call us at 559-434-4420 to hear about all the incredible specials offered right now. Remember, at Renaissance Travel, our advice is free...our service is priceless!

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