

THE ROUGH GUIDE TO

Safer Travel

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

THE ROUGH GUIDE TO

SAFER TRAVEL

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www.roughguides.com



Foreign &
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Contents

Foreword	5
Introduction	7

1. Before you go9–43

Passports	10
Visas	13
Insurance	15
Health	20
Booking your trip	31
Money	32
Driving	34
Advice for older travellers	38
Advice for disabled travellers	40
The journey	41

2. Being there44–66

Avoiding crime	44
Local customs	47
Local laws	49
Staying in touch	54
Driving	58
Sustainable tourism	59
Sexual behaviour	59
Advice for backpackers	61

Women: safety and cultural issues	63
Advice for gay, lesbian and transgender travellers	65

3. If things go wrong67–72

Theft or loss	67
Assault and rape	68
Natural disasters and war	68
Death	69
Consular advice	70

4. Contacts73–93

Embassies and High Commissions abroad	73
Charities	84
Gay, lesbian and transgender associations	86
Health	87
Older travellers	87
Tax and National Insurance	88
Transport	89
Travel websites	89
Travel organisations	90
UK government websites	90
Voting	93

Foreword

Those of us lucky enough to travel for a living are, by now, fairly competent wanderers – or so you might imagine. But you would be mistaken. Recently, for example, I turned up at Luton airport for a flight that was departing from Gatwick. I also spent the second-hottest day of the Peruvian year walking deep into the jungle in completely the wrong direction – and the very warmest day retracing each blistering step.

When 2005 began, I resolved to be a better traveller. But as I checked in for my first big trip of the year and the agent asked how many bags I had, I realised my backpack was still in the hall at home.

None of these things really mattered, of course. In Peru, the people of the Amazon kindly provided a bed and a meal; and on my hand-luggage-only expedition, I learned just how far you can travel in the same set of clothes before you start getting strange looks.

The first decade of the twenty-first century is the best of times to be a traveller, with falling air fares and rising incomes – the result, expanded horizons and experiences that enrich us for the rest of our lives. Travel also has a central role to play as a force for good in a troubled world. The decisions you make about where to go and how to travel can directly affect living standards for your hosts, and in many communities, tourism is crucial in providing investment, jobs and sustainable livelihoods.

The travel business deals in dreams. When you or I buy a flight, a package holiday or a guidebook, we are investing our cash and our desires in that most unpredictable of commodities: a journey. Mostly, our dreams turn out even better than we hoped. But sometimes a trip can become a nightmare. For some travellers and their families, the last few years have proved the worst of times: natural disasters, accidents and terrorism have wrecked thousands of lives.

Travel, like life, can never be risk-free, but you can take some simple steps to reduce dramatically your chances of danger – by keeping up to date with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Travel Advice (www.fco.gov.uk/travel), for example, and by making sure you have adequate insurance. And, as this excellent *Rough Guide* reveals, we should spend less time worrying about exotic spiders and snakes, and more time taking precautions against common-or-garden mosquitoes. Travelling by rail or air rather than by road cuts down the risks of an accident. But do try to turn up at the right airport. And even if you leave your luggage behind, don't forget this book.

Simon Calder

Travel Editor, *The Independent*

Introduction

With travel so cheap these days, we are all travelling more and more. But, as Alan Whicker famously pointed out, the trick is to travel in style. While few of us have the budget for five-star travel, any journey can benefit from the ultimate luxury – time. Booking in advance means cheaper deals and planning ahead will forestall any number of headaches. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) **Know Before You Go** campaign is designed to help those travelling abroad to be prepared for the unexpected. Whether it's a short week-end break in Europe or a year-long backpacking trip around the world, a little forethought can save a lot of trouble if problems arise.

A thorough knowledge of your destination, whether through a **guidebook** or **Internet** research, will improve your trip. In the first instance, a good guidebook can help you decide where you want to go to – either the country itself, or the places within it once you are there. It can also provide useful inside knowledge about such things as local customs and laws – will the shops be open when you arrive? How old do you have to be to go into a bar? Can you drink alcohol at all?

As well as such issues as checking **passport** and **visa** requirements and **tickets**, a main aim of the campaign is to encourage travellers to have proper **insurance** cover for all eventualities. No one ever thinks the worst will happen to them, but a lack of insurance can all too often result in little

problems becoming big ones. Other practical matters include getting up-to-date **health advice** from your doctor, working out how to carry your **money**, getting a valid **E111 form** for travel to Europe, and making sure everyone at home knows how to get hold of you.

In addition to this book, the FCO website www.fco.gov.uk/travel is a vital resource. It gives comprehensive advice on 217 countries and territories and links to FCO offices abroad that can help in times of crisis. It also lists nearly two hundred useful partner organisations, ranging from travel agents and airlines, to banks, insurance companies and charities. These partners can provide help before, during and after a trip, with everything from choosing a destination or itinerary, through preparation and packing, insurance and health advice down to such details as displaying your photos afterwards on the Internet. As Liz Symons, Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, says, “More of us than ever are travelling overseas, experiencing the thrills of independent travel and exotic locations. But there are potential risks, too, for example from an unfamiliar environment, threats to personal security, or unexpected natural disasters. Safety is key. The Know Before You Go campaign offers advice and guidance for trouble-free and safe trips abroad. This pocket-sized guide is full of tips to plan your trip and enjoy it to the full, and is small enough to take with you.”

Indeed, this short book provides an overview of everything you might need to ensure your trip runs smoothly. Most important of all, however, is to remember that the vast majority of travellers have a great time on their journeys. After all, that's why we keep going back abroad: to experience new countries, new sights, new people, and to broaden our horizons. Make sure that any overseas adventure you make is a safe and successful one by taking the time to Know Before You Go.

Before you go

When planning a trip abroad, a good first stop for British travellers is the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) website, www.fco.gov.uk/travel, where FCO Travel Advice Notices provide up-to-date information on 217 countries and territories, including entry requirements, local laws and levels of crime. The site also provides contact details of all the FCO's overseas and consular posts around the world – it's a good idea to write down any that are relevant for your trip, so that you have them handy in an emergency: see also pp.73–83 of this booklet for a list of phone numbers.

The website also lists countries that you are advised NOT to visit, as well as those where only essential travel is recommended. While the FCO cannot prevent you visiting such places, its advice, backed up by a global diplomatic network, is worth listening to – and going against its recommendations might invalidate your travel insurance: if in doubt, check with your insurance company before you leave.

In addition to the obvious things you need on a foreign trip – a passport with a valid visa and a credit card – there is a whole range of other things you should take to ensure a trouble-free visit abroad, including insurance, an E111

form, a mobile phone, vaccination certificates, and a good guidebook.

Passports

The first thing to make sure of is that you have your own **passport** – we've all heard variations on the story of the executive who dashed off for an early-morning flight and found he had snatched his partner's passport off the table.

Check that your passport is valid for at least six months from the date of entry, as many countries insist on this before allowing you in. You'll also need to have enough blank pages left for entry stamps: some countries demand a completely empty page for their entry stamps and if you are visiting several countries in one trip this requirement can catch you out. If you are going to the USA, you'll need a machine-readable passport: check www.fco.gov.uk/travel for further details. Also check the condition of your passport – if your photo has been damaged or any pages torn or removed, you will need to get a replacement passport – and make sure that the details of your next of kin (at the back of the passport) are up to date.

If you do need a new passport, you can get a standard **passport application form** from the Passport Adviceline (☎0870 521 0410), the UK Passport Service website (www.passport.gov.uk), a passport office, selected post offices, or from some branches of Worldchoice travel agents. Once you've filled the form in and sent it back, allow at least four weeks for delivery, and to be on the safe side don't make any travel arrangements until you have your new passport. Once you receive your new passport, check that all the details in it are correct.

Top Tips for Passports

- ✓ Check the expiry date.
- ✓ Check you have sufficient blank pages for entry stamps.
- ✓ Check your next-of-kin details are complete and up to date.
- ✓ Keep a photocopy of the data pages of your passport in a safe place, separate from your passport.
- ✓ Leave a copy with someone at home.
- ✓ Take some other form of photo identification with you.
- ✓ Lock your passport in the hotel safe and carry your photocopy with you.
- ✓ If your passport is lost or stolen overseas, contact the nearest British Consulate or Embassy immediately.

If your passport is **lost or stolen**, it is important that you report it to the UK Passport Service as soon as possible, to help prevent any potential problems of identity theft. In the UK, you can report it on the Passport Adviceline (☎0870 521 0410), or by filling in a lost/stolen (LS01) report form available at 🌐www.passport.gov.uk: in addition, you should let the police know if you think it has been stolen. Abroad, a police report is also essential, as is contacting the nearest British Consulate or Embassy who will advise you on the right course of action: see pp.73–83 for your nearest consular post.

If your passport turns up after you've reported it lost or stolen, don't try to use it: like credit cards, British passports are no longer valid once they've been reported lost.

Children

All **children**, including newborn babies, now require their own passport. The only exceptions are those children already on a parent's passport before October 1998, who are still under 16, although for the USA even these will need a full passport. It is a criminal offence to take a child under 16 out of the UK without consent from a parent or guardian, someone with a residence order or parental responsibility, or the leave of the court. Full details of this requirement can be found at www.passport.gov.uk/applications.

Single parents or other **adults travelling alone with children** should be aware that some countries will demand documentary proof of parental responsibility before letting you enter the country or, in some cases, before letting the children leave.

Terrorism: simple precautions

Before travelling to a potential trouble spot, always check the current situation with the FCO website (www.fco.gov.uk/travel) and visit the "Risk of Terrorism" pages. In addition, there are a few basic, common-sense **precautions** that you can take:

- ✓ Be alert to unattended baggage in public places.
- ✓ Listen to the local and regional news in the media.
- ✓ Avoid political and other demonstrations or gatherings.
- ✓ Have an emergency plan: make sure you know how to use the local phones, and arrange a time and place for friends or family to meet if you get separated in a crisis.

Visas

Once you've found your passport, you'll need the right **visas** for your destination. You might have to send off your passport for this, so make sure you leave enough time before your trip – a couple of weeks should suffice. Check with your travel agent or the Embassy of the country you're visiting to find out what you need. They will also tell you if any existing visas or stamps are likely to cause a problem.

Safari setback

Well-travelled businessman John Robinson says:

“ I was looking forward to a well-earned holiday on safari in Botswana. I'd booked the trip through my travel agent who told me to check my passport was valid for six months – which I had, even though I knew it still had four years to run. I also brought my inoculations up to date and started a course of malaria tablets.

“Despite a last-minute crisis at work I made it to Heathrow in plenty of time for my flight, where I joined the queue for check-in. But two Virgin Atlantic staff asked to check my documents and then told me they couldn't let me on the flight.

“They said that my passport had only one completely blank page in it and both South Africa – where I was spending a day in transit in Johannesburg – and Botswana insisted on one blank page each for their visa stamps. Despite my protests, they were immovable – saying that a First Class passenger had been sent back from Johannesburg a few days earlier for the same reason. ”

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Visas are usually issued for a fixed period and may need to be re-issued if you change your date of travel, or extended if you lengthen your stay.

If you are a British Overseas Territories Citizen, British Overseas Citizen, British Subject, British National Overseas, or a British Protected Person, you may need a visa that is not required by British Citizens. Nationals of other countries should also check visa requirements with the relevant Embassy.

Insurance

Although statistically very rare, mishaps abroad can ruin a long-anticipated holiday. It might not be your fault – you might suffer an accident, or have your bags stolen – but you'll still need enough money to cope with a crisis. Buying **insurance** minimises the effects of these problems, and can make the difference between an incident being an experience and a nightmare. When choosing a policy, don't always go for the cheapest scheme: shop around and make sure the cover provided is adequate for your needs. If you travel regularly, annual multi-trip policies can save time and money.

Always tell your insurer if you plan to do any hiking or adventure sports, and be wary of undertaking any unplanned activities that your policy might exclude, such as jet-skiing. Know what your policy covers and check that the cover is adequate: you'll need a minimum of £1 million **medical cover** for Europe, and £2 million worldwide. Check that your policy includes cover for emergency treatment, hospitalisation and repatriation if necessary, and consider the knock-on effects of any injury, such as how

Insurance Top Tips

- ✓ Keep a note of your policy number, and make sure family and friends know it too.
- ✓ Note the international 24-hour emergency number, or program it into your mobile phone.
- ✓ Declare – and get extra cover for – any very valuable items you are bringing, such as watches, cameras or laptop computers.
- ✓ Declare any current or past medical conditions. This includes the medical condition of close relatives, whose failing health might cause you to cancel a trip. Be honest – or you risk invalidating your policy.
- ✓ Always keep paperwork, such as tickets, receipts, medical bills, police reports, etc, in case things go wrong.
- ✓ If travelling within Europe, fill in an E111 form.
- ✓ Note that no insurance policies cover drink- or drug-related incidents.

much cover you'll have if you are unable to work for any length of time, especially if you are self-employed. A broken wrist, for example, might prevent you using a computer keyboard for a good two months.

Make sure, too, that you have **cancellation cover** which starts as soon as you make a booking, and **possessions cover**, for money, tickets and passports, etc. **Personal accident** cover will pay out on death or permanent disability. Check, too, that you are covered for **legal expenses** to help you win compensation or damages.

Insurance saves the day

Kathryn Shaw says:

“ I’m a medical student and 18 months ago I went travelling to Tanzania with one of my friends. We had 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 up to £100,000. ”

Adventure sports and fitness

Insurance cover for any **high-risk activity** is essential: a recent survey of 18- to 35-year-olds found that two-thirds had gone bungee jumping without knowing if their insurance covered them. Always check that your policy includes any adventure activities you are considering, and if not, get extra cover.

Also, before attempting any strenuous activity, ask yourself if you are **fit** enough for it. When planning a holiday, try and train for any sport you might try beforehand, whether it’s skiing, swimming or even a mild game of tennis. Think, too, before undertaking a long hike: suddenly

Get fully covered

Alex Peebles says:

“ I went on a trip to South Africa when I was 26 years old. Unfortunately, although I had taken out some insurance, it wasn't adequate to cover me for extreme sports. While abroad I decided to go bungee jumping on the spur of the moment.

“Afterwards I felt very nauseous and while swimming later I began to feel extremely dizzy. I was rushed to hospital where I had a CAT scan which showed that due to the pressure my brain had swollen.

“I was treated and given medication by the doctor and had to delay my flight home, which meant I had to wait five days for the next available flight, costing me about £500. I wish I had extended my insurance so that it fully covered me for extreme sports.”

throwing yourself into a week of energetic activity after months of sitting behind a desk can be a recipe for disaster.

Form E111

A completed **E111** form allows UK residents to undertake any medically necessary treatment for free or at a reduced cost during a visit to the European Economic Area. Certain UK residents, however, are exempt from cover in Denmark, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland: check www.dh.gov.uk/travellers for details. In addition to the E111, all travellers are advised to take out extra travel insurance with medical cover.

You can download the CM1 application form and the E111 itself from the website above, or get the booklet

Health Advice for Travellers from post offices or travel agents, or call ☎0800 555777. The forms have to be filled in using black ink and then taken to a post office to be stamped and signed. They keep the CM1 and give you back the E111.

For travel during 2005 all UK citizens will need a new-style E111: old-style E111s (issued before August 19, 2004) will no longer be valid. Unlike the old E111s where several members of a family could be included on the same form, you will need to apply for a new E111 for each person, though you can use the same application form to apply on behalf of your spouse/partner and dependent children. The new E111 will be valid until December 31, 2005, after

Insurance checklist

- ✓ Does the FCO website advise against travel? If so, your insurance may be invalid.
- ✓ Does your policy cover all the activities you intend to try? Check any exclusions.
- ✓ Check for any age restrictions.
- ✓ Is any equipment you are taking with you covered? Is replacement rental covered?
- ✓ Check the details. For diving, what depth are you covered up to? For skiing, can you go off-piste?
- ✓ Check third party liability, especially for skiing, where you could easily injure someone else on the slopes.
- ✓ If you do decide on an activity on the spur of the moment, make sure the organisers offer insurance, or contact your own insurer to arrange a top-up.

which it will be replaced by the **European Health Insurance Card**. Those that apply for the new E111 in 2005, and tick the relevant box, will automatically receive a European Health Insurance Card, towards the end of 2005.

Health

As well as making sure your vaccinations are up to date (see below), you'll need to check that you have enough supplies of any **medicines** that you take normally, even for minor complaints such as indigestion. If you are travelling with prescription drugs, you should ensure that you have a note from your doctor, and keep the medicine in its original packaging, rather than carrying loose tablets on you. You should also ensure that the medicine you take is legal in the country you are going to, as some common prescription and over-the-counter medicines are banned in certain countries, such as decongestant inhalers in Japan. If in any doubt, check under the relevant country on the FCO website (www.fco.gov.uk/travel).

Asthmatics and anyone on regular medication need to have enough to carry them through their time away, plus some extra to cover them for any delays. If you have a communicable medical condition, such as **HIV**, you may find it more difficult to obtain a visa for certain countries, particularly if you plan on staying for any length of time. If you wear **contact lenses**, consider using disposables, as storing and cleaning can be a real chore. Don't use bottled water, or any other kind of water, to clean contact lenses – use only dedicated contact lens cleaning products.

The **journey** itself can be quite stressful, so prepare for that, too. Air travel often means sitting in one place for a long time, so exercise whenever you can to minimise the

risk of deep vein thrombosis. Before you board the plane, take a long walk and again as soon as you land. Also, try to do some exercise onboard, such as a short walk or some stretching routines. You'll need to drink plenty of water to guard against dehydration, so bring a bottle. See p.41 for further hints on surviving the journey.

The sun

One of the most common causes of ill health abroad is over-exposure to **the sun**. Although many of us go on holiday to get a suntan, too much sun can ruin the trip – it's hard to feel good when you're bright red and burning – not to mention the long-term health risks.

As well as wearing long-sleeved shirts, long trousers, a sun hat and sunglasses, you should also take plenty of

Tanning Top Tips

- ✓ Use a waterproof sunscreen. Even if you're not going swimming, it won't be washed off so easily by your own sweat.
- ✓ Buy lots. You need a generous amount of lotion if it is going to be effective, and you need to re-apply it every few hours.
- ✓ Check out the once-a-day products. Applied an hour before exposure to the sun, they bind to the skin and last all day. Although expensive, they might work out cheaper in the long run. One downside is that they can stain clothing.
- ✓ Check that your sunscreen protects against both UVA and UVB rays: sunscreens of this type may be labelled "broad-spectrum".

sunblock. Most doctors now recommend using at least SPF15, which is designed to give you fifteen times more protection than no sunscreen. In reality, however, this will depend on how thickly and how often you apply it. If you have pale skin, you should always use an SPF of at least 15. If in any doubt about the strength of the sun and your level of protection, it's wisest to stay in the shade.

The Australian mantra – **slip, slap, slop** – is well worth remembering: slip on a shirt, slop on some sunscreen and slap on a hat. This precaution is particularly important for those with sensitive skin, such as children and anyone taking photosensitising medications, including certain blood pressure pills or malaria tablets.

Using a different brand of sunscreen from usual can cause an **allergic reaction**, which often appears as a rash. If you suspect you have a reaction, switch to another brand that contains different ingredients. Sunblocks with titanium dioxide are less likely to cause problems as they work by deflecting light, rather than absorbing it. If you are extremely sensitive to sunlight, pack zinc oxide or a similar sunblock that keeps out all UV rays, as worn by cricketers and surfers who spend all day in the sun.

Stomach complaints

Delhi belly, Montezuma's revenge – whatever you call it, the most common misery endured by travellers is an **upset stomach**. The most usual causes are dirty water or food, and poor hygiene practices, such as reheating food. It can also be caused by too much sun or alcohol. Diarrhoea is usually relatively mild, but more serious cases can develop into **dysentery**, which is often caused by salmonella poisoning and needs urgent medical attention.

Prevention is the best policy: use bottled water if possible, or boil tap water, and be choosy when eating from local food stalls. Also be wary of ice cubes as they may well be made from tap water, and always check the seal is unbroken on bottled water. Make sure any vegetables you eat are cooked, and meat and fish should be very well cooked; shellfish is probably best avoided if you have any doubts about its freshness. Also, be wary of salad that may have been washed in tap water. If you are going to an area where water hygiene is a problem, bring a water purifier or purification tablets with you: both can be bought from local camping stores. If in any doubt, follow the mantra, “Boil it, bottle it, peel it, cook it ... or forget it”.

If you do get ill, there are various **treatments** you can take. Firstly, drink as much as you can, as you'll lose a lot of fluid: carbonated drinks, tea (with sugar), soups and clean water will all help. Use oral rehydration salts if symptoms persist or become serious, in which case you should see a doctor too. Stick to a light diet, avoiding anything that might irritate your stomach, such as milk. Symptoms usually improve after a few days, while over-the-counter medicines will help if you have to travel – ask a pharmacist for advice on local brands.

If problems persist, contact your doctor on your return in case you have contracted something more serious, such as giardia or amoebiasis, which will need professional treatment to clear up.

Vaccinations

A few months before you plan to travel, you should check which **vaccinations** and health care you need with your GP, a specialist travel clinic, or by phoning NHS Direct on ☎0845 46 47. The Department of Health also provides

Before you visit Europe, visit your Post Office

Travelling to Europe?

Make sure you pack a new E111 form/European Health Insurance Card.

As a UK resident, you're entitled to free, or reduced cost, state healthcare when you visit a European Union (EU) country – but only if you have a **new**, completed E111 form with you. Pick one up for free from your nearest Post Office, along with the booklet 'Health Advice for Travellers', or download it from our website.

Because of recent changes to European law, this new E111 form

now replaces the old one, which expired on 31st December 2004. The new form is issued on an individual, instead of a family, basis. However, you only need to complete one application form to receive E111s for you, your partner and your children. Your new E111 will be valid until 31st December 2005.

The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) replaces the E111 in late 2005. To apply for an EHIC now, just tick the box on the E111 application form. We'll then send you your EHIC automatically during the second half of 2005.

www.dh.gov.uk/travellers

 **Department
of Health**

advice on vaccinations on its website (www.dh.gov.uk/travellers), or in a leaflet called *Further Health Advice for Travellers* (available by calling 0800 555 777). The jabs you need will vary according to where you are going and what type of holiday you are going on – someone staying for a week in a luxury hotel in a city, for example, won't be subject to the same health risks as someone spending months trekking through a jungle.

Vaccinations can be split into three categories: routine, required and recommended.

Routine

These are the jabs that everyone should be up to date on, whether travelling or not. The **tetanus, diphtheria and polio** (TD/IPV) jab is a combined vaccine against all three diseases, that lasts for ten years. **Measles** still kills millions of children in the developing world and is a particular risk for pregnant women. Although most people receive the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine at about one year of age, with a booster at the age of four or five, you can have your immunity tested if you are in any doubt. Younger children who have not had their booster can have it early if they are travelling to a high-risk country.

Required

Certain countries demand that you are vaccinated against particular diseases before allowing you in, and will check certificates at the port of entry. If you don't have a certificate, you may be refused entry or face re-inoculation, often not in the healthiest of conditions.

Several countries in Africa require vaccination against **yellow fever**, while many other countries also require a certificate if you have recently travelled to a destination

where the disease is endemic, such as Brazil or Nigeria. Yellow fever is a viral infection affecting the liver, and is transmitted by the culex mosquito. It has a mortality rate of up to thirty percent. If there is a medical reason why you cannot have the yellow fever vaccine, your GP can provide you with an exemption certificate.

Religious pilgrims attending the Hajj or Umrah ceremony are required by the government of Saudi Arabia to have a valid certificate of vaccination against **meningitis**, before being issued with a visa. The vaccination needs to be the quadrivalent meningococcal vaccine (ACWY Vax), which protects against four different strains of meningitis. Some years, vaccination against **cholera** is also required: check the current situation with your doctor.

Recommended

In addition, there is a whole raft of vaccinations that are recommended, depending on which countries you are visiting. Inoculation against **typhoid fever** is usually recommended for travellers to countries where water and sewage treatment is inadequate. A bacterial infection transmitted via infected food or water, typhoid fever has an incubation period of one to three weeks, followed by symptoms including headaches, fever, abdominal pain and a cough. It is often treatable with antibiotics, though the easiest way to guard against the disease is to be careful about what you eat and drink. The vaccination gives protection for three years, and has few side-effects, though the jab can leave you with a sore arm for a few days.

Most common in Asia, Africa, South America and the South Pacific, **Hepatitis A** is a viral infection of the liver which can be transmitted through infected food and water, or from person to person. Symptoms appear a few weeks

after infection and include fever and nausea, followed by jaundice of the skin and eyes. The illness lasts about a month and will clear up by itself. The vaccine, taken at least two weeks before departure, gives almost total protection, with a booster dose, taken six to twelve months later, giving protection for up to ten years.

Hepatitis B is also a viral infection of the liver, but a much more serious one. It is transmitted through blood, blood products and unprotected sex. Most people recover and develop immunity but about five percent of those infected become carriers. With this comes serious liver damage, ranging from chronic hepatitis to cirrhosis or cancer of the liver. In parts of Africa and Asia, up to fifteen percent of the population can be carriers, so these are high-risk areas for travellers. The vaccine is recommended for those who will be spending long periods in those areas, such as backpackers, or those at higher risk, such as health workers. Anyone who engages in unsafe sex is also at risk. Caught in the same way as Hepatitis B, **Hepatitis C** is even more serious, but there is currently no vaccine available.

A bacterial infection of the bowel which causes severe diarrhoea and even death, **cholera** is caught from infected food and water but is very rare in those who take even basic care with their food and drink (see “Stomach complaints”, on p.22). An oral vaccine provides protection for six months but is only really necessary for those specifically at risk, such as health workers in a refugee camp.

One of the most serious threats to travellers in the tropics is **malaria**, a disease that kills nearly two million people each year, most of them children in Africa. A parasitic infection of the blood, it is transmitted through the bite of the female anopheles mosquito, and gives flu-like symptoms including headache, chills, fever and aches and pains.



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Malaria Top Tips

- ✓ Stay indoors between dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are at their worst.
- ✓ Keep as much skin as possible covered with socks, long trousers, etc.
- ✓ Wear light-coloured clothing.
- ✓ Use a mosquito net at night, preferably impregnated with an insecticide such as permethrin.
- ✓ Use insect repellent containing the chemical DEET (but use it according to the dosage instructions, especially around children and not at all for those under six months).
- ✓ If you are in an area where there is also dengue fever, take precautions during the day as well.

Symptoms can take from ten days to several months to appear, and any traveller returning from an area with the risk of malaria should take fever or flu symptoms very seriously, and let their doctor know at once where they have been.

Although some strains of malaria are becoming increasingly resistant to treatment, a course of anti-malarial tablets is recommended for certain destinations. Always tell your doctor your complete itinerary and full medical history so that he or she can decide which is the best course to prescribe – those with a history of depression, for example, should avoid certain brands of tablet. That said, the best way to prevent malaria is to avoid being bitten by infected mosquitoes – wear long-sleeved shirts and long trousers, protect any exposed skin with insect repellent, and sleep under a mosquito net, impregnated with permethrin if possible.

Malaria misadventure

Catherine Rodie says:

“ When I was younger I lived in Uganda for a year. In 2002 I went back to visit the country on a two-week holiday. Having previously lived there, I didn't feel it was necessary to take malaria tablets or any sort of health advice.

“Unfortunately, a week after returning from holiday I developed flu-like symptoms and four days later I was tested at hospital and diagnosed with malaria. I was in hospital on a drip for a week and was told that if I'd left it much longer I would have been in very serious danger. I wish I had prepared properly for my travels and would definitely do so next time. ”

If you are spending long periods in underdeveloped countries, other vaccinations worth considering are **meningococcal disease**, **Japanese encephalitis** and **rabies**: again, check with your GP or travel clinic as to whether any of these are recommended for your particular trip.

First-aid kits

For travel to remote areas or less developed countries, a **first-aid kit**, which can be brought from any chemist, is vital. Commercially available ones cover all eventualities and all budgets, and the type of kit you choose will depend on where and how you are travelling.

If you are heading into the jungle, for example, or to parts of Africa where HIV infection is a major risk, you should consider taking a more comprehensive medical kit, complete with syringes and sterile needles. Remember,

however, that these cannot be carried in your hand baggage for security reasons and might even be considered as paraphernalia for illegal drug use by border guards: make sure you keep them wrapped up in obvious first-aid packaging.

Contraception

If you think you'll need contraception during your trip, it is wisest to bring it with you. Different countries have different policies towards dispensing the **pill** and the **morning-after pill** – some may sell it over the counter, others may require you to see a doctor (see p.60 for further details). As for **condoms**, local brands might be unreliable, or hard to obtain – look for the British Standards Kite mark or European CE mark, which means the quality is strictly controlled. Always check the expiry date on your condoms, and throw away any that are out of date.

Booking your trip

If you book your trip through a **travel agent** or tour operator, make sure it is a member of a reputable bonding organisation, as this will give you some financial protection if things go wrong. The three main organisations are detailed below, but in addition, there are a host of smaller financial protection companies: see “Contacts” on p.90 for details.

All UK tour operators selling package holidays that include a flight are required to hold an Air Travel Organisers Licence (**ATOL**; www.atol.org.uk), issued by the Civil Aviation Authority, which protects their customers from being stranded abroad or losing money if the

holiday company goes bust. Each licensed company lodges a bond with the CAA that is used to arrange refunds or flights home for those stuck abroad. The whole value of the holiday is covered, as well as charter and discounted scheduled flights. In addition, should an airline fail, companies are required to provide alternative arrangements or a refund, though a small insurance premium may be payable for this cover on scheduled flights.

ABTA (Association of British Travel Agents; www.abta.co.uk) is a major trade association, whose members provide their customers with similar protection to ATOL. In addition, however, it covers customers booking holidays that do not include flights. Also providing similar protection to ABTA's for non-air holidays is **AITO** (Association of Independent Tour Operators; www.aito.co.uk), a collection of independent companies, mostly owner-managed and specialising in particular destinations or types of holiday.

Money

Today's worldwide **ATM** network means that you can withdraw cash from hole-in-the-wall machines in the most exotic places, and the majority of people opt to access the bulk of their funds in this way when travelling. However, it does mean that your cards become very important, so it is vital to keep them safe.

First of all, check the expiry dates and the credit limits of your cards. Your bank will tell you which cards can be used in which countries. Take at least two cards, and keep them in separate places. Make one your emergency reserve, and make sure you know the PIN numbers for both **debit** and **credit cards**.

Money Top Tips

- ✓ Keep a spare credit card in the hotel safe or somewhere secure.
- ✓ Know the 24-hour emergency number to report stolen cards.
- ✓ If you'll be away for a long time, make sure you've made arrangements for any credit card bills to be paid – or your card may be stopped.

In addition, it's worth taking a small stash of **cash**, for emergency use, in sterling, euros or US dollars – the latter, in particular, are accepted almost everywhere in the world. A small amount of foreign currency can also be very useful, especially if you are arriving late at night and want to get a taxi or bus to your hotel. For extra security, take **traveller's cheques**, as they will be replaced quickly and easily if stolen. If you don't spend them, they'll also keep for your next trip.

Consider buying a **money belt** to keep money and credit cards in. A secure inside pocket is a good place to keep an extra credit card and some cash. If travelling with someone else, it might be a good idea to swap cards with them, so that if one of you loses everything – either accidentally or through crime – you still have a backup.

It's worth noting that if you don't have a **return ticket**, many countries will refuse you entry unless you can prove you have enough money to buy one. In extreme cases, they may even force you to buy one on arrival – and it won't be at a very favourable rate.

Driving

If you plan to drive abroad, check with the AA or RAC or the relevant country's Embassy about the laws and driving licence requirements of the country to be visited, as these can vary greatly from what you are used to. For example, in the USA and Canada you must stop if you see a school bus offloading, no matter what side of the road it is on. Not stopping is a very serious offence that may well result in your licence being suspended.

Licences and International Driving Permits

When driving abroad, you'll need your full **UK driving licence** – with new photo cards, this includes the paper part. You'll need it to rent a car and may be asked to show it if stopped by a police checkpoint. Check that your licence is up to date, and has the correct address on it. Any errors or changes in personal details, including change of address, must be notified to the DVLA in Swansea, or DVLNI in Coleraine for Northern Ireland licences.

In addition, you can take an **International Driving Permit** (IDP), which translates your driving licence into several languages and provides an extra form of photo-identification. It is not a replacement for your UK licence – indeed, you risk a fine if you try driving on an IDP alone – but it may be more immediately recognisable in certain countries. You'll need to get your IDP before you leave the UK: take a fee of £5.50, a recent passport-sized photo signed on the back, a full UK driving licence and a valid passport to a post office. Alternatively, you can get

one through the AA (www.theaa.com), or the RAC (www.rac.co.uk).

Driving in Europe

If you are taking your own car to Europe, you will need to check with your insurance company that your **insurance** is valid. Some countries may require an International Motor Insurance Certificate, which your insurance company can provide. To find out which countries require this, check with your insurance company, or the AA or RAC websites.

Make sure you have a first-aid kit, fire extinguisher, warning triangle, headlamp beam reflectors and spare lamp bulbs. These are the law in many countries and common sense anyway. If you hire a car in Europe, check that these items are in place: the police will hold you responsible, not the hire company.

UK-registered vehicles with the new **Euro plates** (with a circle of twelve stars on a blue background) no longer need to show a GB sticker at the back in European Union countries. However, you'll still need one in non-EU countries.

Wherever you drive in Europe, it is mandatory to carry the original **Vehicle Registration Document**. If you don't have this, you will need a letter of authority from the owner and a **Vehicle on Hire Certificate** (VE103B), available from the RAC and AA.

If you're taking a car into another country, it should be for your own use and must not be lent or hired to anyone else. If you leave it behind, or sell it, you must tell the local **Customs** authority. If you stay for longer than six months, you'll usually have to license the vehicle locally and pay import duties.

Car rental

You can either arrange **car rental** in advance as part of your package, or independently when you get to your destination. The latter option may well be cheaper, though in the case of any disputes, dealing with an international company is likely to be easier.

Rental car companies in the USA often provide only the bare minimum of insurance for the state you plan to drive in. Take out top-up cover and arrange this before you go, as it's a lot cheaper at home. Make sure you – and your rental company – know which states you plan to drive in, and don't cross a state line by accident. **State laws** – and speed limits – vary throughout the USA and your rental company will advise you of the differences. One important point to remember, if you are pulled over by the police in the USA, is to stay in your car and let the officer come to you – getting out of your car is asking for serious trouble.

Scooter rental

Many people who never ride a **scooter** in the UK think nothing of renting one in a holiday resort, where it is often possible to do so on a car licence. While it's a lot of fun, it can occasionally end in trouble, with the most common causes being a combination of alcohol, inexperience, and sudden downpours that turn dusty roads into slick death traps. Given the number of tourists who suffer serious injury or even death on scooters, the best advice is probably not to rent one unless you are experienced.

Taking a **Compulsory Basic Training** (CBT) course in the UK is a sensible introduction to two-wheeled vehicles. One of the first things you'll learn is the importance of the

Keep your helmet handy

Experienced motorcyclist Paul Bernard says:

“ I was on holiday in Italy, on the Amalfi coast, where I hired a scooter. I'd brought all my kit from the UK, including a good full-face helmet.

“I was returning to my hotel one evening when it started to rain. It had been very hot and dry, so the rain turned the roads into a slick ice-rink. I was driving very carefully, probably at no more than 15mph, when I hit a patch of oil that I later discovered had come from a previous accident.

“My bike slid very gently into a wall – almost at walking pace – and when it hit and I was thrown off and over the wall, I landed softly on some grass, but then started to slide downhill. In fact, I was heading for a 200-foot drop, but luckily stopped suddenly by hitting a rock head first.

“My helmet took most of the impact and I escaped with a visit to casualty, a few cuts and bruises and a cracked rib. Had I not been wearing my own helmet, I would have suffered a broken jaw and lost most of my teeth at the very least. And all from an accident at 15mph. ”

right clothing, and the beaten-up, plastic, open-face helmets you will probably be offered with your rented bike are not adequate. If you are intending to do a lot of biking abroad, bring with you the appropriate protective equipment – or be prepared to insist that the rental company finds you some.

Advice for older travellers

Like all globe-trotters, older travellers should always declare any existing health problems, including any arranged hospital admissions, when buying travel insurance. Check with your doctor about where you are going and how, and have a pre-travel health check to provide any special advice on the mode of travel, choice of destinations and route. Make sure that you have adequate **medication** for the whole trip and any delays.

Lack of exercise in airports and on aircraft can cause deep vein thrombosis and possibly pulmonary embolism (blood clots in the lungs), so ask the cabin crew about simple exercises you can do on flights. Angina and breathlessness can be worse at high altitude and sometimes in aircraft: if pre-warned, most airlines can provide an extra oxygen supply.

Retiring overseas

There are many benefits to **retiring overseas**, including a milder climate and the chance to experience a new culture. Some careful planning beforehand is vital, though, so speak to experts and get as much advice as you can.

Before you go

Find out as much as you can about your destination. As a European Economic Area (EEA) national, you have the right to live in any EEA country (EU member states plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway). For non-EEA countries, speak to the foreign Consulate in the UK, and the British Consul abroad, or check local British Consulate websites (see p.73).

Once you have decided where you want to live, it's a good idea to work out what your retirement **income** will be. Get a UK state pension forecast from your local social security office and speak to your pension adviser. If you retire abroad you will still have to pay UK **tax** on income from the UK, so check your allowances. You should also find out about your welfare rights abroad, as while you may lose some UK **benefits**, you may also be entitled to some benefits in your new country of residence.

Make sure you let all the relevant official bodies know your **change of address** – including your social security office, the Inland Revenue National Insurance Contributions Office (International Services), and the Department for Work and Pensions: see p.91 for contact details. Also, keep them informed of any later changes of address, or if you return home.

Find out about **health costs** abroad. Within EEA countries, for example, UK pensioners are entitled to the same free or reduced-cost medical treatment as a qualified pensioner of the country they are in, under its state health care scheme, though this may not necessarily be the equivalent of what you'd get in the UK. Buy health insurance to cover private medical and dental treatment, and medical repatriation to the UK.

It is usually easier to rent at first and keep your home in the UK. If you want to **buy abroad**, get professional help: the local British Consul can provide a list of English-speaking lawyers.

When you arrive

First, **register** with the local authorities. This will give you access to local welfare services after a short period of time. If you are moving to another EEA country you must apply

for a **residence permit** within three months of arrival. Then register with the British Consulate, who will be able to offer advice on settling in and help in case of emergencies: you can do this via the FCO website (www.fco.gov.uk/travel). Make sure you keep your passport up to date, and open a foreign bank account, into which your pension can usually be paid.

You may need to make a new **will**, as sometimes separate wills are required for assets and property held in the UK and other countries. Again, your local British Consul will provide a list of English-speaking lawyers who can advise you.

Most people find that they settle in much more easily and enjoy life much more, if they learn the local **language** and participate in the local community as much as possible. It is also important, however, to stay in touch with people back home – make sure family and friends know your new address and any later changes to it.

And lastly, make sure that you keep your **vote** in the UK: visit the Electoral Commission website (www.electoral-commission.org.uk) for advice on how to do so.

Advice for disabled travellers

With proper planning and a little foresight, there's no reason why **disabled travellers** shouldn't be able to visit even the more remote areas of the world, though it's worth noting that many places in Africa, South America and Asia will not have as good facilities as at home. Your travel agent should be able to provide advice, while your airline can provide all the assistance you need at airports or on-board,

Disabled Travellers Top Tips

- ✓ Make sure your travel insurance includes repatriation if necessary.
- ✓ Always declare any pre-existing medical condition to the insurers.
- ✓ Check your accommodation's access and facilities for those with disabilities. Are there good lifts and wheelchair ramps, etc?
- ✓ Check the suitability of bathroom equipment.

For more information on travelling with a disability, contact the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR): see "Contacts", p.85.

though smaller budget carriers and remote airports might struggle to cope with unusual demands.

The journey

A good journey gets any trip off to a good start, and there are several ways to make flights less stressful and more enjoyable. Make sure you **drink** lots of fluids during the flight, preferably water or juices, and avoid alcohol, tea and coffee, which will dehydrate you and make sleep difficult. **Eat** little and often, and consider bringing your own snacks and drinks so you are not reliant on the airline's feeding schedule. Note that you may feel bloated because of the changes in air pressure.

On a night flight, get as much **sleep** as you can. An inflatable pillow, ear-plugs and an eye-mask will all help, as might a mild sleeping pill. On day flights, walk around as

much as you can and do some stretching **exercises** to minimise the risk of deep vein thrombosis. Most in-flight magazines now carry some ideas that will help.

Unless you're there for only a very short while, switch to **local time** as soon as you get on the plane.

Packing Top Tips

- ✓ Travel light – the less you pack, the less stressed you'll be by the weight and by the thought of losing it all.
- ✓ Check in as much of your baggage as possible, and keep hand luggage to a minimum.
- ✓ Check in any potentially dangerous objects, such as nail scissors or tweezers.
- ✓ Pack a sarong – beach towel, skirt, scarf or sun shade, its uses are endless.
- ✓ Pack your toiletries in your hand baggage, in case of delays (but nothing sharp – airport security will take it off you).
- ✓ Consider packing a pair of ear-plugs or noise-reduction headphones to eliminate aircraft noise.

Air Travel Safety Top Tips

- ✓ Keep the overhead storage bin free of heavy objects. Overhead bins may not be able to hold very heavy objects during turbulence.
- ✓ Keep your seat belt fastened while seated, in case the plane hits unexpected turbulence, or brakes suddenly on approach to the terminal building.
- ✓ Don't ignore the emergency instructions: each aircraft is different, and it's a good idea to count the number of rows to the nearest emergency exit so you can find it in the dark if you have to.
- ✓ Listen to the flight attendants. The main purpose of the flight crew is passenger safety, so do what you are told, and ask questions later.
- ✓ Don't drink too much. The cabin is pressurised and any alcohol you consume will affect you more strongly than on the ground.
- ✓ In an emergency, listen to the cabin crew and act quickly and calmly.

Being there

While abroad, keeping your **money and valuables** safe is a priority, as little ruins a trip more than being a victim of crime. Whilst there is no need for paranoia, a few sensible precautions will ensure that you and your possessions remain safe when abroad. You can also greatly increase your enjoyment of any foreign trip by finding out about the **local culture and customs**. This will also mean that you avoid inadvertently giving offence, and will help keep you out of many potentially dangerous situations.

Avoiding crime

On holiday, it is tempting to carry a lot more **cash** than you would normally, which increases the risk of crime. However, widespread ATMs (see p.32) nowadays make it easier to carry small amounts of cash, and pay with credit or debit cards for larger purchases.

If you are **changing money**, make sure you use a reliable outlet – a bank or legal foreign exchange dealer – and check the exchange rate carefully to ensure you get the right amount of local currency. In many countries, it's illegal to change with unauthorised sources and you also run the risk of receiving counterfeit currency. Always keep your

Avoiding Crime Top Tips

- ✓ Keep your passport and travel tickets in the hotel safe and carry photocopies with you.
- ✓ Carry a minimum amount of cash.
- ✓ Leave your valuables and spare cash in the hotel safe or other secure place.
- ✓ Check your guidebook, or with your hotel or tour guide, for warnings on local scams.
- ✓ Do not flaunt your valuables.
- ✓ Avoid unlit streets at night.
- ✓ Never resist violent theft.

exchange receipts, in case you have to prove you obtained your currency legally. You might, for example, be asked for these at the airport on departure when you try to change it back.

Leave any valuables you don't need in the **hotel safe**. Don't carry all your cards with you – leave at least one behind. It is a good idea to put your cards in a sealed envelope or small lockable bag in the hotel safe, as there have been cases of credit cards being removed by hotel staff from the safe, used, and then replaced, with the owner not knowing anything untoward has happened until a credit card bill arrives many weeks later.

When out and about, keep valuables in a **money belt** or secure inside pocket (a safety pin makes a good anti-pick-pocket device), and in higher risk areas, a dummy wallet or handbag with a few expired cards and small change can be a wise precaution. If you have to carry a lot of money, ask a partner or friend to take some for you.

Be discreet with any **valuables**: be careful opening your wallet or purse if it contains a lot of cash, and check to see if anyone is watching. Expensive jewellery and watches, even expensive clothing, can all make tempting targets for opportunistic thieves. Even a coat left over a restaurant chair, for example, can be snatched while you go to the bar. This applies to mobile phones and **cameras**, too. Use both discreetly, and put smaller cameras away in a secure pocket after use. Larger cameras should be carried close to the body, slung under an armpit rather than around the neck.

Selling a dummy

Regular business traveller Ben Fellows ran into trouble in Johannesburg:

“ I was in the central business district – after booking a train ticket to Mozambique – when I started to feel very uncomfortable. Although it was only 11am, and the streets were quite crowded, I began to notice I was alone on the pavement.

“Just as I realised that a group of about eight youths had formed a slow-moving kind of road block around me, I found myself with a knife to my throat. They crowded in around me, hiding me from any potential help, and stopping me making any noise.

“I carefully reached into my pocket, pulled out my wallet, dropped it and they ran off with it. Fortunately, it was a dummy wallet, but I had all my traveller's cheques, tickets and passport with me in a money belt. I hate to think what I would have lost if they had frisked me. ”

If you lose your hotel **room key card**, bear in mind that the data 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.

Be sensible about walking through unfamiliar streets after dark: if in doubt, **take a taxi**. If you are mugged, don't resist: provided you've taken proper precautions, you should have little to lose.

Local customs

In order to avoid offence and blend in when in a foreign country, the key is to arm yourself with a little knowledge about **local customs**. A good guidebook, such as a *Rough Guide*, is invaluable, while your tour operator or guide should also be able to give you some tips. Out on the street, however, nothing beats keeping your eyes open: watch what local people around you are wearing and how they behave with each other. Small things can make a big difference, such as whether people exchange greetings in a shop before asking for what they want, and whether money and change are put into the hand or onto the counter.

That said, most local people will know you are a visitor and will not expect you to know local customs – that is part of your appeal. What will cause more problems is a misunderstanding of the deeper things, such as **time-keeping** or **moral behaviour**. You may be annoyed if a local person says they will meet you at 1pm, and turns up at 2pm, having made a very special effort to be that punctual. Conversely, they may be annoyed or offended by behaviour that in the UK is considered acceptable, such as couples kissing in the street, or women drinking alcohol. Again, a good guidebook is your best source of advice.

Dressing appropriately, of course, is vital if you wish to avoid causing offence. In sacred places, for example, such as churches and mosques, you may be refused admission if dressed immodestly. Clothes that cover legs and arms for both sexes – and a headscarf for women – will show respect for a holy place. When out and about, common sense and a good guidebook will help you to avoid offending local sensibilities. Wearing bikini tops, for example, may be fine on the beach in many countries, but could cause offence in towns. If in doubt, a sarong will serve women for most eventualities, as will a headscarf, or a skirt. Also, flashing expensive clothes or watches in a poor neighbourhood is offensive at the very least, and, at worst, an invitation to mugging.

Buying a phrasebook is always a good idea: everybody appreciates it if you try even a few words of the **local language** and it can be a great ice-breaker, especially if you get it wrong. More fluent speakers, however, should be wary in some countries when talking about politics or cultural differences. Expressing certain views can cause offence or concern, even if your audience is too polite to say so. Be discreet about your opinions, particularly in rural communities, and more restrictive societies.

Always ask permission before taking anyone's **photograph** and respect their answer. In many cultures, it is considered unacceptable to photograph women: asking politely without waving a camera around will ensure you don't get it wrong. If you promise to send someone a copy of their photo, try to do so. It is only polite and will leave a good impression for travellers who come after you.

Don't **haggle** too much. As a tourist, you might expect to be ripped off but consider what the object is worth and offer a fair price. A few pence to you might represent the seller's profit.

Above all, when in doubt, err on the side of caution. Behaviour that might be thought of as a bit of a laugh in

the UK – being drunk, or going topless – could well be taken more seriously elsewhere.

Local laws

Wherever you travel, you are subject to the **laws** of the country you are in and not those of the UK. In only a very few cases, including sexual offences against children, can offenders be prosecuted in the UK, under UK law, when the crime has happened abroad. Many cases of people falling foul of the law abroad are where the offence has occurred unwittingly, or where people have underestimated its seriousness. The examples below are some of the most common causes of trouble.

Overstaying your visa may not seem that serious, but in some countries it can land you with a hefty fine, or even jail. At best, you are likely to be deported, and any future visa applications may well be refused. So if you are staying longer than originally planned, make sure you extend your visa, which is usually a fairly simple procedure.

Working illegally can also result in deportation, a fine, or even prison, and you may well be prevented from entering the country again. If you are planning to work abroad, make sure you get all the correct paperwork and do things by the book.

Taking **photographs** of buildings whose functions you are unsure of can be unwise. If in doubt, check with your guide or a local first. Airports abroad are quite often military installations where cameras are banned, and innocent hobbies, such as plane spotting – as well as bird-watching or train spotting – are considered suspicious in some countries.

Don't buy **wildlife souvenirs**, if there is any possibility at all that they are made out of endangered animals or plants

Antiquity calamity

Last year British national Eric Reed was arrested in Turkey for attempting to smuggle an antiquity out of the country.

“ I was on holiday and quite innocently purchased a piece of rock from a roadside stall, thinking it would look good in my garden.

“On leaving Turkey, I made no attempt to hide the rock, placing it on the x-ray machine conveyor belt along with my hand luggage. On seeing the rock, the police arrested me. Subsequent analysis of the rock showed it to be very old and possibly of historical significance. ”

Eric is being held in custody and is still awaiting trial. His offence can carry a prison sentence of five to ten years in Turkey.

whose trade is regulated or banned. Customs throughout the world will confiscate illegal souvenirs and in the UK you face criminal prosecution and unlimited fines. The UK Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has launched a “Souvenir Alert” campaign (see www.ukcites.gov.uk/travel), advising on which wildlife souvenirs can be legally brought into the country. Also check out www.arkive.org/coral for information about the campaign against the coral trade, which is threatening the survival of many reefs around the world.

On-the-spot fines are quite common in many countries. If you get into trouble and don't have enough cash, your passport may well be confiscated until you pay up. If you are asked for a fine, make sure the official is a bona fide one. If in doubt, ask to be taken to a police station.

Drugs and alcohol

Most countries around the world have a strict attitude to **illegal drugs**. Many Asian countries adopt a zero-tolerance approach, with the death penalty applying for drug trafficking in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia, though this charge can arise from the possession of relatively small amounts of drugs. Long sentences are also imposed for drug trafficking in some European countries. It is worth noting that there is often no distinction between the class of the drug and the length of the sentence, with offences involving even so-called “soft” drugs attracting severe penalties. Many countries refuse bail before trial and may keep

Thai drug trauma

Sandra Gregory was arrested in 1993 and sentenced to 25 years in jail for drug trafficking in Thailand. Her holiday of a lifetime turned into a nightmare after she contracted dengue fever and began to run out of money in Thailand. She says:

““ The years I spent in prison were a traumatic and terrifying experience which resulted from the extraordinary risk I took for money, ignoring the price to be paid for smuggling drugs.

“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 to 25 years in prison in Thailand.

“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 after receiving a pardon from the King of Thailand.”

Drugs Top Tips

- ✓ Pack your bags yourself and lock them.
- ✓ Don't let your bags out of your sight.
- ✓ Be wary of anyone asking favours at airports – “keeping an eye” on someone's bag might be a recipe for disaster.
- ✓ Don't carry anything across borders for anyone else – it will be your responsibility if anything illegal is found. Crossing borders with strangers or in unknown cars is also a hazard.
- ✓ Carry the prescription for any medication you use.
- ✓ If someone threatens you or offers money to take something through customs, contact the authorities immediately.

suspects in solitary confinement. A British passport does not provide any immunity from prosecution abroad, and those found guilty of drug offences overseas will also get a criminal record in the UK.

Do not be tempted by the fact that locals sometimes indulge – they may know the unspoken rules that you don't. It is also worth considering the environmental impact of the global drugs trade and its effect on local communities: contact Tourism Concern (see p.86) for more information.

Be aware, too, that some **legal drugs** you use on holiday might affect your behaviour: malaria tablets, for example, can cause increased risk of sunburn, nausea and blurred vision – something to be aware of if you are driving.

A relatively new phenomenon is the rise in the use of **date-rape drugs**, which are usually added to drinks. These drugs are undetectable, with no smell or taste to

warn you of their use, but they can leave you unable to defend yourself against robbery, sexual assault or even rape. The best way to protect against this is to be careful of where your drink comes from: keep an eye on it at all times and, if you have any doubts about it or the company you are in, get a fresh one. Always drink in moderation and preferably with friends you trust.

A more common danger, however, in any unfamiliar social setting is the drink itself, with **alcohol** often undermining the best of resolutions. You can be caught out by alcohol being added to a soft drink, or by measures that are much larger than you are used to at home. It's also tempting to drink more and faster than usual when on holiday, particularly in warmer climates, and perhaps because it is cheaper than at home. If you do indulge, always avoid driving or sports while under the influence: apart from the increased risk of doing something stupid a long way from home, your insurance could be rendered invalid. Many airlines will also now refuse to let you on board if you turn up drunk at the airport.

With both drugs and alcohol, you also increase your chances of being a victim of **crime**. Being taken to the back streets of some unknown city to buy drugs, cash in hand, is practically an invitation to be mugged. And trying to find your hotel, drunk at 3am, is not much wiser – you might struggle to remember its address even when sober. If you are planning a night out on the town, arrange for a taxi to call for you at a prearranged time and take the same precautions you would in a city back home. Don't get into strange cars, and be wary of accepting hospitality – such as drinks and a bed for the night – in an unknown environment.

However, you shouldn't get too paranoid – part of the reason for travelling is to meet new friends and appreciate different cultures, and the vast majority of encounters with strangers will provide great memories rather than bad ones. In

many countries hospitality is so much a part of the culture that you can cause offence by refusing it: again, try to learn a bit about the local customs and culture beforehand, and you'll have a better chance of appreciating the difference between accepting hospitality and exposing yourself to danger.

Staying in touch

It's always a good idea to **keep in touch** when abroad, especially if you're travelling alone. Make friends at your hotel and let the front desk or someone you trust – such as a fellow traveller – know when to expect you back, and call them if you are delayed. Take a card from your hotel so you can ask for directions if you get lost, and women should try to ask directions from other women. Solo travellers could also consider leaving a note in their room saying where they have gone and with whom, so that helpers have a clue to follow in case of trouble. If you are travelling to a country where the FCO recommends that you register, do so at the nearest Consulate (see p.73 for contact details).

Stay in touch with people back home, too, so they know your plans or any changes in them. Make sure they have a copy of your itinerary and contact numbers for your hotels. Text, emails or phone are the most immediate ways of updating them, but faxes or letters are also good options. Remember, they might need to get in touch with you urgently, perhaps because of a crisis at home, or maybe even with the news that you've won the Lottery.

Email

Internet cafés are common throughout the world and make an easy and cheap way of staying in touch, not just

with those at home, but also with fellow travellers. They are also useful for making or confirming hotel bookings and finding tourist information, such as opening hours or taxi firms.

Before you leave home, it's a good idea to set up a secure **email address** that you can use when abroad, such as Hotmail or Yahoo. These are usually free, but you may need to log in regularly to keep the account active – a point to remember when you are not travelling, too, so that you can keep the same address.

You can also send yourself emails containing scans of your passport and other documents, which you can print out if you lose the originals. Send yourself an email with all the useful data you might need, such as phone numbers of friends, hotel booking references, emergency helpline for credit card loss, etc.

Rough Guides intouch

Rough Guides has developed a software package for travellers, **intouch**, that allows you to set up a website easily and keep people back home informed about your travels. You can update it with an SMS from your mobile, and the site emails or texts your friends and family to tell them you've made an entry.

Intouch lets you plan a detailed itinerary, and input all the information you need, such as hotel addresses, flight times, insurance and traveller's cheque numbers. Security codes lock out parts of the site – so only you can access a photocopy of your passport, for example, or friends can see photos you'd rather not let your mum see. Downloading digital photos for storage can be done from anywhere, such as an Internet café or hotel with web access.

Mobile phones

Taking a **mobile phone** with you is the simplest and most efficient way of staying in touch with home, besides being a potential life-saver. Sailors, snowboarders, climbers and motorists, in particular, will all find a mobile phone a useful backup.

To **use your phone abroad**, it has to have international roaming enabled, though in some European countries, this is done automatically. If not, your UK mobile network will do it for you – they may charge a small fee – and it's worth setting the wheels in motion a few weeks before you leave. You'll also need to check your handset will work in the countries you will be visiting: again, your supplier can advise. They will also provide you with a list of **call charges** which you should study carefully. It is often very expensive to use your mobile abroad, even for local calls, as both your UK supplier and the local phone operator will be

Saved by the phone

Experienced mountaineer Rachel Kelsey says:

“ Keeping in contact when travelling abroad is one of the most important precautions you can take, as I found out when I was stranded on a Swiss mountain in a blizzard. Even though we had undertaken extensive weather checks, my partner and I were trapped on an Alpine ridge for three days in sub-zero temperatures – it was truly terrifying. I am an experienced mountaineer, have completed the SAS selection procedure and took the correct survival equipment, but the only thing that saved us was the fact that I had my mobile phone on me and was able to alert people by text. ”

Mobile Top Tips

- ✓ If you are using a pre-paid phone, make sure you have enough credit for your trip, as it may be hard to top up when abroad. Check the procedure with your supplier.
- ✓ If calling your family or friends from abroad, you'll need to add +44 to their number (for UK) and drop the first 0 from their number. If you have their numbers pre-programmed into your phone, change them before you leave home – the new numbers will also work from home. Some networks and countries may need extra numbers – ask your network provider for details.
- ✓ Pre-program useful numbers into your phone, such as the British Embassy, High Commission, or Consulate in the country you are visiting, and your hotel and tour representative. If you change your SIM card when abroad, you may have to input all your numbers again if they are stored on the SIM, rather in the phone itself.
- ✓ Change your voicemail message and make sure you know the procedure for checking messages from abroad. Check with your supplier whether you need a PIN number to access messages.
- ✓ Take an electrical adaptor, so that you can keep your phone charged.
- ✓ Make a note of your mobile's serial number (the IMEI number), your mobile telephone number and your network's customer service and emergency numbers. Keep them safe so that if your phone is lost or stolen you can get it barred and organise a replacement.

charging you. The same applies to text messages, though they should be cheaper than voice messages.

If you plan to use a mobile a lot abroad, ask your supplier if a cheaper tariff is available. On arrival, your phone will automatically select a local network, but there may be cheaper alternatives: check with your UK supplier if they have a preferred partner that offers preferential rates.

Alternatively, you can save money by buying a **local SIM card**, the card that authorises your phone for a particular network. You can buy these at the arrival airport, or at major hotels, but you'll need to check first that your phone will take other SIM cards. A call made with a European mobile in Moscow to a Moscow number, for example, can cost ten times less if you use a local SIM card. Another alternative is to rent a mobile phone locally – a service offered at many airports or hotels.

Remember to change your **answer message** before you leave home and when you get back. You may also want to change it from abroad to update friends and family on your trip, saving them an expensive overseas call.

Driving

When driving abroad, always plan your route and buy a good **map**: getting lost, particularly at night, can be very stressful. Take as much care with the keys of a rental car as you would with your own – if it is stolen, you will have to pay an excess charge.

Be aware that **rented vehicles** can usually be recognised by their number plates or stickers, making it obvious that you're a tourist. Criminals know this means that the car is likely to hold valuables such as money or cameras, and that tourists may well be reluctant to spend any of their valuable

holiday time reporting a crime, never mind following it up. Be wary if anyone signals to you to pull over, and never leave the car unattended at petrol stations.

When returning rented vehicles, ask for the condition to be noted in writing to prevent later disputes about damages. Using a **reputable rental company** will help avoid credit card scams, that later charge you for items you were not made aware of at the time, such as extra insurance.

Sustainable tourism

As a guest in a foreign country, it is only right to show respect for the country's people and its **environment**. If you have come to see its natural beauty, you'll want to make sure it stays that way for future visitors. Think, particularly, about what happens to your rubbish: use biodegradable products wherever possible, and a water filter to cut down on plastic bottles. In your hotel, don't waste water and encourage any environmental initiatives, such as less frequent changing of sheets and towels to cut down on washing.

Think also about where your money goes. Buy **local food and drinks** rather than imported brands, stay in local-run accommodation and eat in local restaurants, where possible. For further advice and ideas on how to reduce the environmental impact of your trip and holiday in a responsible way, see www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk.

Sexual behaviour

Whilst holidays are for relaxing, letting your hair down and having a good time, do take into account how your **behav-**

your will be viewed within the local culture. Flirting and open displays of affection that would be seen as relatively innocent in the UK, for example, might be taken more seriously in other countries. Locals, or other foreign tourists, could be getting a very different signal from the one you think you are sending out, so be careful.

If you do have sex with a new partner, always use a condom (see also “Contraception”, on p.31), as **sexually transmitted infections** (STIs), including HIV, are rife in many countries. Syphilis is now a major problem in the former Soviet bloc, while HIV infection rates are high in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as in Asia, India, Latin America and the Caribbean. Between 2000 and 2002, 69 percent of men in the UK who acquired HIV from heterosexual sex were infected while abroad. Twelve percent of sexually transmitted diseases reported at a London clinic were contracted while abroad. It's worth noting that many STIs have no symptoms, so if you have taken any risks, a checkup at a sexual health clinic when you get back home is a wise precaution. The Terrence Higgins Trust (☎0845 12 21 200, 🌐 www.tht.org.uk) offers free information in many languages on sexual health issues, and can provide advice about local attitudes to HIV travellers.

If you need emergency **contraception** (the morning-after pill), a local doctor might be able to help, though it is not available in every country. You might consider requesting this from your GP in the UK before you leave. The pill should be taken within 72 hours, but if it is later than that, a doctor might also offer advice on other methods, such as an emergency intrauterine device (coil) which can be fitted up to five days after the time of predicted ovulation. The local British Consulate (see p.73 for contact details) can provide a list of local English-speaking doctors.

Advice for backpackers

If you are going to be away from home for an extended period, and staying in budget or backpackers' accommodation, there are a few extra precautions that are worth considering. First of all, check your **insurance**: most annual policies stipulate a maximum number of days you can spend travelling, for example. Make sure that all the countries you are likely to visit are covered, and be honest with the insurer about your plans.

Make sure you have enough **money** for your trip. Take plastic and cash, but also some traveller's cheques, which are

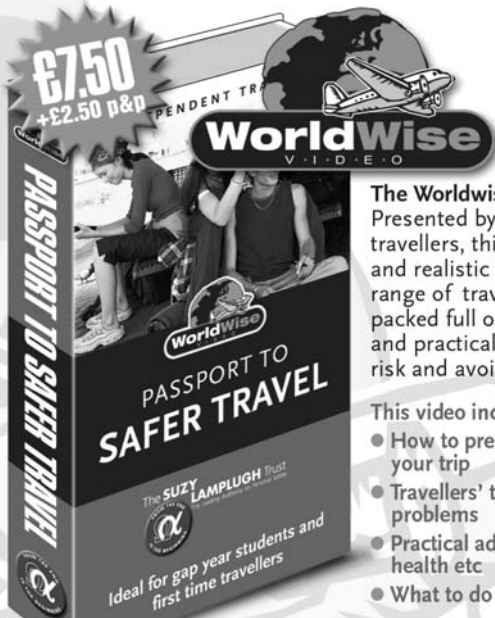
Fan fiasco

Backpacking in Australia, Jane Holmes had an unusual accident:

“ I had just arrived in Darwin and was sleeping in a top bunk in a hostel. During the night, I was rather thirsty so decided to get up for a drink. But, as I sat up: bang! An incredibly painful blow on the head started pouring blood. I was rather befuddled but eventually realised I had been hit on the head by a ceiling fan.

“At the local hospital, after a wait of some hours, a rather dishevelled casualty doctor stitched me up. It turned out it was quite a familiar wound to them with inexperienced Poms from that particular hostel coming in on a regular basis. Of course, the hostel denied all responsibility.

“But it goes to show that sometimes you aren't even safe lying in your bed at night! After only two hours in Australia, my medical insurance was already at work.”



The Worldwise Video

Presented by and featuring young travellers, this video takes a lively and realistic look at a whole range of travel issues. It is packed full of useful information and practical tips for reducing risk and avoiding danger.

This video includes:

- How to prepare and plan for your trip
- Travellers' tips for avoiding problems
- Practical advice on money, visas, health etc
- What to do if things go wrong

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the safest way of taking money abroad for longer periods. Take a UK **telephone charge card**, and remember a **padlock** and chain or a bicycle lock to secure your luggage onto something solid at railway stations, and on buses, etc.

Always try and book your first night's **accommodation** for any new destination in advance. In some countries, local authorities require you to do this, and it also gives you somewhere to aim for on your arrival in a new country. In addition, it makes a good point of contact for family and friends. Particularly, if you are eating at street stalls and local cafés, be careful about what you **eat and drink** in a new country (see p.22 for details).

Always, **stay in contact** with someone at home, through email or phone calls, and check the FCO website (www.fco.gov.uk/travel) for up-to-date **information** about your next destination.

Women: safety and cultural issues

When travelling in some countries, women will need to take more care than they might do in the UK, and be aware of certain **safety and cultural issues**. Do some research beforehand and, on arrival, study the local women for guidance. Think about how your clothing will fit in with the local expectations: if local women don't show bare shoulders, neither should you; if local women don't sit alone at cafés, maybe you shouldn't. Whatever your own personal opinions on how women should behave, following local customs will help you to blend in and avoid unwanted attentions from local men.

In many cultures, women walk arm-in-arm, talking continually, to avoid male harassment. If you feel at all vulnerable,

Top safety tips for women

- ✓ Don't wear expensive jewellery.
- ✓ Dress to blend in with local women.
- ✓ Walk with a sense of purpose, keep moving and avoid being drawn into conversation.
- ✓ Don't feel obliged to respond to unwanted questions such as "What country are you from?"
- ✓ Wear a wedding ring.
- ✓ If harassed on public transport, make a loud fuss.
- ✓ If there are "women only" areas on buses or trains, use them.
- ✓ Keep your hotel room locked, and don't open the door unless you know who is outside.
- ✓ Follow your instincts: if a situation starts to feel wrong, get out of it.
- ✓ Never accept lifts or hitchhike.
- ✓ Don't accept a drink from a man you've just met.

follow their lead – find a female companion, or a male one you trust, or go round in a group. In some cultures, accepting a drink from a man or even just looking him in the eye can be considered a come-on. Avoid this to some degree by wearing a pair of dark glasses, though it is polite to remove them when talking to someone. Married women may well be treated with more respect than single ones: if you're not married, consider buying a cheap ring to wear on your wedding finger.

There are also certain **health** issues that women may need to consider when abroad. Be aware that travel can upset the **menstrual cycle**, and that you may not be able

to buy a familiar brand of sanitary protection – if you don't want to use local products, make sure you bring enough with you for your stay. Alternatively, consider re-usable protection, such as the Keeper (www.keeper.com), a natural rubber menstrual cap worn internally, and popular with many women who have to spend prolonged periods in remote areas.

If you are on the **pill**, again bring enough for your stay and remember to take it at the same time each day, even if time differences vary dramatically. Note that certain medications such as the antimalarial tablet, doxycycline, or stomach upsets, will reduce the pill's effectiveness, and a backup method of birth control may be needed. Local supplies of male or female condoms are not always reliable, so pack your own supply if you think you'll need it.

If you are susceptible to **yeast infections**, humid climates can aggravate these. Wear loose-fitting cotton underwear and skirts, rather than trousers, and drink plenty of water to help offset any increased risk of **cystitis** in hotter weather.

Advice for gay, lesbian and transgender travellers

The relative openness that gay, lesbian and transgender people take for granted in the UK does not extend to all countries, where same-sex relationships may not only be illegal but, in extreme cases, attract the death penalty. Even if you are going to a specifically gay resort or event, you are likely to transit other areas, and should take account of

local sensitivities. In general, rural areas may be more conservative than urban ones, so be prepared for more problems with finding accommodation or other facilities outside larger centres. Check before you go, and make reservations in advance to avoid difficulties when checking in.

Doing some **research** before you go is useful: get a good guidebook, and even try to make contact with a local gay group to find out what to expect. Specialist tour operators can, of course, provide all the information you need, and even mainstream travel agents should be able to offer some advice: see also “Contacts” on p.86.

Local Attitudes Top Tips

- ✓ Respect local sensitivities. Although it is common in some cultures for people of the same sex to hold hands in public, more open displays of affection are another matter. Also be aware that local ages of consent might differ.
- ✓ Criminals, especially thieves, may exploit the generally open and relaxed nature of gay areas and beaches. Do not leave your belongings unattended and avoid carrying large amounts of money.
- ✓ Be aware of your environment, remain alert, and stay in control – remember alcohol or drugs will affect your judgement. If you attract unwanted attention or insulting remarks, the best policy is to ignore it and move to a safer environment.

If things go wrong

Rare though it is, when things go wrong abroad, it can be much more serious than at home. A bit of forethought and some advance planning can help avoid disaster, and in most cases problems can be sorted with the help of a tour operator, a hotel manager or the local police. However, for more extreme cases, it's reassuring to know that British consular offices around the world are on hand.

Theft or loss

The **local police** should be your first stop, if you lose or have anything stolen, such as money, passports or cameras. Apart from anything else, you'll need a copy of their report for any insurance claim – so insist on one. If you lose your passport, make sure you also inform the **British Consul**, who will cancel your old one and, after the necessary checks, issue a new one, or issue you with an emergency passport (a one-off travel document to get you back to the UK).

Lost credit cards can be cancelled by a call to your **bank's 24-hour emergency number**. They'll also help if you need money transferred to replace any loss. If you lose trav-

eller's cheques, contact the issuing agent who will organise replacements. Equally, if you lose your airline tickets, contact the airline itself or your tour representative. Make sure you report any loss as soon as possible to your **insurance 24-hour helpline**, who will be able to advise you on what you need to do to make a claim.

Assault and rape

If you have been **assaulted** or **raped**, you should always let the British Consulate know, especially if you have been hospitalised. In this situation, the Consulate can help arrange a medical examination and put you in touch with doctors able to provide advice on sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy and abortion. The Consulate can also tell you what professional support is available locally and in the UK, and can contact your next-of-kin or other family and friends, if you wish.

If you want to inform the local police, the British Consulate will come with you to the police station and advise you on local judicial procedures. They can provide details of local lawyers, but can't become directly involved in any legal action or investigation of the crime.

Natural disasters and war

If you are in a country and serious trouble breaks out, such as **war**, a major **terrorist incident**, or a **natural disaster**, find a place where you feel safe and seek advice from your hotel or tour representative or local police. Listen to local

TV or radio stations and follow any advice that is broadcast, consult the FCO Travel Advice website (www.fco.gov.uk/travel), or telephone your nearest British Consulate or mission (see p.73 for contact details). If you have been in a country for more than three months, you should have already registered with the Diplomatic mission.

If the country you are visiting suffers a natural disaster or any other kind of incident that may reach the media back home, try and let your family and friends know as soon as possible that you are safe. Even if the trouble is nowhere near you, they might not know this and will worry needlessly until they hear from you.

Death

The death of a friend or relative is always traumatic – even more so when it happens away from home. The Consul will help in all cases, whether the death is accidental or not. First of all, you need to **register** the death with the local authorities and, if you wish to register it with the Consul, you can get a British death certificate, which may be needed for later formalities. The Consul can also put you in touch with local and international **undertakers** and advise on burial, cremation, or repatriation of the body.

The Consul will explain about the local **legal processes**, such as inquests or postmortems – which may delay any repatriation – but they cannot become directly involved in any legal action or police investigation. These remain in the hands of the local authorities, though the Consul can put you in contact with any legal help you may need. As in any legal process, the local courts will deal only with your lawyer and not any third parties, including the Consul.

In the case of a sudden or unexpected death the local police or judicial authority may order a **postmortem**. In a number of countries the authorities are not required to return any organs removed for examination, or may return them only when requested. In the event of a postmortem being necessary, the next-of-kin should check the situation with the British Embassy or Consulate before the deceased is returned to the UK.

Consular advice

The addresses and telephone numbers of local **British Embassies, High Commissions** and **Consulates** around the world are listed in the “Contacts” section on pp.73–83. In addition, there are small consular offices, including **Honorary Consulates**, in other cities and towns: your hotel or tour operator should be able to help find the details of the nearest office.

Most British Consulates have an answer-phone service that lists **office hours** and details for handling emergencies such as deaths, serious illnesses or accidents, outside those hours. In countries outside the European Union (EU) where there is no British consular presence, the Embassies and Consulates of any other EU member state should be able to provide help. You may be charged a **fee** for some consular services – full details of charges are posted in Consulate waiting rooms and on the website www.fco.gov.uk/travel.

If you have any **complaints** or comments about the consular service at a British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate abroad, you can either contact the post concerned or the Director of Consular Services, Consular Directorate, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Old Admiralty Building, Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2PA,

☎ 020 7008 0223, ☎ 020 7008 0152. You should receive a reply within twenty working days.

What the Consul can do:

- Issue an emergency passport to get you back home.
- Contact family and friends who can help you with money or tickets.
- Advise you how to transfer money.
- In an emergency, cash a sterling cheque for up to £100, if you have a valid bank guarantee card.
- Put you in touch with local doctors, interpreters, lawyers and British organisations.
- Visit you in hospital and pass messages to family or friends.
- If you are arrested, they can visit you, assist with access to local lawyers and explain about the local legal and prison systems. They will also pass messages to your family. If you are under 18, they are obliged to inform your parent or guardian of your arrest.
- In certain circumstances, if all other avenues fail, they may give you a loan to get you back to the UK. There is no legal obligation for them to do so and each case is considered on its own merits. This loan must be repaid, and you will have to sign a legal undertaking to do so.

What the Consul can't do:

- Intervene in court proceedings or get you out of prison. Nor can they give legal advice or get better treatment for you than that given to local people.

- Investigate a crime.
- Pay travel costs, except in special circumstances.
- Pay your hotel, medical, legal, travel, or any other bills.
- Get you somewhere to live, a job or a work permit.

Contacts

In this last section, we have listed the contact details of a number of organisations, charities and government bodies that you may find useful when planning a trip abroad, as well as those that can help if things go wrong in foreign parts. We have also included the phone numbers of all the UK Embassies (for non-Commonwealth countries) and High Commissions (for Commonwealth countries) overseas, and in countries where there is no UK representation, we have advised whom to contact. Each country may have additional consular posts in other towns or cities: for a full list of all UK consular posts with addresses and opening hours, see www.fco.gov.uk/embassies and click on the relevant country.

Embassies and High Commissions abroad

Afghanistan ▶ British Embassy Kabul ☎(93) 70 102 000.

Albania ▶ British Embassy Tirana ☎(355) (42) 34973.

Algeria ▶ British Embassy Algiers ☎(213) (21) 23 00 68.

Andorra ▶ see Spain.

- Angola** ▶ British Embassy Luanda 📞(244) (2) 334582.
- Antigua and Barbuda** ▶ High Commission St John's 📞(1) (268) 462 0008.
- Argentina** ▶ British Embassy Buenos Aires 📞(54) (11) 4808 2200.
- Armenia** ▶ British Embassy Yerevan 📞(3741) 264301.
- Australia** ▶ High Commission Canberra 📞(61) (2) 6270 6666.
- Austria** ▶ British Embassy Vienna 📞(43) (1) 716 130.
- Azerbaijan** ▶ British Embassy Baku 📞(994) (12) 975188.
- Bahamas, The** ▶ High Commission Nassau 📞(1) (242) 325 7471.
- Bahrain** ▶ British Embassy Bahrain 📞(973) 574100.
- Bangladesh** ▶ High Commission Dhaka 📞(880) (2) 8822705.
- Barbados** ▶ High Commission Bridgetown 📞(1) (246) 430 7800.
- Belarus** ▶ British Embassy Minsk 📞(375) (172) 105920.
- Belgium** ▶ British Embassy Brussels 📞(32) (2) 287 6211.
- Belize** ▶ High Commission Belmopan 📞(501) 822 2146.
- Benin** ▶ see Nigeria.
- Bolivia** ▶ British Embassy La Paz 📞(591) (2) 2433424.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina** ▶ British Embassy Sarajevo 📞(387) 33 28 2200.
- Botswana** ▶ High Commission Garabone 📞(267) 395 2841.
- Brazil** ▶ British Embassy Brasilia 📞(55) (61) 329 2300.
- Brunei** ▶ High Commission Bandar Seri Begawan 📞(673) (2) 222231.
- Bulgaria** ▶ British Embassy Sofia 📞(359) (2) 933 9222.

Burkina ▶ see Ivory Coast.

Burundi ▶ see Rwanda.

Burma British Embassy Rangoon ☎(95) (1) 256918 or 380322.

Cambodia ▶ British Embassy Phnom Penh ☎(855) (23) 427124 or 428295.

Cameroon ▶ High Commission Yaoundé ☎(237) 2220545 or 2220796.

Canada ▶ High Commission Ottawa ☎(1) (613) 237 1530.

Cape Verde ▶ see Senegal.

Central African Republic ▶ see Cameroon.

Chad ▶ see Cameroon.

Chile ▶ British Embassy Santiago ☎(56) (2) 370 4100.

China ▶ British Embassy Beijing ☎(86) (10) 5192 4000.

Colombia ▶ British Embassy Bogotá ☎(57) (1) 326 8300.

Comoros ▶ see Madagascar.

Congo (Democratic Republic) ▶ British Embassy Kinshasa ☎(243) 98169100 or 98169111.

Costa Rica ▶ British Embassy San José ☎(506) 258 2025.

Croatia ▶ British Embassy Zagreb ☎(385) (1) 600 9100.

Cuba ▶ British Embassy Havana ☎(53) (7) 204 1771.

Cyprus ▶ High Commission Nicosia ☎(357) (22) 861100.

Czech Republic ▶ British Embassy Prague ☎(420) 2 5740 2111.

Denmark ▶ British Embassy Copenhagen ☎(45) 35 44 52 00.

Djibouti ▶ see Ethiopia.

Dominica ▶ High Commission Roseau ☎(1) (246) 430 7800.

Dominican Republic ▶ British Embassy Santo Domingo ☎(1) (809) 472 7111.

East Timor ▶ British Embassy Dili ☎(670) 332 2838.

Ecuador ▶ British Embassy Quito ☎(593) (2) 2 970 800 or 970 801.

Egypt ▶ British Embassy Cairo ☎(20) (2) 794 0850 or 794 0852.

El Salvador ▶ see Guatemala.

Equatorial Guinea ▶ see Cameroon.

Eritrea ▶ British Embassy Asmara ☎(291) 1 12 01 45.

Estonia ▶ British Embassy Tallinn ☎(372) 667 4700.

Ethiopia ▶ British Embassy Addis Ababa ☎(251) 1 61 23 54.

Fiji ▶ High Commission Suva ☎(679) 3229100.

Finland ▶ British Embassy Helsinki ☎(358) 2286 5284.

France ▶ British Embassy Paris ☎(33) (1) 44 51 31 00.

Gabon ▶ see Cameroon.

Gambia, The ▶ High Commission Banjul ☎(220) 4495133 or 4495134.

Georgia ▶ British Embassy Tbilisi ☎(995) (32) 955497 or 998447.

Germany ▶ British Embassy Berlin ☎(49) (30) 204570.

Ghana ▶ High Commission Accra ☎(233) (21) 7010650 or 221665.

Greece ▶ British Embassy Athens ☎(30) 210 727 2600.

Grenada ▶ High Commission St George's ☎(1) (473) 440 3536 or 440 3222.

Guatemala ▶ British Embassy Guatemala City ☎(502) 2367 5425.

Guinea ▶ British Consulate-General ☎(224) 45 58 07.

Guinea-Bissau ▶ see Senegal.

Guyana ▶ High Commission Georgetown 📞 (592) (22) 65881/2/3/4.

Haiti ▶ see Dominican Republic. (British Consulate Port-au Prince 📞 (509) 257 3969.)

Honduras ▶ see Guatemala.

Hungary ▶ British Embassy Budapest 📞 (36) (1) 266 2888.

Iceland ▶ British Embassy Reykjavik 📞 (354) 550 5100.

India ▶ High Commission New Delhi 📞 (91) (11) 2687 2161.

Indonesia ▶ British Embassy Jakarta 📞 (62) (21) 315 6264.

Iran ▶ British Embassy Tehran 📞 (98) (21) 6705011.

Iraq ▶ British Embassy Baghdad 📞 (964) (0) 790 192 6280.

Ireland ▶ British Embassy Dublin 📞 (353) (1) 205 3700.

Israel ▶ British Embassy Tel Aviv 📞 (972) (3) 725 1222.

Italy ▶ British Embassy Rome 📞 (39) 06 4220 0001.

Ivory Coast ▶ British Embassy Abidjan 📞 (225) 20300800.

Jamaica ▶ High Commission Kingston 📞 (1) (876) 510 0700.

Japan ▶ British Embassy Tokyo 📞 (81) (3) 5211 1100.

Jordan ▶ British Embassy Amman 📞 (962) (6) 5923100.

Kazakhstan ▶ British Embassy Almaty 📞 (73272) 506191 or 506192.

Kenya ▶ High Commission Nairobi 📞 (254) (20) 2844000.

Kiribati ▶ High Commission Tarawa 📞 (686) 22501.

Korea (North) ▶ British Embassy Pyongyang 📞 (850) 2 381 7980.

Korea (South) ▶ British Embassy Seoul 📞 (82) (2) 3210 5500.



- Kuwait** ▶ British Embassy Kuwait ☎ (965) 240 3334/5/6.
- Kyrgyzstan** ▶ see Kazakhstan.
- Laos** ▶ British Embassy Vientiane ☎ (856) (21) 413606.
- Latvia** ▶ British Embassy Riga ☎ (371) 777 4700.
- Lebanon** ▶ British Embassy Beirut ☎ (961) (1) 990400.
- Lesotho** ▶ High Commission Maseru ☎ (266) 22313961.
- Liberia** ▶ see Sierra Leone.
- Libya** ▶ British Embassy Tripoli ☎ (218) (21) 340 3644/5.
- Liechtenstein** ▶ see Switzerland.
- Lithuania** ▶ British Embassy Vilnius ☎ (370) (5) 246 2900.
- Luxembourg** ▶ British Embassy Luxembourg ☎ (352) 22 98 64.
- Macedonia** ▶ British Embassy Skopje ☎ (389) (2) 3299 299.
- Madagascar** ▶ British Embassy Antananarivo ☎ (261) (20) 22 49378/79/80.
- Malawi** ▶ High Commission Lilongwe ☎ (265) 1 772 400.
- Malaysia** ▶ High Commission Kuala Lumpur ☎ (60) (3) 2170 2200.
- Maldives** ▶ see Sri Lanka.
- Mali** ▶ see Senegal.
- Malta** ▶ High Commission Valletta ☎ (356) 2323 0000
- Marshall Islands** ▶ see Fiji.
- Mauritania** ▶ see Morocco.
- Mauritius** ▶ High Commission Port Louis ☎ (230) 202 9400.
- Mexico** ▶ British Embassy Mexico City ☎ (52) (55) 5 242 8500.
- Micronesia** ▶ see Fiji.

- Moldova** ▶ British Embassy Chisinau ☎ (3732) 238 991.
- Monaco** ▶ British Consulate Monaco ☎ (377) 93 50 99 54.
- Mongolia** ▶ British Embassy Ulaanbaatar ☎ (976) (11) 458133.
- Morocco** ▶ British Embassy Rabat ☎ (212) (37) 72 96 96.
- Mozambique** ▶ High Commission Maputo ☎ (258) (1) 320 111.
- Namibia** ▶ High Commission Windhoek ☎ (264) (61) 274800.
- Nepal** ▶ British Embassy Kathmandu ☎ (977) (1) 4410583.
- Netherlands** ▶ British Embassy The Hague ☎ (31) (70) 427 0427.
- New Zealand** ▶ High Commission Wellington ☎ (64) (4) 924 2888.
- Nicaragua** ▶ see Costa Rica.
- Niger** ▶ see Ivory Coast.
- Nigeria** ▶ Deputy High Commission Lagos ☎ (234) (1) 261 9531.
- Norway** ▶ British Embassy Oslo ☎ (47) 23 13 27 00.
- Oman** ▶ British Embassy Muscat ☎ (968) 609000.
- Pakistan** ▶ High Commission Islamabad ☎ (92) (51) 2822131.
- Panama** ▶ British Embassy Panama City ☎ (507) 269 0866.
- Papua New Guinea** ▶ High Commission Port Moresby ☎ (675) 3251643.
- Paraguay** ▶ British Embassy Asunción ☎ (595) (21) 612611.
- Peru** ▶ British Embassy Lima ☎ (51) (1) 617 3000.
- Philippines** ▶ British Embassy Manila ☎ (63) (2) 816 7116.

- Poland** ▶ British Embassy Warsaw ☎(48) (22) 311 0000.
- Portugal** ▶ British Embassy Lisbon ☎(351) (21) 392 4000.
- Qatar** ▶ British Embassy Doha ☎(974) 4421991.
- Romania** ▶ British Embassy Bucharest ☎(40) (21) 201 7200.
- Russia** ▶ British Embassy Moscow ☎(7) (095) 956 7200.
- Rwanda** ▶ British Embassy Kigali ☎(00) (250) 585771 or 585773.
- St Kitts and Nevis** ▶ High Commission Basseterre ☎(1) (268) 462 0008.
- St Lucia** ▶ High Commission Castries ☎(1) (758) 45 22484/5.
- St Vincent** ▶ High Commission Kingstown ☎(1) (784) 457 1701.
- Samoa** ▶ High Commission Apia ☎(64) (4) 924 2888.
- San Marino** ▶ see Italy.
- São Tomé and Príncipe** ▶ see Angola.
- Saudi Arabia** ▶ British Embassy Riyadh ☎(966) (1) 488 0077.
- Senegal** ▶ British Embassy Dakar ☎(221) 823 7392 or 823 9971.
- Serbia and Montenegro** ▶ British Embassy Belgrade ☎(381) (11) 2645 055 or 3060 900 or 3615 660.
- Seychelles** ▶ High Commission Victoria ☎(248) 283666.
- Sierra Leone** ▶ High Commission Freetown ☎(232) (22) 232961.
- Singapore** ▶ High Commission Singapore ☎(65) 6424 4200.
- Slovakia** ▶ British Embassy Bratislava ☎(421) (2) 5998 2000.

- Slovenia** ▶ British Embassy Ljubljana ☎(386) (1) 200 3910.
- Solomon Islands** ▶ High Commission Honiara ☎(677) 21705/06.
- Somalia** ▶ see Ethiopia.
- South Africa** ▶ High Commission Pretoria ☎(27) (12) 421 7500.
- Spain** ▶ British Embassy Madrid ☎(34) 91 700 82 00.
- Sri Lanka** ▶ High Commission Colombo ☎(00) (94) (11) 2 437336/43.
- Sudan** ▶ British Embassy Khartoum ☎(249) (11) 777105.
- Surinam** ▶ British Embassy Paramaribo ☎(597) 402558.
- Swaziland** ▶ High Commission Mbabane ☎(268) 404 2581/2/3/4.
- Sweden** ▶ British Embassy Stockholm ☎(46) (8) 671 3000.
- Switzerland** ▶ British Embassy Berne ☎(41) (31) 359 7700.
- Syria** ▶ British Embassy Damascus ☎(963) (11) 373 9241.
- Taiwan** ▶ British Trade and Cultural Office (886) (2) 2192 7000.
- Tajikistan** ▶ British Embassy Dushanbe ☎(992) (91) 901 5079.
- Tanzania** ▶ High Commission Dar es Salaam ☎(255) (22) 211 0101.
- Thailand** ▶ British Embassy Bangkok ☎(66) (2) 305 8333.
- Togo** ▶ see Ghana.
- Tonga** ▶ High Commission Nuku'alofa ☎(676) 24285 or 24395.
- Trinidad and Tobago** ▶ High Commission Port of Spain ☎(1) (868) 622 2748.
- Tunisia** ▶ British Embassy Tunis ☎(216) 71 108 700.

Turkey ▶ British Embassy Ankara ☎(90) (312) 455 3344.

Turkmenistan ▶ British Embassy Ashgabat ☎(993) (12) 363462/3/4/6.

Tuvalu ▶ see Fiji.

Uganda ▶ High Commission Kampala ☎(256) (31) 312000.

Ukraine ▶ British Embassy Kiev ☎(380) (44) 490 3660

United Arab Emirates ▶ British Embassy Abu Dhabi ☎(971) (2) 6101100.

United States ▶ British Embassy Washington ☎(1) (202) 588 6500.

Uruguay ▶ British Embassy Montevideo ☎(598) (2) 622 3630 or 3650.

Uzbekistan ▶ British Embassy Tashkent ☎(99871) 1206451 or 1207852/3/4.

Vanuatu ▶ High Commission Port-Vila ☎(678) 23100.

Venezuela ▶ British Embassy Caracas ☎(58) (212) 263 8411.

Vietnam ▶ British Embassy Hanoi ☎(84) (4) 936 0500.

Yemen ▶ British Embassy Sana'a ☎(967) (1) 264081/2/3/4.

Yugoslavia ▶ see Serbia and Montenegro.

Zambia ▶ High Commission Lusaka ☎(260) (1) 251133.

Zimbabwe ▶ British Embassy Harare ☎(263) (4) 772990 or 774700.

Governors and Commanders in Chief

These are generally in British overseas protectorates where there is no formal consular presence. However, the numbers listed below can provide limited consular services and will be able to advise you on the nearest full consular post, if necessary.

Anguilla ▶ ☎(1) (264) 497 2621/2622.

Ascension ▶ ☎(247) 7000.

Bermuda ▶ ☎(1) (441) 292 3600.

British Antarctic Territory ▶ ☎020 7008 2616.

British Virgin Islands ▶ ☎(1) (284) 494 2345/70.

Cayman Islands ▶ ☎(1) (345) 949 7900.

Falkland Islands ▶ ☎(500) 27433.

South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands ▶
☎(500) 27433.

Gibraltar ▶ ☎(350) 45440.

Montserrat ▶ ☎(1) (664) 491 2688/9.

Pitcairn Henderson Ducie and Oeno Islands ▶ ☎(9) (64)
366 0186.

St Helena ▶ ☎(290) 2555.

Tristan Da Cunha ▶ ☎(871) 682 087 155.

Turks and Caicos Islands ▶ ☎(1) (649) 946 2309.

Charities

Amnesty International

www.amnesty.org.uk

Campaigning organisation, whose website provides information on human rights abuses worldwide.

The Compassionate Friends (TCF)

www.tcf.org.uk

An organisation of bereaved parents and their families who offer support to others after the death of a child or children. The website offers a range of information on publications, TCF events and links to other sources of information and centres of support.

Cruse Bereavement Care

www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Provides support and counselling for the bereaved and runs a confidential helpline (0870 167 1677).

Diabetes UK

www.diabetes.org.uk

Helps people with diabetes and funds research into the condition. The website also offers up-to-date advice on managing diabetes.

National Missing Persons Helpline (NMPH)

www.missingpersons.org

Helps find missing persons and provides information, advice and support for their family and friends. It runs two confidential helplines: the Message Home Helpline (0800 700 740), and the Missing Persons Helpline (UK 0500 700 700; abroad 0044 (0) 20 8392 4545).

Prisoners Abroad

www.prisonersabroad.org.uk

Provides information, advice and support to Britons

detained overseas, to their families and friends, and to released prisoners trying to re-establish themselves in society. It can help to find lawyers, negotiate with prison authorities, and advise on prison transfers.

Rape Crisis Federation (RCF)

🌐 www.rapecrisis.co.uk

Offers advice and support to those affected by rape and sexual abuse/assault. The RCF acts as a referral service and puts individuals in contact with their nearest local rape and sexual abuse counselling service (☎0115 934 8474).

Reunite

🌐 www.reunite.org

Helps in international custody disputes and cases of parental child abduction. Its confidential telephone line (☎0116 2556 234) offers practical advice on the issue.

The Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR)

🌐 www.radar.org.uk

Provides information and advice for disabled people, and publishes guides on holiday planning, transport and accommodation. The site offers news and information on events, and links to sites providing disability-related information, services or research.

The Samaritans

🌐 www.samaritans.org.uk

A 24-hour-a-day telephone service (☎08457 909 090) that provides confidential emotional support to anyone in need.

Support after Murder and Manslaughter (SAMM)

🌐 www.samm.org.uk

The charity SAMM offers support to those bereaved through murder and manslaughter and runs a confidential

telephone helpline (☎ 020 7735 3838). The website links to sources of further information and to other centres of support.

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust

🌐 www.suzylamplugh.org

A national charity for personal safety, that promotes understanding of potential dangers and how to tackle them. The site offers personal safety tips and guidance for young travellers.

Tourism Concern

🌐 www.tourismconcern.org.uk

An organisation that campaigns for ethical and fairly traded tourism, and for change in the tourism industry. It provides advice for tourists, students and teachers on being sensitive to environments, cultures and communities. The website also has a responsible travel code.

Victim Support

🌐 www.victimsupport.com

An independent charity that helps people cope with the effects of crime. It provides free and confidential advice via its centres throughout the UK and can provide contacts with other victim support groups across the world.

Gay, lesbian and transgender associations

International Lesbian and Gay Association

🌐 www.ilga.org

A worldwide federation of national and local groups campaigning for equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people.

Health

Department of Health (DOH)

🌐 www.dh.gov.uk

Information on planning for a healthy trip, avoiding health risks when overseas, obtaining emergency medical treatment abroad, and on the E111 form which will give you free or reduced cost emergency medical treatment in most European countries.

Hospital for Tropical Diseases

🌐 www.thehtd.org

A world authority on the prevention and treatment of tropical diseases. The site provides advice and tips on health for short- and long-stay travellers, and information on travel health products such as first-aid kits for backpackers.

Scottish National Health Service

🌐 www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk

Provides health information for people travelling abroad from the UK, with up-to-date news, general advice for travellers and advice on malaria prevention.

World Health Organisation

🌐 www.who.int/ith

WHO has an on-line guide to travellers' health and highlights current areas of risk worldwide.

Older travellers

Age Concern

🌐 www.ageconcern.org.uk

Provides information and support for older people. The website offers advice on holidays, as well as details of events, news and links to other sites. You can also write to Freepost

(SWB 30375), Ashburton, Devon, TQ13 7ZZ, or phone
☎0800 00 99 66.

Retirement Pension Forecasting and Advice Unit (RPFA)

🌐 www.dwp.gov.uk

For all advice on state pensions and retirement, contact the Department for Work and Pensions, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE98 1BA ☎00 44 (0) 191 218 7585, 📠00 44 (0) 191 218 7293.

Tax and National Insurance

Inland Revenue

🌐 www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/menus/non-residents.htm

Guidance for non-resident taxpayers who live or work abroad, or are planning to do so. Includes links to other UK government sites and to overseas tax authority sites, as well as offering on-line information about National Insurance liability, healthcare, and retirement pension forecasts. For all information on UK income tax while living abroad, contact the Centre for Non-Residents, St John's House, Merton Road, Bootle, Merseyside, L69 9BB, UK ☎0845 0700040; abroad ☎00 44 (0) 151 210 2222.

National Insurance

🌐 www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/nic

For all information about paying National Insurance contributions when abroad, contact the National Insurance Contributions Office, International Services, Longbenton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE98 1ZZ, UK ☎0845 9154811; abroad ☎00 44 (0) 191 225 4811.

Transport

Airline safety

🌐 www.airsafe.com

Information on airline safety according to airline and by aircraft model. Also provides additional safety advice for different airports, as well as tips for passengers. The site links to other travel and travel-safety sites.

Freight Transport Association (FTA)

🌐 www.fta.co.uk

A trade association representing the freight transport industry, providing information and services for its members when travelling abroad.

Road Haulage Association (RHA)

🌐 www.rha.net

A trade association representing the road haulage industry, that offers its members working abroad a range of international services and information.

Travel websites

Communications Advice

🌐 www.telecomsAdvice.org.uk/features/using_your_mobile_abroad.htm

A comprehensive guide to using your mobile abroad. The site will also show you how to register your phone to stop its use in case of theft.

Need2Know

🌐 www.need2know.co.uk

A new portal providing information on areas of life such as travel, with links to relevant websites in the public, private and charitable sectors.

Worldwise Travel Information

www.brookes.ac.uk/worldwise

The World Wise Directory provides country-by-country practical tips on health, safety, visa and currency requirements as well as information on local codes of dress and behaviour.

Travel organisations

Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust (ABTOT)

www.abtot.com

A DTI-approved body offering low cost bonding for holidays.

Bonded Coach Holidays (BCH)

www.bondedcoachholidays.co.uk

An organisation offering safeguards to people on coach holidays should the tour operator cease trading.

Travel Trust Association (TTA)

www.traveltrust.co.uk

A non-profit making organisation that provides consumer protection at a low cost.

UK Government websites

Adoption Overseas

www.dfes.gov.uk/adoption

Guidance for anyone interested in inter-country adoption, including British Citizens residing abroad. The site offers on-line publications, information and links to other relevant websites.

Child Abduction Unit – The Lord Chancellor's Department

www.offsol.demon.co.uk/intnchab.htm

Administrative central authority for England and Wales on child abduction.

Consumer Direct

www.consumerdirect.gov.uk/goods-service/holidays/index.shtml

Telephone (☎08454 04 05 06) and on-line consumer advice service, supported by the Department of Trade and Industry. It provides clear, practical, impartial advice to help you sort out problems and disagreements you may have with suppliers of goods or services.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

www.defra.gov.uk/animalh

Details of import controls, telling you what is safe and unsafe to bring back with you.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

www.dwp.gov.uk

Provides information on social security benefits if you have recently come from abroad, and how to claim benefits if you are going abroad.

The General Register Office (GRO)

www.gro.gov.uk

The Overseas Section of the GRO holds records of the births, marriages and deaths of British Citizens overseas that have been registered with British authorities, such as Consuls, High Commissions and HM Forces.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

www.hse.gov.uk

The site links to organisations concerned with health and

safety in both the UK and internationally, and offers guidance on the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969 for employees being sent overseas and their employers.

HM Customs and Excise (HMCE)

🌐 www.hmce.gov.uk/public/travel

Provides guidance for travellers entering the UK, on personal allowances, declaring goods to Customs, and prohibited and restricted goods. Also details the "Customs Confidential" hotline for reporting smuggling offences (☎ 0800 59 5000).

Home Office

🌐 www.crimereduction.gov.uk/cppmwya.htm

The Home Office Crime Reduction website provides helpful tips on how to make your home look lived in when you are away, getting your neighbours to help, and a checklist of things to do before you leave home.

Pet Travel Scheme (PETS)

🌐 www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/index.htm

The Pet Travel Scheme allows pet animals from certain countries to enter the UK without undergoing quarantine, as well as allowing UK Citizens to take their pets to these countries, and return without the need for quarantine.

Pensions Service

🌐 www.thepensionservice.gov.uk

Its Telephone Liaison Unit (☎ 00 44 191 218 7777) deals with incoming overseas calls about retirement pensions, widow/bereavement benefits, incapacity benefits, industrial injury benefits and directs them to the correct department.

Trade Partners UK

🌐 www.trade.uktradeinvest.gov.uk

Helps UK businesses secure overseas sales and investments. The site offers on-line information and help with identify-

ing export opportunities (including free sales leads), practical experience of all aspects of exporting, and links to other sites.

UK CITES

🌐 www.ukcites.gov.uk

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species provides information on endangered and internationally protected species, and advice on buying wildlife souvenirs and plant products overseas.

UK Online

🌐 www.direct.gov.uk/Topics/Travel and Transport

Information on travelling away from home, with advice on health, holiday bookings, and travelling with children and disabilities, as well as tips on taking your pet and car overseas.

UK Passport Service

🌐 www.ukps.gov.uk

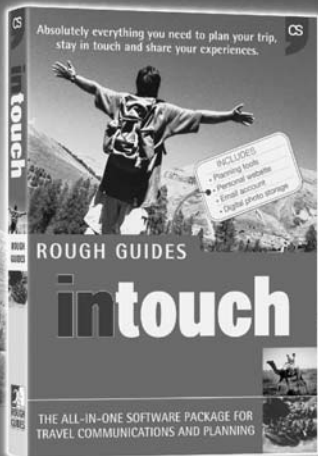
Advice on passports and visas.

Voting

The Electoral Commission

🌐 www.electoralcommission.org.uk

The Electoral Commission provides advice on overseas voting. To register as an overseas elector, British Citizens should contact the electoral registration officer at the local council where they were last registered as an elector when living in the UK. The necessary forms are also available from the Electoral Commission website.



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✓ Things to do before you go

- ☐ Check FCO Travel Advice at www.fco.gov.uk/travel
- ☐ Check passport is valid and in good condition
- ☐ Check visas are valid
- ☐ Buy suitable travel insurance
- ☐ Get a new E111 form if necessary
- ☐ Book a health check and vaccinations
- ☐ Book a dental check
- ☐ Buy foreign currency and traveller's cheques
- ☐ Read up about the local laws and customs of your destination

✓ Things to take

- ☐ Passport
- ☐ Visas
- ☐ Tickets
- ☐ Insurance details
- ☐ Cash
- ☐ Credit/debit cards
- ☐ Traveller's cheques
- ☐ Photocopies of important documents
- ☐ Guidebook
- ☐ Itinerary
- ☐ Medicines and first-aid kit
- ☐ Driving licence
- ☐ Car insurance
- ☐ Breakdown kit
- ☐ Mobile phone
- ☐ Sunblock
- ☐ *The Rough Guide to Safer Travel*

useful numbers

Insurance company 24-hour emergency number

➡

Insurance policy number

➡

Insurance company

➡

Passport number

➡

Credit card company 24-hour emergency number

➡

Traveller's cheque numbers

➡

Accommodation details

➡

Local emergency phone number

➡

Address of nearest hospital

➡

Trusted taxi company

➡

Airline number

➡

Tour rep emergency number

➡