

## Travel Smart

Unwary travelers can often draw unnecessary attention to themselves because they may stand out in a crowd, are unused to their new surroundings, and usually carry money and valuables on their person. Families may also have the added stress of looking after young children in unfamiliar surroundings. To maximise your chances of enjoying a hassle-free and safe holiday the following precautions should be taken:

### Before you leave

- Research the safety of your intended destination with the Department of Foreign Affairs <http://foreignaffairs.gov.ie/services/traveladvice/>. This Government department keeps an updated bulletin on travel destinations, covering factors such as political unrest or criminal activities that target tourists. You could also consult with your travel agent, or talk to friends who have already visited your intended destination.
- Give a copy of your itinerary and contact information to a relative or friend.
- If you are traveling with young children look for hotels that have supervised play centres.
- Create an emergency plan in case someone gets lost. Choose a specific meeting spot when you arrive, so your child will know what to do if he or she gets lost.
- Write your child's name and contact information on the label inside of his or her shirt. Also, dress them in bright colors so they can be spotted easily in large crowds.
- Make sure your child knows the name of your hotel and your room number.
- Photocopy your passports and all travel documents including insurance details, travels tickets etc.



### Hotel safety

- If possible, choose accommodation that has unmarked 'swipe cards' rather than numbered keys for each room. If you lose your swipe card or if it is stolen, a thief won't know which room to rob.
- Take note of emergency exits, stairwells, fire escapes and emergency plans, in case of an emergency.
- Always lock your hotel door when retiring for the night. If there is a chain on the door, use it.

### Out and about

- Even if you're not sure where you're going, look confident and walk like you've got a purpose.
- Match your dress style to that of the locals. Don't wear an obvious 'tourist' outfit like a loud shirt with a camera slung around your neck.
- Be discreet when map reading.
- Notice the people around you. Be wary if someone seems to be taking more than a passing interest.
- Don't wear expensive jewellery on obvious display.
- Try to rely more on credit cards and travelers cheques than cash.
- Wear valuables (such as traveler's cheques and credit cards) on a belt worn under the clothes and next to the skin.
- If feeling particularly vulnerable, wear your money belt somewhere other than around your waist. Thieves know about money belts too.
- Consider carrying a 'dummy' wallet holding a small amount of cash.
- Ask your hotel manager for advice on 'safe' versus 'unsafe' local areas.
- Avoid 'seedier' areas of the cities or towns you visit, especially at night.
- As a general rule, streets that include children and women suggest the area is safe for families.
- Keep a photocopy of your passport and all other important documents in a safe place.
- Use ATMs during the day, when there are people around.
- Don't share taxis with strangers.
- If you are mugged, don't fight back. It is better to lose a few euro and a watch than to get injured.

