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## Travel Advice

## Travel Advisor

## The best travel advice from news.com.au readers

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Pulling out a large paper map can be a mistake. Picture: Thinkstock

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- news.com.au readers share some of their top travel tips
- Suggestions range from health and safety tips to saving money
- **Read more travel tips here** (<http://www.news.com.au/travel/travel-advisor/travel-tips-you-really-should-know/story-e6frfqfr-1226633556750>)

**YOU should always carry a power board while travelling, and avoid pulling out a map at all costs.**

These are among the top travel tips offered by *news.com.au* readers who've been there, done that and want to share their tips with you. The advice came flooding in after we published this article on the **52 travel tips you must know** (<http://www.news.com.au/travel/travel-advisor/travel-tips-you-really-should-know/story-e6frfqfr-1226633556750>).

We've broken down the reader advice into these categories: money, safety and security, health and more handy travel tips.

## Money

**Do some quick, rough sums on a piece of paper so you have an idea of what things actually cost in Aussie dollars**, for example \$AUD1 = 10000 INDO Rupiah, \$AUD5 = 50000 INDO Rupiah etc. Keep it in your purse. It only needs to be a rough conversion, this has saved me a fortune when my wife couldn't do the sums in her head while bartering with a Balinese wood carver - Bali boy of Darwin.

**In Asian countries, take cash.** The exchange rate is far better from an exchange shop than a bank and you remove the high withdrawal fees and low daily limits that the banks have in place to gouge you. I even take additional cash and convert to US dollars when I'm in Bali as it works out about 5-6 per cent cheaper. I now have a 'cheap' stash of US dollars for when the Aussie dollar goes south or I travel to the US - Greg of Wollongong.

**You need to inform your bank of where you're going and how long you're going for.** I've had my card suspended while in Italy as I forgot to inform them and it was flagged as a possible fraudulent transaction. It can take a number of days to get the card re-activated. I've also heard of cards being cancelled, in which case they can't just be re-activated and you'll need to wait for a new card to be mailed out - Mattah of Perth.

**Walk a street or two back from the touristy areas and the price drops in half.** Also, keep a note of local currency in your sock/shoe in case you lose your wallet. Better yet, don't carry everything in your wallet - do you really need the video store card in Prague? To save money on food, carry a small bowl with lid and plastic cutlery - you'll save on things like breakfast - but try and dine with the locals often. - Mt of Canberra.

**Get a local pre-paid SIM card for your phone**, store the numbers of your travelling companions local SIM numbers as well as the closest embassy number in your phone. Give your number to family back home. Forget the global roaming charges - Brendan of Canberra.

**Ring your mobile phone provider to turn on phone roaming** and make sure data roaming is turned off - Anna of Vic.

**Get a traveller's credit card** - this way you don't have to pay international conversion fees. Also, withdraw ATM money in larger amounts so you don't get charged ATM fees on multiple withdrawals - Sam of Sydney.

**Cheaper is not always better.** If your hotel is a 45 minute train ride from all the attractions it can pay to spend the extra \$5-20 night a stay in a better location. You'll spend that on transport if you stay too far away. You'll also save your self a heap of time - Adam of Adelaide.

**Take local currency and small notes**, you'd be surprised how many taxis/vendors don't have change - Peter of Phuket.

## Safety and security

**Take mobile phone photographs of both the metro layout and local maps when you arrive.** Tourists with paper maps are targets. Keep cards and additional money inside pants to minimise worry of being robbed of valuables - Matt Macks of Perth.

**It may sound silly but take a whistle and carry it on you at all times.** It will draw attention to you if you need help and is more effective than shouting. I was glad I had it when my tour guide in Vietnam pointed me in the wrong direction and I got lost. It was the whistle that he heard 1km away, not my shouting - Rob.

## **Woman whistle**



Take a whistle with you while travelling. Picture: Thinkstock

Source: No Source

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**Take a rubber door stop/wedge.** They cost a couple of dollars from any hardware and they can be used to jam doors/windows shut for added security! I've used it as a female on trains, hotels, youth hostels etc - Karen of Brisbane.

**When hiring a car purchase a local newspaper (and keep it current) and place on the back seat where visible** - will make it look like you're a local. Obviously don't keep any luggage or travel maps from the hire car company in the car - dead giveaway you're a tourist. Always use the key to manually open and close your hire car, this prevents people with scanners who can then open your car after you walk away. Also, register with the travel warning website to send you SMS updates if one is released in the countries you are visiting - Anna of Vic.

**Scan your passport, visa and driver's licence and email it to yourself before you go.** You can access webmail anywhere and instantly have a colour printout. Learn basic first aid and CARRY A FIRST AID KIT. You'll probably only use it for cuts, blisters and hangovers, but it's nice to know you're equipped for more - Brendan of Canberra.

**Carry a small torch if you go out at night,** don't flash your valuables around and take a few combination padlocks that fit your backpack. Don't dress like a tourist - take cues from the locals - Mt of Canberra.

### **Health**

**Bring some Travelan.** Particularly when travelling in Asia. It's all good and well to have Imodium, and I never leave home without that, but by the time you need Imodium you are already feeling pretty dreadful and it puts a dent in your travel to be stuck on a toilet for a day. Travelan is a preventative, take one 30 mins before each meal. Three weeks in India (eating plenty of street food) and none of us got sick once. I was put on to this stuff by a GP who also never leaves home without it. It's my number one travel tip - Brissie Mel of Brisbane.

**Always fill up your water bottle if you see a drinking fountain, Always.** I was in transit in Beijing, and not only did the flight attendants get annoyed if we asked for water (on 10 and 8 hour flights), but our lay-over hotel that was provided by the airline seemed awfully unfond of English speakers. There was no drinking water at all and you cannot drink Beijing tap water. We had to boil a kettle and leave it until morning. After so much flying, I've never felt so dehydrated - Jayna.

## aqua



Beware of tap water in some countries! Picture: Supplied  
 Source: The Courier-Mail

## More handy tips

**Don't just pack one power adapter conversion plug. Pack a power board too,** so that you can use many appliances from the one resource - Lisa Bell of Brisbane.

**Take a few clip type clothes pegs.** Some curtains never close completely - Nixchik of Edens.

**Instead of taking a beach or bath towel,** take a small absorbent sports towel (chamois), which doesn't take up much room and dries quickly. Also, I found a sarong or wrap to be very handy when travelling - you can use it to lie on the beach or grass, as a blanket or sheet or just to wear - Tracey of Brisbane.

**Take a roll of five centimetre-wide sticky tape with you.** It can repair broken luggage, be twisted into a remarkably strong twine to hang things up, seal plastic bags containing souvenirs, can be written on and is very good at protecting blisters without becoming uncomfortable. Also always remove ALL your luggage from the taxi before paying the fare, then they have no bargaining power if there's a dispute. And please read your travel insurance policy, especially the section relating to transport ... many policies don't cover you for a

motorbike accident if you don't have an Australian motorcycle licence: that cheap moped in Bali may not be cheap at all - Mark of Sydney.

**Dry your clothes fast by laying them flat on bath towel, roll and fold**, step on (rolled/folded) to press out dampness, hang and dry with hair dryer from the bottom up - Frances la of Sydney.

**Be warned, in some countries saying 'no' then 'thank you' means 'yes'** - Jo of Perth.

**If you travel with someone, it's a good idea to pack some of your things in their bag**, and their things in your bag, just in case your bag gets lost. This happened to me in NYC last year. I had no bag for three days, and was left having to purchase new things, and find out where to buy them, all in daggy two-day old clothes from the plane - Katie.

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## Baggage



Lost luggage can be a nightmare. Picture: AP  
Source: AP

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