

Most of us in our vintage years don't need instructions in respect. We realize other peoples throughout the world have customs and religious beliefs that, although often strange to us, are serious parts of their lives. When visiting, we just don't do nor say anything foolish to offend them. A friend who should have known better was with a tour of an Indian temple. Although in his 70s, he jumped up on an ancient stone statue while a friend shot video of the guy comically hugging and mugging in the arms of the goddess figure.



It was all very funny until two guards came rushing over, led by a very angry religious representative of the temple. Despite the protests of our native tour guide, our friend was hauled away to a local jail. It took calls to the American consulate in the region and a \$500 fine to bail out the misbehaving tourist. Without the intervention of the American official, it could have been much worse punishment for the man's childish act.

We all know about the image of the typical American tourist, complete with outrageous clothing, camera, loud talk and total disrespect for native sensibilities. Fortunately, most senior travelers don't fit that negative image today. However, once in awhile, one will do something foolish and make it difficult for the rest of us to erase that image.

The rule we should always follow while traveling is very simple. If we'd be offended by thoughtless actions by a stranger in our country, we shouldn't do the same kind of stupid act when visiting their country.