



When traveling, the idea is to relax and have fun. That's a perfect goal, but if you want to do it safely, there are those nagging little warnings that should always be somewhere in your head.

If you're getting up in years, awareness of your surroundings and some positive paranoia can help make your trip safer. If you listen to that little voice of reason at the right times, it can make your travels more enjoyable and less worrisome.

1. Your travel motto should be: if it seems too good to be true, it ain't true. This applies to promises from taxi drivers, time-share deals, 99-cent buffets, food served from street vending carts and everything else that smells fishy.
2. On cruises and in hotels, never leave your room door unlocked, even for a few moments. Never leave children alone in the room or anywhere else during your travels with them.
3. If someone knocks on your door and says the visit is necessary, tell the person to wait outside the locked door until you can confirm it by phone with the hotel or ship's courtesy desk.
4. When aboard ship or in a hotel, and you're invited for an outside midnight stroll by a stranger or new acquaintance, unless you're part of a large group, turn down the invitation.
5. When shopping or touring in a strange city, never go out alone at night. In fact, when wandering through unfamiliar streets during the day, it's safer to be with at least two other tourists.
6. Protect your valuables at all times. If you have lots of cash, travelers' checks and jewelry, keep them in your room safe or with the security desk safe at the hotel or ship.
7. Never flash large amounts of cash, especially in a crowded unfamiliar city location. Keep your wallet in a zipped pocket, or if you carry a handbag, keep it strapped tightly under your arm. If you'd prefer not using your credit or debit card, carry with you only the amount of cash you'll need for a day's purchases.
8. If you're a heavy drinking tourist and at a bar alone, you're looking for trouble. Always have at least one sober friend with you. You should be on watch at all times to make sure your exposed money isn't stolen nor drinks spiked. A small sip will usually tell you if a drink is off-tasting.

9. Whether a drinker or not, don't walk around in public areas talking in a loud voice, wearing flashy clothing and generally calling attention to the fact that you're a clueless tourist. It's best to dress as the locals do, except maybe if your tour bus takes you to a nudist camp.

10. Along with safety first, do everything possible to keep yourself healthy while traveling. Besides staying away from food of street carts, don't use travel as an excuse to eat more than you do in your normal hours, foods and amounts you experiences at home. Of course, cruise ship midnight buffets and Vegas all-you-can-eat gorgies are tempting, but unless you want your stomach to bellyache in a violent way, take it slow, light and easy.

Remember, as you travel, a little paranoia is the safe way to go.