



In previous overseas travel, we almost always rented a car. However, we've recently heard horror stories about parking ticket and other sky-high traffic charges in foreign cities. Some tourists didn't even know about the hefty fines until they showed up on credit card accounts long after they returned home.

We're scheduled to spend a week in Tokyo next month. Should we rent a car or make it around the city by taxi, bus and train? *BL, San Diego CA*

A: Remember small-town Barney Fife types ticketing innocent tourists for speeding or parking violations? They used the money to pay their salaries or as outright thievery. We're afraid this trend, enhanced by ever-more crowded streets, digital messaging and credit cards, is happening in some of the world's most popular tourist cities.

We won't make any specific accusations, but if we were going to Tokyo this season, and considering a car rental there, we'd first check with our travel agent, and then at the agency in Tokyo. Rentals start at about \$45 a day. We'd want the truth about how to avoid high-cost traffic violations with rental cars.

A taxi ride between the airport to the city costs about \$50 each way. Subway and bus fees average about \$3 per ride. Incidentally, the Japanese city's public transportation system is not the cheapest, but is one of the fastest, extensive and cleanest in the world. For more info, go to www.tokyometro.jp/en