

## A safe trip requires careful planning

*Here are important steps you can take to prepare for a safe trip outside US.*

excerpted from <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/checklist.html>

### Getting There

- **Beware of Any Travel Alerts and Warnings for Your Destination**

The State Department issues Travel Warnings to recommend postponing travel to a country because of civil unrest, dangerous conditions or terrorism.



- **Do You Have All Required Travel Documents?**

Most U.S. citizens must use a U.S. passport to travel overseas and reenter the United States.

If you are traveling by land or sea, you may travel using the new U.S. passport card instead of the normal passport book.

Some countries may require travelers to present proof of relationship to the children and evidence of consent from any non-accompanying parent(s).

Some countries require that a traveler's passport be valid for at least six months beyond the dates of the trip.

- **Are You Prepared for an Emergency?**

Make sure you have the contact information for the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate where you are going.

- **Do You Plan to Drive Overseas?**

If you plan to drive overseas, you may need to obtain an International Driving Permit (IDP).

If you will be residing overseas for an extended time, obtain a local driver's license as soon as possible.

- **Pack Smart!**

Pack light so you can move quickly and have a free hand when you need it.

Carry a minimum number of valuables and plan places to conceal them.

Use covered luggage tags to avoid casual observation of your identity and nationality.

Avoid packing IDs, tickets and other vital documents in backpacks or other locations you won't be able to see at all times.

- **Do You Have Photocopies of Your Itinerary and Travel Documents?**

Make two photocopies of all your travel documents in case of emergency or if your documents are lost or stolen.

Leave one copy with a friend or relative at home. It is always a great idea to let at least one person know exactly where you will be staying and how to contact you in an emergency.

Carry the other copy with you stored separately from the originals.

Documents to make copies of include Passport, visa, itinerary, confirmations, airline ticket, driver's license and credit cards.

### Your Money

- **Prepare to Handle Money Overseas**

Check and understand the exchange rate before you travel. Notify your

bank, credit card company, or other financial institutions that you are going overseas. Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. Do not flash large amounts of money when paying a bill.

- **Learn about local laws and customs**

If you break local laws while abroad, your U.S. passport won't help you avoid arrest or prosecution. The U.S. Embassy can't get you out of jail.

### Your Health

- **Do You Need Any New Vaccinations?**

Vaccinations are required for entry to some countries and require foreign visitors carry an international certificate of vaccination or yellow card.

Health experts recommend vaccinations for travel to some countries.

- **Do You Know How to Find Medical Help Abroad?**

- **Does Your Health Insurance Cover You Outside the U.S.?**

If your insurance policy does not cover you abroad, consider purchasing a short-term policy that does.

**NOTE: Social Security and Medicare do not provide coverage outside of the U.S.**

- **If you take prescription medication?**

Pack enough to last your entire trip, including some extra for just in case you need extra.

Carry your medications in their original labeled containers in your carry-on bag.

Ask your pharmacy or physician for the generic equivalent name of your prescriptions.

Get a letter from your physician in case you are questioned about your carry-on medication. ■