

Travel smart

Holidays are exciting times and full of new experiences and adventures. To make sure that your holiday is enjoyable, we want to let you know about where you might need to take extra care. Please read this leaflet through and pass it on to your travel companions too. Thank you and have a great time!

In your accommodation

Your security

- Where available, keep all money, valuables and important documents in a safety deposit box
- Keep your passport safe and always keep a copy
- Never leave your key so that someone could note your room number
- Remember to lock your room door even when you are inside the room
- Check that windows and/or balcony doors are securely locked when leaving your room and also when you are in your room, use the security chain if provided. Some doors do not lock automatically so always double check
- Some locking devices can be confusing to operate. If you are unsure how to lock any door or window to your room, do not hesitate to ask a hotel staff member for assistance
- Familiarise yourself with how to raise the alarm or who to call in an emergency

If you have a balcony

- Children should NEVER be left alone on balconies
- If you are travelling with young children, consider requesting a room on the ground floor
- Never lean over, sit or climb on the balcony wall or railings
- Keep all furniture away from the balcony wall or railings and don't climb or stand on balcony furniture
- Be aware that not all balcony doors are made with toughened glass, take extra care in bright sunlight as it is not always obvious if the door is open or closed

In the bathroom

- Take care as condensation and water spray can make surfaces slippery
- Remember that bath or floor mats may not always be provided
- Do not use any mains electrical appliances near to water

If you have a kitchen

- Exercise extreme care with all electrical and cooking appliances, especially if you are cooking with oil
- Familiarise yourself with the nearest fire blanket or fire extinguisher before using the cooking appliances
- Never leave cookers unattended whilst in use
- Switch off cooking appliances when leaving your apartment or going to bed
- Never place any shopping or other items on the cooker

Gas appliances

- Familiarise yourself with the operating instructions for any gas appliances e.g. gas cookers or fires in your room and if you're unsure please ask a hotel staff member for assistance
- Ensure all cooking appliances are switched off when leaving your apartment or going to bed
- Never use a gas cooker to heat the room
- If you smell gas within your accommodation:
 - Extinguish all naked flames. Don't use matches or lighters
 - Don't switch lights or any other electrical appliances on or off
 - If you can, turn off the gas supply
 - Open all doors and windows
 - Inform reception
 - Leave the building and allow time for the gas to disperse
 - Only re-enter when you are sure it is safe to do so.
- If a gas appliance is faulty signs can include black marks or stains, lazy orange flames instead of crisp blue ones and excessive condensation in the room. If you have any concerns please speak to reception, tell your Representative or call the emergency number provided
- Carbon monoxide detectors are rare overseas. The symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning can be 'flu-like' and can include tightness across the forehead, tiredness, drowsiness, headaches and pains in the chest or stomach. If you experience any of these symptoms and think it could be related to a gas appliance in or adjacent to your room, leave the room immediately and notify reception

Fire safety

On arrival

- Study the fire instruction notice displayed in your room
- Identify the method of raising the alarm if you discover a fire
- Locate the nearest fire exit and escape routes to your room
- If you're a smoker, ensure that all smoking materials are safely extinguished and don't smoke in bed

If there's a fire

- Stay calm and raise the alarm
- Get out of the room immediately – don't stop to collect belongings
- Close the door behind you, follow the escape route and leave the building
- Proceed to an assembly point outside and do not re-enter the building
- If you can't leave the room, close all doors, put wet towels or clothes around door seals and phone reception or shout for help from the window

Using the lifts

- Children should not use the lifts unaccompanied
- In the event of a fire, use the stairs not the lift

In the pool

Stay safe

- Remember there may not always be a lifeguard on duty
- In the event of an emergency, know how to summon help
- Please look after the young members of your party and ensure children are supervised by an adult at all times
- Familiarise yourself with the layout of the pool to identify the deep end and shallow end before use
- Do not jump or dive into the swimming pool
- Pool surrounds can be very slippery, don't run around them
- Have fun in the pool, but avoid unruly behaviour and observe pool rules and safety signs at all times
- Do not swim immediately after a meal and never swim when you have been drinking alcohol
- Don't use the pool after dark or when closed, even if it has underwater lights
- If you cannot swim or are not a particularly strong swimmer, consider carefully whether you should enter a swimming pool

Keep it clean

- Take a shower before entering the pool
- Ensure that children use the toilet before entering the pool and take regular toilet breaks throughout the day. In the event of a faecal accident in or around the pool, please report it immediately; this will help the hotel in ensuring the highest levels of pool hygiene
- Young children and babies must wear appropriate swim wear (e.g. rubber lined trunks) – swimming in nappies and nude bathing is unacceptable
- Don't change nappies at the poolside and wash your hands afterwards
- Don't swim (or allow children to swim) if suffering from an upset stomach and wait for 48 hours after illness before entering the pool again

Food and drink

Eating

- Wash your hands thoroughly before eating and after going to the toilet
- Make sure your food has been thoroughly cooked and is hot when served
- Ensure any food that has been re-heated is piping hot all the way through
- Avoid any uncooked food (apart from food that can be peeled or shelled including fruits and vegetables)

Drinking

- Always check with your Rep or agent, as in certain destinations it is advisable to only drink bottled water and to use it for brushing your teeth. Make sure that the seal on the bottle is intact before opening
- Avoid ice in drinks where possible

Out and about

- Slips and trips are common, so take care following rainfall and be extra careful when walking around your hotel barefoot.

On the beach

- Check out the beach when you arrive and look out for safety information e.g. warning flags and safety signs and adhere to them at all times
- Never swim alone, make sure there are always other people around
- Children must be supervised by an adult at all times
- Be aware of dangerous rip currents and strong tides and look out for large waves when entering and exiting the water
- Do not swim near or dive from rocks, piers, breakwaters and coral
- If possible, swim where there is a lifeguard on patrol and take their advice
- Never swim where a sign says not to (in zoned areas for boats or jet skis)
- Never swim at night, after drinking alcohol or on a full stomach
- If you see someone in difficulty, tell somebody – preferably a lifeguard if there is one nearby
- Find out what to do in an emergency, like calling the local coastguard
- If you cannot swim or are not a particularly strong swimmer, consider carefully whether you should enter a sea

In the sun

- Build up the time you spend in the sun gradually and drink plenty of water
- Use a high factor sunscreen and re-apply frequently
- At the first sign of sunburn get out of the sun immediately
- Avoid sunbathing between 11:00am–3:00pm
- Never expose babies under months to the sun and always take extra care with children
- It's possible to burn when swimming or in the shade, even when cloudy
- Wear a hat

Hiring a car

- Check the vehicle is road worthy and familiarise yourself with all controls before setting off as they may differ to what you are used to
- Check that the car hire insurance cover you take out provides adequate cover for the driver and all passengers
- Ensure that the driver and all passengers wear a seat belt at all times
- Familiarise yourself with local traffic laws and pay particular attention at junctions and roundabouts
- Always carry car hire emergency and breakdown telephone numbers and a spare set of spectacles
- Stick to well travelled and/or well lit roads and ensure you know where you are going before you leave the hotel
- NEVER drink and drive
- We advise that you DO NOT hire mopeds or motorbikes, but if you do decide to please ensure that you have insurance cover and ALWAYS wear a helmet
- If you're flagged down by a stranger, do not give them a lift. Pay particular attention in built up areas and at traffic lights
- Keep doors locked and windows shut if possible

Birds, bugs and animals

Birds

- Although the risk of avian flu to travellers is believed to be very low, we do recommend that you take the following precautions in any destination around the world:
 - Avoid visiting live animal markets, poultry farms and other places where you might come into contact with wild, domestic or caged birds
 - Avoid contact with surfaces contaminated with animal faeces or fluids
 - Avoid eating or handling poultry, egg or duck dishes if any of these are under cooked or raw (normal cooking destroys the avian influenza virus)
 - Wash your hands regularly
 - Do not attempt to bring any poultry products back to the UK

Insect Bites

Mosquitoes and other insects can carry serious illnesses such as Malaria, Chikungunya, Japanese Encephalitis, Dengue Fever, West Nile fever, Yellow Fever and Zika Virus.

- Take the following precautions against mosquito and other insect bites:
 - Insect repellents containing DEET* should be used, as these are proven to be the most effective and they should be reapplied regularly
 - Mosquitoes can bite through tight clothing, loose fitting garments with long trousers and sleeves are best
 - Light coloured clothing can help spot any mosquitoes that land on you
 - Clothing can be treated with an insecticide (e.g. permethrin), which kills insects, including ticks, on contact
 - Avoid wearing perfumes or highly scented products which may attract insects
 - Make sure you sleep under a repellent treated mosquito net if one has been provided. Air-conditioning can be effective at reducing insect numbers in your room
 - In tick-infested areas, trousers should be tucked into socks to prevent ticks from crawling up the legs
 - Those travelling in Africa in areas where tsetse flies exist should avoid dark blue clothing
 - If you experience any flu-like symptoms, headaches, skin rash or fever upon your return you should seek medical advice
 - Avoid areas of stagnant or standing water, where mosquitoes are likely to breed
 - Keep to footpaths and avoid long grass when walking to avoid tick bites
 - Insecticide vaporisers can be used to inhibit mosquito bites and mosquito coils can be used outdoor

Animal Interactions

In any destination, planned or unexpected wildlife encounters may occur and while these experiences can be exhilarating, wild animals can also be very dangerous.

- The following tips can help to keep you safe while enjoying any once-in-a-lifetime encounters:
 - Observe and photograph all wildlife from a safe distance, being careful not to disturb them in their natural habitat
 - Do not attempt to feed, touch or capture wildlife of any size or shape, they could leave you with a nasty bite or sting

- Be aware of the possibility of alligators or other dangerous animals in and near areas of water. Do not swim or wade in waterways or lakes unless they are marked as an area where swimming is allowed. Take extra care at dawn, dusk and night
- Always be vigilant, even at animal parks or on excursions where animal encounters are encouraged. Ensure that you have sufficient travel insurance coverage for any animal interactions you wish take part in. Always follow the instructions given by the excursion guides, take notice of safety signage and supervise children at all times
- Always stay on designated trails, where possible
- If you find yourself in an area with a lot of signs that wildlife might be nearby, make noise and travel closely with others
- Check any closures or warnings issued by National Parks in advance

Your personal safety

When you go out

- If you are not sure where you are going and need directions, ask your Rep or hotel reception for advice
- When walking near roads be vigilant at all times and familiarise yourself with the direction of traffic
- Avoid carrying too much money or wearing excessive jewellery
- Keep all valuables close to you at all times and ensure your wallets and purses are not easily accessible
- Be aware in some countries traffic is not required to stop at pedestrian crossings
- If you're going out as part of a group, make sure you look out for one another
- Stay aware of what's going on around you and keep away from any situation where you don't feel comfortable. If you are threatened, do not resist in handing over your personal belongings. Take extra care of mobile phones and other electronic devices, and exercise caution when using in public areas, especially at night. Do not leave them on charge unattended in your hotel room
- Alcohol and drugs can lead to you being less aware of your environment
- Consider carefully if you should leave a pub, club or event with someone you have just met

At the bar

- Don't share, exchange or accept drinks from strangers
- Don't leave your drink unattended and nominate someone you trust to watch your drink if you are leaving it to go to the toilet
- Do not allow children to drink alcohol whilst on holiday, some destinations enforce strict laws which can result in heavy fines and/or prison sentences
- Be aware of how much you have had to drink and remember alcohol will dehydrate you and can leave you less able to judge a situation

Taking a taxi

- If you're calling a taxi from a public place, try not to let people overhear your name or details of where you are staying
- Never accept a lift from an unlicensed taxi, a stranger or someone you do not completely trust and if possible try to share a taxi with a friend
- Always sit in the back of the car, and never give any personal details

If you feel threatened

- In any situation, remember that you always have the right to say 'NO' at any point and you don't have to do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable
- Stay calm, and try to be firm and direct
- If you feel uncomfortable or in danger, don't be afraid to draw attention to yourself. Shout and make people aware that you feel threatened

Excursions and activities

- Before undertaking any activity, ensure you are covered by the terms and conditions of your insurance policy
- Virgin Holidays takes all reasonable care and skill to operate their excursions and water sports in accordance with local laws and regulations so where possible always book excursions and activities through your Virgin Holidays representative
- The safety standards of excursions or activities booked through any other operator or beach vendor cannot be guaranteed, and they may not be adequately insured if an accident occurs
- We strongly advise that you DO NOT hire quad bikes, jet skis or take part in any high risk activities
- If you are scuba-diving please ensure you allow 48 hours between your last dive and your flight

