



## TRAVEL TIPS

# Travelling: 8 mistakes not to be done !

You are planning a trip abroad ? So that everything goes smoothly, please ensure you don't make blunders. Here are eight mistakes not to be done !



### 1. To forget to call the credit card issuing company.

Imagine: while in Paris, you decide to buy in the stores... until they advise you that your **credit card** is blocked! Yet, you haven't gone beyond your credit limit. Impossible? Alas, no.

In order to counteract a possible fraud, financial institutions do not hesitate to freeze the account of their customers when transactions shown on their card appear to be unusual.

The solution to prevent this night-marish situation: advise the issuing institutions of all your credit cards that you are going on a trip. Also verify the expiration date of your credit cards and the credits available. And carry two credit cards, just to make sure you're not caught short.

### 2. To arrive at the hotel without reservation.

To land in a foreign city, without hotel reservation, may be quite the adventure. In fact, to look for a place to sleep, while you're tired and under the **time difference**, may be particularly agonizing and irritating. You will undoubtedly be tempted to choose the first hotel in view, which will not necessarily meet with your preferences nor your budget. And your not yet sure if there will be room vacancy. Brief, to avoid this useless stress, reserve at least for the first night.

### 3. Not to do business with a travel agency.

A trip represents a large expense. So, put all chances on your side. You can choose Internet to obtain information and prepare your itinerary. But to finalize the main, nothing beats the expertise of a travel agent, especially if there are several aspects to manage, such as flight connections, flights, hotels and car rental, or simply if you don't travel often. He will advise you, amongst others, concerning vaccination, transportation, accommodation



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and the tourist spots or attractions to see, he will target your needs and tastes for you to avoid costly or unpleasant mistakes, and he will discover goods rates – often better than the ones posted on the Internet.

Furthermore, you will save time: he can wrap up the transaction quickly, whereas you will have to devote numerous hours if you decide to take charge of all this burden upon yourself. You will also be better protected. Rightfully so, by law Quebec travel agencies have an obligation to hold a permit from the Consumer Protection Office (CPO) and to deposit the monies collected in trusteeship until this trip happens. Each travel agent must also hold an individual certificate granted by the CPO. In case of mistake or error done by the agent or of bankruptcy by the agency, you will be entitled to a compensation, which is not the case if you personally transact directly on the Internet.

#### **4. Not to hold an international driver's licence.**

You plan on renting a vehicle upon your next trip abroad? The international driver's licence (IDL) will then be a precious ally, regardless of your destination. Know that it's not required in all countries, notably in France and in North America (except in Georgia). But, even if a country doesn't require an IDL, the car rental company with which you will deal may require it.

It constitutes a proof that you hold a valid driver's licence permit in your country of residence. It will also be very practical should you get stopped for an **infraction under the highway code** of a country by an agent who doesn't understand your language. The IDL translates your driver's licence in ten languages!

#### **5. Not to inform his closest relatives of his flights and of his itinerary.**

You will travel more in peace knowing that, if you encounter a problem and that you couldn't communicate with your relatives, these last will be able to hand over your itinerary to the Department of Foreign Affairs, amongst others, and start looking for you.

It is also important that your relatives can easily communicate with you in case of emergency.

#### **6. Not to inform oneself on the itinerant fees.**

The international itinerant allows the customer of a wireless network to automatically connect to a wireless network of another country. Itinerant fees are however demanded. These apply to access Internet, vocal calls, text messages, pictures, in fact to all of which is received, downloaded or sent when you are outside the network area covered by your plan, and this, even in Canada.



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To memorize: the itinerant fees begin as soon as your cellular telephone is turned on. Even if you don't use it, data may be released, downloaded or received automatically. Brief, upon your return from your trip you may receive a rather steep invoice.

Ideally, it's to travel without a cellular telephone. But if you can't live without it, take certain precautions before your departure.

Several options are available to you:

- You can for instance obtain a trip package deal for the long distance calls and the data transmissions from your services provider. Think however to gather the information on the procedure to closely follow your itinerant fees during the trip as well as the amount accumulated.
- You plan on using your device only for local calls? You can then disactivate the itinerant network connections or program your device in «aircraft» mode at all times, because the overinvoicing is mainly tied to the Internet utilization, text messaging and data transmission.

You can also acquire a low cost device on the premises, or a prepaid calling card from one of the local service providers. In this last instance, ensure that your device is compatible with the network frequency used in the visiting country.

### **7. To travel without travel insurance.**

Without **insurance**, a cancelled trip, shortened or extended, a health problem or an accident abroad may be very costly. Examples: a consultation and emergency care in Vermont may result in approximately \$2,000 in fees; a three days hospitalization in intensive care in Florida may cost \$26,000 and more; a mild heart attack aboard a cruise ship, an evacuation, hospitalization and repatriation to the province of Quebec, may be as high as 37,000\$! The snag: the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ) reimburses only a portion of health services received outside Quebec, and according to applicable tariffs here, which are not necessarily the same as abroad or elsewhere in the country. Furthermore, certain services are not covered by the RAMQ, like emergency transportation, repatriation to Quebec, medicine or medication purchased outside the province, accommodation and meals of the partner if he must extend his stay.

There are also the associated possible costs linked to the trip cancellation by virtue of a medical or family-related emergency, flight delay or lost due to your stolen luggage that you will have to assume.

So, to leave with peace of mind, always ensure to have adequate travel insurance as soon as you leave Quebec. But first, don't forget to verify carefully the trip coverage, your collective insurance and the one of your **credit card** generally Gold or platinum), if applicable. They may be interesting, and it's useless to pay twice for the same



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protection. Only take insurance for services not included. It's possible, because travel insurances may be sold as a package or by the unit.

### 8. Leave one's passport at the hotel.

Passport Canada recommends to keep one's passport on our person at all times. In case of control, you will, in fact, have to present a recognized identity paper, not a photocopy. To that effect, the waistband money holder, or the hanging neck pocket, is much practical to securely carry the passport, under the clothes. Upon returning to the hotel, place your passport in the safe of your room.

But even before your trip departure, don't forget to make two photocopies of the identification page of your passport and of your important papers (driver's licence permit, health insurance card, etc.) and to leave a copy to a friend or parent in whom you have trust and who doesn't leave with you. Keep another copy with you at the time of your trip and leave it in a secure place but elsewhere than with your passport.

You can also scan the first page of your passport and download it on a USB key, which can easily be carried and that you will keep in another pocket than the one of your passport.

You can also email to yourself the scanned page at an email address you will be able to access without problem once abroad. Thus, in case of loss or theft of your precious document, you will have all the data to replace it quickly.

Hoping that these few pieces of advice will make life easier for you, travelling!