



Older people who journey to other countries often have many personal concerns. Unlike young backpackers who can hike non-stop for miles, eat anything and sleep anywhere, traveling seniors must consider their vulnerabilities. Some tips may help you avoid the unexpected during that next venture into the unknown.

Prescriptions: With flight schedules, weather and other unpredictable happenings, you never know when you'll be delayed getting home. Take enough daily prescription meds to last through your journey. Then add and take along an extra week's worth. Have with you a copy of signed doctors' prescription forms for each item. Keep another copy in your suitcase. Be prepared to display them at airport security and customs inspections.

Passport: Before you travel to another country, be sure it's up-to-date and handy to show. Leave a copy of the information at home with your family, plus another in your suitcase. Never allow the original passport out of your control.

Insurance: Before leaving home, check with your family insurance and/or travel agent about types of insurance that will protect you in all contingencies. For example, you may opt to buy insurance to cover trip cancellation, evacuation in case of disaster and personal property losses.

Though you may be covered by Medicare in the U.S., make sure you have sufficient additional health and accident insurance for the unexpected. You may need coverage in case of emergency treatment and hospitalization in a foreign country.

Join up: Don't be a loner: Book a trip to a foreign country with a group. Choose going with a church, alumni, age, gender or any other special group of like-minded travelers. You'll make new friends, and as you wander through the foreign countries together, you'll be much safer.

Respect your stomach: In foreign countries, young backpackers can eat from street vendors or pick fruit from native trees with no ill effects. Traveling seniors with tender stomachs don't have that luxury. Stick with well-cooked food in clean restaurants and drink boiled beverages and bottled water.

Cruise with a view: Forget taxis, buses and trains. A comfortable way for seniors to travel to other countries is in a large, modern cruise ship. This is especially convenient if you have physical limitations. Once aboard, you're only steps or wheels away from everything, including dining, entertainment, spas and pools.

Spend a little extra to book a balcony cabin. In total privacy, you can enjoy day and night ocean views. You can also watch exciting scenes as the ship approaches and departs from port visits. Another great fun part of a cruise is that you can choose to go ashore on excursions, wander port towns on your own or just hang around the ship to sun, spa and swim.