

BACKPACKING SAFETY TIPS



A Guide to Enjoying
Any Trip Safely

Backpacking Safety Tips

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Text by Sarah Scott

Additional text by Lucy York

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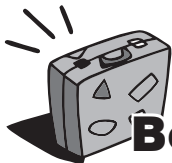
Introduction

Backpacking is an exhilarating and liberating way to explore the world, as well as a horizon-expanding opportunity to meet people from all corners of the globe.

Understandably you or a nail-biting parent may have a few concerns about the risks involved, but there's no reason why you shouldn't be able to avoid any major disasters. This book doesn't claim to have the solution to every tricky situation that you may come across on your travels, nor is it meant to scare or discourage you. Rather it will simply help you think more carefully about how to make your trip a safe one. Most

travellers don't encounter anything worse than the occasional hairy but harmless spider, so armed with this book and a bit of common sense your trip should be the experience of a lifetime – for all the right reasons. Bon voyage!





Before you go

Research your destination thoroughly

... by reading guide books and Internet sites and talking to others who have been on a similar trip. Pay particular attention to local climates and seasons, traditions, diseases and potential dangers to be aware of. Being informed about the countries you are going to will prepare you for what's ahead and give you confidence. Useful websites are listed at the back of this book in the resources section.



Learn a few words in the local language

... of the countries you intend to visit, especially if you are travelling to areas where English is not widely spoken, such as many places in South America. It is particularly useful to know how to ask for directions, where the toilet is, how much something costs, and for help in case of an emergency. Local people are likely to be more receptive if you make the effort to learn basic greetings such as 'Hello', 'Goodbye' and 'Pleased to meet you'.



Consider taking a first-aid and self-defence course

... before you go. There are also courses run year round specifically designed for those about to go backpacking, covering aspects such as how to prepare for your trip, personal safety, medical issues and what to do in an emergency. These courses aren't just designed to reassure paranoid parents: you will probably find that just knowing how to deal with a threatening situation, or what to do in the event of a spider bite, will dispel any apprehension you may be feeling about your trip, especially if you are travelling alone. However, you should never expose yourself to potential danger presuming you could deal with it just because you have this knowledge.



Visit the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website

... for updates on the political, economic and cultural situation in the countries you are planning to visit, as these can change very rapidly and it's important to be up to speed about what's going on before your departure.



Ensure that your passport is valid

... for at least six months after your expected return date. If you need to apply for or renew your passport, find out the time scale for processing your application and make sure you submit it in plenty of time to receive your up-to-date passport before your planned departure date. The UK passport service advise that they aim to process and return postal applications within three weeks, but this may be delayed so do allow plenty of extra time.



BEFORE YOU GO



TRAVEL TRIVIA

**99.985 per cent of all overseas
travellers make it home safely.**