



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

PASSPORT TO EXTREME FUN



www.fco.gov.uk/travel



PASSPORT TO EXTREME FUN

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 INSURE A GREAT HOLIDAY
- 7 MAKE SURE YOU 'KNOW BEFORE YOU GO'
- 9 PASSPORT TO ENTRY - CHECK YOUR VISAS OR YOU'RE NOT GETTING IN!
- 11 A HEALTHY CONSCIENCE
- 13 ON THE PISTE – ESSENTIAL TIPS FOR THE HIGHLY SPIRITED
- 16 IF YOU NEED US - WHAT WE CAN AND CANNOT DO
- 20 TOP TEN TIPS
- 24 DANGER OF DRUGS
- 25 CASH STASH
- 26 USEFUL DETAILS - TEAR OUT AND LEAVE AT HOME



INTRODUCTION

Travelling abroad is exhilarating, enjoyable, enriching and exciting, allowing you to let your hair down, relax and escape from it all. Through travel you'll discover new places, meet new people, experience different cultures, try new activities, hone your skills in a specific sport or maybe just lark around.

Whether it's a winter sports or adventure holiday, a long weekend away or a trip of a lifetime involving spur of the moment activities like bungee jumping, scuba diving, surfing, skiing or wakeboarding, you'll want to ensure that your holiday is remembered for all the right reasons. Don't say hasta la pista to those great holiday memories by taking the risk to feel the adrenaline rush – always be prepared.

With this in mind, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has produced this guide featuring handy hints and essential travel tips for the adventurous traveller, giving you a sporting chance to properly enjoy yourself, confident that you're well prepared.

PASSPORT TO EXTREME FUN

INSURE A GREAT HOLIDAY

You never know what's around the corner, especially when travelling abroad. Whether you're an adrenaline junkie or going away to enjoy some rest and relaxation, with the chance that you may dabble in sports, you need to make sure that you're covered for the type of holiday or activity you may try.

Research int the 18-35 year-old age group shows:

- 2 out of 3 went bungee jumping on the spur of the moment without checking whether their insurance covered them. This was 1 out of 2 for jet ski-ing, scuba diving, mountaineering and rock climbing and 1 out of 3 for snow sports.
- 1 out of 2 jet skiers were unaware of their insurance cover despite having had time to plan their activity



holiday. This was 1 out of 3 for mountaineers/rock climbers and 1 out of 5 for skiers/snowboarders.

- Despite activities such as skiing being perceived as planned activities, 10% of 18-35 year olds undertook a skiing holiday on the spur of the moment. This was 17% for jet skiing, 14% for mountaineering /rock climbing and 5% for bungee jumping.

Some typical costs for those without adequate insurance:

- Treatment of broken leg (in Europe) **£5-7,500**
- Treatment of broken leg (in USA) **£24,000.**
- Air ambulance (from Canaries) **£12-16,000**
- A week's hospital stay (in Greece) **£4-5,000.**

Figures supplied by FirstAssist.

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Handy tips when shopping around for your insurance policy:

- Check the FCO travel website that travel to your destination is not advised against as this may invalidate your cover.
- Ensure all activities, especially hazardous sports, are covered.
- Make sure comprehensive medical and repatriation cover is included.
- Make sure your insurance is up to date, valid for the entire trip and covers everyone who is travelling.
- Disclose pre-existing medical conditions, including those of anyone you are travelling with. If you don't, it may affect your claim.
- Check for any restrictions, including age.



- Check exemptions, including those relating to drugs or alcohol.
- Check that any equipment you are taking with you is covered in case it is lost or stolen.
- Check that the cost of hiring replacement equipment during your trip is covered.
- Make sure you understand exactly when and where cover is given – for diving check the maximum depth covered, for winter sports check whether off piste is covered.
- Ensure that 3rd party liability is included with your cover, for example if there is any chance you could collide with someone else or someone else's property/equipment while enjoying your sporting activity. This is particularly important if you are taking part in winter sports.
- If you have any doubts about your cover – check with your insurer before you go.

PASSPORT TO EXTREME FUN

- If you find yourself without cover, ask the organisers of the activity to provide cover or consider the purchase of top-up cover if you are involved in hazardous activities and have only basic travel insurance.
- Anyone travelling within the European Economic Area (see note 1) or Switzerland, should get a free European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). This is available by visiting www.ehic.org.uk or www.dh.gov.uk/travellers, or by calling 0845 606 2030 or going to a Post Office and will provide you with free or reduced-cost emergency medical treatment. But you will still need travel insurance.
- Ensure that you carry your personal details and details of your next of kin – some companies issue cover cards.

NOTE 1

The European Economic Area is made up of all 25 members of the European Union plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.



- In the event of a possible claim remember to make a Police report, keep any damaged items or get receipts or doctors notes as necessary.

MAKE SURE YOU KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

As well as learning the new sporting lingo and knowing your 'Goofys' from your 'Regulars', being able to reel off your 'Hola', 'Ciao' and 'Salut' greetings with confidence and panache can make a huge difference to your trip and the reception you get when you are away.

Learning some of the local customs could also prevent you from inadvertently causing offence.

The best advice is:

- Plan ahead to avoid trouble – check out the latest on the FCO travel website at www.fco.gov.uk/travel or by

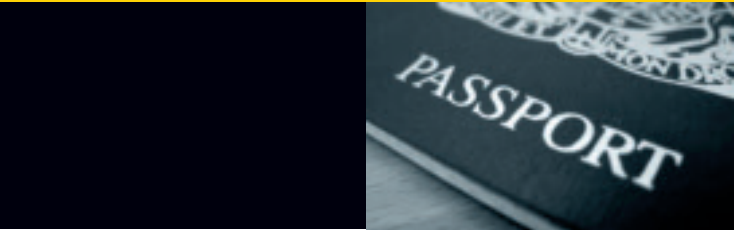
PASSPORT TO EXTREME FUN

calling 0845 850 2829 (see Note 2). Be aware of your personal security and take sensible precautions to protect yourself.

- Get a good guidebook and read up on your destination. Make sure you know about local laws and customs, especially those relating to alcohol and drugs.
- Take a phrase book – you may enjoy learning a few words – it can be invaluable in case of emergencies.
- Respect local customs and dress codes. Think about what you wear and how you fit in. Ask your tour rep or local guide if you are unsure.

NOTE 2

While we take particular care in preparing our travel information, that information is general and may change. Neither the UK Government nor any government official can accept liability for injury, loss or damage arising from any statement contained in it.



- Authorities in all resorts should publish information and warnings where necessary on weather conditions, sporting conditions and any other dangers specific to certain sports, areas or times. Whether you are taking part in water skiing, diving or snowboarding – it is a good idea to check this before you undertake any activities.
- Photographs – it’s worth asking before you snap so as not to cause offence.

PASSPORT TO ENTRY – CHECK YOUR VISAS OR YOU’RE NOT GETTING IN.

For a smooth journey, check whether you have a valid passport and the right visa for all the countries you plan to visit before you go. In some countries, if you don’t have the right paperwork you won’t be let in!

- It’s worth checking the expiry date on your passport before you travel. If you turn up at check-in with an out-of-date passport, you won’t be allowed to travel. Make

PASSPORT TO EXTREME FUN

sure your passport is valid for a minimum of six months at the date of your return. Fill in the contact details at the back of the passport.

- If you do require a new passport, make sure to apply for it in good time. In the UK, advice on how to obtain a passport is available online at www.passport.gov.uk or by calling the 24/7 Adviceline on 0870 521 0410.
- If you lose your passport, or it is stolen, you now have to fill in an LS01 form before you can apply for a replacement. For information about where you can obtain forms, see the UK Passport Service website at www.passport.gov.uk or call the Adviceline on 0870 521 0410. If the loss or theft happens while you are abroad, you should report it to the local Police and get a statement. The nearest British Consulate, Embassy or High Commission can issue a replacement travel document, contact them in order to find out what documentation you will need.



- Check visa requirements with your travel agent or the nearest Embassy, High Commission, or Consulate of the country you are going to. Our consular staff cannot help you enter a country, for example if you do not have the right documents.

A HEALTHY CONSCIENCE

Being ill on holiday – it could be sunstroke, the ‘bends’, altitude sickness or frostbite – can be a real pain and with no home comforts or familiar remedies, it really can ruin a trip.

A few handy tips include:

- Make sure you consult or visit your GP at least six weeks prior to going abroad to check that you are totally up-to-date with any vaccinations you might need and for advice on any additional health precautions.
- Check out the advice available online at www.doh.gov.uk/traveladvice and ask your travel

PASSPORT TO EXTREME FUN

agent about the medical facilities in the country you are visiting.

- Check that any medication is legal in the country you are travelling to and pack it in your hand luggage. If taking medication with you, also take the prescription and a GP's letter.
- For longer trips make sure you are up-to-date with dental and optical check-ups. Go to the dentist before you go and take a spare pair of glasses or your prescription – just in case!
- Be safe in the sun, especially between 11am and 3pm and wear a high factor sunscreen. Burning can increase the risk of skin cancer. Remember that you are just as likely to get burnt up a mountain as on a beach.
- Drink plenty of water. Dehydration is a very real threat at high altitudes. Also, if you drink alcohol or use some kinds of drugs, your body can become dehydrated, especially in a hot climate.



- Keep sugar levels high. An energy snack is a good idea to ensure your blood sugar levels remain high when participating in sporting events.
- If you have sex, always use a condom. Ensure you pack a supply before you go as they are not always as readily available abroad and quality/sizes can differ depending on where you are.
- Find out the local emergency number and the address of the nearest hospital when you arrive overseas. Your holiday rep/local guide or hotel/guesthouse will know.

This information could help save a life.

ON THE PISTE – ESSENTIAL TIPS FOR THE HIGHLY SPIRITED

Drunken tales can make great holiday stories and we all go away on holiday to have a good time – but fun shouldn't come at a price! Try to know your limits, make sure that you

PASSPORT TO EXTREME FUN

are taking care of yourself and ensure your holiday is not a 'wipe out':

- Be aware that accidents are more likely to happen after using alcohol/taking drugs.
- Excessive alcohol consumption prior to sports not only puts you at risk but also those around you. It can, in some resorts, lead to the confiscation of lift passes and the like.
- Self-inflicted accidents come at a cost: If you have an accident or injure yourself while on drugs, or under the influence of alcohol, it is unlikely that your travel insurance will cover you. You may have to spend time in a foreign hospital, where they may not speak your language or you may need to be repatriated home at a huge cost.
- Make sure you're fit to fly. There are severe penalties for being drunk and disorderly onboard aircraft.
- Never drive after drinking or taking drugs or get in a car with someone who has. Try to share a cab with a friend.



Never accept a lift from an unlicensed taxi, a stranger or someone you do not completely trust.

Make sure you remain vigilant however much fun you're having, and keep an eye out for your friends:

- If you are going to drink alcohol, know your limit. Remember that drinks served in bars overseas are often stronger than those in the UK.
- Consider very carefully whether you should leave the pub, club or party with someone you have just met. Be aware that the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to you being less alert, less in control and less aware of your environment.
- Be aware that drugs are sometimes used in rape. Once added to a drink they cannot normally be detected. Try to keep your drink with you at all times.
- Remain aware of other holidaymakers and acquaintances you have made. Rape and incidents of sexual assault are frequently perpetrated by 'acquaintances', however casual

PASSPORT TO EXTREME FUN

that acquaintance may be. And it happens to men as well as women.

IF YOU NEED US – WHAT WE CAN AND CANNOT DO

If you do get into trouble, you can contact British Consular Staff around the world who may be able to help. It's worth checking you have the address and telephone number of the local British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate before you travel. Your rep/local guide, hotel/guesthouse or local police are likely to have this information.

The UK consular operation covers most countries. However, in some countries outside the European Union (EU) where we do not have any British consular officers, and where there is an embassy or consulate of another EU member state, you may be able to get help from the consular staff of that member state. Also, Commonwealth countries such as Australia and Canada may provide certain consular services to British nationals in countries where the UK is unrepresented.



British consular staff can:

- issue replacement passports;
- provide information about transferring funds;
- provide appropriate help if you have suffered rape or serious assault, are a victim of other crime, or are in hospital;
- help people with mental illness;
- provide details of local lawyers, interpreters, doctors and funeral directors (see Note 1);
- do all we properly can to contact you within 24 hours of being told that you have been detained;

NOTE 1

Neither the Government nor the relevant British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate can make any guarantee in relation to the professional ability or character of any person or company on the list, nor can they be held responsible in any way for you relying on any advice you are given.

PASSPORT TO EXTREME FUN

- offer support and help in a range of other cases, such as child abductions, death of relatives overseas, missing people and kidnapping;
- contact family or friends for you if you want; and
- make special arrangements in cases of terrorism, civil disturbances or natural disasters.

Cannot:

- get you out of prison, prevent the local authorities from deporting you after your prison sentence, or interfere in criminal or civil court proceedings;
- help you enter a country, for example, if you do not have a visa or your passport is not valid, as we cannot interfere in another country's immigration policy or procedures;



- give you legal advice, investigate crimes or carry out searches for missing people, although we can give you details of people who may be able to help you in these cases, such as English-speaking lawyers;
- get you better treatment in hospital or prison than is given to local people;
- pay any bills or give you money (in very exceptional circumstances we may lend you some money, from public funds, which you will have to pay back);
- make travel arrangements for you, or find you work or accommodation; or
- make business arrangements on your behalf.

OUR STAFF AIM TO MAKE SURE OUR HELP IS ACCESSIBLE AND EQUAL TO EVERYONE, NO MATTER WHAT THEIR SEX, RACE, AGE, COLOUR, SEXUALITY, DISABILITY OR RELIGION.

PASSPORT TO EXTREME FUN

TOP TEN TIPS

- **DON'T BLOW YOUR COVER:** Be sure to take out comprehensive travel insurance that covers you for dangerous sports or activities, medical and repatriation costs and any equipment you are taking. Think ahead about any unplanned holiday activities such as sports – it is best to be covered for all situations. We cannot get you better hospital beds or buy you a flight home if a problem occurs.
- **LOCAL LOOKOUT:** Familiarise yourself with your destination, local laws and customs. Remember the security situation in certain countries can change rapidly, so monitor the news. Check out the FCO travel website on www.fco.gov.uk/travel or on 0845 850 2829 prior to and where possible during travel. Sign up for travel information updates to your e-mail address.



- **STAY CONNECTED:** Keep friends and family informed of your plans with a travel itinerary, particularly if you are going to be uncontactable for a period of time. Keep them updated of any changes. If you are taking part in an organised activity give them the contact details of the host company. Consider recording your itinerary and key details (passport number, insurance policy number etc) in a word document which you can e-mail to yourself and to any concerned friend or family member. In the event of theft of all your luggage, you or others will still be able to access the information.
- **HEALTHY CONSCIENCE:** Consult your GP regarding any health-care precautions and vaccinations you will require, at least six weeks prior to travel. Ensure you are in good health before participating in hazardous or strenuous activities. If you are on any special medication, ensure you have a sufficient supply for the trip itself and any delays.

PASSPORT TO EXTREME FUN

- **DANGER OF DRUGS:** When it comes to drugs, be aware of the consequences, which may be severe or carry the death sentence in the country you are in. We cannot provide you with a get out of jail for free card. Being under the influence of drugs can also seriously impair your physical ability and judgement. If an accident occurs whilst you are under the influence, your insurance may not cover you.
- **LIMITED LIQUOR:** Be sensible about alcohol consumption, particularly prior to physical activities. Accidents are more likely to occur if your ability and judgement are impaired as this can affect your insurance cover.
- **DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT:** Ensure that your passport is valid for a minimum of six months from the date of your return and it contains up-to-date information on your next of kin. Also, make sure you have the correct visas (including multiple-entry if appropriate). If you extend your stay, remember to extend your visa. Take copies of all important documents



(visa, insurance, passport etc) prior to travel and leave them with friends or family.

- **CASH STASH:** Take enough money and back-up funds for your trip, including access to enough for a return flight if required. We cannot get you a free flight home if you run out. Also, be vigilant about the possibility of credit card or identity fraud.
- **SAFETY MEASURES:** If you decide to undertake an activity with an organised group, you reduce the risk of things going wrong (though a risk still exists). Larger, well-operated companies are more likely to have stricter safety controls and contingencies for when problems do occur. The greater risk lies in undertaking an activity alone or with inexperienced colleagues or companies.
- **GET INTO GEAR:** Make sure that any specialist equipment for your trip can be carried by the airline.

PASSPORT TO EXTREME FUN

DANGER OF DRUGS

Be aware of the consequences of becoming involved with drugs overseas. Obey the local laws. Using or transporting drugs abroad carries heavy penalties. In many countries you could be imprisoned for many years – often in grim conditions; fined; or deported for offences that may incur a lesser charge in the UK. You can even receive the death penalty in some countries. We cannot get you out of jail.

Over one third of British nationals detained overseas were for drugs-related offences.

- Never carry packages through Customs for other people and do not sit in anyone else's vehicle or accompany strangers when going through Customs or crossing a border.
- Many countries refuse to grant bail before trial and often detain people in solitary confinement.
- You will get a criminal record in the UK if caught with drugs abroad, prosecuted and found guilty.



- If you've been caught with drugs abroad, you're unlikely ever to be allowed to visit that country again.
- If you get injured or ill as a result of drugs, your holiday insurance may be invalidated and your tour operator can refuse to fly you home.

CASH STASH

Spending money abroad is easier than ever before – so ensure you are not in the red when all you want to see is the big blue! The following tips should help you when buying that new pair of 'boardies' or fins:

- Check the validity, expiry dates and cash available on your credit or debit card(s) ahead of your trip. It's best to know your spending capacities before they run out!
- Make sure you have back-up funds such as travellers' cheques, sterling, Euros or US dollars or a credit card you don't intend to use except in emergencies.

PASSPORT TO EXTREME FUN

- Have a return ticket, or enough money to buy one.
- Always have some change in the local currency when you arrive in case you need to make a short telephone call, catch a taxi or get something to eat or drink.
- Check with your bank prior to going abroad whether you can use your debit/credit card in the country you are visiting.

USEFUL DETAILS – TEAR OUT AND LEAVE AT HOME

Make sure that at least one person (in addition to yourself!) knows where you are and all your essential details! Tear out and complete this form. Leave it at home with a family member or close friend, attached to a photocopy of the information page of your passport and your insurance policy document:



Write your details here

Name: _____

Passport Number: _____

Itinerary/Accommodation Details: _____

Insurance Company: _____

Insurance Company Assistance Tel: _____

Insurance Company Policy Number: _____

Credit Card Company Contact Tel: _____

Travellers Cheque Company _____

Lost and Stolen Tel: _____

Travellers Cheque Numbers: _____

Mobile phone number: _____

Email Address: _____

PASSPORT TO EXTREME FUN

FEEDBACK

We welcome your views on the support we provide. If you have any comments or suggestions about the support you received, please write to the address below:

Feedback

Policy, Communications and Training Group

Consular Directorate

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Old Admiralty Building

Spring Gardens

London

SW1A 2PA

Telephone: 020 7008 1500

Fax: 020 7008 0152

E-mail: feedback.consular.services@fco.gov.uk



NOTES



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Consular Directorate

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The Mall, London SW1A 2PA
Tel: 00 44 (0)20 7008 1500



COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

We welcome the views of our customers on the quality of the service we provide. Please write to the Head of Consular Directorate at the above address.



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