

## Make traveling abroad a breeze

**P**lanning a trip overseas? Today's travel constraints can make for unexpected delays and other headaches, so prepare ahead by following these tips.

Make sure your passport is current. The U.S. Department of State provides comprehensive information for both first-time applicants and those renewing old passports at [http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/passport\\_1738.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html). The site explains where and how you can apply, and the status for applying in person or by mail. There are also conditions under which you can qualify to receive your passport within a shorter time span.

Look on-line at the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) list of permitted items to pack ([http://www.tsa.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/Permitted\\_Prohibited\\_Facts.doc](http://www.tsa.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/Permitted_Prohibited_Facts.doc)). Then follow these recommendations before you leave and as you travel to ensure a safe, easy and comfortable trip:

- Travel light. You won't be as tired, and will have less to keep track of or lose to thieves.
- For faster security checks, wear clothing without metal buckles, snaps or hidden metal, such as in underwire bras, which can set off sensitive screening equipment. Shoes that are easy to get on and off, have thin soles, and contain no metal cause the fewest problems during security checks.
- In transit, use concealed pouches or money belts; or wear a purse with straps that can be slung across

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the chest. Keep important papers in interior jacket and coat pockets.

- Tape complete contact information to the inside of all luggage; use covered luggage tags for outside identification. If you lock your luggage, use TSA accessible locks.
- Keep in mind that a wardrobe that's too casual or flashy--for example, displaying expensive jewelry--broadcasts that you are a tourist and puts you at risk of robbery or other threat.
- When you're staying somewhere for a few days, ask to store your passport, credit cards and extra cash in the hotel safe.
- Carry an extra set of passport photos and identifying numbers for each member of your party.
- Take a phone calling card, and be sure to verify the access number to U.S. operators from the countries you'll visit before you go.
- Carry travelers checks and only one or two major credit cards instead of cash.
- Check with your healthcare provider about insurance coverage. Take a doctor's letter attesting to any pre-existing medical conditions. Have your doctor verify the need for any prescription medication if it contains narcotics; they may be illegal in another country. Take all medicines in their original bottles, and pack copies of all your prescriptions, as well as the generic names for the drugs.
- Ask a family member or friend to keep an extra copy of your relevant travel documents and your itinerary, including phone numbers, so you may be reached from home.

For more detailed information and related links, visit the Federal Citizen Information Center's website at **<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cfocus/cftravel06/focus.htm>**.