



OLDER TRAVELERS

Travel Smart. Travel Safe. Travel Well.

As an older traveler, you may face challenges related to health, federal benefits, or emergency services while abroad. Please review the information below carefully while making your travel plans.

✔ GET INFORMED

Learn about your destination before you go! Do you need a visa? Vaccinations? Can you take your prescription medications? Learn what you need to know at travel.state.gov/destination.

✔ TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

At least three months before you travel, check your passport's expiration date and review the entry requirements for the countries you plan to visit. If necessary, apply for a new passport at least two months before your trip. Some countries require that passports be valid for six months after your trip ends, and some require you to obtain a visa.

Review the cancellation policies for your travel, and consider purchasing travel and luggage insurance. Many credit card, travel, and tourism companies offer protection packages for an additional fee. Before you leave, give a copy of your passport and itinerary to a family member or trusted friend in the United States.

✔ MEDICAL INSURANCE

Medicare does not cover healthcare overseas. Many companies offer short-term health and emergency assistance policies to cover health care expenses overseas, including emergency services such as medical evacuations. We highly recommend obtaining health insurance to cover emergency medical and dental treatment as well as medical evacuation to the United States. Be aware of any requirement to pay costs up front before submitting for reimbursement.

✔ HEALTH INFORMATION

Check travel.state.gov/destination to find out if any health checks or vaccinations are required for your destination. Consult with your physician six to eight weeks prior to your travel overseas to allow time for required vaccinations.

Research the environmental conditions that may contribute to your specific health concerns, particularly if you are sensitive to altitude, pollution, humidity, or other conditions.

✔ PHARMACIES AND MEDICATION

If you routinely take prescription medication, be sure to pack an ample supply for your trip, and discuss with your doctor any adjustments to your medication schedule if you change time zones – both on the way out and on the way home. Have information from your doctor regarding your condition and your medication.

- To avoid questions or delays at customs or immigration, keep medications in their original, labeled containers.
- Know the generic name for your medication as those generic names may be more recognizable at pharmacies in a foreign country.
- Check with the embassy or consulate of the country you plan to visit to ensure that your medications are not considered illegal substances under local laws.

✔ ACCESSIBILITY

If you have mobility difficulties or use a wheelchair, determine what the access and accommodations are for swimming pools, public facilities, restaurants, bars, bathrooms, and other public spaces.

✔ BEWARE OF SCAMS

Scammers intend to get money from their victims by making the victims believe they will gain something of great personal value (financial gain, romantic relationships, helping someone in trouble, etc.). Scammers operate primarily via the internet, email, and phone.

✔ FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Know the currency rates and understand the financial system of your destination country. Inform your bank or credit card company that you will be traveling overseas so that they do not freeze your account. Ask if your bank has any international banking partners where you can safely deposit or withdraw funds as needed. If ATM service is not widely available or not secure, bring travelers checks and one or two major credit cards instead. Many banks in foreign countries will issue cash advances from major credit cards. Review the Crime and Safety section of the country information page on our website to see if there are any financial or ATM scams in the country you plan to visit.

✔ PREPARE FOR EMERGENCIES

Leave emergency contact information and a copy of your passport with family or trusted friends. Carry emergency contact information with you when you travel. Complete the emergency contact section in your passport. Know the contact information for the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate, and provide that information to your family and friends. If there is an emergency where you are traveling, contact your family and friends as soon as possible to prevent undue worry. Cellular plans may offer international calling and texting packages that you can use in case of an emergency—research these ahead of time to minimize costs.

✔ STAY CONNECTED

A smart way to maintain your emergency contact information is to enroll with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). Your information is stored securely and enables the U.S. Department of State, U.S. embassy, or consulate to contact you, your family, or friends, in an emergency according to your wishes.

✔ FOR MORE INFORMATION

Website: travel.state.gov

Twitter: twitter.com/travelgov

Facebook: facebook.com/travelgov

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program: step.state.gov

To learn more, visit travel.state.gov/oldertravelers

