

TRAVEL NOTES ADVENTURE BIKES, HAUTE CUISINE AND MOUNTAIN AIR

New cycling tours

Better start doing more leg presses at the gym. Mountain-bike touring company H+I Adventures has launched guided trips through New Zealand, Spain and Slovenia that combine mountain ranges with coastal trails, taking cyclists from the shorelines to the summits. Enjoy local food and a variety of digs, from mountain huts to luxury caves. Visit MountainbikeWorldwide.com.



Cycle through New Zealand. CONTRIBUTED

Gourmet trend

Bumping up to business class? Air Canada just hired award-winning Vancouver chef David Hawksworth to create the menu for the airline's international business flights and elevate the offerings in the Maple Leaf Lounges, beginning Oct. 1. The dishes will be in line with Air Canada's route-inspired menus. Break out the Aero-plan points and tuck in.



Yellow fin tuna on Air Canada. CONTRIBUTED

Bucket list: Zermatt

Now that the larch trees are about to turn yellow-gold, a fall break in the Swiss alpine town of Zermatt could see you celebrating the 150th anniversary of the first ascent of the iconic Matterhorn nearby. The number of tourists has dwindled, leaving you free to enjoy mountain railways, cable cars, glacier trails, hike-and-bike tours and fresh, car-free air. Visit Zermatt.ch. DOUG WALLACE



Zermatt, Switzerland. PASCAL GERTSCHEN

Theft-proof your vacation

ON THE MOVE

Tips to protect your belongings at the hotel and on the go

Loren Christie
For Metro Canada



Nothing can ruin a travel adventure quicker than having your money or personal possessions stolen. Following are some top tactical tips to avoid travel theft.

Credit card

Before you leave on vacation call your credit card company to let them know you are travelling. They can flag your card for any unusual or potentially fraudulent charges and put a stop to the fraud before it starts.

At the hotel

The public and transient nature of a hotel make it an attractive place to commit petty crime so be smart. Safes have become fairly commonplace but it is worth asking if your hotel has in-room safes when making your guestroom reservation.



Nanjing Road, Shanghai's busiest shopping street. Large gatherings give pickpockets the opportunity to blend into crowds, but there are ways you can reduce your risk. ISTOCK

If they do, use them.

If you are travelling alone also ask for a room close to the elevator. Do not answer the door to an unexpected guest. If they claim to be a hotel employee, call the front desk to verify. Use the "Do Not Disturb"

sign if you want strangers to think you are in-house and leave the closets and bathroom door open when you leave.

Crowd control

Avoid large gatherings. Whether it is a celebration, rally or

protest, pickpockets like to blend into chaotic crowds as they search for unsuspecting tourists.

Consider purchasing a travel-safe purse with a "slash-proof" strap. There are also purses and wallets equipped with anti-scan

pockets to assist you in fending off tech-savvy criminals who try and scan your credit card information.

Outer appearances

A recent survey from The Divine Destination Collection, Canada's curator of unique luxury travel adventures, found that its upscale clientele strongly believed that leaving the bling at home is the key to avoiding theft on vacation. Of the respondents, 76.6 per cent do not travel wearing valuable clothing, watches or jewelry, and 36.67 per cent admitted that they actually dress down while on vacation.

Party smart

Be wary of new friends. Without a doubt meeting people is one of the best parts of travelling, but not everyone has your best interests at heart. Keep conversations light and do not offer up any personal information, such as where you are staying or your cabin number if you happen to be on a cruise.

Also make sure to drink responsibly. It's fine to let your hair down on vacation but you always want to be in control and aware of your surroundings.

TRENDS

Global tourist numbers up 4% in first half: UN

The number of international tourists rose by four per cent worldwide during the first half of 2015 although security and health concerns hit hard some African destinations, the UN World Tourism Organization said Thursday.

Some 538 million tourists made trips to international destinations between January and June 2015 — 21 million more compared with the same period last year, the Madrid-based body said in a statement.

"These results show that, despite increased volatility, tourism continues to consolidate the positive performance it has had over the last five years and to provide development and economic opportunities worldwide," said the organization's head Taleb Rifai.

Global tourism figures were hard hit by the global financial crisis and swine flu outbreak in 2009, but have risen in each year since.

Asia, the Middle East and Europe, the world's most visited region, all saw a five per cent increase in arrivals, with the Americas posting growth of four per cent. But Africa saw a drop of six per cent. AFP

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