

all you need
to know to
enjoy your holiday



from your Travel Centres
at Braintree, Chelmsford
and Wickford

TRAVEL CENTRE

enjoy a rewarding experience...



More and more people today are looking at independent travelling. Package holidays have fallen dramatically since 1990 whilst independent travel now accounts for a large percentage of the travel market. Your **Co-op Travel Centre** is totally independent and as such guarantees honest and impartial advice on any holiday you choose and some fantastic savings too. However, before you take off here's a few useful questions and answers that could make all the difference between a bad experience or the holiday of a lifetime...

- **How long can I go for?**
- **How much do I need to spend?**
- **When can I go?**
- **What temperature can I expect?**
- **Can I speak the language?**
- **Will I have food problems?**
- **How can I feel safe and secure?**
- **How do I stay healthy?**
- **What does the small print say?**
- **What if I get bored easily?**
- **Do I need a visa and passport?**
- **How should I respond to different cultures?**
- **Can I bring back local goods?**



advise you of exactly what the package includes. Generally speaking, you need to consider how much you wish to spend inclusive of:

- flights • accommodation • tips • food
- sightseeing/attractions • spending money
- vehicle hire • pre-holiday purchases eg: skis, vaccinations, insect repellent, etc.

When can I go?

Your travel consultant will advise you and suggest the best times to visit your chosen location. For instance, you may not want to go to India in the monsoon season and you may not wish to visit Greece when all the restaurants and attractions are closed!

Also, bear in mind school holidays which can add to the cost, or that in some countries religious holidays and other events may mean areas are closed that you would otherwise have liked to visit.

What temperatures can I expect?

Good weather is never guaranteed but at least you can be given a good guide to the general expected temperatures. Many people travel to Europe during the school summer holidays but are not prepared for the high temperatures that are often experienced during the Summer months.

How long can I go for?

Your break can be anything from a weekend away to a world cruise. Typically package deals are 7, 10 or 14 night stays, but independent travellers are free to fashion their very own dream experience.

How much do I need to spend?

Knowing your budget will help your travel consultant steer you towards the best holiday for you.

You may wish to visit some far-flung location but feel it would be too expensive. Not necessarily, if you are prepared to go out of season or at short notice, sometimes the impossible can happen.

Our Travel Centres have immediate access to all late bargains and will be pleased to





Also watch out for ice and washed salads. Local restaurants may use tap water which could make you unwell. Avoid ice in drinks and only drink bottled water.

If you have a special dietary request, always inform your travel consultant who will endeavour to advise your airline and your hotel. Most airlines cater for vegetarians, gluten free, kosher and low fat diets.

How can I feel safe and secure?

- Always take a comprehensive travel insurance policy with you and ensure you are covered, especially if you have health problems. You should also bear in mind that you need to be covered if your money, tickets and passport are stolen.

Likewise, if you are going on a grand tour of a large country, the temperatures between cities can differ greatly. Ensure you know the variances so that you pack appropriate clothing.

Can I speak the language?

We are lucky that most countries speak some English but do be aware that outside of the major cities and resorts local people, especially older citizens, may only speak their own dialect. Be prepared by taking a dictionary, it can be a great help.

A dictionary may also be helpful in local restaurants where not all menus are in English. It is also true to say that locals will often be more helpful if they can see you making an effort to communicate. So give it a go, it could be fun!

Will I have food problems?

Be aware of your dietary needs. Food abroad can be totally different to what you are used to. Generally, most hotels offer standard tourist fayre, that is suitable for most tastes. However, if you want to experiment with local dishes, do try to select restaurants that are recommended not only for quality but for hygiene. Eating locally can be great fun but remember that certain foods may upset your stomach.



Not all policies cover this and it can be a very expensive mistake if something goes wrong. Ask your travel consultant for further details.

- Take travellers cheques and keep a separate record of the serial numbers. Ensure that these cheques are of the relevant type required, ie, sterling or dollars. Some countries change dollars easily and sterling may be a problem. Once again, ask.

- It helps to have a small amount of local currency to get you started. You can order this (currency available in notes only) from your travel agent commission free, although not all currencies are stocked.

If you are going to some destinations like Peru or Tunisia, for example, you may have to wait until you arrive. If possible, keep a small amount of coins on you, for tips which can be given to local taxi drivers, porters etc. Ask your travel consultant for details.

- Take extra ID as well as your passport and take photocopies.

- Check your passport is valid well before you go. It can take longer than three weeks in the summer to obtain a new one. Also check expiry dates. Most countries require at least six months before the passport expires.

- Make a separate note of credit card numbers and don't forget your pin numbers (but don't write them down!). Also check the expiry dates on your credit cards, especially if you don't use them that often.

- Check you have chosen the right methods of payment. Some countries accept cash but no credit cards, outside of major cities. This is often due to the high fluctuation of currency rates.

- Keep valuables, medication, passports and money in your hand luggage. Make sure this is lockable. Take spare mini locks with you. Women should be very aware of leaving handbags over the backs of chairs, especially in airports and restaurants. Ask yourself do you need to take valuable or sentimental jewellery on holiday, it could be

irreplaceable. Remember most insurance companies will not pay out more than £250 for valuables. You may also wish to consider covering camera equipment, etc. under your household insurance. In certain countries handbags over shoulders can be easily grabbed by motorcyclists so, once again, be careful but don't be paranoid, just be aware of the security of your belongings.

- Whilst on holiday use hotel safe facilities. If the worst happens, list the items stolen or damaged and report the theft to the local police, insisting on a report. Cancel credit cards and contact your representative or tour operator for assistance.

Finally, if you are physically assaulted contact the British Consulate (situated in most capital cities). This is especially important if you are arrested or hospitalised.

How do I stay healthy?

Check out whether you require any vaccinations or medication. Do not leave this until the last minute as:

- It is not always possible to take all types of vaccination together.

- Some vaccinations are not immediately available.

- Some types of malaria tablet courses need to be started at least two weeks before departure.



■ Some vaccinations taken prior to departure are only valid for certain periods. Check the date of your last vaccination.

■ Some countries require proof of vaccination, especially when travelling from high risk areas. This can be obtained from your doctor.

You should remember that if you chose not to be vaccinated and then contract a disease abroad, your insurance may be invalid. Be very wary of water. If in any doubt, always use bottled water. Make sure that the bottle has not been tampered with and refilled. If you are travelling to hot, tropical climates, ensure you have insect repellents, bite creams, suntan lotion and general medications such as aspirin, anti-diarrhoea tablets, etc.

Always take with you what you are used to from the UK. You may not be able to buy what you need abroad. Mosquitoes can be a serious problem if you are not prepared. If you are on medication, take extra just in case and carry prescriptions for any medication you are taking.

What does the small print say?

Always check the small print in your holiday brochure and insurance policy. Make sure you know what you are and are not entitled to before you sign on the dotted line. Things to check include: cancellation charges, free child places, occupancy supplements



for self catering apartments, single room supplements, infant charges, flying during pregnancy, weekend and regional flight supplements and flight delays.

What if I get bored easily?

Make sure you are aware of all the amenities and attractions in your chosen destination. If you have children, they'll need plenty of entertainment and a beach that's close by. Do you want lively discos or peace and quiet? Whatever you're looking for your Travel Centre has an Agent's Gazetteer that is an excellent source of information for up-to-date hotel and resort details.

Do I need a visa and passport?

Most countries require at least six months before expiry of your passport at the date of entry. Make sure you know when yours expires and allow plenty of time if it needs to be renewed, especially in the summer period. It can take longer than three weeks. You can get your passport form from your local post office. Selected main post offices also offer a useful system whereby if you pay a small premium they guarantee your passport back in ten working days.

Some countries require entry visas. These need paying for and can normally be obtained via your tour operator. Travellers over the age of 16 must have their own passport.

How should I respond to different cultures?

It always helps to be aware of what is and isn't acceptable in your holiday destination. Remember you are a visitor and as such should respect local customs.

For example, this could mean women covering bare shoulders and legs when entering places of worship. Take a large spare headscarf. Female travellers from a western country have few restrictions on what they choose to wear in public, however many countries, especially arab nations, are far less tolerant. So please remember when travelling - always respect other cultures.

Bear in mind that certain people do not like having their photographs taken. Ask politely and respect a 'no'. However, many locals are prepared to pose for photos in exchange for a few coins. In some poor countries you'll find sweets, pens, soap bars, etc are gratefully received. Some people find it difficult to come to terms with poverty which can be heart wrenching. Try not to be over generous or you maybe surrounded by hoards of people, it's amazing how quickly they can appear.

Haggling is a way of life in many countries. Sellers can be insulted if you do not join in. You may not like it but remember that it is part of their culture.

Can I bring back local goods?

Be aware of what you can legally take in and out of a country. Some countries have protected species, ie, pretty shells and untreated wood items bought in Fiji could be confiscated on arrival in countries like Australia. Certain plants or vegetables may not be brought back due to contagious diseases. If you want to bring back souvenirs just bear in mind that most airlines have a limited luggage allowance.

As a general rule, most airlines accept luggage weighing up to 20 kilos plus one piece of hand luggage weighing up to 5 kilos (toiletries alone can easily weigh this amount!). Airlines can be quite strict on weight, particularly on leaving the UK, you can be charged for excess luggage, so be prepared and pop your luggage on the scales at home before you go.

Travelling can be great fun and very rewarding as long as you are well prepared.

TRAVEL CENTRE

have a
great
holiday!



did you know?

- We are an independent travel agent and only recommend companies on merit
- We deal with more tour operators than most other agents
- We have direct access to late special offers
- We have won awards for our service from companies such as Leger, Unijet, Shearings, Warners, Titan and Crusader
- We can provide commission free currency and travellers cheques
- We sell holiday gift vouchers
- We provide good value holiday insurance, but it is not obligatory
- We specialise in tailor made itineraries to suit the individual

- We book airport parking and hotels, flights only, car hire, cruises, theatre trips, coach outings and tickets to attractions

For further information, contact your nearest Travel Centre at:

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travellers checklist

Destination

Date of travel

Passport
(Is there sufficient time left on your passport before expiry date?)

Insurance policy No.

Insurance tel no.

Time difference to UK

Airport terminal (UK)

Weather/Temperature

Visa(s) requirements

Language/Phrase book

Electric current/adaptor

Tel code to UK

Vaccinations/medication

Currency

Travellers cheques

Driving licence

No sharp objects in luggage

Weight of luggage

Hand luggage
(general guide 14 x 9 x 22 inches)

Sunscreen (factor)

Insect repellent



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