

Be Safe

*When You Travel with
Worldwide Central Travel*



Informational Shorts on Travelling Safe

The "Honest" Airport Currency Exchange Scam

Before you leave the airport, you decide to change money at one of the many currency exchange booths. The clerk hands you a receipt for the exchanged amount and then counts it in front of you. He pretends to make a mistake, apologizes and then counts it again. You are watching this process and are satisfied that he is giving you the correct number of bills. Sometime later you count your money and discover that you've been short-changed. How did this happen?

The Clerk manipulated the bills. As he counted - you were watching the top of the pile, but at the same time, he was taking a few bills from the bottom of the pile for himself (in the area of magic, they call this 'prestidigitation', meaning 'quick-fingered' or 'sleight of hand'). When the clerk pretended to make a mistake, he was doing this to gain your trust so you would see that he was an honest person. You walked away feeling that everything was in order.

The lesson is to always re-count the bills that you have just been handed. Never be intimidated by impatient people in the line behind you - and never step to the side to count. Do it right in front of the clerk - so that if there are any problems, you cannot be accused of pocketing the extra money yourself.

One more note: Pay attention to countries where there may be an issue with counterfeit bills. Learn how to hold the bill up to the light and recognize the watermark. (You will see all the locals doing this). Then when you are handed your exchange - even if it looks like a legitimate bank in the airport - count every bill and check the legitimacy of every bill. It will pay off in the long run.

WORLDWIDE CENTRAL TRAVEL ADDITIONAL NOTES:

Some countries have multiple currencies - one for the tourists and one for the locals.

A notable example of this is in Cuba where there are two different currencies:

1. The major legal currency for Cuba is the Cuban Convertible Peso, CUC. This is what you will have to exchange your Canadian dollars for and make all your purchases with while in Cuba if you are not using a Canadian based credit card. For international exchange purposes 1.00 Cuban Convertible Peso = \$1.00 US Dollar, however that exchange is loosely based on parity with the US Dollar.
2. The second legal currency in Cuba is the simple and lowly Cuban Peso, CUP, which is rarely used by the vast majority of tourists, but it's still something you should know about. Outside of a resort or hotel when you're travelling independently it's always handy to have a few Cuban Pesos with you. You get about 24 Cuban Pesos for 1 Convertible Peso.

When purchasing in the CUC be aware that local stores or individuals may try to give you change in CUPs rather than CUCs. Always check in front of the clerk/individual any change received.

Lastly, all of your tipping at a resort will be in CUC. Never tip in CUP.

You can see examples of CUC and CUP differences at:

http://www.cubacurrency.com/cuban_convertible_pesos_cuc.html

http://www.cubacurrency.com/cuban_pesos_cup.html

Another interesting article, **Cuban Money Matters**, can be found here:

<http://www.worldwide.on.ca/20130715-cuban-money-matters-newsletter.pdf>

Continued...

We are delighted to partner with Steve Gillick (President of Talking Travel / www.talkingtravel.ca) who has been in the travel industry for over 30-years and is a well-respected speaker and travel educator. These are designed to give you information about travel scams and how scam artists work. The goal is to be aware and informed. Still, there is no guarantee that, despite all precautions, you can completely avoid scam artists. We hope you enjoy these and that you travel safe.



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