

Be Safe

*When You Travel with
Worldwide Central Travel*



Informational Shorts on Travelling Safe

DO YOU REALLY NEED TO MAGNIFY YOUR TRAVEL PROBLEMS?

Budapest gained some unwanted publicity when, in one highly publicized case, a Danish tourist was forced to pay more than \$7,000.00 for a dinner for four. The restaurant had a notice printed on the menu, in teeny-tiny letters, advising patrons that the prices changed after 7:00 pm for both food and drinks. The pricing structure of the restaurant was re-enforced by the presence of some rather scary-looking men who ensured that customers paid their bills.

A traveller checked out of hotel in Southern Thailand, where she has stayed for a few days. There was an extra \$30.00 charge on the bill. The hotel clerk said that the charge was for the first night's dinner and gratuity. But I did not eat in the hotel that night, the woman explained. The clerk pointed to a line, in teeny-tiny letters at the bottom of the hotel registration form, which stated that a compulsory dinner charge will be added for the night of December 24th. The front desk clerk reminded the customer that she did sign the registration slip on arrival and therefore was responsible for the charge whether she ate at the hotel or not.

A customer paid the taxi driver the fare on the meter, but the driver, who spoke no English, started arguing for more money and nearly became hysterical when the passenger tried to leave the vehicle. A passer-by explained that there was a taxi surcharge after 6:00 pm and the man had to pay it. The customer asked how he would have known this information. The response was that it was clearly marked on signs at the airport taxi stand. The passenger angrily paid the fare. Returning to the airport a few days later, he asked about the sign. There it was, clearly printed in teeny-tiny letters, that a surcharge would apply to all fares originating at the airport or in the city.

Stories like this provide a good education for travellers. Be aware of your surroundings. Be extra cautious when you know that your jet lag may interrupt your logical thinking process. Have your tour guide or friends or hotel concierge recommend reliable restaurants. Read a review of the restaurant in your favourite guidebook. Ask for taxi information at the tourist counter at the arrivals level of the airport. Ask questions about prices. Don't be shy. It is easier to do a bit of research rather than lug a magnifying glass and a translator everywhere you travel! And if you find tiny wording and you are told not to worry about it - don't give in and don't trust someone with a nice smile. They will inevitably NOT be around when it comes time to pay the bill. Always know what you are getting in to.

The motto of the savvy traveller is... If in doubt - just walk out.

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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