

# The Ultimate Q&A Handbook for Travelers



A Compilation of **TRAVEL ADVICE**  
*you won't find anywhere else*

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<b>AIRPORT TRAVEL.....</b>	<b>1 - 10</b>
Airport Apparel • First Class Upgrades • Bare Feet in Airports • Duty-Free Shops • Sleeping on Airplanes • Luxury Flying Mansion • Airplane Seat to Avoid • Flight Attendants • Airport Lounges • Airport Perks	
<b>ON THE ROAD.....</b>	<b>11 - 12</b>
Universal traffic laws • Dangerous Places to Drive	
<b>LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION.....</b>	<b>13 - 20</b>
Train Travel • Selfie Dangers • Eating Challenges • Where never to Travel Alone • Dangerous Amusement Park Rides • Abandoned Civilizations • Beautiful Spots in Every State • Island Getaways	
<b>TRAVEL DESTINATIONS.....</b>	<b>21 - 24</b>
New York • Disney World • China's Glass Bridge • Niagara Falls	
<b>ON VACATION.....</b>	<b>25 - 26</b>
What Never to Pack • Fall Vacations	



No matter where in the world you travel, one can always find brochures, maps and guides to local destinations and area information.

But the 'official' tourist materials don't always include insider tips and fascinating tidbits of little-known local lore.

The purpose of this e-book is to answer some of the questions from those who don't want to take the standard tour, but rather prefer a **combination of useful hints and fascinating narrations that can't be found anywhere else.**

This compilation of travel advice is **The Ultimate Q&A Handbook for Travelers...** those who seek to discover a little more than the typical brochures provide.

*Enjoy!*

Q:

➔ *Does what I wear in the airport matter?*

A:

**ABSOLUTELY!** What you choose to wear at the airport can mean the difference between sailing smoothly through security or getting bogged down with hassles and unnecessary delays.

Consider these examples...



- **Hair pins/belt buckles:** These are known triggers for metal detectors.
- **Hats, sunglasses, or anything that shields your identity:** These only give you more items to remove at security.
- **Cargo pants:** Too many pockets mean more to empty out, and can look suspicious to TSA agents.
- **Slip-on shoes:** Faster and easier to remove and put back on again.
- **Easy-to-remove outer wear:** Jackets/sweaters with snaps or tie-closures are simpler than those with clasps or buttons.
- **Fitted garments:** Baggy clothing can invite a 'pat-down' if loose enough to hide prohibited items.

Give your airport wardrobe some forethought and try to anticipate any apparel or accessories that may cause a slow-down in the security line. You'll find that **these extra steps taken beforehand will eliminate many of the annoyances associated with the overall security process.**

## ☑ TRAVEL TIP: Opt for Comfort

We all want to look our best when traveling, but remember that those great shoes or fashionable ensemble may not *feel* as good as they *look*, after spending hours in the airport and on the plane!

Q:

➔ *How can I get upgraded to first class?*

A:

**The first thing you should know: UPGRADES RARELY HAPPEN.**

That having been said, it's not *impossible* to score a free upgrade, but don't expect it to be the result of dressing up in fancy garments, or weaseling your way in with sob stories, or 'buttering up' airport staff.

On the few occasions when unsold first class seats become available as free upgrades for travelers, airlines will always give preference to those who have been loyal and frequent customers; fliers who bring the most benefit to the airline.

## HELPFUL HINTS

1. **You should fly a LOT**, and with the same airline as often as possible. Frequent fliers are most commonly the first candidates when upgrades are available. Those who fly 100+k miles per year will always get top billing, followed by those with 25+k miles per year.
2. **Take advantage of frequent flier miles.** Some airlines will allow travelers to cash in these miles for upgrades. But be sure to read the *fine print*; a cash co-pay may also be required with frequent flier trade-ups.
3. **Make a wish.** Obviously, this isn't a sure-fire method for gaining upgraded seating, but depending upon the circumstances, sometimes passengers may be chosen at random if rear seating is full. This can occur when airline staff needs to get the plane off the ground on time, for instance.



**BOTTOM LINE:**

*The best way  
to score a  
first-class  
upgrade  
is to be  
a valuable  
customer.*

Q:

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➔ *Why is walking barefoot through an airport a no-no?*

A:

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**One word: BACTERIA.**

You don't have to be a germaphobe to find that word frightening. It's one thing to come in contact with foreign surfaces in everyday public places such as grocery stores, theaters and sports arenas. But consider this:

The airport is one place in particular where travelers will gather from all parts of the globe, and as a result, an airport floor is a veritable petri dish for pathogens such as E. coli, Staph and all manner of undesirable contaminants.

***Then, isn't it unsafe to remove one's shoes during security checks?***

Not necessarily.

The removal of shoes and outer wear while going through the security line is a necessary evil for safer overall travel; a practice that isn't going away in the foreseeable future.

However, you can still protect yourself by simply, (wait for it)...

**Wearing Socks.**

It's that easy. While socks may come in contact with the unseen bacteria coating airport flooring, pathogens are blocked from being absorbed into the bare skin, particularly when cuts or abrasions are present on the feet. And socks can be washed.



**BOTTOM LINE:**



***Wear closed shoes (not sandals), and always wear socks when traveling through the airport.***

Q:

➔ *What are the best things to buy at the duty-free shop in the airport?*

A:

**We all know that most items sold at airport shops are a complete rip-off.**

Travelers pay ridiculous amounts of money for items that can be obtained on the cheap anywhere else, all in the name of opportunity and convenience. We are at the mercy of those stores who know we don't have time to leave the airport to track down last-minute forgotten items, when we can simply pay a fortune to have them immediately in hand. *And pay we do.*

But there are a few exceptions to the rule, and **some items are actually decent buys** when shopping at the duty-free airport stores.

## Here are a few examples:

- **MAGAZINES**

Not exactly a steal, but the cover price isn't outrageously higher than what you'd pay in stores outside the airport. It's a great convenience if you're expecting a long flight and need something to keep your mind occupied.

- **ALCOHOL & TOBACCO PRODUCTS**

The price of alcoholic beverages in an airport bar are notoriously sky-high, but when it comes to duty-free shops, you can actually buy bottled alcohol for as much as half the price of domestic purchases. And without the high taxes associated with imbibing, you stand to save quite a bit here. (Plus, you can take a small amount in your carry-in, if you so desire!)

The same applies to cigars and cigarettes, which typically carry a hefty tax when purchased outside the airport.

- **HAIR PRODUCTS & MAKEUP**

Airport shops commonly carry premium hair and beauty products at substantially lower prices than are charged elsewhere. A keep eye will spot huge discounts and out-of-this-world sale prices on these items.

Q:

➔ *What's the trick to sleeping on airplanes?*

A:

Ah, yes... **SLEEP**: the sure-fire way to make flying more bearable.

We all know how difficult traveling can be when we can't rely on the sweet escape of slumbers to make time pass by faster, and to take us away from the discomforts of ever-shrinking airline seating space.

But we also know that it's very difficult to sleep in a cramped, uncomfortable (and possibly noisy or odorous) environment.

## Here are some tips to help travelers catch some Zzz's during long, boring and often difficult flights.

- **Choose a window seat.** Even if you have to pay more for the selection, it's worth a nominal fee to have a window to prop a pillow against, (instead of a neighboring passenger's shoulder,) and not to have to get up every time someone in your row needs to visit the lavatory.
- **Carry on a pillow & blanket.** Eliminating uncomfortable neck positions with a pillow will help prevent painful kinks and cramps, while the comfort of a cozy blanket will soothe the body as well as keep you warm.
- **Use eye covers/shades.** In complete darkness with no lighting distractions, melatonin production is stimulated and the body has greater ability to drift into a deeper, longer sleep.
- **Eat and drink sensibly.** Consuming caffeinated drinks or sugary edibles prior to and during a flight will only serve to keep you more wide awake, and worse yet, you could spend the entire flight in a nervous, jittery state.
- **Read books, not screens.** Electronic screens are known to be inhibitors of sleep-inducing melatonin production, and should be turned off during flights if sleep is desired. Holding and reading a book are far more likely to bring about the fatigue necessary to doze off.

Q:

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➔ ***What's it like to ride in a luxury "flying mansion" plane?***

A:

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Let's face it... most of us have to endure the indignity and discomfort that is flying coach. But for those with an excess of coin and a thirst for the luxurious, there are far more desirable options.

*(Fair warning: the following perks of the rich & famous may leave some readers with a distinct feeling of nausea and envy.)*

Check out the fringe benefits of paying top dollar for a lavish flight to *anywhere*, in these top-of-the-line specialty aircrafts; the ultimate in opulence and comfort!

- **"The Residence"**: Thusly named due to its hotel-like occupancy, designed for two passengers. This amazing ride features a living room, double-bed, shower and luxury amenities. If you have an extra \$40k lying around, drop it on a ticket for this oh-so-sweet ride!
- **The "Kosmo Sleeper"**: Much like the above listing, only less expensive, less opulent and designed for one person rather than two. This flight features a cubicle-sized seating with comfy sleeping space, TV and reading light. Less ostentatious, yet still luxurious.
- **First Class – Cathay Pacific Airlines**: A ride in this pricey section will get you a huge space with an uber-comfy lounging chair, three full windows to yourself, state-of-the-art entertainment system and all the alcohol and beverages your flight attendants can carry to your cabin space.
- **The "Skyacht One"**: For those of you with 80+ million bucks to blow on a private jet, this insanely-pricey aircraft features 85 feet of *extreme* opulence including 5 cabins, a bedroom, conference room, cocktail bar, and even a mini-library! And those are just the quarters; the service and amenities are world-class all the way around.

If reading this make your mouth water, don't despair; you could one day too invent the next super-gadget or win the big lottery jackpot... then send us some photos from your luxury quarters in the sky!

Q:

➔ ***What seats should be avoided on an airplane?***

A:

**Depending upon what you deem most comfortable on an airplane, there are certain seats that can make or break how well you fare during your flight.**

Is it leg room you desire? Storage space? Or perhaps more quiet immediate surroundings? Answering these questions will help determine where *not* to choose your seat on an airplane.

## I WANT...

- **Leg room.** If you want room to stretch out your gams, don't settle for anything but a seat at the front of any section, where a gap between rows allows for extra stretching. (*Note: you'll sacrifice personal bag storage here.*)
- **Floor Storage Space.** Don't sit at the front of any new section unless you want to store all belongings in an overhead bin during take-off and landing.
- **Peace & quiet.** Obviously you can't escape *all* sounds in a limited airplane space, but choosing a seat near the lavatory or attendant station will only add to unwanted noise levels in your immediate surroundings.
- **Convenience.** If you know you'll need to leave your seat frequently during your flight, steer clear of seats that are farthest from lavatories, and choose aisle seats for ease of exit to facilities.
- **Comfort!** This one is a no-brainer; who *doesn't* want comfort during a flight? There is only so much you can do, but choosing NOT to sit in the back of any section is a start. In those seats, you lose the ability to recline fully, or at all. You also want to stay away from middle and aisle seats, where you have no window surface against which you can prop a pillow for sleep. Also avoid seats nearest exit doors, unless you prefer colder temperatures during flight.

Whatever your preference for in-flight features, always consider how the seat you choose might prevent you from having the most comfortable and convenient flight possible, and as needed, choose another seat.

Q:

➔ ***What do flight attendants want passengers to know?***

A:

**While a flight attendant is on board to be at your service, this doesn't give passengers a green light to run them ragged or abuse their courtesy.**

Attendants will go above and beyond the call of duty for most passengers, provided their services aren't being outright mis-used or over-run. Here are some tips that will help you get top courtesy service, when you *really* need it.

## What Flight Attendants Want You To Know...

- **Don't use the call button unless you *absolutely have to*.** Consider this the #1 gripe from attendants, who are mis-used by those who call to ask when the plane will land, and the like. Attendants make frequent passes through the plane, so unless you're ill, wait for the next pass with your inquiries.
- **Attendants are not babysitters.** Never ask your flight attendant to hold or watch your child, or even worse, hand them a dirty diaper to dispose of. You know you're bringing a child on the flight; plan ahead by carrying sturdy Ziploc bags in which to place items that can be thrown away during regular trash collection rounds.
- **Don't blame attendants for oversized carry-ons that don't fit into an overhead bin.** All airlines provide ample information via phone call or website with regard to specific bag sizes. Adhere to these bag dimensions, and you'll find the stowing process far more pleasant for all.
- **You *don't* have to be nasty or demanding.** While flight attendants are paid to be at your service, this doesn't mean you have the right to verbally abuse them or take advantage of their courtesy. You may have to wait for something or follow flight protocol like everyone else on the plane; it's a fact of life. But don't blame nor mistreat attendants who are working hard to accommodate all passengers in a prompt and friendly manner. Remember, flight attendants are people too!

Q:

➔ *How can I get into any airport lounge?*

A:

If you thought you had to fly first-class to enjoy the comforts and amenities of an **airport lounge**, think again. Even those passengers who fly coach can gain access to this leisurely escape from the hustle and bustle of a busy airport, and here are just a few of the ways to get in...

**1. Yep - *there's an app for that.***

All you need is a smart phone and a couple of taps to lounge out like a VIP at the airport, (for a fee, of course!) **LoungeBuddy** is free app that enables you to purchase instant access at hundreds of airports worldwide — suitable for occasional travelers. **Priority Pass** is a paid, membership-based app that results in overall cost savings for those who travel (and lounge) more frequently.

**2. Purchase a Day Pass**

If you're not a frequent traveler but still want to enjoy the airport lounge during your trip, take advantage of the day passes made available by many airlines, (primarily in the US.). This permits access with no long-term commitments or membership clubs.

**3. Airline Club Memberships**

This option is best suited for frequent business travelers, who mostly book with the same airline. An annual paid membership is especially good when traveling internationally, as it will often include alliance clubs from around the world. But one caveat: you'll need to check that airports you plan to visit actually have lounges, as these are found mostly in large, busier airports.

**☑ INSIDE TIPS:**

Check websites such as [FlyerTalk.com](http://FlyerTalk.com), [Ebay.com](http://Ebay.com) and [Craigslist.com](http://Craigslist.com) for deals on guest lounge passes, (you can often make swaps too.)

Or, if you don't mind talking to strangers, you can simply ask someone entering the lounge if they'll bring you in as a guest!

Q:

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➔ *What's the best (and most seldom used) airport perk?*

A:

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How many times have you headed into the airport and breezed right past the sky caps perched outside the front doors offering **curbside check-in** services? Much like parking valets, they've become such a fixture that many travelers don't even notice them, other than to offer a quick nod while rushing in to self-check baggage.

Perhaps it's the possibility of additional fees, on top of those we're already pummeled with while reserving the flight; but this particular service provides minimal cost for maximum convenience — why not take full advantage of such a benefit?

#### **THE COST:**

- While prices may vary from one airline to another, they're all relatively low-cost; often in the neighborhood of \$2 per bag.
- Many airlines don't charge for this service at all, though they do make clear that gratuities for sky caps are accepted and greatly appreciated... a small price to pay for their service and your convenience.

#### **THE BENEFITS:**

- Ever been on a family vacation with children? That's probably enough said, but we'll say it anyway — letting someone else handle your bags while you handle the kids is well worth its weight in gold.
- Lines are generally far shorter than those you'll encounter inside at the self check-in counter.
- If you carry a lot of luggage with you, letting a pro see to your bags will alleviate stress and strain on your part, leaving you more energy for security lines, boarding, etc.

The only down side is that once you've been spoiled by the convenience of curbside check-in, you'll find yourself a little disappointed when it's not available; not all airlines provide this service at all airports, or offer it only seasonally — so be sure to use it when you have the chance!

Q:

➔ **What universal traffic laws are never obeyed?**

A:

Remember the driver's test you took so you could get your license to operate a motor vehicle? The test requires you to know all the road signs, pavement markings, required actions for school zones and emergency vehicles and more; pretty much everything you should know before sitting behind the wheel.

Then, with license in hand, so many of us exit the licensing office and conveniently *forget* much of what we just proved we knew about traffic laws. Perhaps it's because some laws seem so obvious, yet they're totally ignored by many drivers.

## Traffic laws that are frequently ignored:

- **Turn Signals.** We know, it's *SO* difficult to take that extra second to signal your intentions to other drivers, but it's the law, and certainly worth the effort. The most often ignored rule is signaling in parking lots, where rules of the road are often tossed out the window, but more necessary than ever.
- **Passing Lanes.** If you've been driving for decades, you may have totally forgotten that the left lane isn't actually "the fast lane" ... somehow it has evolved into this as common knowledge, but did you know that the left lane is designated for passing only? Not frequently enforced, but true.
- **Full Stops.** We've all been there — a wide-open intersection, no traffic for miles, and a stop sign. We know there's no one else around, so we slow to a *rolling stop*, then proceed on our way. But it's a sure-fire ticket if the troopers see you; a stop sign *requires* a FULL stop before proceeding.
- **Yield to Pedestrians.** It doesn't matter whether or not a crosswalk is present; a pedestrian always has the right of way, period.

If you're one of those who don't pay much attention to these *seemingly* minor traffic laws, try to remember that the laws are in place with road safety in mind... and at the very least, following the rules will help you avoid traffic tickets and fines.

Q:

➔ ***Where are the most dangerous roads for driving?***

A:

Driving on any road, in any country, can be a dangerous proposition, with reckless or distracted drivers, hazardous weather conditions and mechanical calamities. But there are certain roads in the world that are particularly notorious for being dangerous by design. Here's a short list of a few roads you world travelers might want to avoid, unless of course you're simply a thrill-seeker at heart.

## Dangerous roads around the world:

- **Norway: Atlantic Ocean Road** – Built across a string of small islands, the bridge road is only 5 miles long, but much of those miles run exceedingly close to sea level. Frequently bad weather conditions and flooding waters often mean low visibility and treacherous passage for drivers.
- **Australia: Eyre Highway** – This 1,030-mile road isn't dangerous by design, but because it's one of the longest and straightest roads in the world, (and there's basically *nothing* to see along this journey,) drivers often literally fall asleep at the wheel, or fail to react when wildlife jumps out of nowhere.
- **Egypt: Luxor-al-Hurghada Road** – At 299 miles long, this roadway is largely devoid of gas stations, hotels and eateries, so there's *that*. But worse yet, there are a high number of robberies and kidnappings by local terrorists. If you travel this road, an armed security escort is advised.
- **Alaska: Dalton Highway** – A 414-mile stretch (305 miles unpaved!) with only 3 towns along the way, and NO cell phone coverage. If you travel this road, you'll want to prepare like you'll be out of civilization for a long while, because you certainly *will* be.
- **Bolivia: North Yungas Road** – This road has earned its nickname: Death Road due to its narrow passage, lack of pavement and guard rails, erosion from falling rocks, mudslides and waterfalls, and *seriously* steep (up to 2000 feet!) drop-offs, it's no wonder many consider this the most dangerous road in the world. Traverse at your own risk!

Q:

➔ ***What are the best places to travel by train?***

A:

Longing for the days of riding the rails through gorgeous scenery and leisurely landscapes? With so little time to spare these days for vacation getaways, more travelers are opting for airplanes to make for shorter trips and longer vacations.

But if you can spare the time to make *the journey* a part of your dream getaway plans, here are some suggestions for beautiful train trips around the world.

## The Ultimate Train Travel Experiences

- **Switzerland: The Glacier Express** – An 8-hour journey through the glorious Swiss Alps, with panoramic views of mountains, castles and quaint local villages.
- **Paris: The Venice Simplon Orient Express** – A 6-day romantic trip through Paris, Budapest, Istanbul and Bucharest, including gourmet meals, champagne and live music. (Available only once per year, so plan ahead.)
- **Canada: The Rocky Mountaineer** – Breathtaking rides on one of 5 different routes, ranging from 2 days to 11 day-trips. With stops at night to sleep in comfortable hotel beds, passengers never grow weary of the train.
- **Bangkok: The Eastern and Orient Express** – A 4-day journey through beautiful cities and lush landscapes, with private cabins and outdoor observation deck. The trip also includes a stop for a river cruise beneath the famous River Kwai Bridge.
- **Australia: The Afghan Express** – A 4-day expedition in private quarters through rolling green hills, tropical landscapes and gorgeous, ever-changing scenery. Includes guided tour excursions of national parks, mines and more.

Q:

➔ ***What are the most dangerous places to take a selfie?***

A:

Taking selfies is a popular trend these days, and with it comes an almost competitive desire to get shots that stand out in the *selfie sea*, if you will. With ever-growing frequency, selfie takers are also becoming risk-takers, trying to snap a unique, awe-inspiring photo that will go viral and make the world take notice.

Unfortunately, this same trend has brought with it frequent tragedy, as selfie hopefuls go out on a limb (*sometimes literally*) to get that perfect image. This is predominantly true with young daredevils — typically teens and 20-somethings — but even the older generation has taken unnecessary risks for the selfie cause.

If you're one of those who aims to capture a permanent memento of your wild, devil-may-care adventures, perhaps these examples below will remind you to **maintain a dose of caution as you set out to conquer the selfie-sphere...**

## ***“Not Such a Great Idea” Selfie Locations***

- **Bridges** – Even with a harness or bungee cord, standing on or hanging from bridge railings is exceptionally dangerous; one slip can mean a deadly fall.
- **Cliffs** – Much like bridges, a cliff is a place for caution and care. Never ignore signs or cross barriers in an effort to grab a selfie shot too close to the edge.
- **Train Tracks & Trains** – Many people have died trying to get a selfie on tracks with a perilously close oncoming train, or riding atop the train cars.
- **Tall buildings** – It may look graphically editorial to get a selfie shot with a bustling city far in the background below, but this can easily spell tragedy if you lose balance on a skyscraper; hardly worth it for a good photo.
- **Any location where diversion of attention can put your life in danger -**  
*Enough said.*

Q:

➔ ***Are there any eating challenges around the world that haven't (or have seldom) been won?***

A:

Eating challenges range from the amusing to the disgusting, and though many of us have no desire to partake in such gastrointestinal atrocities, there's still a fascination in watching those who do.

Many restaurants offer eating challenges as a means to gain publicity, and many contestants take them up on it as a way to get attention AND possibly win prizes such as money or food. Usually the best eater wins... but sometimes nobody does!

Here are a few eating challenges that have proven nearly impossible to beat...

## ***100-Challenging Eating Challenges***

- **The Breaking BadAss Challenge: Newcastle, UK** – *The challenge:* eat a 7-pound meal in 1 hour. Menu includes ribs, beef brisket, smoked hog, sausage, chicken wings, chili, coleslaw and fries. No winners to date.
- **The Kidz Breakfast Challenge: Great Yarmouth, UK** – *The challenge:* eat a 9-pound meal in 1 hour. Menu includes sausage, bacon, eggs, toast, pudding, hash browns, fried potatoes, veggies. Only one winner to date.
- **The Inferno Bowl Challenge: St. Petersburg, FL** - *The challenge:* eat a 48-ounce bowl of ghost-pepper soup in 30 minutes. Soup contains a variety of hot peppers, mainly Bhut Jolokia (aka Ghost Pepper), one of the world's hottest peppers. Only one winner to date.
- **"That Burger" Challenge: Danville, CA** - *The challenge:* eat a 5 lb, 12 in burger + ½ lb of fries & onion rings in 1 hour. Burger is 2 beef patties, 4 cheeses, bacon, shoestring fries and BBQ sauce. No winners to date.
- **Squeeze Inn burger challenge: Sacramento, CA** - *The challenge:* Beat existing record for number of burgers eaten. Burgers are loaded with as much cheese as burger, and the competition gets harder with each win. Current record to beat: 17 burgers.

Q:

➔ *What cities should never be visited alone?*

A:

While we don't particularly want to focus on the negative aspects of traveling, there are in fact certain dangers that merit fair warning, in an effort to help prevent mishaps or worse, tragedies. There's an unlimited trove of beautiful places to visit around the world, and many are not without peril.

It is our hope that noting a few of the more notorious locations, travelers may avoid danger through increased vigilance, and return home safely after a wonderful, mishap-free trip. Here are some places where you might want to take extra caution, and travel with companions for added safety, if at all possible.

## Cities Where Solo Travel is Not Recommended

- **Lima, Peru** – Rich in historic significance, tourists are attracted here from around the world. But be wary of criminals who take advantage of visitors with scams, robberies, and even hijackings.
- **New Delhi, India** – This region is a major hub of commerce, drawing both vacationers and business travelers. But it is also well known for an excessively high rate of sexual assaults against women from all countries.
- **Mexico City, Mexico** – Gorgeous coastal resorts and vacation delights draw many Americans here, but gang violence is also common in the form of attacks, robberies and kidnappings, particularly against women.
- **Jakarta, Indonesia** – A tropical adventure awaits at this popular getaway destination, but terrorism and kidnapping of tourists is an extremely high occurrence here.
- **Bogota, Colombia** – A beautiful land of floral scenery and exquisite coffee, this region is also known for drug cartels, terrorists and gangs who frequently target western travelers with robberies and kidnappings.

Keep in mind that these are in fact magnificent regions, and we would never specifically recommend not visiting them. But for your safety, please remain aware of the dangers, and always avoid traveling to these cities alone.

Q:

➔ ***Where are the world's most dangerous amusement park rides?***

A:

The thrill of an exhilarating ride in a controlled environment with just the right dose of peril is attractive to adventurous beings who long to flirt with an element of danger, while remaining confident of relative safety. But some amusement parks push the limits in an effort to satisfy the ever-increasing public appetite for thrilling extremes, and sometimes riders do get hurt.

**Check out a few examples...**

## Amusement Park Rides with More *Spills* than Thrills

- **Batman: The Ride - Six Flags, Georgia** – This deadly rollercoaster is not as much a danger to riders as it is to those in the immediate vicinity on the ground... this ride claimed the lives of bystanders on 2 separate occasions.
- **Mission: Space - Walt Disney World, Florida** – Some 200 people sustained injuries on this ride in a single year alone; many were incidents of cardiac issues, including two fatalities due to major health events.
- **Superman: Ride of Steel - Six Flags, New England** –The lightning speed of this coaster led to 3 different passengers being thrown from the ride, 2 of whom died. A track collision injured 22 in a separate incident.
- **Space Journey - Ecoventure Valley, China** – Built to re-create the experience of taking off in a space rocket, the inherent problem was that the ride was too realistic, and dangerous. To this day, it remains a mystery how 6 people died and 10 more were injured during a single ride in 2010.
- **The Big One - Pleasure Beach, Blackpool, England** – The height and velocity of this ride alone make it especially perilous; add to this several malfunctions and crashes with injuries... this ride might be one to avoid.
- **Action Park - New Jersey** – Yes, we mean *the whole Park*. This one merits special mention, as the 6 fatalities that occurred here involved not just one ride, but several different attractions.

Q:

➔ *Know any creepy tales from abandoned civilizations?*

A:

Shifting gears from danger to mystery... if you're a world traveler who revels in regional lore and historical enigma, you'll love these **tales of lost civilizations** that will have your hair standing on end!

## **The Mayans**

The unexplained disappearance of an entire civilization has been one of history's most perplexing mysteries. Among the more popular theories are that the inhabitants were taken by a horse-headed serpent, while some scientists consider the plague a possibility. One consensus among locals is that the region is haunted by a stone woman and other paranormal beings.

## **Angkor Wat**

This city of nearly 1 million people was emptied suddenly and without explanation, leaving the site untouched for some 400 years. Many have reported ghostly presences inhabiting the lands during the hours of night.

## **The Roanoke Colony**

Home to roughly 100 people in the mid-1500's, the entire colony disappeared without a trace, leaving only a carved word, "Croatoan" behind. While some thought the people had blended into local native tribes, their fates and whereabouts have never been determined.

## **Bhangarh**

This abandoned city is widely-known as the most haunted place in India. It is commonly spoken that no one can survive staying through the night there, due to intense ghostly activity and a holy man's curse. Other tales suggest a wizard who condemned the city was responsible for the exodus of its inhabitants.

### CHECK IT OUT:

*These are of only the short versions of ever-enduring enigmas... search them on the internet and you'll find a treasure trove of mysterious details to explore!*

# Location, Location, Location

Q:

➔ *What's the most beautiful spot in every US state?*

A:

Whatever US state you may be planning to visit, there's a gorgeous, must-see spot in each one. Check out this list of suggested locations and explore further if you're planning a trip to one of these states:

- **ALABAMA:** Little River Canyon
- **ALASKA:** Lake Clark Ntl Park
- **ARIZONA:** Havasu Falls
- **ARKANSAS:** The Buffalo River
- **CALIFORNIA:** Pfeiffer Beach State Park
- **COLORADO:** Garden of the Gods
- **CONNECTICUT:** Gillette Castle State Park
- **DELAWARE:** Bombay Hook Ntl Wildlife Refuge
- **FLORIDA:** Little Palm Island
- **GEORGIA:** Cumberland Island
- **HAWAII:** Haiku Stars of Oahu
- **IDAHO:** Rolling Hills of the Palouse
- **ILLINOIS:** Starved Rock State Park
- **INDIANA:** Brown County State Park
- **IOWA:** Pike's Peak State Park
- **KANSAS:** The Monument Rocks
- **KENTUCKY:** Cumberland Gap Ntl Historic Park
- **LOUISIANA:** Avery Island
- **MAINE:** Acadia Ntl Park
- **MARYLAND:** Clear Meadow Farm
- **MASSACHUSETTS:** Gay Head (Aquinnah) Cliffs
- **MICHIGAN:** Turnip Rock
- **MINNESOTA:** Split Rock Lighthouse State Park
- **MISSISSIPPI:** Noxubee Ntl Wildlife Refuge
- **MISSOURI:** Johnson's Shut-ins State Park
- **MONTANA:** Glacier Ntl Park
- **NEBRASKA:** Toadstool Geologic Park
- **NEVADA:** Bonsai Rock
- **NEW HAMPSHIRE:** Lake Sunapee
- **NEW JERSEY:** Cranberry Bogs
- **NEW MEXICO:** White Sands Ntl Monument
- **NEW YORK:** Letchworth State Park
- **NORTH CAROLINA:** Pisgah Ntl Forest
- **NORTH DAKOTA:** Badlands Overlook
- **OHIO:** Marblehead Lighthouse
- **OKLAHOMA:** Natural Falls State Park
- **OREGON:** Thor's Well
- **PENNSYLVANIA:** Cherry Springs State Park
- **RHODE ISLAND:** Newport Cliff Walk
- **SOUTH CAROLINA:** Kiawah Island
- **SOUTH DAKOTA:** Mount Rushmore
- **TENNESSEE:** Twin Falls
- **TEXAS:** Hamilton Pool
- **UTAH:** Btyce Canyon
- **VERMONT:** Jenne Farm
- **VIRGINIA:** The Devil's Bathtub
- **WASHINGTON:** Jade Lake
- **WASHINGTON D.C.:** Thomas Jefferson Memorial
- **WEST VIRGINIA:** Lindy Point
- **WISCONSIN:** Apostle Islands Ice Caves
- **WYOMING:** Grand Prismatic Spring

Q:

➔ *Where can I find affordable island getaway locations?*

A:

If you have a hankering for lazy tropical days on a gorgeous island beach, far from the hustle and bustle of everyday city life, we have a few suggestions for you that are certain to provide the leisure you desire. Have a look at a few lesser-known destinations to satisfy your hunger for paradise...

## Beautiful Island Vacation Getaways

- **Bulgaria** – Sun, sand and fun at beach resorts suited for smaller budgets.
- **Dominican Republic** – Sandy beaches, surfing & jungle hiking on the cheap.
- **Greece** – White sands, crystal clear waters and cheap accommodations.
- **Malta** – Secluded Beaches and superb diving at low prices.
- **Morocco** – Unspoiled beaches, coastal villages and seaside fishing for all.
- **Panama** – Day trips on sandy beaches, affordable food & accommodations.
- **Phillipines** – White sandy beaches on multiple islands at decent prices.
- **Poland** – Sandy Baltic Coast shores, dunes and affordable beach resorts.
- **Portugal** – Affordable fine dining and wine in brilliant, diverse landscapes.
- **Thailand** – Diverse landscapes, diving, snorkeling, backpacking on a budget.
- **Venezuela** – Waterfalls, endless coastline beaches, windsurfing and more.
- **Vietnam** – Long beach coastline, clear blue waters and bargain dining.

Q:

➔ ***What should be avoided when visiting New York?***

A:

New York City has unlimited attractions and things to do; unless you live there year-round, you have limited time for all there is to see and do... so we're here to help you make the most of it.

By avoiding certain common activities, you can spend a more quality time on things more worth your while... below are some tips from those who know firsthand.

## New York City *"Don't Bother"* Places & Activities

- **Taxi Cabs** – Expensive, stressful, obnoxious and often unreliable.
- **Times Square** – Crowded, overpriced and geared to take tourists for a ride.
- **Empire State Bldg Observation** – Long lines & pricey, with common views.
- **Circle Line Cruises** – Too expensive for tours you can get for free on the ferry.
- **High Line** – 3 words: *too damned crowded*.
- **Horse Carriage Rides** – Considered cruel to many, with chaotic surroundings.
- **Bus Tours** – Way overpriced for distant views; walking tours are far better.
- **Statue of Liberty** – Nearly impossible to get up-close views, at high prices.
- **Chain Restaurants** – Sample genuine NY cuisine; visit Olive Garden at home.
- **Street Carts** – Unremarkable (and questionable) food at high prices – *bleh*.

Q:

➔ ***How can visitors make the most of a Disney World trip?***

A:

If you plan to visit Disney World for the first time, don't go until you read this section; it'll save you tons of time and help you get the most bang for your buck.

First and foremost, remember that you simply *cannot do it all* in a day, or even a weekend. If you're planning EVERYthing on the Disney itinerary, you're in for disappointment. With that in mind, here are some things you can skip at Disney.

**DON'T: Sleep late.**

Yes, it's a vacation, but with so little time and SO MUCH to do at Disney, sleeping means missing out. You'll have no trouble sleeping after a full day's park activities to wear you out!

**DON'T: Stay far from the park.**

Sure, you may save a few bucks on a hotel, but you'll lose a ton of fun-time sitting in heavily congested rush-hour traffic!

**DON'T: Keep the family together every minute.**

Splitting up sometimes during your visit will enable more opportunities for each family member to experience what *they* want to see – so everybody's happy!

**DON'T: Keep your eyes on a map or the ground.**

Look around; explore all the wonders around you as you stroll through Disney's streets... you'll find many delightful surprises when taking in your surroundings.

**DON'T: Be surprised if Disney characters terrify your children.**

We know Goofy and Mickey are friends, but if your kids don't share this sentiment, don't force them to endure something scary for the sake of a photo.

**☑ USEFUL TIP:**

The greatest hint of all: **HAVE A PLAN.** Trying to 'wing it' at Disney World will have you walking in circles and wasting precious time.

Q:

➔ ***What's so dangerous about Niagara Falls?***

A:

Millions of tourists flock to Niagara Falls each year, for an unparalleled spectacle of nature at its most grand. But with breathtaking views and scenic grandeur come dangers that many visitors don't take into consideration.

**Here are a few of the more tragic tales in the history of Niagara Falls:**

**1930:**

Author George Stathakis attempts to float over the Falls in a homemade barrel, in hopes of gaining publicity for his book. While the barrel was air-tight and sturdy enough to endure the drop, it ended up wedged behind the falls, and George ran out of air and died before his body was recovered 18 hours later.

**1951:**

William "Red" Hill attempted a ride over the Falls in a poorly-constructed contraption of inner tubes and fishing net that couldn't possibly survive the 165-foot drop, and a day later Hill's lifeless body was plucked from the chaotic waters.

**1990:**

28-year old Jessie Sharp attempted to ride over the falls in a kayak, with no helmet or lifejacket. He miscalculated his landing, disappearing instead into the churning waters at the base of the Falls. His presumed dead remains were never recovered.

**1995:**

Trained stunt man Robert Overacker rode a jet ski over the Falls in the name of charity. His intent was to slow his descent with a rocket-propelled parachute, but due to a chute malfunction he fell too fast and died upon impact in the water.



**BOTTOM LINE:**

***Respect nature; Niagara Falls is no playground.***

Q:

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➔ ***Why did China's glass bridge closed so soon after it opened?***

A:

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Less than 2 weeks after opening, China's 430-meter Glass Bridge over the Zhangjiajie Park Grand Canyon was closed, leaving only a large sign indicating, *"Nothing to see here."*

A spokesperson for the bridge cited an overwhelm of Bridge visitors as the cause of this closure, making sure to emphasize that there was no actual problem with the construction of the bridge itself, (likely a reference to a similar glass bridge in China that had recently cracked.)

Apparently the bridge, (which was the longest and highest glass bridge on the planet,) was designed for some 8,000 visitors per day, but the demand was some 80,000 tourists attempting to experience this attraction - far too many to be accommodated by the facility.

Though there are no specific dates currently set to do so, the bridge may in fact re-open in the future, after its infrastructure has been fully renovated to accommodate the much-larger stream of visitors that flocked in droves to enjoy this magnificent man-made structure.



## **BOTTOM LINE:**

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***Glass bridges aren't always what they're  
"cracked up" to be.***

Q:

➔ ***What shouldn't I bother packing for vacation?***

A:

It's normal to want to be prepared when you go away from home, even if only for a few days. The biggest worry is what you might forget to pack, that you'd hate to need (and not have) when you're traveling. You know there will be things you'll pack and never end up using, and aren't particularly bothered by the idea that you'll be unpacking those unused items when you return home again.

By all means, pack underwear, climate-appropriate clothing and any medicines you know you'll need to take; but there are probably a few things you can do without, (unless you're trekking off to the jungle or some other place far away from civilization.)

**Here are a few items you might want to consider leaving behind,** (unless you want to lug them around unnecessarily, that is):

- **Airport security no-no's** – check TSA regs in advance for prohibited items.
- **Hair Dryer & Products** – Hotels provide these, (or your host, if staying with friends/family...) Why carry your own?
- **Towels** – These are bulky, and again, hotels or your host should have plenty.
- **10 pairs of shoes** – You have 2 feet; how many shoes will you *really* need?
- **More than 1 book** – How much time will you spend reading on vacation?
- **Valuables** – Other than what you wear, leave these items safely at home.
- **Too many electronics** – Pick one gadget and unplug from the rest for awhile.
- **Workout Gear** – If you really want to exercise on vacation, take a nice hike.
- **Personal Mementos** – Anything you'd be heartbroken to lose, leave behind.

## ☑ USEFUL TIP:

Remember that there will probably be shopping centers where you're going, and hotels provide many of the necessities you'll need. To make the most of your travels, try to travel light; you'll be glad you did... the less weight you have to lug around, the better.

Q:

➔ *Where should travelers go for the best Fall vacations?*

A:

**Brilliant, glorious Fall colors and seasonal festivals make Autumn the perfect time of year for vacation travel** – or even just a weekend getaway. If you long to get ‘back in touch’ with nature, this is the time to do it. Grab a suitcase and head out for the rejuvenation of fresh air and magnificent foliage.

And if you’re not sure where you’re going, check out this handy list for ideas....

## Gorgeous Fall Getaway Suggestions

- **Virginia: Carter Mountain Orchard** – Beautiful expanses of apple orchards and exquisite landscapes; perfect for family getaways.
- **Washington: Leavenworth** – Experience the annual Oktoberfest festival and stay at the uniquely rustic Bavarian Lodge.
- **North Carolina: Bald Head Island** – Take a sailboat or kayak tour for extraordinary views of gorgeous coastal beaches and Fall landscapes.
- **California: Napa** – Napa Valley vineyards are a must-see, particularly during the Autumn season when temperatures are especially pleasant.
- **New Hampshire: Laconia** – Lavish Fall colors and seasonal atmosphere make a trip to the pumpkin festival a delight for visitors of all ages.
- **South Carolina: Charleston** – The historic district provides extraordinary scenery and world-famous culinary tours to please any palate.
- **Blue Ridge Parkway** – If you want to make the journey your destination, a driving trip through the Blue Ridge Parkway provides dazzling Autumn views and colors galore. This is a must-do trip for any bucket list!

# The Ultimate Q&A Handbook for Travelers



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