

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a yellow ribbed sweater, is seen from behind, rowing a canoe on a calm lake. She is holding a lit lantern in her right hand. The background shows a forested shoreline under a soft, twilight sky. The text is overlaid in a white, cursive font.

How to Travel Safely,  
Intelligently and  
Confidently on your  
next adventure.

*Transformational experience*—the phrase people often use to describe their first solo trip. Over the past 3 years I have gone to 28 different countries and 45 different US states. Many of them have been solo travel. I am always asked “aren’t you fearful, afraid, anxious”... the list goes on! Sure, sometimes, but aren’t you frightened of going to the dentist or doctor? You do it though because it’s good for your health, right? For me, travel is under the category ‘good for my health’. It has expanded my heart, opened my mind and broadened my perspective. I continue to positively step outside of my comfort zone, and learn and grow as a human.

You’re thinking—yes, this sounds fantastic! I want to overcome my fears! Sign me up! But wait, before committing to this life changing experience, what is the ultimate worry? SAFETY... Ah yes, with theft and harassment and the connection it has to assault, who wouldn’t have concerns?

Being a Martial Artist since age 5, I have learned valuable tools that have been applied to every travel venture. No, they aren’t going around from country to country throwing roundhouse kicks—it’s actually quite the opposite! It’s all about preparation, awareness and avoiding situations where you need any combative forces.

Although I have many safety guidelines, I will start with five. These preparation tips will help you build more confidence and appear less vulnerable in your travels.

- It Starts Before You Go •

Book a flight that has you arriving in the morning or during the day. You will be able to head to your hotel at a decent hour, see better in daylight and you are not lugging a suitcase or backpack around in the dark. You are more susceptible to being a target when your hands are tied. During the day, you can also feel out the city or town where you can gauge any foreseeable threats. If you find a flight that arrives at night, book a hotel by the airport and begin your journey the next day.

- Don’t Scream Tourist! •

One of the biggest tools for me is to download Google Maps prior to my trip. You can download offline maps that work off a satellite sans WIFI. Stick one ear bud in and don’t look down at your phone for directions. Always keep your eyes up, act as if you know where you are going and let SIRI lead you to your destination. If you need to look at your phone, go to the nearest shop or back up against a wall where you still have your

peripheral vision—not everyone has eyes in the back of their head. Maybe you need to ask for directions? Sure, but don't lead on that you are alone. Pretend your friends are waiting for you.

- Separate Your Money and Identification Cards •

Don't have your money and ID's all in one place. Separate your money in different pockets or perhaps in your sock! Depending on the destination, some places have real con artists, so your front pockets would be best or a backpack with a lock on it. Keep extra cash and cards at the hotel. Make sure you send copies to friends and family of your passport and any other ID.

- ALWAYS Be Aware of Your Surroundings •

You want to see a situation before it sees you. Take wide corners when walking on the sidewalk because muggers engage on the element of surprise behind walls, bushes, corners etc. Never take the same route. Be unpredictable and walk into shops often.

When 15 minutes has passed—you should be aware that the guy in the plaid shirt is still in the vicinity. No sketchy alleys day or night—period. Avoid walking through or close to big groups of people especially during rowdy hours. Again, see it before it sees you.

- Instinct •

ALWAYS trust your instinct. I can't stress this enough, we have it for a reason. If something feels off or wrong, you are absolutely right. Get out of there as soon as possible.

Being a cautious traveler has never stopped me from having fun. If anything, it enhanced my experience because I was more composed. I've never had anything stolen or been hassled when traveling and it is simply because I avoid a bad situation. Now go out and have a blast! But do it safely, intelligently and confidently.

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