







Assist America operates emergency
Operations Centers 24/7 from
locations that are strategically
located to provide services globally.
Our members enjoy reliable support
and freedom from dealing with
complex decisions and financial
considerations during difficult times.
They also gain security knowing that
initiating Assist America services
activates our network of resources to
respond to travel emergencies.

Utilize the Assist America Travel App to gain access to travel assistance services when you need it. During a travel emergency, you can use the "Tap for Help" button anytime, anywhere to connect with our Operation Center and receive services.





#### TRAVEL EMERGENCY KITS



A well-stocked emergency kit is an essential travel companion, providing crucial assistance in the event of unforeseen situations. Whether a minor health issue, a weather-related delay, or an unexpected event, being prepared with the right supplies ensures greater safety and peace of mind.

#### Medical Necessities

The emergency kit should contain basic medical supplies that address a wide range of minor injuries and common illnesses. Essential items include adhesive bandages in various sizes, sterile gauze, and antiseptic wipes. Over-the-counter pain medications, antihistamines for allergies, antacids for digestive issues, anti-diarrheal medications, and remedies for colds or flu-like symptoms should also be included. Additional supplies like tweezers,



scissors (if permitted by airline regulations), alcohol antibacterial and antifungal creams, and a thermometer are also strongly recommended.

Personal prescription medications must be packed in sufficient quantities

The emergency kit can include additional gear beyond core medical supplies to enhance emergency preparedness.

to cover the full duration of the trip, with allowance for unexpected delays. Each medication should be stored in its original, properly labeled container, along with written copies of the prescriptions, detailing the generic names, strength, dosage instructions, and the prescribing physician's contact information. Controlled substances or injectable medications require a physician's note on letterhead. A copy of these prescriptions should also be left with a trusted individual at home for added security. Families traveling with children may need to include pediatric formulations of common medications, oral rehydration packets, and diaper wipes.

#### **Additional Considerations**

Depending on the nature of the trip and destination, the emergency kit can include additional gear beyond core medical supplies to enhance emergency preparedness. A fully charged mobile phone and a portable power bank are critical for communication. Printed copies of essential documents - such as passports, identification cards, travel insurance and travel assistance details, emergency contacts, and medical records, should be kept in waterproof pouches, with digital backups securely stored online or on encrypted flash drives.

Other equipment for consideration includes a small LED flashlight with extra batteries, a multi-tool or compact Swiss Army knife (if permitted), items like duct tape for makeshift repairs, and an additional lock for luggage for added security whileintransitorataccommodations. Personal safety gear, such as a loud whistle or personal alarm, can help attract attention if needed. In some regions, pepper spray may be appropriate, though travelers must verify its legality in advance. Hand sanitizer, disposable gloves, and masks are strongly advised in high-traffic or health-sensitive environments. Feminine products should also be included, as



For remote or under-resourced areas, nonperishable, high-energy snacks such as protein bars, nuts, and dried fruits can offer nutritional support. Additionally, for regions with uncertain water quality, a refillable water bottle can be essential, with purification tablets or a portable filter system to ensure a supply of safe drinking water.

#### Adapting for Climate

For colder destinations, thermal blankets and hand warmers can provide protection against hypothermia. In tropical or insectprone areas, insect repellent and mosquito netting are important safeguards. In hot climates,

Store all emergency kit contents in a compact, durable, waterproof bag and keep it readily accessible

lip and balm can protect against sunburn, while oral rehydration salts are useful for maintaining hydration during periods of strenuous activity. Motion sickness pills can provide comfort during extended travel by sea or air, while preventive medications for

altitude sickness may be pertinent for high-altitude destinations.

To ensure quick access, store all emergency kit contents in a durable, waterproof compact, bag and keep it readily accessible, preferably not in checked luggage. Regularly review and update the kit's contents, check expiration dates, and tailor it to the specific requirements for each trip.

#### DOWNLOAD THE ASSIST AMERICA TRAVEL APP

FOR TRAVEL ASSISTANCE WHEREVER YOU GO







### CAMPING INJURY

- In Colorado -



Minthe\* had been on her annual camping trip with her husband in Colorado. On the hike back to their cabin, her husband fell and broke his ankle. While in the hospital with her spouse, Minthe contacted Assist America to help them get back home. Due to the injury to his ankle, her husband would not be able to safely endure the car ride back home, as they had driven out to their cabin to begin with. Minthe asked the Operations Case Manager if there was any way that Assist America could help them in their time of need.

Once the Assist America Operations Case Manager collected all necessary information from Minthe, they immediately began the process of medical monitoring to assess her husband's condition. Once he was granted medical clearance from the hospital and Assist America's consulting physicians, the Operations team made the necessary arrangements to bring him home by booking a business-class commercial flight to accommodate his injury, and organizing ground transportation and wheelchair assistance to and from the airports. Assist America also arranged for the return of their vehicle to the couple's residence.



TRAVEL PREP FALL 2025 TRAVEL PREP FALL 2025

## NAVIGATING THE SKIES



Beyond

### What's New in Air Travel

This Fall?

If it's been a while since your last trip through the airport, now might be a good time to revisit your checklist—because travel air travel, both domestic and international, has changed in ways that could catch even seasoned flyers off guard. From new rules about what you can pack to increased tech scrutiny and evolving international entry systems, the landscape of global travel is shifting fast.

One of the most talkedabout changes comes straight from the TSA. While the agency has long discouraged packing lithiumion batteries in checked it's now doubling bags, down on enforcement. Power banks, vape pens, camera batteries—anything with a rechargeable lithium battery—must be kept in carry-on luggage. Checked luggage is now a strict nogo for these devices due to the fire risk they pose in aircraft cargo holds. It's not just a suggestion anymore: travelers have been stopped at security, and some have had their devices confiscated or faced delays. And if you're asked to gate-check a bag last-minute? You'll need to remove your power bank before handing it off.

Airlines are also getting more proactive. Southwest Airlines recently rolled out a new policy requiring passengers to keep portable chargers visible while in use and to avoid using them in overhead bins. The reason? An alarming spike in batteryrelated fire incidents on U.S. flights—19 this year alone. Other airlines, particularly in Asia and Europe, are following suit. Carriers like Singapore Airlines and Jetstar Asia now prohibit power banks from being used during flight or stored

in seat-back pockets. Some are even considering limits on the number of batteries a single traveler can carry.

the

battery

rules, international air travel is evolving in other meaningful ways. Entry systems are going digital in many countries. In Europe, the long-delayed ETIAS visa waiver is set to launch in 2026, requiring U.S. travelers to apply for authorization ahead of their visit—similar to the U.S. ESTA system. Thailand has rolled out a new Digital Arrival Card, replacing the old paper immigration forms. Travelers must now submit this online at least three days before arriving, or risk being denied boarding. Meanwhile, more countries adopting biometric systems at immigration checkpoints, which can streamline entry but may require pre-enrollment or additional steps when you land.



for sustainability. Several European airports, including Amsterdam Schiphol and London Heathrow, experimenting with weightbased fare adjustments and encouraging passengers to fly with lighter luggage to reduce emissions. Some budget carriers are even piloting biofuel surcharges or eco-fees—small costs added to tickets to help carbon offset output.

So what's a traveler to do? Stay informed, travel light, and give yourself a little extra time. Check with your airline before you fly—especially if you're carrying batteries, booking international flights, or transiting through countries with new entry systems.

## Air travel is adapting to a more tech-conscious world

Print your confirmations, carry backups of essential documents (yes, digital arrival cards too), and keep your portable chargers in your personal item, not buried in a roller bag.

The bottom line? Air travel is adapting to a more digital, tech-conscious, and environmentally aware world. That means what's in your luggage—and even how you use it—matters more than ever. With just a little preparation, you can stay ahead of the curve and focus on what really matters: getting where you're going safely, smoothly, and stressfree.

TSA. "Pack Safe: Batteries." tsa.gov

FAA. "Lithium Batteries and Portable Devices." faa. gov

AP News. "Southwest Airlines now requires power banks be kept visible." apnews.com

New York Post. "TSA enforces power bank restrictions." nypost.com

European Commission. "ETIAS Visa Waiver Program." europa.eu



As the leaves begin to turn and peak-season tourists head home, fall offers a golden window for travel crisp air, rich colors, and often lower prices. But instead of heading to the usual hotspots, why not explore somewhere unexpected? From Arctic islands and ancient wine regions to mountain towns and Southern Hemisphere spring, these lesser-known destinations deliver all the autumn magic—without the crowds.



#### GASPÉ PENINSULA QUÉBEC, CANADA

Far from the bustle of Quebec City and Montreal, the Gaspé Peninsula is a dramatic sweep of coastline and wilderness that comes alive in the fall. Flaming red maples and golden birch trees frame cliffs, coves, and coastal villages along Route 132. Forillon National Park offers hiking, wildlife watching, and panoramic views of the Gulf of St. Lawrence—with fewer crowds and a raw, rugged charm.



#### LOFOTEN ISLANDS

NORWAY

The Lofoten Islands offer a stunning Arctic experience without the extreme cold of winter. In fall, the tundra blushes in golds and reds beneath jagged mountain peaks, and fishing villages like Reine are serene and camera-ready. Best of all, by mid-September, you'll have a chance to witness

the northern lights dancing across clear, dark skies—with far fewer visitors than in peak aurora season.



#### KAKHETI GEORGIA

The country of Georgia's Kakheti region is the birthplace of some of the world's oldest winemaking traditions, and fall is when this ancient culture comes to life. Visit rustic vineyards during the grape harvest, join in a traditional supra (feast), and try amber-hued qvevri wines made in clay vessels. Against a backdrop of rolling hills and the snowtipped Caucasus Mountains, it's a harvest season rich in flavor, tradition, and heart.



#### JEMEZ MOUNTAINS

NEW MEXICO, USA

Just a short drive from Santa Fe, the Jemez Mountains offer a stunning alternative to crowded fall destinations. Aspen groves shimmer in gold, especially along the Jemez Mountain Trail Scenic Byway, which weaves past dramatic red cliffs and forested canyons. Add in natural hot springs, the cultural history of Bandelier National Monument, and a distinct high desert serenity, and it's a hidden autumn gem.



#### HOKKAIDO

JAPAN

While most travelers wait for Kyoto's fall color, Japan's northernmost island is already peaking. Hokkaido's national parks—like Daisetsuzan and Shiretoko—burst into color from late September, offering crisp

weather, clear skies, and vast open landscapes. It's a paradise for hikers, photographers, and hot spring lovers alike—without the crowds of Japan's more famous leaf-peeping spots.



#### **JULIAN ALPS**

SLOVENIA

Slovenia's Julian Alps are a quieter, more affordable alternative to the Alps in France or Switzerland especially beautiful in autumn. The forests in Triglav National Park light up in gold and orange, and the trails are peaceful under clear alpine skies. Charming towns like Kraniska Gora and Bovec offer mountain hospitality, while nearby wine regions are in full harvest swing.



TRANSYLVANIA
ROMANIA
With medieval towns like

Braşov and Sibiu framed by colorfulforests, Transylvania in the fall feels like a fairytale come to life. The Carpathian Mountains offer hikes through vibrant woodland, while castle visits—Bran, Peleş, and Corvin—take on an atmospheric edge in October. Whether you're into Dracula legends or just moody cobbled streets with autumn leaves underfoot, this is a perfect destination for cozy, offbeat fall travel.



#### NORTHERN PATAGONIA

CHILE

Patagonia often considered a summer destination, but in northern Patagonia's Aysén region, spring (September to November) begins quietly, with glacier-fed rivers and emerald lakes sparkling under fresh snowmelt. This lesser-known part of Chile offers towering peaks, turquoise waters, and wideopen trails with almost no tourists. Whether you're kayaking, hiking, or just soaking in the silence, fall here means raw beauty without the rush. The region's remote lodges and eco-resorts make it ideal for unplugging and reconnecting with nature in a dramatic, unspoiled setting.

**FEATURE** 

# TRAVEL SCAM AWARENESS

#### Popular Cons and How to Avoid Them

Scams against travelers are increasingly common, contributing to annual losses exceeding USD 1 trillion globally. From fraudulent bookings to elaborate inperson schemes, scam tactics continue to evolve and take advantage of travelers unfamiliar with technology or local customs.



These scams often use official-sounding names or impersonate actual companies to appear legitimate.

#### **Booking and Accommodation Scams**

Most travel scams begin online, before a trip. Fake websites may promote flights, luxury vacation homes, or full travel packages at deep discounts, designed to lure travelers into paying for nonexistent services. These falsified listings often include manipulated photos, copied branding from legitimate providers,

and fictitious customer reviews to bolster credibility. In some instances, individuals posing as travel agents or accommodation hosts will demand full payment through unsecured channels and then disappear once the transaction is complete. Victims frequently encounter these schemes through social media ads, fake travel forums, or email campaigns impersonating well-known platforms. The scam may not be apparent until arrival at the airport or destination.

Travel insurance scams are another common threat. Fraudsters may sell policies that appear valid on the surface but offer little to no coverage when help is needed. These scams often use official-sounding names or impersonate actual companies to appear legitimate.

#### Scam Encounters at Destination

At the destination, street scams often occur during face-to-face interactions. In busy tourist zones, travelers may be approached by overly friendly individuals offering directions, assistance, or guided tours. These encounters often start casually but quickly turn into solicitations for money, either through guilt, pressure, or aggressive tactics. In other cases, tourists are offered seemingly free trinkets, such as bracelets, flowers, or keychains, and then coerced into paying. Vendors in markets may also dramatically overcharge or falsely claim that items are handmade or locally produced.

Distraction theft is another potential technique, where a stranger would simply bump into a person or spill a drink, and lift a bag or wallet during the confusion.



Others may pose as activists collecting donations for fraudulent causes, often holding fake IDs or clipboards to appear legitimate. Transport scams are also pervasive. Unauthorized taxi drivers may wait outside airports or train stations, especially where regulation is lax, and charge exorbitant fares or refuse to use meters. Some drivers may take circuitous routes to inflate the final cost.

ATM skimming is a more covert but an equally damaging scam. Devices hidden inside card readers can capture debit or credit card information and allow criminals to clone cards and make unauthorized withdrawals. Skimming is especially prevalent at stand-alone or poorly lit ATMs.

#### Digital and Online Scams

Online deception has also become increasingly sophisticated. A typical scam could involve emails, texts, or app notifications that mimic communications from airlines, hotel chains, banks, or even embassies, as criminals can disguise their phone number or email address to appear as a legitimate organization or known contact. These messages often create a sense of urgency, claiming there is a booking issue, a missed payment, or an identity verification requirement. Clicking links or submitting personal information opens the door to identity theft or malware infection.

Public Wi-Fi is another vulnerability. Many travelers log into unsecured networks in cafes, airports, or hotel lobbies without realizing that cybercriminals can intercept data, capture login credentials, or plant spyware. Sensitive activities, such as accessing online banking or entering passwords, are particularly risky on open networks.

#### **Prevention and Response Strategies**

The following strategies will help reduce vulnerability:

- Use only official travel websites or reputable third-party services for bookings. Check for secure payment options and read verified user reviews.
- Research common scams at your destination to help recognize and avoid them.
- Politely decline unsolicited offers for help, gifts, or guided services. If assistance is truly needed, seek out uniformed staff, information desks, or licensed vendors.
- Only use official taxi ranks, rideshare apps, or licensed transport providers. Confirm pricing before entering the vehicle.
- Keep valuables, cash, and passports secure while in public. Keep physical copies of important documents separately.
- Create strong, unique passwords for online accounts and activate two-factor authentication, especially for financial and email accounts.
- Avoid using public Wi-Fi for financial transactions or personal communications. If necessary, connect through a virtual private network (VPN).
- Use ATMs inside banks or other secure, well-lit areas. Monitor accounts regularly and enable fraud alerts through banking apps.

In the event that a scam is suspected:

- Immediately stop communication and do not provide further information.
- Notify the bank or credit card provider to cancel or freeze affected accounts.
- Change passwords on any potentially compromised online services.

