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FREE GUIDE

20 Travel Scams *to Avoid*

The most common traps around the world... and how to never fall for them.

20

SCAMS DECODED

Travel with peace of mind: spot the scam before it starts.

SECTION 01

Getting around

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1 The broken taxi meter

The driver says the meter is broken, then charges you three times the normal fare when you arrive.

WHERE Bangkok, Rome, Prague, Cairo

HOW TO AVOID IT

Use an app like Uber, Grab or Bolt, or agree on the price before you get in.

2 The fake airport driver

Right outside arrivals, a man offers you an “official” taxi. No license, no fixed price, and a huge bill.

WHERE Mexico City, Bali, Cairo, Nairobi

HOW TO AVOID IT

Only take taxis from the official counters inside the terminal, or book ahead.

3 The $1 tuk-tuk tour

An almost-free city tour... that stops at jewelry or tailor shops where the driver gets a commission.

WHERE Bangkok, Delhi, Agra

HOW TO AVOID IT

Turn down tours that are too cheap and say clearly: no shop stops.

4 The fake scooter damage

When you return it, the owner “finds” scratches that were already there and keeps your deposit, or even your passport.

WHERE Thailand, Bali, Greek islands

HOW TO AVOID IT

Film the vehicle from every angle before you leave, and never leave your passport as a deposit.

On the street

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5 The friendship bracelet

Someone ties a bracelet on your wrist in a flash, then demands money and gets pushy.

WHERE Paris (Montmartre), Milan, Rome

HOW TO AVOID IT

Keep your hands in your pockets, say a firm no and keep walking.

6 The fake petition

You're asked to sign for a cause, then pressured for a donation. Meanwhile, an accomplice goes through your bag.

WHERE Paris, London, Amsterdam, Barcelona

HOW TO AVOID IT

Never sign anything on the street and keep your bag in front of you.

7 The stain on your clothes

Something lands on your shirt. A kind stranger helps you clean it while an accomplice steals your wallet.

WHERE Buenos Aires, Madrid, Barcelona, Santiago

HOW TO AVOID IT

Refuse the help, walk away and clean up later somewhere safe.

8 The shell game

Passersby win easily, so you try. They're accomplices: nobody ever beats them.

WHERE Paris, Berlin, Barcelona, Prague

HOW TO AVOID IT

Never play, and watch out for crowds gathered around: perfect ground for pickpockets.

On the street (continued)

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9 The found gold ring

Someone “finds” a ring on the ground next to you and offers it to you for a little cash. It’s worthless.

WHERE Paris, Rome, London

HOW TO AVOID IT

Politely refuse and keep walking. Real gold rings aren’t sold on the street.

10 The not-so-free photo

A costumed character, a monkey or a snake on your shoulder for a photo... then you’re asked for a big payment.

WHERE New York (Times Square), Marrakech, Rome

HOW TO AVOID IT

Ask the price before the photo, or simply say no.

03 Fake friends & fake officials

11 The fake police officer

An “officer” asks to check your passport and wallet, and walks off with some of your money.

WHERE Mexico City, Prague, Lima, Bangkok

HOW TO AVOID IT

Never hand over your wallet. Offer to sort it out at the nearest police station.

12 “It’s closed today”

A stranger tells you the attraction is closed and offers another tour... that ends in a shop.

WHERE Bangkok (Grand Palace), Beijing, Jaipur

HOW TO AVOID IT

Check for yourself at the official entrance. It’s almost always open.

Fake friends & fake officials

(continued)

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13 The guide you didn't ask for

Someone kindly shows you the way or helps at the ticket machine, then demands to be paid.

WHERE Marrakech, Fez, Cairo, Paris and Barcelona metros

HOW TO AVOID IT

Say no thanks right away and use an offline map to find your way.

14 Your new bar friends

Friendly locals invite you for a drink at "their" bar. Then the bill arrives: hundreds of dollars.

WHERE Istanbul, Budapest, Prague, Shanghai

HOW TO AVOID IT

Pick the place yourself, and ask for prices before ordering.

04 Money

15 The rigged ATM

A small hidden device copies your card, and a camera films your PIN.

WHERE Worldwide, especially in very touristy areas

HOW TO AVOID IT

Use ATMs inside banks and cover the keypad with your hand.

16 The short change

The seller counts fast, gives you unfamiliar local coins, or claims you handed over a smaller bill.

WHERE Prague, Lima, Buenos Aires, Rome

HOW TO AVOID IT

Say the bill's value out loud as you hand it over, and count your change before leaving.

Money (continued)

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17 The menu with no prices

No prices on the menu, or hidden fees added to the bill: you pay double what you expected.

WHERE Venice, Rome, Prague, Paris

HOW TO AVOID IT

Ask for prices before ordering and check the bill line by line.

05 Online & bookings

18 The fake rental

A gorgeous apartment at a discount... if you pay by wire transfer, outside the platform. The place doesn't exist.

WHERE Everywhere: Facebook, classifieds and sometimes Airbnb

HOW TO AVOID IT

Always pay through the official platform, never by wire transfer or gift card.

19 The fake free Wi-Fi

A believable network name like "Airport_Free_WiFi" captures your passwords and banking details.

WHERE Airports, cafés and hotels worldwide

HOW TO AVOID IT

Ask for the exact name of the official network and avoid your bank accounts on public Wi-Fi.

20 The fake skip-the-line ticket

A street seller promises you can skip the line. The ticket is fake, or way overpriced.

WHERE Rome (Colosseum), Paris (Eiffel Tower), Barcelona (Sagrada Família)

HOW TO AVOID IT

Only buy from the attraction's official website or ticket office.

THE SPOTWYZ RULE

Too good to be true? *It is.*

If a deal is too good, someone rushes you or a stranger insists, pause and walk away. No honest person will mind.

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YOUR NEXT TRIP STARTS HERE

Travel like *a local*.

Spotwyz is a platform that gives travelers the best tips to save time and money. We help you discover the least crowded places in each country, so you can live a unique experience, as if you were a local.

- Hidden places tourists never see
- Real, tested tips from locals
- More time living your trip, less time searching

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