

**Getting Started:** You're headed in the right direction.

# Money and Travel

## How to handle finances when you travel

By Cathi Douglas

Avoid travel nightmares by preparing before your trip for worst-case scenarios, like your debit card getting stuck in a foreign ATM machine. Having a Plan B will keep your hard-earned travel money safe when you're on the road.

Never keep all your money in one place, because if you are robbed or misplace your bags, you lose everything. Carry enough cash for one day hidden somewhere discreet, and leave the rest in a secure spot, like your hotel safe, even if you plan to primarily use a bank card while traveling.

Here is how to handle cash when you're on the road:

- U.S. dollars, British pounds and Euros are the easiest currencies to change. Keep enough set aside to support yourself for several days.
- Changing money on the street is a bad idea. Exchange foreign currency with a recognized bank or exchange bureau.
- You will get better exchange rates if you plan in advance, rather than changing it at the

airport or abroad. There are many ways to buy foreign currency (online, offline, from banks or from private retailers), so consider your options beforehand.

It's a good idea to use a mix of debit and credit cards on the road. Credit cards are best for making reservations, large purchases and emergencies. Using debit cards, you avoid credit card bills after your holiday. Additional ways to spend safely:

- Check the layout of the ATM keypad. You can lose your card by entering the right pattern but the wrong numbers.
- Always carry back-up cash or travelers checks. ATMs can be unreliable.
- Be aware of bank charges. These can include withdrawal fees, and some offer poor exchange rates for credit and debit cards.

Travel can broaden your mind. But unless you're careful, it can also thin your wallet. Use these valuable tips to keep your finances under control during your travels.



## Steps for Success



**Before you travel, pay your bills.**

If you're leaving for more than a month, use online banking to schedule payments and avoid late charges.



**Inform your bank that you are traveling.**

If your bank sees a bunch of unexpected charges to a Caribbean resort, they may suspect fraud and freeze your card.



**Check your health coverage.**

If your health plan doesn't cover costs incurred while traveling, consider purchasing a travel health insurance policy.

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