

hospital upon arrival; the cost of your treatment and other medical expenses will be deducted from this deposit and the balance returned to you upon departure. Although medical care in local hospitals is relatively inexpensive, you should still purchase private health insurance before your trip to cover any unforeseen expenses. Medical care in clinics offering Western-style care for foreigners is much more expensive and must be paid for on the spot, using U.S. dollars or a credit card.

Drugs

The Government of China deals harshly with persons found in possession of illegal drugs. You should exercise the utmost caution when travelling. Never carry a package or luggage for someone else unless you have completely verified the contents. Choose travelling companions carefully, since you may be implicated if they are found to be carrying drugs. For details, consult the Drugs and Travel section of our Web site (www.voyage.gc.ca/main/drugs_menu-en.asp) and refer to our publication *Drugs and Travel: Why They Don't Mix*.

Prescription medicines and syringes may be considered suspicious by Chinese authorities. Keep all drugs in their original containers and carry the prescriptions with you. If you have a medical need for syringes,

carry a medical certificate saying so. If you require over-the-counter medicines, such as those commonly used for traveller's diarrhea, it is best to take them with you.

Crime

China is a relatively safe country where violent crime is rare. But petty theft is common, and you should constantly be on guard for pickpockets. It is wise to leave valuables in a hotel safe wherever possible. Be careful when carrying money or passports in a handbag, shoulder bag or backpack, because bag slashing is a common tactic of criminals.

If you decide to stop at a bar, ensure that the prices are clearly marked on the menu so that your tab may be easily calculated. Avoid in particular "hostess bars," where foreign patrons have been taken advantage of, with costly results. For information on safety issues, consult our Country Travel Reports on China at www.voyage.gc.ca/dest/intro-en.asp.

Women Travelling Solo

Female travellers should dress conservatively and take safety precautions. General guidelines for women travelling alone are provided in our publication *Her Own Way: Advice for the Woman Traveller*.