

Accommodation

Choose your accommodation carefully. You may wish to consider small hotels, B&Bs or homestay exchanges. Their size generally allows for caring, personal attention. To avoid extra stress, travel early in the day, especially if you don't have reservations. This gives you time to find a place you like before it gets dark.

Whether the accommodation is a hotel, a B&B or a hostel, always ask to see the room before you take it. Is it clean enough? Does the door lock properly? Does it feel safe? Trust your intuition. Don't stay anywhere unless you feel entirely comfortable with both the accommodation and its location.

Never accept a room if the check-in clerk calls out your name or room number. Others within hearing distance may use this information to try to call you or gain access to your room.

You should avoid ground-floor rooms or any room that has easy access from outside, such as from a balcony or fire escape. Book a room that is close to an elevator and away from exits.

Stairwells allow troublemakers to hide and to come and go undetected.

Never open your door to anyone without taking the necessary precautions. Even if your visitor claims to be a member of the staff, you should check with the front desk to verify the person's need to enter your room.

Consider investing in a small, lightweight, portable smoke detector, as well as a deadbolt that can easily be installed on any inward-opening door. These items are perfect if you plan to stay in very simple accommodation.

"Women travel differently than men. Whether they choose a hot pink nail buff, a fake wedding ring or the proverbial baggy dress while trekking in Nepal, life on the road for women is simply a different trip."

*Debra Cummings,
columnist specializing
in women's issues*