

Short-term Gain, Long-term Pain

When you're on vacation and far away from your regular life, it can be easy to give in to temptation and take illegal drugs, especially in countries where drugs are used openly. But the fact remains: they're still illegal. Remember that in many countries you are part of the visible minority. Taking drugs just once could turn your dream vacation into a nightmare.

Zero Tolerance

The United States has zero tolerance for possession and smuggling of illicit drugs. Travellers caught with even a small amount will end up in jail.

Be aware that some drugs that are legal in Canada are illegal in other countries. Similarly, drugs that are legal abroad might be illegal in Canada. Travellers are subject to the judicial system of the country they are in. It is their responsibility to know what the drug laws are in a foreign country before they go.

Prescriptions

When you are abroad, even prescription medication can be treated as suspect, leading to delays and time-consuming investigations. Keep all medication in its original, labelled container and carry a note from your doctor explaining its use.

Illegal drugs can alter your perception of reality and affect your emotions and judgment. Some people have sustained serious injuries as a result of the hallucinogenic effects of narcotics or natural substances that are said to have "special" powers. Most illegal drugs are addictive, and mixing them with prescription drugs can be especially volatile. Illegal drugs can affect your heartbeat, blood pressure and respiration, resulting in loss of consciousness, coma and even death.

Because illegal drugs can impair your faculties, you shouldn't drive if you've taken drugs. It is unlawful to drive under the influence, and you could be putting yourself and others at risk. If you get sick or are injured while on drugs, your travel insurance might not cover your medical or hospital expenses.