



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR **LGBTQ TRAVELERS**

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Over 76 countries criminalize same-sex relations. How do you get info in advance to help ensure your safety?

First of all, it's important to remember that just because a country has laws against same-sex relations doesn't mean that LGBTQ travelers should leave them off their lists. The specifics of these laws as well as how consistently they are enforced vary widely, and things can be different for locals versus foreign nationals. For advanced information, many governments, such as the U.S., the U.K., Canada and Australia maintain detailed travel advice for individual countries that include information for LGBTQ travelers. Most major online travel guides and travel discussion forums will also have good information, including advice from other experienced travelers.

How safe are large LGBTQ events, such as gay pride and gay cruises, globally? What precautions should I take?

It really depends on the country and city, regardless of the specific region. Gay cruises are generally very inclusive, but travelers should research cultural attitudes and LGBTQ security issues in specific port stops. For cruises or parties, keep in mind that there are some locations, even in culturally conservative regions, that are very open to the LGBTQ community. Israel – and especially Tel Aviv – is very accepting and hosts a major Gay Pride event every year. Russia on the other hand has a history of hostility toward the LGBTQ community and associated events, and even using mobile apps oriented toward the LGBTQ community can get you in legal trouble. The best thing you can do to protect yourself is research the location. If you see a history of threats or violence at a specific Pride event in a location, it's probably best to stay away from that event.

Which travel agents, tour operators and content providers have information on LGBTQ issues, especially in more exotic destinations?

Again, country-specific advice from various governments is always a good place to start, and most major online travel guides like Lonely Planet and Frommer's have great information.

What resources are available from the U.S. State Department and other organizations about destinations around the world?

The U.S. State Department maintains an LGBTQ Travel Information page, and maintains information and advice for specific countries at travel.state.gov, as well as humanrights.gov, which contains worldwide human rights information. And again, the U.K., Australia and Canadian governments have similar advice that is updated consistently. For additional information on specific laws in different countries, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) publishes a map on worldwide LGBTQ-oriented laws along with other great information. Finally, the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) has travel information as well as a database of LGBTQ-friendly businesses around the world to help you plan your trip.

What are the biggest concerns for lesbian travelers heading overseas (especially anti-gay locations)?

First of all, in some locations, female travelers in general may face risks of harassment or violence, and in some places like Saudi Arabia, female travelers could be harassed or denied entry if not accompanied by a male. Lesbian travelers specifically could face further threats of harassment or violence in areas hostile to LGBTQ individuals. It's important to research the local culture, stay vigilant and exercise discretion when interacting with locals regardless of whether you are traveling alone or with someone else.

What are the biggest concerns for transgender travelers heading overseas?

Transgender travelers face some unique issues when traveling overseas. First of all, we should recognize that some entry/exit procedures like document checks and security inspections can be emotionally difficult for trans travelers. Knowing your rights and what officials are/are not allowed to request from you during security checks is important. Trans travelers may also face harassment in an official capacity at airports and in some cases have been denied entry. Harassment from locals can also be a concern, depending on the destination. When traveling, it's important to keep a low profile and avoid confronting anyone who harasses you.

How concerned should LGBTQ travelers be about health issues and what can we do to prepare?

All travelers should be concerned with health, and that starts at home. Packing a basic first aid kit and making sure you have all of your medications with a doctor's note if necessary should be a first step, along with taking out a comprehensive travel insurance policy. Sexual health is also important, and you may want to be prepared before your trip since the effectiveness of products in other countries cannot always be guaranteed, and the packaging may be in another language. Research the local laws to make sure any items you bring into a country are allowed.

If you're required to travel to an anti-LGBTQ country for work how do you prepare for that?

Staying discreet and avoiding personal discussions will usually suffice in anti-LGBTQ countries, and it is a little easier to do so when you are in a country on business for a short period of time. Non-disclosure and avoiding the topic is sometimes the best course of action. If you can, work with your company's HR or security department to address the specific risks you may face when traveling and how the company can provide support and security. If you are not comfortable with disclosing your orientation to your employer, do your own research on local laws and customs and be mindful of legal issues, general cultural norms and business etiquette. Remember that cultural issues usually go beyond attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals – you want to research wider cultural expectations in the location to which you're traveling.

Want to find out more or have questions? Contact AIG Travel 24/7 with any travel questions; in addition, we are available to assist customers before, during or after their travel. Visit www.aig.com/travel/LGBT to view more in-depth information on safety and security tips for LGBTQ travelers.



www.aig.com/travel