

Staying Safe in St. Pete Beach

Tips for the Tourists:

St. Pete Beach is a great place to visit. However, unwary tourists can make easy targets for thieves because they stand out in a crowd, are unused to their surroundings, and are generally carrying money, credit cards and valuables like cameras.

You can reduce your risk of becoming a victim by taking a few simple precautions.

General safety suggestions

- Keep your travel plans, including accommodation details, to yourself.
- Don't hitchhike.
- Keep a photocopy of your passport and all other important documents in a safe place.
- Use ATMs during the day, when there are people around.
- Try to rely more on credit cards and travelers checks than cash.
- If you are a victim of crime, don't fight back. It is better to lose a few dollars and a wristwatch than get injured.

Transport safety suggestions

- At the airport, watch for your suitcase as it appears on the carousel. Don't hang back and wait for the crowds to disperse - you might find that someone else has already taken your bag in the meantime.
- Avoid changing money at airports, as thieves could be watching you.
- Consult with your hotel manager or tourist information booth about the public transport in your area. Make sure you know what official taxi cabs look like. A thief may pose as a taxi driver to lure you into their car.
- Don't share taxis with strangers.

Hotel safety

- Take note of emergency exits, stairwells, fire escapes and emergency plans, just in case.
- Always lock your hotel door when retiring for the night. If there is a chain included, use it.
- When arranging to meet people you've never met before (such as business associates), wait for them in the lobby. Don't ask them to come up to your room.

Don't stand out in a crowd

- Even if you're not sure where you're going, walk like you've got a purpose.
- Notice the people around you. Be wary if someone seems to be taking more than a passing interest.

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Don't make yourself an attractive target

- Don't wear expensive jewelry on obvious display.
- Carry valuables (such as traveller's cheques and credit cards) on a belt worn under the clothes and next to the skin.
- Wear your money belt somewhere other than around your waist. Thieves know all about money belts too.
- Consider carrying a 'dummy' wallet holding a small amount of cash. If you are directly confronted by a mugger, you can hand over the dummy wallet and avoid further distress.

Beware of scams:

- Posing as a tour guide and offering to show you the sights of the city.
- Slipping sedative drugs into your food or drink.

Safety Tip Information Provided by the US State Department