

CONSULAR AFFAIRS

Her Own Way

Advice for the Woman Traveller



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The Consular Affairs Bureau of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade is committed to providing effective and efficient services throughout the world to all Canadians.

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We would like to receive your comments on this booklet. Write to us at the above address or e-mail us at voyage@dfait-maeci.gc.ca.

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This booklet was originally written for the Consular Affairs Bureau of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade by "women & travel" consultant Evelyn Hannon.

The "For More Information" section (page 22) includes information on publications, resources and programs available from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, as well as from other government departments and agencies mentioned throughout the text.

This publication is available in alternative formats upon request.

Ce document est aussi disponible en français sous le titre Voyager au féminin.

Note: The information contained in this booklet is subject to change. Please check our Web site or the appropriate government departments and organizations mentioned inside to ensure you have the most current information.

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Introduction

From the young to businesswomen to energetic grandmothers, Canadian women are travelling like never before. They're travelling solo, in pairs, with their children and as members of interest groups. And while women travel for many of the same reasons as men do, their social concerns, as well as their health and safety needs, are very, very different.

Female travellers are directly affected by the religious and societal beliefs of the countries they visit. As they make their way around the globe, chances are they'll be called upon to adapt the way they dress or the manner in which they interact with the male population. They might even find that, in some places, it's inappropriate to be outdoors after sundown. The more that women prepare themselves for these differing attitudes, the richer and safer their travelling experiences will be.

Whether you're a breast-feeding mother, a busy executive or an older traveller, as a woman you'll have a unique set of health concerns to contend with on the road. A bit of pre-planning and

research in this area will prove to be invaluable once you're on your way.

Everyone knows that, when travelling, a woman must be extra vigilant in terms of safety and security. What steps can she take to avoid possible sexual harassment? How can she make her hotel room secure?

This publication is filled with practical tips specifically of interest to the female traveller. Its prime objective is to inform and inspire Canadian women to travel safely. For general information on planning a safe trip, see our booklet *Bon Voyage... But*, which is listed in the "For More Information" section. And bon voyage!

“Knowledge itself is power.” A smart traveller is one who finds out everything she can about the culture and customs, and the role of women, in the places she’ll be visiting. It makes sense to learn what to expect and prepare yourself for as many eventualities as possible.

One of your best sources of travel information is other women.

Connect with them; ask for their advice. Note their recommendations on hotels, bed and breakfasts (B&Bs) and restaurants. Find out if they have friends or know of organizations or bookstores for you to contact at your destination. Tips and information from these sources can be invaluable.

Ask other women if you may read parts of their travel journals. If they don’t mind sharing, this is a wonderful way of acquainting yourself with other cultures from a woman’s point of view. It will also prepare you for the emotional highs and lows that may occur on your journey.

Don’t count on mainstream media to present information specifically relevant to the female traveller. Instead, supplement your reading with travel books, newsletters, magazines and Web sites for women. They address, with appropriate empathy, the most important health, safety, cultural and emotional issues experienced by females on the road.

Surf the Net. Post your queries on on-line bulletin boards. You could get responses from helpful travel-

lers around the world. But beware of those who may be using the Net for unsavoury purposes.



In Southeast Asia,
signs are posted at
religious landmarks asking
women not to enter
if they’re menstruating.

Canada is a multicultural country. Seek out women in your community who were born and raised in the places you plan to visit. They are the perfect guides to appropriate behaviour and dress for women within their culture. Get them to teach you a few key words and phrases in their mother tongue, too.

Consider investing in a self-defence course designed for women. You’ll embark on your journey with added confidence.

Travel Light, Travel Smart

It's a good idea to travel light. As a woman alone, you'll be far less vulnerable and much more independent if you're not loaded down with heavy luggage and extra bags. Depending on your style of travel, a small suitcase on wheels or a backpack is a good luggage choice. Try to make sure you have at least one hand free at all times.

A few days before your departure, you might want to try some test walks. Pack your bag and make your way around the block. Visualize yourself climbing subway stairs or getting on and off a train unassisted. You'll probably go home and reduce the bag's contents by half.

A fanny pack, tote bag or small day pack is useful for shorter excursions. If you plan to do a lot of shopping, you'll need an extra lightweight bag to bring your souvenirs home.

It's smart to keep your luggage locked at all times. Carry several small locks and two sets of keys.

Avoid expensive-looking camera bags. They may only serve to

identify you as a wealthy tourist. Be creative. Try using a diaper bag instead.

Luggage tags with flaps that hide your name and address from inquiring eyes are a smart idea. They protect your anonymity and thwart would-be thieves who may try to identify the empty home you've left behind.

Taking a handbag? One that has zippered inner compartments for added security and a thick shoulder strap that goes over your head as well as your shoulder is ideal. The best way to carry your handbag is in front of you, next to your stomach. This way, it isn't easily accessible to pickpockets.

"The three most important things about travelling: pack light, always wear comfortable shoes and smile!"

Erin Woodley, Canadian Olympic silver medallist, synchronized swimming, 1996

Extra Security Makes Sense

In your handbag or fanny pack, carry only those necessities that are lightweight and that you can afford to lose or have stolen. You should conceal those items that are not easily replaceable and are crucial to your travel arrangements – your passport, traveller's cheques, cash, medical prescriptions, contact numbers for your doctor and a copy of your insurance policy – by carrying them close to your body.

You can use a cotton money belt that you wear around your waist or a cotton pouch that hangs around your neck and is concealed by loose-fitting clothes. Another

"Foreign women aren't seen as women per se in China, but first and foremost as foreigners. As such they won't be any more vulnerable than a male traveller."

Jan Wong, Globe and Mail columnist and author of Jan Wong's China

"As a woman, my fear of being cooped up in my home without new challenges, new conversations, new vistas, far outweighs any fears I might have at travelling solo in a strange land."

Evelyn Hannon, editor, Journeywoman.com

excellent option is a security half-slip worn under a skirt or dress. Hidden under the hem are three zippered compartments perfect for holding travel documents, cash and credit cards. If you plan to spend time at the beach, consider buying a waterproof pack worn around the waist. It's a practical method of keeping your valuables safe and dry.

Be sure to make duplicate copies of all your important travel documents. Store these in your suitcase and, if the originals are lost

or stolen, you'll have a workable backup system. It's also a good idea to leave copies of these documents with a family member or friend.

If you'll be travelling in developing countries, pack a small flashlight. Power failures can be frequent. Consider carefully whether to accept food or drink from strangers. Understand that drugging is always a possibility.

Air Travel

Remember that, when you're flying, your body has to adapt to changes in cabin pressure, the air you're breathing and different time zones.

Travelling in comfortable, casual clothes that don't restrict body movement is a good idea. Also remember that your feet are bound to swell. Avoid travelling in pull-on boots; shoes with laces make the most sense.

Lip balm and moisturizer can help to combat the dryness of aircraft cabins.

If you use contraceptive pills, be sure to take them every 24 hours.

In any country you visit, avoid sightseeing in isolated places.

If you plan to rent a car, consider travelling with a cellular phone. If you do, make sure you have an emergency telephone number in case you experience a mechanical breakdown or find yourself in a dangerous situation. Never pick up hitchhikers. And never get out of your car if someone bumps into it; wait for the police to arrive.

Don't be misled by crossing time zones.

A good way to minimize jet lag is to drink a glass of water for every hour you're in the air.

Chewing gum will help relieve the pressure that builds up in your ears, especially during the plane's final descent.

Shoes are never worn in Muslim mosques and Buddhist temples. Travellers should pack a pair of heavy socks.

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*

Networking Along the Way

For those who would like to connect with other women on the road, here are some suggestions:

As soon as you begin your journey, start plugging into the female network. Finding a good source may lead you to many others. Local women are usually as pleased to meet you as you are to meet them.

Carry referrals from women back home. Take advantage of the contacts they made when they travelled.

In larger cities, make a quick check of local directories under the headings "female," "woman" or "travel." This can produce wonders. You'll probably find listings for craft collectives, women's bookstores, women's entrepreneurial councils and women's organizations.

Check with the Canadian embassy or consulate for any listings of women's expatriate clubs and

organizations. Members of these groups can sometimes be an excellent source of information. They might even invite you to one of their cultural events.

"A woman travelling is able to gather up those encounters and observations, moments of clarity or frustration, wonder or defeat. And they all become part of her personal history."

*Donna Nebenzahl,
women's columnist
and feature writer*

Think about joining a female-guided walking tour. It's not only a wonderful way to learn about a place, but it's also a perfect way to meet other female travellers. Be sure to chat with the leader; she'll be a worthwhile source of

female-friendly information.

In less populated places, the person who runs the place where you're staying will probably know everyone in the village and will be ready to provide advice and introductions.

Carry a small notepad and coloured pencils. While children might not understand the language you speak, they'll delight in drawings you make for them.

Pack photographs of your home and family. They're perfect icebreakers wherever you travel.

If you can't make yourself understood in the local language, seek

out female teenagers. Chances are they're studying some English at school and will take pride in being your translator.

Dress Sense

When visiting a religious site, a woman should always dress conservatively. A woman traveller should carry a scarf in case she needs to cover her head.

Give some thought to how you dress. At home, you'll encounter few, if any, clothing restrictions, but it still makes sense to dress conservatively. Leave your valuables at home.

If you travel into developing countries and male-dominated societies, make every effort to dress modestly. In some places, customs based on religious and moral beliefs strongly influence the way the women dress. For you to blatantly break these rules would be considered irreverent and might put you in jeopardy. Why not adapt your clothing to fit

the customs of the host country? It becomes an interesting and educational challenge.

For a good source of information on dress codes for women worldwide, check out the *Journeywoman* Web site (see the "For More Information" section).

Outside North America, a one-piece swimsuit is always a safer choice than a bikini. In some countries, local women might swim entirely clothed, in accordance with their religious beliefs.

Avoiding Harassment

Unfortunately, the potential for sexual harassment and intimidation is a reality around the world. Be prepared. Do your networking and research before you leave.

Find out as much as you can about the roles of both women and men in the places you plan to visit.

Avoid wearing provocative, form-fitting clothing.

A woman alone may be considered fair game. Understand this and prepare yourself mentally for any propositions, suggestive comments or catcalls. Then simply ignore them.

In some male-dominated cultures, it's considered incorrect for a woman to travel solo. For these and other potentially challenging destinations, you might want to team up with a companion. Two women travelling together might have an easier time.

In some cultures, making eye contact with a man is a sign that you want his company. Some

women solve this problem by wearing dark glasses.

In the Pacific Islands, a woman's thighs are considered an erotic part of her body and should not be exposed in public.

Be aware that you'll probably be openly stared at. In countries where you look very different

from everybody else, both men and women will make no attempt to hide their curiosity.

Behave confidently. When you're out, try to look as if you know exactly where you're going and what you're doing.

Take your cue from the local women. As a general rule, if they don't sit in cafés alone, you shouldn't either. If they aren't wearing sleeveless dresses, neither should you.

Never accept car rides or hitchhike. Ask the local hotels to recommend reputable taxis and, whenever possible, try to double up with someone you know when travelling by cab.

Crowded trains and buses can be perfect breeding grounds for antisocial behaviour. Some men will use this opportunity to touch

or pinch the female passengers standing close to them. If this happens to you, make a fuss. Point at the offender and chastise him in a loud voice. He'll probably slink away. However, to avoid these types of advances, consider choosing reserved seating.

In countries where it is available, take advantage of the female-

only section in buses, trains and subways. Use this excellent opportunity to communicate with local women and their children.

In India, a female's upper arms are considered sensual areas of the body and therefore must never be exposed in public.

Alone After Sundown

Women rightly tend to be more cautious about going out after sundown.

However, that doesn't mean that you shouldn't go out at all. Simply take precautions.

For example, in planning an evening out, arrange in advance to have a taxi take you there

and back. When deciding where to eat dinner, choose a restaurant that is close to where you're staying.

Since it's always interesting to experience the sights and rhythms of a place after dark, consider joining a sightseeing group. Check

with the local tourism centre for any appropriate tours or cultural

events that are available. Make sure that the tour bus picks you up and drops you off at your hotel or hostel.

Alternatively, you may appreciate matinée performances, which are

far less expensive and may give you an opportunity to meet others.

If you're not comfortable eating alone in the evening, have your main meal at lunchtime when even the finest restaurants offer their specialties at more reasonable prices.

In Saudi Arabia, a woman must wear an abbaya (a long black dress that covers the body from the shoulders to the toes). A scarf should be carried at all times to cover the head when requested.

During the day, why not stop at a market or supermarket and shop alongside the local women?

You can learn about the food specialties of the area and put together a meal to eat as a picnic in your room. Even with wine, it's less expensive than eating out every night.

Understand that, in some parts of the world, "respectable" women

don't go out alone in the evening. In these places, a flagrant rejection of this custom could very

well put you in jeopardy. Instead, after a long day of sightseeing, welcome the opportunity to rest, relax and rejuvenate yourself, so you can

be ready to enjoy another full day of new experiences.

In Saudi Arabia, a woman is not allowed to drive a motor vehicle or ride a bicycle. She must have a male driver.

Maintaining Connections

You should maintain contact with at least one person back home, especially if you're travelling solo. By letter, fax, e-mail or telephone, let that person know where you are and where you're heading next.

Off travelling for the day? You should leave a note in your room

explaining where you're going.

If you run into trouble, at least there will be clues to follow.

"Travelling – it opens your eyes. It makes you realize how well off we are here in Canada."

*Captain Nicole Sauvé,
airline pilot*

Always carry a business card from your hotel or B&B. If you get lost, approach

another woman on the street and show her the address on the card. She may be able to point you in the right direction.

Staying Healthy

Not all travel books deal with uniquely female health needs. You can augment what you read with the experienced advice of other women travellers.

It's a good idea to carry your doctor's phone and fax numbers as well as copies of prescriptions for medication you might require along the way.

You won't always be able to eat properly. Consider carrying multivitamins to supplement your diet.

Your regular brand of contraceptive pill may not be available at your destination. Take enough with you to last the whole trip.

Major stomach upsets (diarrhea or vomiting) cause your body to lose its ability to absorb the contraceptive pill. It's wise to use condoms to guard against unwanted pregnancy.

You may want to pack a supply of condoms to protect yourself against sexually transmitted diseases, too.

When travelling to developing countries, carry a supply of tampons and sanitary napkins.

When travelling in Asia, it's a good idea to carry a supply of disposable chopsticks. Dishwashing facilities are not always adequate to kill bacteria.

They tend to be difficult to find and may be expensive.

It's not unusual for women to stop menstruating when they're travelling for a long time. If there are no other symptoms and you're not concerned that you might be pregnant, don't worry.

If you're prone to yeast infections, they're more likely to recur in warm, moist climates. Wearing loose-fitting cotton underwear and skirts rather than pants may help. Carry appropriate medication in your first-aid kit; it might not be available where you're travelling.

Cystitis is an infection of the urinary tract and bladder. Drinking a lot of purified water, especially in hotter climates, may help to reduce your chances of suffering from this problem.

Getting Medical Advice

Your risk of acquiring a disease while travelling depends on several factors.

These include your age, your current state of health and immunization status, your itinerary, the duration and style of your trip, and anticipated activities (including contact with animals, exposure to fresh water, sexual contact),

as well as the local disease situation.

Know before you go!

Health Canada's Travel Medicine Program strongly recommends that your travel plans include contacting a travel medicine clinic or your physician six to eight weeks before departure. Based on an

If you wear contact lenses, consider using disposables. Storing and cleaning your lenses can become a nuisance if you're going to be on an extended journey.

It's definitely inadvisable to have ear-piercing, acupuncture, tattooing or manicures while you're on the road. Instruments that are not properly sterilized can carry hepatitis B or AIDS.

If you absolutely must have dental work, injections or an internal

examination, contact the nearest Canadian embassy or consulate abroad. Officials there can often recommend appropriate local medical practitioners.

Consider joining the International Association for Medical Assistance to Travellers (IAMAT). This organization provides information on immunization requirements, health and climatic conditions, tropical diseases such as malaria, food and water sanitation, and maintains a list of English-

individual risk assessment, a health care professional can determine your need for immunizations and medication and can advise you on what precautions to take to avoid disease while travelling. Consult the Travel Medicine Program Web site to find a travel medicine clinic close to your home. The

Canadian Society for International Health also provides information on health and travelling.

See our booklet *Bon Voyage... But* for further information provided by Health Canada on vaccinations, childhood immunization, tropical diseases, medication and AIDS.

speaking physicians around the world who have agreed to treat travellers.

If you have a pre-existing medical condition that could present a problem while you are travelling, it is wise to wear a MedicAlert® bracelet. Through the MedicAlert® Foundation, your vital medical facts are stored in a database that can be accessed 24 hours a day from anywhere in the world (see the “For More Information” section).

Make sure you don’t leave Canada without adequate health insurance for travellers. Review your policy thoroughly so that you know exactly what your coverage entails. For example, does your policy provide an in-house worldwide emergency hotline that you can call if you’re in trouble? Does the policy pay foreign hospital and related medical costs? If so, does it pay upfront or expect you to pay and be reimbursed later? Carry proof of your coverage with you.

Coping with Foreign Bathrooms

Modern bathrooms as we know them in North America do exist around the world, but not everywhere. As a traveller, you'll come across everything from outhouses to simple holes in the ground where squatting is a necessity. Some toilets will flush, but many won't. In developing countries, some cubicles are enclosed. However, as you venture further into the countryside, you might have to make do with little or no privacy.

To cope with the vagaries of foreign bathrooms, consider wearing a long, full skirt. This will allow for some modesty in situations where you have to "go" outdoors.

Always carry a supply of toilet paper with you. In some parts of

"Oh Canada! I enjoy leaving it, but I love coming back."

*Erica Ehm,
Canadian television
personality*

the world, it's either very scarce or too coarse to be usable.

In parts of Asia and Africa, expect a jug of water, left beside the toilet, in lieu of paper.

The smell in toilets is sometimes overpowering. Try dabbing some mentholated ointment or lip balm under your nose to help mask the odours while you use the facilities.

Carry your own antiseptic wipes or a small bar of soap. These are generally not readily available.

The Pregnant Traveller

Try to have at least your first prenatal checkup before you travel.

You should check airlines' rules about pregnant passengers before you book your ticket. In Canada, airlines will allow you to fly up to the 35th week of your pregnancy, providing you're healthy

and there is no previous history of premature labour. The rules in other countries might be different. You could be asked to supply a letter from your doctor verifying the stage of your pregnancy.

Check your travel insurance policy carefully to make sure that you'll be

covered for all eventualities. Most policies don't automatically cover pregnancy-related conditions or nursery care for premature infants.

Most, but not all, vaccines are considered safe during pregnancy. Once your pregnancy is confirmed, you'll require special advice. A Canadian organization called Motherisk will answer any questions you might have about appropriate drugs and immunization (see the "For More Information" section).

It's wise to build in extra rest stops while you're travelling. Your body is busy nurturing a baby, and the extra effort of travel makes it work even harder.

Constipation can be a problem, especially if you're taking iron supplements. Try to eat plenty of high-fibre foods, like fruits and vegetables.

In developing countries, pasteurized milk is often difficult to find. You can take powdered milk with you if you want to ensure that you get enough calcium. It can be added to most foods.

For coping with morning sickness, ginger is an excellent remedy. Crystallized forms can be found

"Don't just read the book!
Travelling to new cultures
and meeting new people is
not only rewarding in itself,
it also gives us an enriched
vision of home and the
people closest to us."

*Françoise Ducret,
chair, Canadian Chapter, European
Travel Commission, 1995-1997*

in the baking section of most supermarkets. Otherwise, raw ginger root can be found just about anywhere in the world, and can be grated into your food in small amounts.

If possible, avoid travelling in malarial zones. Even while taking antimalarial drugs, pregnant women are more liable to catch the disease, and the illness tends to be more severe.

Especially if you're in the first trimester of your pregnancy, avoid high-altitude destinations, where oxygen to the fetus could be decreased.

Pregnant women should avoid using iodine to purify water. Iodine could have an adverse effect on the fetal thyroid.

Travelling with Children

Since December 11, 2001, Canadian children need their own passport. The practice of adding a child's name to a parent's passport is no longer permitted. For more information on this issue, consult our booklet *Bon Voyage... But.*

Before setting out, come to terms with the fact that you'll be travelling at your child's pace, not your own.

When travelling by air with an infant, carry a bottle or pacifier for the baby to suck on during takeoff and landing. This helps to equalize ear pressure and keeps the baby more comfortable.

If you're breast-feeding, take your cues from local women, since cultural practices vary from country to country. However, when in doubt, try to breast-feed in private.

Never leave a young child unattended. Always keep some form of identification in your child's pocket in case you accidentally become separated.

For emergency identification purposes, take along several recent photographs of your child.

"I've been travelling with my kids since the youngest was three months old. When she fussed, I went into a larger than life singing or dancing routine to distract her. Often, this made fellow travellers laugh and sympathize instead of trying to get as far away as possible from an upset mother and child."

*Kathy Kastner, vice-president,
The Parent Channel*

You may also wish to leave extra copies of those photographs with a family member.

Teach your child never to open the door of your hotel room to anybody.

When entering or leaving a hotel elevator, keep your child right beside you. If the doors close too quickly, he or she could be stranded.

If your child is under 16 and is not listed on your passport, you must have a certified document from the child's father giving permission for the child to travel.

If you're travelling to another country with your child and there is a possibility of a custody dispute developing in Canada or abroad while you're away, talk to

a lawyer before leaving home. For details, refer to our publication *International Child Abductions: A Manual for Parents* (see the "For More Information" section).

International Adoptions

Provincial and territorial authorities in Canada are responsible for authorizing international adoptions. If you're thinking of adopting a child from another country, you must first obtain information about the adoption regulations of the province or territory in which the child will reside. While adoption is a provincial/territorial responsibility, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) is responsible for allowing an adopted child entry into Canada.

Entry can be refused if the child does not hold the appropriate immigrant visa. A visa may be denied even if the adoption has already been completed.

For more information, consult the CIC publication *International Adoption and the Immigration Process* (available on-line only) or contact your provincial/territorial authorities or the CIC call centre nearest you (see the "For More Information" section).

The Older Traveller

This is a wonderful time in your life to be travelling. In most cultures, age brings respect. Children will gravitate to you. Local women will be protective, and you'll suffer less from unsolicited male advances.

Check your library for the many travel books written especially for the older adult. They contain

valuable information about obtaining discounts, avoiding single supplements, educational holidays and the many group travel opportunities available for those of mature age.

Planning an adventure holiday involving hiking or a lot of walking? If you're not already involved in fitness activities,

consider beginning an appropriate exercise program at least a month before your departure.

Expecting to carry a backpack? You might want to do a few training walks to get used to it. You can start light and work your way up to carrying the full capacity.

If you're experiencing the hot flashes of menopause, pack a

wardrobe of "layers" that can easily be adjusted to your fluctuating body temperature.

A small magnifying glass is perfect for reading the tiny print on maps.

Make very sure that you have adequate health and travel insurance.

Businesswomen Abroad

In many parts of the world, a woman's traditional role is in the home. The concept of a woman as a business executive is much less common. Understanding the customs and proper business protocol at your destination is imperative.

Learn to greet your business host in his or her language. This show of respect and consideration is always appreciated.

Always meet your business contacts in the lobby of your hotel. Avoid giving out your room number.

Print your business cards in English on one side and in the language of the host country on the other. Especially in countries

In India, men generally don't shake hands with women. They greet them by placing the palms of their hands together and bowing slightly.

where women generally don't hold key corporate positions, this will eliminate any misunderstanding about the rank and position you hold within your profession.

Find out the correct way to give and receive business cards. In China (including Hong Kong) and Japan, you're expected to use both hands. However, in parts of the Middle East, you must never use your left hand, as that hand is considered unclean.

Dress appropriately. If local women don't wear trousers to the office, you shouldn't either. Wear sensible shoes that allow you to stand for long periods and to move quickly if necessary.

Learn how to decline food graciously during business dinners so that no one will be insulted. For example, in Asia, leave some food in your bowl. This implies that your hosts have fed you well and you're no longer hungry.

Understand that, in some countries, even if you do business with men during the day, you may be seated separately, with women only, for evening dining.

In Korea, the highest-ranked businessperson, whether female or male, is expected to enter and exit a meeting-room first.

In certain cultures, businessmen may consider it acceptable to proposition or to flirt with visiting businesswomen. Don't be offended. A simple and direct "no" is appropriate.

Before offering gifts to your hosts, make sure that the type of present and even the colour of the wrapping paper are culturally acceptable.

Consular Assistance

Canada has over 270 "points of service" worldwide where consular officials are ready to help you if needed. If you encounter problems while travelling abroad, contact a Canadian embassy or consulate. Addresses and telephone numbers are listed in our booklet *Bon Voyage... But*.

If you require urgent assistance abroad, you can make a collect call to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in Ottawa, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at **(613) 996-8885**, or e-mail us at **sos@dfait-maeci.gc.ca**. See *Bon Voyage...* *But* for more information on consular assistance.

For More Information

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Web site: www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca

Consular Affairs Bureau

Web site: www.voyage.gc.ca

E-mail: voyage@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

Publications (free)

*Bon Voyage, But... Information
for the Canadian Traveller*

*Canadian Performers: How to
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HEALTH ISSUES

Canadian Society for International Health

List of travel clinics:

Web site: **www.csih.org**

E-mail: **csih@csih.org**

Tel.: **(613) 241-5785**

Health Canada

Web sites:

Health Canada: **www.hc-sc.gc.ca**

Travel Medicine Program:

www.travelhealth.gc.ca

Tel.: **(613) 957-8739**

FAXlink: **(613) 941-3900**

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA (CIC)

Web site: **www.cic.gc.ca**

CIC Call Centres:

Tel.: **1 888 242-2100** (in Canada)

or

Montreal **(514) 496-1010**

Toronto **(416) 973-4444**

Vancouver **(604) 666-2171**

Publication (free)

International Adoption and the Immigration Process (on-line only)

International Association for Medical Assistance to Travellers (IAMAT)

Web site: **www.iamat.org**

Tel.: **(519) 836-0102** or

(416) 652-0137

E-mail: **info@iamat.org**

MedicAlert®

Web site: **www.medicalert.ca**

E-mail: **medinfo@medicalert.ca**

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