

Travel Guard®

LGBTQ+ Travelers

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Advice for Transgender and Non-Binary Travelers

Members of the LGBTQ+ community may face a number of challenges when traveling, and this is especially true for transgender and non-binary travelers. Concerns vary from person to person, and the following tips and considerations will help you make informed decisions about your travel in relation to your own unique profile.



Be Informed

The most important tool for transgender and non-binary travelers is knowledge. Thoroughly research your destination by seeking out information from official sources, travel experts and anecdotal reports. Factors such as security risks and cultural issues may be dramatically different across neighborhoods and even individual businesses, so tailor your research based on your planned activities. Do remember to consider your own profile – including your gender presentation and official travel documentation – in addition to more general concerns.

✓ Legal issues

Get to know the laws regarding LGBTQ+ individuals in your destination, including any country-level legal protections. Anti-LGBTQ+ laws do not necessarily preclude you from traveling. However, you should carefully consider risks of entry/exit, the precautions you will need to take, the risks you will face during your travels and what you should do if you are detained or face harassment from local officials. Some countries have anti-LGBTQ+ laws that include restrictions on LGBTQ-oriented written materials, mobile apps and websites. If traveling to these locations, individuals should delete apps, browsing history, photos and any personal information on social media accounts and should avoid traveling with LGBTQ-oriented books and other media.



✓ Cultural concerns

Even if a destination does not have, or consistently enforce, anti-LGBTQ+ laws, cultural attitudes can impact your travel experience. In some cases, you may inadvertently cause offense or simply stand out as a foreign national, making yourself more vulnerable to crime. In other instances, acting outside of cultural norms may increase risks of discrimination, harassment or violence. Understand cultural attitudes and practices in your destination and how best to adhere to them so you can maintain a low profile.

✓ Safety considerations

Transgender and non-binary individuals face disproportionate levels of harassment and violence. In addition to researching general concerns such as crime, terrorism, civil unrest and political risks, seek information on incidents involving transgender and nonbinary individuals. Again, make sure you focus on your specific travel plans and the places you intend to visit.

✓ Health issues

Research the general health risks in your destination and be aware that certain medications or medical treatments may be illegal, restricted or unavailable. In locations where laws or the cultural climate present concerns, some medications, medical devices and medical conditions can also prompt discrimination or harassment. Make sure you can legally enter your destination with your medications and medical devices, as well as how your specific medical conditions could affect your destination entry and medical treatment. Carefully research how legal and cultural concerns may have bearing on your interactions with medical professionals and the medical treatment you receive.



Plan Ahead

Transgender and non-binary travelers may experience additional scrutiny at airports, customs checkpoints and hospitals. They are also more likely to face harassment and discrimination at hotels, independent rentals on public transportation and when using rideshare services. While there is no way to eliminate these risks, taking the following steps may help streamline your travel experience and ease your mind.

✓ Travel documents

Book flights and accommodations with the name and gender marker on the identification you will use when you travel. If your gender presentation does not match your photo, name or gender marker, consider updating your identification if you can. If this is not possible, be mindful that in some locations, you may face delays, uncomfortable questioning, harassment or even denial of entry. Gender nonconforming individuals or travelers with gender-neutral passports can experience similar issues. Consider updating the photo on your identification to better match your presentation. If you are applying for a passport for the first time or need to change or renew your passport, initiate the process well in advance of your travel in case you encounter unexpected delays. If you have imminent travel plans and an existing passport, do not attempt to make changes to your documentation.



✓ Airports, international borders and customs

Going through security or customs and border checks can be a distressing experience for transgender and non-binary travelers. In addition to ensuring your identification documents match travel bookings, know your options and rights when it comes to airport body scanners, pat-downs, information disclosure and prosthetics or binders. Travelers may choose to place prosthetics or binders in carry-on luggage, as wearing them during the screening process may lead to additional searches. Airport security, border security personnel and customs officials may have inconsistent knowledge of approved protocols. Understanding the rules and available resources if you encounter difficulties can better prepare you for the departure and arrival process. Allow additional time to go through security or customs screening in case you face additional scrutiny/questioning. If you experience issues with security or customs personnel, be cooperative and respectful when communicating your rights.

✓ Medications and health considerations

Obtain appropriate permission to travel into your destination with your medications and medical devices (including syringes, pen injectors, etc.). Carry extra medication unless the country restricts the quantity of a medication. Keep all prescription and over-the-counter medications in their original containers. Travel with a note from your doctor (translated into the local language, if necessary) as well as any other necessary medical permissions and documentation.

✓ Accommodations

Choose somewhere that is known to welcome LGBTQ+ travelers. International hotel chains and resorts generally have easily accessible information regarding LGBTQ+ travelers. Even countries with anti-LGBTQ+ laws may have options. However, it is always best to remain circumspect when sharing personal information.

✓ Transportation

Transgender and non-binary travelers have experienced harassment, violence and discrimination on public transportation, in taxis and when using rideshare services. Plan your transportation in advance to the extent possible, including researching various options and pre-booking services if you are able.



Stay Safe

Research and planning are important, but it is just as important to travel confidently and know how to respond in a dangerous situation or an emergency.

✓ Getting around

Let a trusted contact at home know your itinerary and, if possible, enable location sharing on your phone. Always stay alert when you are traveling and avoid disclosing personal information to strangers. Know where the closest police stations and diplomatic facilities are in relation to your accommodations. In addition to taking general precautions such as avoiding isolated areas and not walking alone after dark, consider risks associated with your gender presentation and using public restrooms. If you are being followed or harassed, do not engage, and quickly remove yourself from the situation. If you are outdoors, seek refuge in the nearest busy establishment as soon as possible.

✓ Meeting people

Connecting with the local LGBTQ+ community can be rewarding but risky, especially in countries with anti-LGBTQ+ laws. In some locations, using mobile apps and websites geared toward the LGBTQ+ community can pose a legal risk in some locations. Authorities may also raid LGBTQ-oriented businesses in countries with legal restrictions. Additionally, some individuals use social apps and websites to attack unsuspecting victims. If you are going to meet someone during your travels, only meet in public places, tell a trusted contact at home where you will be and who you are meeting and do not travel to a second location. Additionally, do not accept food or beverages from strangers, and never leave your food or drink unattended.

✓ Contacting authorities

If you are a victim of a crime, local authorities may not have the manpower or resources to effectively respond. In some locations, harassment by officials can also be a concern. If the country in which you are traveling has a tourist police force, these units are often more responsive to travelers. Additionally, be sure to contact your nearest diplomatic facility to report the incident as well as any police harassment.

✓ Seeking medical treatment

Even at home, seeking medical care can be a complicated endeavor for transgender and non-binary individuals. Accessing care when traveling adds a new dimension of uncertainty and stress, and there is no straightforward set of advice for individuals to follow. Transgender and non-binary individuals may experience discrimination, harassment and even legal issues when seeking medical care abroad. Your nearest diplomatic facility, travel insurance provider or a travel medicine specialist may have more information on where to seek medical care.



Have questions?

Contact Travel Guard 24/7 with any travel questions, we are available to assist customers before, during or after their travel.

Visit www.travelguard.com/LGBTQ to view more in-depth information on safety and security tips for LGBTQ+ travelers.

Travel Guard, part of Zurich Cover-More, meets the diverse needs of travelers worldwide through its comprehensive portfolio of travel insurance plans and assistance services as well as a network of experienced providers. With global service centers placed strategically around the globe, our 24/7 multilingual team is always just a phone call away and ready to assist when our customers experience travel issues – from lost luggage or minor travel inconveniences to medical emergencies or life-threatening events. We help customers recover from travel disruptions and enjoy their journeys knowing Travel Guard has their back every step of the way. Learn more at www.travelguard.com and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and TikTok.