

Strategies and Resources: **Travel (part 2)**

So, you've decided you want to go on holiday/travel! Fantastic! The Leeds Autism AIM team have created this helpful guide to support you plan your holiday, with accommodations in mind that will make your holiday more enjoyable and less stressful.

Our guide has been broken up into smaller parts to make it easier to read and find the resources you are looking for. Part 2 covers holiday safety when travelling.

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Health Concerns

Please note that the text below was not written by a medical professional and does not constitute medical advice. The information below is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the advice of a qualified medical practitioner such as your GP or a pharmacy that supplies travel vaccinations.

Airport/station/stop safety

Remember to pack your OWN luggage and handle your OWN luggage in the airport, train/coach station, ferry terminal or bus/coach stop.

Do not help a stranger with their bags in the airport/station, on the plane/train/bus/ferry/coach or at arrivals. Only touch your own bag. If you need help with your bags, then ask a cabin crew or airport/train/coach/ferry staff member for help.

If on a train or coach, ask staff about putting your luggage in the overhead compartment.

Travel Vaccinations



Whether you need vaccinations depends on where you are going. If you have decided to stick to Europe or North America, you shouldn't need additional vaccinations. If you are high-risk, then this could be different – consult your GP.

If you are thinking of travelling anywhere else, you will need to think about vaccinations. The Scottish NHS has the Fit for Travel website that can give you guidance on recommended vaccinations: [Destinations - Fit for Travel \(scot.nhs.uk\)](https://www.scot.nhs.uk/fitfortravel/)

Vaccination costs: Many are not available on the NHS; a full course of the most expensive vaccinations will come close to £200. But many of these will last for years before you need a booster. After getting vaccinated, you can travel to these places without any more needles.

If you go to these countries without vaccination, you are running a massive risk, these diseases can be very serious.

Malaria

Currently (mid 2023), there is a vaccine for Malaria, but it is not available for travellers. It is only being given to children in certain African countries – they need it more than you do!

This means if you are going to a country where Malaria is present, you will need to take tablets every day, including before and after your trip. Doxycycline is the cheapest anti-malarial drug; you can get these from the GP or a pharmacy.

If you struggle with routine, add Malaria tablets to your daily task lists. This is vital, a bout of Malaria is very unpleasant, it also can reoccur even after you think you are cured – even years later.

Covid

Covid vaccinations are free and can protect you against spreading Covid. As of writing, most countries are dropping requirements for Covid tests. We recommend you take an up-to-date copy of your Covid passport with you and have it available for inspection. Some countries and tour operators still require it.

Here's a useful link: [Get an NHS COVID Pass - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

Encountering Animals Abroad



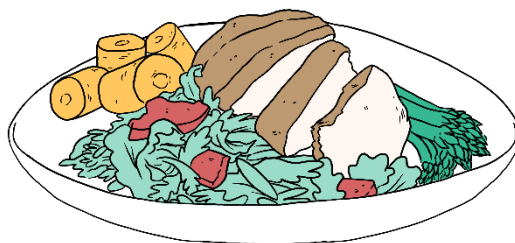
This is something that follows on from health concerns, the situation with animals abroad is different abroad than it is at home. Again, these are notes intended as a starting point; they are not intended as the replacement for professional advice. Please consult with experts in where you are going.

Here's a few things to think about:

- In certain parts of Africa, India, Australia, the Arctic, and National Parks in the USA, there are large and potentially dangerous animals. Obey any instructions given by rangers, wardens, guides etc...
- In many countries, stray dogs and cats can be carrying diseases – such as Rabies: they can also have fleas. They make look cute but resist the temptation to stroke them. Only stroke animals you know are well cared for pets.

- If the place you are going to is hot, it probably will have various snakes and creepy crawlies that can sting and bite. Be cautious around these, they may be hiding under logs and stones etc... Again, listen to advice given. Here are some general points:
 - Leave alone any insects that are brightly coloured and/or has spines, large pincers, large biting mouth parts and/or stingers. Butterflies and Moths are usually OK. Always leave alone scorpions, spiders, sun spiders, centipedes, leeches, bees, wasps, ants, and snakes.
- If you are out camping in such parts of the world, shake out your boots in the morning before you put them on!

Food and Hygiene



In some countries hygiene will often be different than it is back home. To keep yourself safe you will need to think about a few things around food. This is to stop you getting food poisoning or becoming ill.

Wash your hands. You need to make sure your hands are clean before eating, either wash with soap and water or an alcohol-based sanitiser.

Only eat food that is freshly served steaming hot. You don't know when the salad was prepared or what state reheated food was in before it was warmed up.

Avoid eating high risk foods. These foods should be avoided in developing countries:

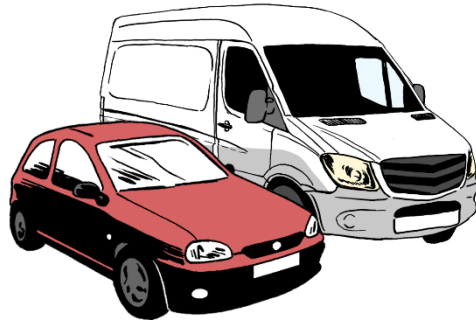
- Meat that is still pink
- Fish and Shellfish
- Unpasteurised milk and cheese
- Dishes that contain raw or undercooked eggs like mayonnaise or mousse.
- Unpeeled fruit and vegetables

Water and drink hygiene: You need to check whether tap water in the country is safe to drink. If it is not, then you need to take the following into account:

- Only drink water that you can see has come out of a sealed bottle of drinking water that comes from a recognised manufacturer.
- Drink fruit juice that has come from a sealed container.
- Only clean your teeth with bottled water (generally, it is still safe to wash your hands in the tap water)
- Do not have ice in your drinks.
- If you do not have access to such water, boil the water or use chemical sterilisation tablets.
- Fizzy drinks from cans and bottles, tea, coffee, and alcoholic drinks are usually safe.

For more information: Go to the Fit4Travel page on food hygiene [here](#).

Roads



Abroad, the roads and traffic can be very different from what you are used to here in Britain. There are two factors to take into consideration with roads and being abroad.

Here in the UK, we drive on the left. In most places you will go abroad, they drive on the right.

So, when crossing the road, bear this in mind - you need to look left first before crossing the road, not right! Be a bit more cautious until you get a feel for the place.

We'd recommend on your first day or two to pay attention to how the locals are driving, so you can make better judgements when crossing or walking near roads.

You may witness a car accident, but you may not speak the language or be able to speak to the police. The people in the accident will most likely know what to do more than you will. Despite being distressing, it is best to walk away unless asked to stay to be a witness – but this is unlikely due to the language barrier.

Jaywalking is a term used mostly in America, but other places across the world have adopted this such as China. This means you shouldn't cross a road unless you are at a designated crossing. If you cross somewhere that is not a crossing, you could be fined or be in trouble.

Crossings are different across the world with different rules on who's right of way it is, so please look both ways when crossing. Do not try to cross large busy roads with no halfway point as you may be stuck in the road.

Jetlag



Jetlag is when you take a long flight and now, you're in a foreign country and your body clock needs to adjust. This results in fatigue, and that can make your symptoms worse.

So, what to do?

Before your journey: Get plenty of sleep for a few nights before you travel.

Whilst Travelling: Get plenty more sleep if you can! Keep hydrated. This is why it is best when flying long-distance to take a later flight.

When you arrive: Try to sleep at night in your new location; don't sleep during the day.

Different time zones: If you are travelling to somewhere that is in a different time zone, you will be before or ahead of UK time e.g. in the eastern United States, you will be four hours behind the time in Leeds.

Jetlag should wear off after a few days.

Temperature and Weather



Autistic people can be under or over-sensitive to temperature. Depending on where and when you are going, you can experience extremes of temperatures you won't find in the UK. Any tricks you have for coping with temperatures in Britain will have to be applied in places like these.

Hot Weather

- **Keep Hydrated:** But remember the guidelines on water safety and hygiene! Bring some bottled water with you.
- **Keep in the Shade**
- **Wear Suitable Clothing:** Hats, loose clothing all helps.
- **Reduce Sensory Stimulation:** Wear sunglasses and earplugs if you need to.
- **Take it Easy:** Stay active but don't push yourself, take breaks from physical activities.

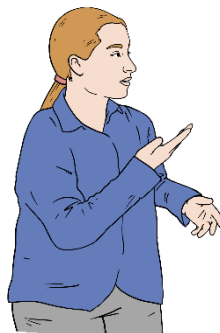
This webpage has more information: <https://spectrumdisorder.com/article/how-autistic-people-can-cope-hot-weather>


Cold Weather

- **What Clothing Should you be Wearing?** See what sort of clothing other people are wearing outside and use that as a guide. For example, if you are in Russia in winter, you'll see all the locals wearing thick winter clothing. Check any travel advice.
- **Hat and Gloves:** Your hands and head need to be kept warm as well.
- **Wear Layers:** Multiple thin layers are better than one thick one.
- **Keep Cosy!** When indoors, you still need to keep warm - use a blanket, keep by the fire/heater.
- **Protect your Eyes:** If there is snow on the ground and it's sunny, then the light will reflect off the snow. You will need sunglasses.

This website has more information: <https://autismguide.co.uk/emotional-issues/autism-and-the-difficult-winter-time/>

Foreign Languages and alphabet





Let's face it, as someone who speaks fluent English, you have a major advantage over the rest of the world. A lot of people around the world will speak English to an extent. It is a good idea to learn something of the language.

Alphabet

Not all the world uses the Latin alphabet – that's the alphabet that this document is written in! Other countries may use a different one such as Greek, Cyrillic, Japanese, Chinese etc... It could be good to learn a little of it, enough to recognise the most common signs, such as men's toilets, women's toilets, exit, train platform, check-in etc...

Learning a little of the language

It is good to learn a few words such as please, thank you, one beer please, men's toilet, women's toilet, exit, train etc... Learning a few words can help immensely.

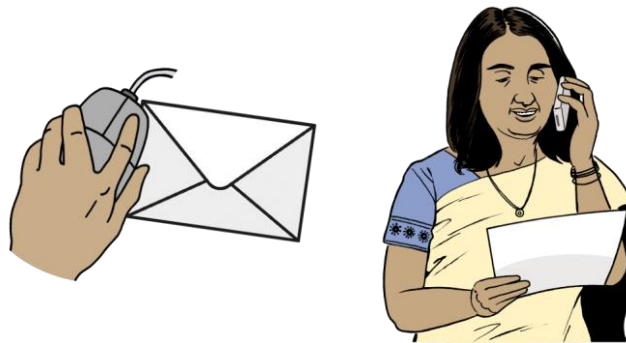
You can also use language apps to help translate or use a 'symbol' t-shirt where you can point to the symbol that you are trying to communicate, for example pointing to the toilet to find the nearest public toilet.

Pocket translators can be helpful for learning the local language. Dictionaries that include words in two different languages e.g. Spanish to English can be useful too and are normally affordable.

Contact Us

This is part two of our Travel Guide. Please refer to our website guides for other parts of the travel series.

This guide was co-produced by **Leeds Autism AIM** and Jonathan Byfield, a volunteer at AIM, as part of The Advonet Group. We are a free service co-led by and run for autistic adults (aged 18+) in the Leeds area.



- Email us at leedsautismaim@advonet.org.uk
- Call The Advonet Group's office on **0113 244 0606** and ask for someone from our team
- Follow us on Facebook at [@leedsautismaim](https://www.facebook.com/leedsautismaim)
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