

Choosing the Right Travel Insurance Policy

Australian travelers seem to spend a lot of time seeking the best deals for their overseas flight and accommodation when going on holiday but often ignore travel insurance which can be seen as unnecessary, not to mention expensive. With travel now taking us further afield, travel insurance needs to encompass more than just lost luggage. All travelers should ensure they have the most appropriate insurance for their needs, before they leave the country.



To assist in this endeavor, many websites provide a free and simple cost comparison tool that allows consumers to compare the price of various popular Travel Insurance products on offer. All travelers are encouraged to consider the following points when deciding on their insurance needs:

A Trip to the Hospital

According to the Australian Government's Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), 1,200 Australians are hospitalized overseas every year. Overseas hospital bills can be crippling.

Australian travelers should make sure that their travel insurance covers their medical expenses in the specific countries they are visiting as medical costs can differ dramatically from one region of the world to another.

In Southeast Asia for instance, daily hospitalization costs can often exceed \$800 and if you need to be

medically evacuated from the United States, you could be looking at over \$75,000. Some cases have been closer to \$300,000.

Aussies should also be wary of stomach nasties that plague so many travelers every year. A newspaper in the UK reported that almost one in four British travelers experienced food poisoning when holidaying in Spain, with Greece, Turkey and Egypt also rating high. A case of 'Bali Belly' can be particularly nasty, especially when you consider DFAT has handled medical evacuations from Indonesia costing in excess of \$60,000.

Safety on the Roads

Road safety is a major issue for travelling Aussies, especially for those not used to driving on the other side of the road! The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) recently released figures that showed British tourists are more likely to be killed in Thailand than any other destination.



Thai law states safety helmets must be worn when driving motorcycles, but according to the FCO this is widely ignored, and contributes to the high number of deaths each year. On average 38 people a day die in motorcycle accidents in Thailand. If the worst does happen, insurance will save your family having to cover the costs to bring your remains home. However, some vehicles are not roadworthy, unregistered and cannot legally be driven on a public road. This could invalidate your travel insurance policy.

Adventure Travel

A bungee jump or sky dive may be high on our things to do in a lifetime list, but most generic policies won't cover you for injury if they occur when taking part in such activities. Make sure you check what's covered in your insurance policy so you can unleash your inner daredevil, safe in the knowledge the experience won't cost you an arm and a leg.



Protecting Your Valuables

Travelers should always be aware of their personal belongings, especially, in countries where pick-pocketing is common. Brazil is highlighted on the DFAT website as a hotspot for mobile phone cloning; imagine how difficult it is to replace your handset while on holiday.

Also certain policies limit cover for expensive items such as cameras, laptops and/or jewellery which may have a per-item limit. Make sure you clarify this with your insurer.

It is vital for travelers to understand that if they don't have insurance, they will be personally liable for all unforeseen costs. Don't risk yours or your family's finances for the sake of a once off premium. While some traditional insurance companies could be deemed expensive, by taking a few minutes to compare all policies available using comparison tools you could halve the cost of buying cover.

The message from DAFT is clear – “if you can't afford travel insurance, you can't afford to travel”. Don't subscribe to the 'it'll never happen to me' myth.

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