

# Smart Ways to Manage Your Travel Money

By

Hank Schrader

# Overview—Smart Travel Money Tips

- Money Questions always arise.
- This power point will help you manage, protect and help you save money while traveling by minimizing fees.
- It will also offer advice on how much to take, what types of credit/ATM cards to take and what not to take.

# Credit Cards

- We carry an American Express Card (AE), either a Visa (VC) or MasterCard (MC) and an ATM debit bank card.
- Our AE and MC are different cards, so **if one person loses their cards, we can still continue our trip.**
- The cards we take charge 0-1% in foreign currency fees, which is good. 3% is high, call to find out fees prior to your trip.

# ATMs

- **ATMs** are the standard way **to get local currency**.
- Use your Debit card—credit cards used at ATMS are cash advances—can charge as high as 22-29%--basically it's a loan.
- Check with your bank to see if your card will work overseas.
- You will need to enter a **PIN (personal identification number)** to use your debit card.
- **Protect your PIN number**—a debit card is useless if lost or stolen without a PIN. It is best to memorize it if possible.

# ATMs (con't)

- You may have to use your ATM pin differently overseas. For example, we have a 6 digit PIN number. In Europe, most ATM machines have 4 digit PINs. Our bank taught how to use these machines so we can get money.
- Try **to withdraw large amounts** when you use the ATM to minimize fees. One big visit is cheaper than many small visits.
- Know if your bank **limits** the amount you can withdraw in a 24 hour period. Also the machine may have limits. If you are denied just try a lower amount.
- You may have to **change high denomination bills at a bank.**

# Foreign Currency

- You need to decide if you will take any foreign currency **prior to arrival in the country.**
- While most larger establishments take credit cards, many small places do not.
- You need **local currency for tips, small purchases, taxis** (farmers markets seldom take plastic).

# Exchanging Money

- There is always a **fee to exchange money**. Banks usually offer the best exchange rates. You will not get the prime published exchange rate—that is only for banks or large currency exchanges.
- **Foreign coins** cannot be changed in banks or at currency exchanges—they only accept folding money. Try to use them before you leave the country or prepare to keep them as mementos.

# How Much Cash Should You Get?

- We carry a **minimum of \$200.00** US dollars. Depending upon the trip, we have carried as much as \$1000.00.
- 2 best places to get foreign currency—your bank or American Express. Bank is usually cheaper.
- We usually only carry **Euros or Pounds** prior to an European trip. Again 200-1000 depending on the length of the trip. Of course, if our trip is only to Russia, we get rubles.
- We always **split our cash money**—half each and carry it in our money belts.



# Money Safety

- Call your credit card company to tell them you are traveling—if you don't, **they may deny or cancel card to help prevent fraud.**
- We always carry **money belts.**
- We always make **3 copies** of our cards and the front page of our passport—Anne keeps one, I keep one and we leave one home with a relative.

# Money Safety

- Travelers often **have problems** buying ticks for the subway or train at machines. If a stranger offers to help, beware—it could be a scam. We have had some great people help us but if you get help watch carefully. If the machine spits out money and a ticket, or multiple tickets (more than the number of travelers), you just got **ripped off!**
- Never, **NEVER** let a local help you with an ATM machine.

# Money Safety (cont)

- Always check your change, especially if you pay with larger denomination bills. **Slow counts** (hoping that a hurried tourist will grab the money in frustration and go.)
- Recently, I had the **wrong change** given back at an European airport—the cashier quickly recognize her mistake and gave me the correct change when I confronted her.

# Money Belts

- Only keep a small amount of cash in your pockets—keep most of your money & your credit cards in your **safe money belt**.
- Always check to see if you **zipped your money belt** after taking out something.
- Don't laugh—I **lost all my cash & cards in Paris after not zipping up my money belt**.
- Lucky for me, some wonderful soul turned them in to the police & I got it all back!

# My Money Belt



# What Not to Take

- **Traveler's checks** are a waste of time & fees.
- All the credit cards you own—not only do you not need them, they could get lost or stolen & just add to your headaches. **Less is best!**

# Customs for Americans

- You are allowed to take home **\$800.00** per person **duty-free** every 30 days.