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Germaphobe On The Go

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Tops tips to beat bacteria and travel worry-free...

According to urbandictionary.com, a “germaphobe” is any person who is obsessed with cleanliness and defeating bacteria. In the battle against bacteria however, Germaphobes often end up losing out, as their every action can be dependent on the likelihood of coming into contact with dirt or disease. When it comes to world travel, it seems unfair that anyone should miss out because of an involuntary opposition to the gross, the grimy and the possibly infectious. So, how do you conquer the world when you're constantly looking over your shoulder for germs on the attack? While there is no all-encompassing remedy to fight the fear that comes with being a germaphobe, there are certain tricks that can get you back on the road or into the skies. By following tips such as these, you can set your mind at ease while you take in the sights, without the unwanted bacteria.

Tip 1: Rub it in

Is a fear of shaking hands, touching restaurant menus and turning hotel doorknobs sucking all the joy out of your travels? One of the best ways to ease your mind when it comes to solving the spread of germs and disease is to break out the hand sanitizer whenever you feel the need to clean. Packing hand sanitizer sounds obvious, but it's not to be overlooked. It may smell poignant and may annoy the heck out of your fellow travelers but nothing says “instant clean” more than feeling the smooth sensation of clear liquid spread across your fingertips, wiping yourself clean with every turn of the wrist. Better yet, travel-sized sanitizers fit in your purse, your carry-on luggage or your jean pocket and is small enough for even the lightest of packers.

Top tip: Scraping your palm with your fingertips helps attack dirt right under the nail! So squeeze tight, make a fist and win the fight against bacteria.

Tip 2: Let it sizzle

Aching to indulge in some mouth watering street food while traveling the busy cities of Delhi, Bangkok or Beijing? While you're first instinct as a 'germ aware' traveler may be to walk away as you silently count the number of people who handled the food being served at hygienically questionable looking food stalls... don't! When deciding whether it's safe to eat food off the street (not literally) it's not always just a matter of *what* you are eating as much as the *way* in which it's been prepared. Food that is cooked at higher temperatures is likely to have less bacteria. So, instead of cringing as you contemplate the germs that may be sprinkled over an otherwise delectable array of culinary delights, just choose foods that sizzle. Indulge in a cup of masala chai instead of mango lassi, or pad thai over salad made of fresh produce (which can often be washed with non-potable water). The possibilities are endless, and the likelihood that you'll get sick from something you ingest will severely decrease.

Top tip: Depending on your personal preferences and beliefs, you may choose to wash down your treat with a local beer, wine, or liquor. Alcohol will kill any bacteria living in your

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Tip 3: Cover up

We've all been there. You sit yourself down in the airplane and inevitably, there is someone sitting next to you, coughing up a lung and spreading the germs, instead of the love. What can you do to prevent yourself from jumping out the window before the plane takes off? Cover up! No, that doesn't mean wrapping yourself from head to toe. It means carrying a scarf with you wherever you go! Scarves serve a multitude of purposes; from covering your face during a sand storm to serving the cause of the germaphobe by acting as a relatively impenetrable divide between you and the spreader of bacteria next to you. Just because you're surrounded by disease that is determined to spread and dust that refuses to settle does not mean that you need to hide away in order to avoid exposure.

Top tip: For women travelers, scarves can also be used as a sirong at the beach or to cover your head as you enter temples or cultural sites! Cut out the need for hats or wraps and pack light!

Tip 4: Wipe, Baby Wipe

One of the hardest things to conquer as a traveling germaphobe is the almighty bathroom. From the airport before you've taken off to the coin-operated toilet waiting for you after touchdown, the bathroom is the number one place where all things gross, grimy and dirty collide for the sole purpose of destroying your travel experience. From the squatter hole to the porcelain throne, they who fear the power of the germ will inevitably detest using public toilets abroad. While there's no cure for the squeamish, there is one product that can seriously ease all bathroom related trauma. Baby wipes! They sanitize, they smell nice and they make for great toilet paper when you're traveling in countries where it's more normal to use a hose, or a bucket to rinse clean. Baby wipes can also be used to wipe up spills, remove stains and wipe away dust when things get dirtier than expected.

Top Tip: Worried about the waste, or impact that tossing baby wipes may have on the environment? Invest in eco-friendly natural baby wipes, 100% natural, made of organic material and entirely chlorine free. Wipe away your worries and your germs all at once!

Don't let bacteria get the best of you! Stay clean and ensure that you're next holiday is worry-free!

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Originally from Toronto, Arden has studied, volunteered and worked her way around the world. From promoting HIV/AIDS awareness as an international volunteer in Tanzania and teaching business English in Germany, to exploring hidden treasures of the Turkish bazaar and accepting a fairy tale proposal amidst the dunes of the Moroccan

dessert. Arden believes that as long as there are unknown lands to discover, the adventure never ends! She holds an M.A in International Communications and Development from City University London in the UK and has worked as a freelance writer and a development practitioner for a number of NGOs.

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