



Brazil Advises World Cup Tourists: 'Don't Scream' if Robbed

By Harriet Baskas

Brazilian police have put together security guidelines for visitors traveling to the World Cup next month, including advice to tourists not to scream if robbed.

“Don’t fight, scream or argue,” advises a brochure filled with World Cup safety tips compiled by the São Paulo police that will be published in four different languages, [Brazilian newspaper Estadao de Sao Paulo first reported](#).

The U.S. Department of State warns that crime such as armed robbery in Brazil is "a major concern — especially in the larger cities" such as [Rio de Janeiro](#) and [São Paulo](#), two of the 12 World Cup host cities.

Brazil expects around 3.7 million tourists during the World Cup, including nearly 2 million coming specifically to attend matches and fan events June 12 to July 13. Of that number, Brazil plans that an [estimated 600,000 foreign tourists](#) will visit.

“I haven’t heard about the ‘don’t scream’ advice but can tell you it’s probably solid advice,” said Kevin Raub, a São Paulo-based writer and author of the Rio chapter in the latest Lonely Planet ["South America on a Shoestring"](#) travel guide.

“People have been killed over a backpack and others have been killed simply out of frustration when the thieves couldn’t get what they wanted. It’s best not to antagonize them whatsoever,” said Raub.

He also agrees with advice not to carry anything valuable, especially at the beach.

“Rio has seen an increase of something called ‘arrastão,’ which means ‘big sweep.’ A wave of thieves line up along the sand and rob everyone in a lightning quick operation that is in and out before beachgoers or police can even blink.”

Raub also suggests not taking out a phone or a camera in large crowds.

“Rio's pickpockets, called ‘rats’ locally, make David Copperfield look like a lame magician. Your phone will be gone before you can say ‘abracadabra’ and you won't even know until the next time you reach in your pocket for it.”

His best advice for travelers? Pay attention to surroundings and use common sense.

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"The chances of something bad happening to you in Rio are slim, and during the World Cup security precautions will be on overdrive," Raub added.

And most Brazilians are willing to help out tourists, said Jill Siegel, owner of [South American Escapes](#). “Brazilians are friendly and most people will be willing to help you if you ask for directions or need to find out anything at all.”

To avoid calling attention to yourself, Siegel advises, don't wear jewelry or gold chains and don't walk around unfamiliar streets or the beach at night. “And wear an obviously inexpensive watch, such as a plastic one.”

She also advises visitors to Rio to “stick to taxis” because on public buses, it's easy to get on the wrong line, and some areas of the suburbs in the North Zone can be dangerous for foreigners. And visitors should be cautious in traffic.

“Buses are crazy,” said Mark Koelen, who works with [Rio Football Tour](#). “They drive too fast in narrow streets and any sudden movement by a visitor who is not accustomed to this is simply fatal.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also recommends bringing a first-aid kit filled with over-the-counter medicines, using insect repellent to help avoid dengue, which is carried by mosquitos in Brazil, drinking bottled water and avoiding unprotected sex.

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