Booking that long-awaited holiday or travel online?

Don't fall victim to travel fraud

Following a year of travel bans, quarantine, uncertainty and missed holidays, many of us are desperate to get away for a break, whether it's a holiday in the sun or a weekend by the sea in the UK. You may be taking the plunge and booking right now, or waiting cautiously until the travel situation becomes clearer.

Or you may be booking travel and accommodation for that face-to-face meeting you've yearned for every time you go on a video call.

But cybercriminals are busy thinking about holidays and travel too ... not taking them but exploiting your desperation for a break, with fake websites, advertisements, emails, social media posts, texts and phone calls for holidays, flights, accommodation or pilgrimages that don't exist.

Avoid disappointment and financial losses: start by reading our expert tips on searching and booking holidays and travel safely and securely.

#safegetaways

Top tips to ensure your holiday or travel booking is safe.

- **Do thorough research** on accommodation, flights, cruises, package holidays or pilgrimages advertised via private advertisements, to check they're authentic.

- **Check that accommodation really exists** by finding it on Google Maps and looking for independent reviews and recommendations. If you can, call and speak to the owner/agent directly. If the number is not provided, email and request it.

- **Check reviews** on TripAdvisor or similar sites.

- **Never pay for holidays or travel by bank transfer**. If you do and it's a fraud, you may never see your money again. Paying by credit card means more chance of getting your money back if something goes wrong.

- Make sure travel agents and tour operators you book through are **members of trade associations** such as ABTA or ATOL, by checking on these bodies' websites.

- **Before paying online or providing any confidential details**, type in the website address you know to be correct (instead of following a link), and ensure the payment page is secure (begins with 'https' and has a locked padlock in the browser window frame).

- **Be wary** of unusually cheap holidays or high deposits.

- **Check terms and conditions** prior to making any payment.

- **Keep confirmations and payment receipts**, and check statements for irregular entries.

- **Be wary of unsolicited approaches** claiming to be from travel firms, insurance companies or claims specialists offering to arrange a refund for a holiday or travel cancelled or postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of these look very authentic, and play on your desire for a refund so that you can book another holiday.

For the full story, visit **www.getsafeonline.org**, select 'Protecting Yourself' and then 'Holiday & Travel Booking'.

Get Safe Online

Get Safe Online is the UK's leading source of information and advice on online safety and security, for the public and small businesses. It is a not-for-profit, public/private sector partnership backed by law enforcement agencies and leading organisations in internet security, banking and retail.

For more information and expert, easy-to-follow, impartial advice on safeguarding yourself, your family, finances, devices and workplace, visit **www.getsafeonline.org**

If you think you've been a victim of online fraud, report it to Action Fraud, the UK's national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre on 0300 123 20 40 or at www.actionfraud.police.uk

In Scotland, report fraud to Police Scotland by calling 101.

www.getsafeonline.org