

## WARNING

# Beware of This Late-Night Phone Scam

Here's the scenario: The phone in your hotel room rings, waking you from a deep slumber. You answer groggily, and the voice on the other end—claiming to be a hotel staffer—asks for your credit-card number. Later, mysterious charges appear on your bill. This bold new scheme is victimizing unwary hotel guests. So, the next time you're on vacation at a hotel and you get a late-night phone request for your credit-card number, what should you do? Hang up—and go back to sleep!



### AVOIDING STOMACH TROUBLE ABROAD

**Q** Any suggestions about how to avoid intestinal upset when traveling to exotic places?

**A** With more people of all ages traveling to parts of the world where health is an issue, it pays to take precautions, says Bradley A. Connor, M.D., a gastroenterologist and medical director of Travel Health Services in New York City.

Before you leave: Get the most recent updates on health conditions and recommended vaccines in the countries on your itinerary from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; send a fax to its fax-back service number, 404/332-4565. For peace of mind, you can request a worldwide directory of travel medicine clinics from the International Society of Travel Medicine in Stone Mountain, Georgia; call 770/736-7060, fax 770/736-6732, or e-mail [bcbistm@aol.com](mailto:bcbistm@aol.com).

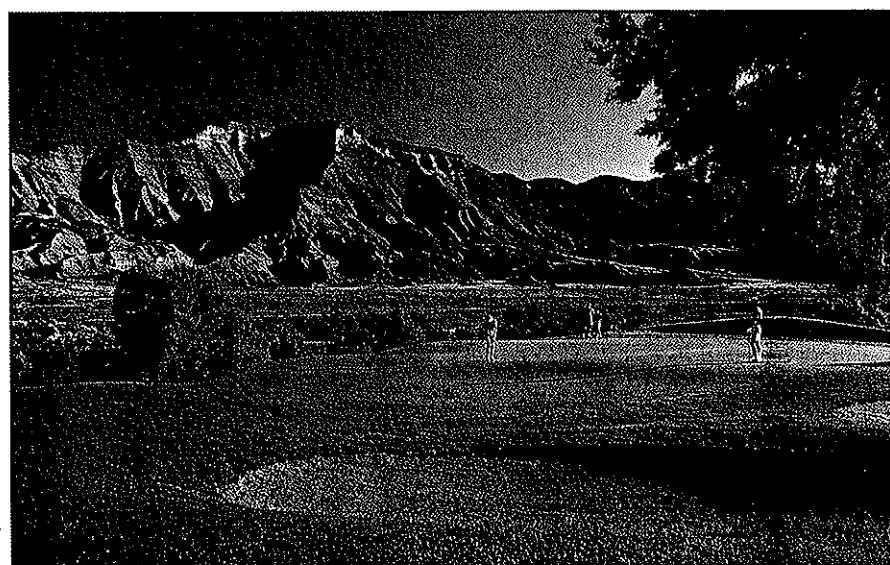
Once you're there: "The old advice about not drinking the water still holds true," says Connor. "However, caution also applies to all beverage and food selection." Foods that have been freshly cooked and served hot are the safest; avoid edibles that have been sitting out for long periods of time, such as buffets and snacks sold at street stalls, as well as dishes that might have been prepared in the morning and then briefly reheated.

Fruit is generally safe if the skin is intact and if you peel it with clean hands (bring a supply of antiseptic towelettes for premeal washes). And beware of fruit that has been cut open or chopped up. Similarly, avoid salads, raw vegetables and anything washed in water.

What's safe to drink? Hot tea, beer and carbonated beverages; however, be careful when choosing a bottled water, which may simply contain local water poured into a bottle and then resealed. Milk, too,

is dangerous in developing countries, where it may be diluted with water. Don't fall for the old saw that alcohol annihilates nasty bacteria; it doesn't. So keep the crushed ice out of your margarita and stay away from frosted beer mugs. ■

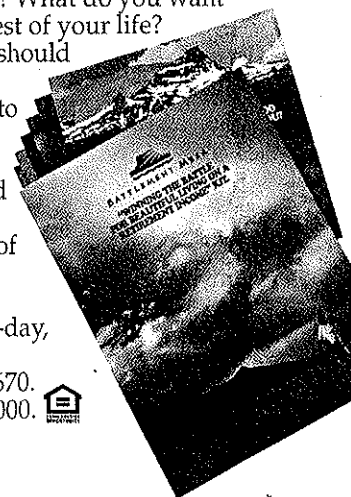
*CATHERINE FREDMAN has been a travel writer and editor for more than a decade. Send your queries to Travel Q&A, NEW CHOICES, 28 West 23rd Street, New York, NY 10010 (or to our e-mail address: [NewChoices@aol.com](mailto:NewChoices@aol.com)).*



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