

## Hiring a car abroad

Always check the car for damage with an employee from the car rental company before signing a rental agreement and again when the vehicle is returned. Have the damage-free condition confirmed in writing, or note any damage.

Clarify the refuelling requirements in advance; keep all fuel bills as proof of a full tank when the vehicle is returned.

Check insurance coverage carefully: third-party insurance is a must but the minimum statutory cover differs in some European countries and in Turkey. If the cover is insufficient, the hirer is personally liable for the excess. There may be an extra charge to increase the cover. Additional insurance is advisable.

If possible, always choose comprehensive damage cover without an excess, but check what is actually covered because such insurance often excludes damage to tyres, rims, the underbody or damage caused by stone chippings.

Take out theft insurance if this is not included in the comprehensive insurance.

Make sure that all agreements and the rental agreement are given in writing. Ask for an English version or a version in a familiar language.

It is impossible to rent a car without a credit card. Enquire in advance which documents you will need (driving licence, ID card, credit card).

Check the individual prices and the total price carefully.

Watch out for hidden costs:

- extra fees for drivers under the age of 25, and for additional drivers;
- VAT added to the rental price;
- cleaning costs that are often charged as an extra, but should be included in the overall hire charge;
- additional road-use charges (other than tolls) that may be applied in some countries such as Italy;
- service and refuelling charges (customary if refuelling rules are not observed);
- extra costs for accessories such as child seats.

Check for age restrictions. Some car rental companies stipulate a minimum age of between 21-25; others set a maximum age (in Spain, it is 79). Anyone failing to meet the age requirements will have to pay more or may not be able to rent a car. Prospective hirers must have held a driving licence for at least one year.

Ask about what to do in the event of a breakdown, accident or theft, ie, whether the police have to be notified, whether an accident report is required, or whether it is sufficient to inform the car rental company immediately?

Take a good look at the condition of the car. In some countries, the motorist is liable for defects such as worn tyres or brakes. Any penalties that may result from such defects should be passed on to the car rental company. The customer is not liable for defects if he was not responsible for them. It might be helpful to take a photograph of any defects at the start of the hire.

If you feel uncomfortable about the car, or if you discover defects, exchange it as soon as possible.

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