Research-Based Solutions for DMOs
Findings from a Food Risk Study

**TCMI**
The Tourism Crisis Management Institute at the University of Florida is the only tourism focused academic crisis management institute in the world. TCMI develops research-driven solutions that address planning, preparedness, response, and recovery in local, state, and national tourism economies.

**MANDALA RESEARCH**
Mandala Research is a trusted market research firm offering a diverse range of travel market research products and services—along with expert analysis—to Fortune 500 companies, non-profit organizations, and government agencies. The company is based in Alexandria, Virginia.

**OVERVIEW**
This study explores the food safety-related attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of U.S. citizens during international travel.

**METHODS**
TCMI works with Mandala Research, LLC to ensure that the research meets standards in crisis management. The survey was conducted in May 2013. A total of 2,113 respondents who were representative of the U.S. population participated.

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**TOP FOOD SAFETY PRECAUTIONS**

When traveling abroad, U.S. citizens were most likely to take the following precautions to protect themselves from foodborne illnesses:
- Taking care of what they ate (57.6%)
- Not drinking water from the tap (56.2%)
- Reading about food safety issues in a travel guide book (41.3%)

**TAKEAWAY #1**

Older respondents were significantly more likely to take food safety precautions during international travel than younger respondents.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**
- Use printed materials (e.g., brochures, pamphlets)
- Show images of older travelers in printed materials
- Provide specific tips for older travelers

**TAKEAWAY #2**

Respondents with higher levels of concern for food safety were significantly more likely to take food safety precautions during international travel.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**
- Reassure and empower concerned travelers by educating them about their role in minimizing risks
- Provide links to existing resources provided by health agencies (e.g., CDC, WHO) on DMO or organization websites

**INFORM TRAVELERS: PROVIDE FOOD SAFETY TIPS**

Brush your teeth and rinse your mouth with bottled water, not tap water.

- Don’t eat food from street vendors.
- Consume ice that is made from bottled or sterilized water, not tap water.
- Use alcohol free sanitizing wipes to disinfect cutlery.

**TAKEAWAY #3**

Respondents who knew someone who had experienced a foodborne illness when traveling internationally were more likely to take food safety precautions during international travel.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**
- Utilize user generated content (e.g., restaurant reviews) to build credibility
- DMOs and organizations must monitor user generated content to understand food safety issues