

BEYOND BEYOND BEYOND HEADLINES HEADLINES HEADLINES

by Ayda Bashiri

The US Department of State

gives travel warnings using 4 levels. These warnings are based on things like crime, diseases, natural disasters, and more. As of Summer 2024, the levels are:



New York City, New York, U.S.A.

"What did he say?" I asked my travel buddy, Brittany. Her red hair swung as she turned her head.

"He said we are the most beautiful women in the world." I looked at the man and saw him laughing with his head thrown back.

Soon, the busy streets of Times Square made it impossible to see him, and we continued walking to our next destination.

Tecpán, Chimaltenango, Guatemala

"You're from America?" she asked. I nodded. "I'm Eriene. I'm from Salvador."

"What are you doing in Chimaltenango?" I asked.

"I study at a Bible school here," she said proudly.

"I want to practice English, and you can practice Spanish. Maybe we get coffee?"

"I would enjoy that!" I smiled as Erine led me to a café. We talked over coffee, as I made a new friend.

Cusco, Sacred Valley, Peru

"It feels inappropriate that I wore shorts," I whispered to my boyfriend Dustin as we walked. The local workers were on strike, so the dirt roads in the mountains were blocked by rocks and guarded by villagers. No cars could pass.

Generations of people watched us: a grandmother sitting, parents working, children playing.

"Bueños Tueños," Dustin said, trying to say Buenos Tardes. I laughed, and a man nearby smiled too.

Shahin Shahr, Esfahan, Iran

"How much?" I nervously asked in Farsi. I was looking at a silver and turquoise charm in a small marketplace store.

"100,000 Rial," the shopkeeper said.

I started to take out my money, but Sirous, my cousin, stopped me.

"50,000 Rial," Sirous said.

"65."

"65," Sirous agreed and smiled. I gave the money and took my charm.

As I left, I saw the shopkeeper smiling and shaking his head.

No matter where a country is on the travel warning scale, one thing stays the same: people are kind. It's important to follow these warnings, but my travels have shown me that people all over the world are connected.

Countries might have problems, but the people living there are still warm and curious. In busy cities, small villages, and even places in danger, I've met good-hearted people, shared food, and had real talks that show we are all connected. The world is full of surprises and kindness, even in the most surprising places.

The U.S. Department of State gives travel warnings using 4 levels. These warnings are based on things like crime, diseases, natural disasters, and more. As of Summer 2024, the levels are:

- **Level 1: Use Normal Caution**
Countries like Canada, Australia, Argentina, and Senegal are at this level.
- **Level 2: Be More Careful**
Countries like Peru, India, Italy, and the Philippines are in this group.
- **Level 3: Think Before You Travel**
Countries like Guatemala, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Colombia are at Level 3.
- **Level 4: Do Not Travel**
Countries like Iran, North Korea, Venezuela, and Sudan are at this level.

Level 1: New York City, USA

"What did he say?" I asked my travel buddy, Brittany. Her red hair swung as she turned her head.

"He said we are the most beautiful women in the world." I looked at the man and saw him laughing with his head thrown back.

Soon, the busy streets of Times Square made it impossible to see him, and we continued walking to our next destination.

Level 2: Cusco, Peru

"It feels inappropriate that I wore shorts," I whispered to Dustin as we walked. The local workers were on strike, so the dirt roads in the mountains were blocked by rocks and guarded by villagers. No cars could pass.

Generations of people watched us: a grandmother sitting, parents working, children playing.

"Bueños Tueños," Dustin said, trying to say *Buenos Tardes*. I laughed, and a man nearby smiled too.

Level 3: Tecpán, Guatemala

"You're from America?" she asked. I nodded. "I'm Eriene. I'm from Salvador."

"What are you doing in Chimaltenango?" I asked.

"I study at a Bible school here," she said proudly. "I want to practice English, and you can practice Spanish. Maybe we get coffee?"

"I would enjoy that!" I smiled as Erine led me to a café. We talked over coffee, as I made a new friend.

Level 4: Esfahan, Iran

"How much?" I nervously asked in Farsi. I was looking at a silver and turquoise charm.

"100,000 Rial," the shopkeeper said.

I started to take out my money, but Sirous stopped me.

"50,000 Rial," Sirous said.

"65."

"65," Sirous agreed and smiled. I gave the money and took my charm.

As I left, I saw the shopkeeper smiling and shaking his head.

No matter where a country is on the travel warning scale, one thing stays the same: people are kind. It's important to follow these warnings, but my travels have shown me that people all over the world are connected.

Countries might have problems, but the people living there are still warm and curious. In busy cities, small villages, and even places in danger, I've met good-hearted people, shared food, and had real talks that show we are all connected. The world is full of surprises and kindness, even in the most surprising places.