

HIRE LEARNING

International car hire can be trouble-free, says the AA's Janine Harrison




Whether you're hiring a car to travel in Europe, across the United States or through Namibia, this checklist could mean the difference between a smooth trip and endless problems.

- Always use a reputable car rental company. A smaller company might be cheaper, but they rarely have the support services and roadside assistance you may need.
- Match the vehicle to your requirements. Do you need a small, economical vehicle, or are you travelling with passengers and lots of luggage?
- Check your eligibility in terms of age, credit card and driver's licence. Some rental companies have a minimum or maximum age limit, and some impose a young driver surcharge. Will they accept your type of credit card, and do you have sufficient credit for the insurance? Also check the validity of your SA driver's licence and find out whether you need an international driving permit (IDP).
- Collecting the vehicle at an airport is often convenient but you will pay an airport surcharge. Providing your flight number and scheduled arrival time will usually secure your reservation even if the flight is delayed.
- It's wise to purchase all three main types of insurance: collision damage

waiver which covers damage to the car; theft waiver (standard or super) which covers the theft of the car and damage caused by attempted theft; and personal accident insurance which covers you and/or your passengers in the event of injury or death caused by a collision. An excess (the amount you will be liable for) applies to the first two – ask how much it is. Also ask if you are covered for damage to the headlights, windscreen and tyres, and that caused by hail – sometimes it's an additional cost.

- List all additional drivers in the contract.
- Ask about any restrictions relating to interstate or cross-border travel.
- If you're renting one-way, there could be an additional fee.
- Confirm whether you will be charged for refuelling (the cost of the used

fuel plus a fee), or if you must return the car with a full tank.

- Try to confirm your price in rands and, if possible, pay in advance.
- Remember, car rental rates run on a 24-hour clock, so you might incur extra charges if you return the vehicle even an hour late.
- Ask about the company's cancellation policy and notice period.
- Read and understand the contract before signing. If it's in a foreign language, request a translated copy. Many countries have automobile clubs that offer reciprocal services such as roadside assistance and travel information to AA South Africa members. For more information, or to obtain a competitive car rental quotation or an IDP, contact the AA's Travel Call Centre on ☎ 083 843 22 or visit your closest Travel Experience store. 

BEFORE DRIVING OFF

- Inspect the vehicle (with the rental agent) for existing dents, scratches and other damage so that you are not held responsible for these.
- Ask about breakdown assistance, who to contact and what procedures to follow.
- Check that there is a spare wheel.
- Confirm the type of fuel used and ask how to open the fuel cap and bonnet.
- Familiarise yourself with the vehicle and take a moment to memorise its make, model and colour so you don't 'lose' it in a busy car park.

get out there

