1. Have backup documentation, especially when traveling abroad.  Make two photocopies of the front page of your passport.  Leave one at your hotel and leave one at home with a trusted relative or friend who will be available while you are traveling.  In a like manner make sure to carry your credit card numbers in a separate location and do not forget to take the card's telephone number in case you need to report a stolen or lost credit card.  
  
2. Make sure that your credit card company knows where you are and what your dates of travel are.   There is nothing more frustration than a credit card computer believing that someone has stolen your card and shutting it down.  By calling the credit card company you can avoid the hassles and embarrassment of your card not working.  
  
3. Carry multiple forms of payment (cash, credit cards, money withdrawal cards etc). Always carry more than one credit card with you in case you lose one, it is stolen, or becomes demagnetized. Know the advantages and disadvantage of each form of payment.  When using cash be discrete and never take a large amount of money out from your pocket in public. Carry only the cash that you will need for that day.  
  
4. Make sure that you do your research before you travel.  Know the local customs, foods, dinner hours and tipping policies before you land. Know the local laws and customs of the place that you are visiting.  Do not assume that what is legal in one location is legal in another place.  Write down and memorize how to ask for a police officer and medical assistance in the local language  
  
5.  Make sure that your family and friends know where you are and how to find you.  In case of an emergency it will help everyone if friends and relatives have you itinerary and list of hotel numbers.  Your cell phone will not work if something happens to you, so back that number up with local numbers. If you change your plans, have a person at home whom you can email with the new information.  
  
6. Your mother was right; don't speak with strangers!  Although when traveling everyone is a stranger, be careful not to give private information to anyone.  Do not give out your address, full name or passport number.  If you are a female traveler be careful of going off with a man who you do not know.  
  
7.  If you are in a place where you may become a victim, then take a city tour first. Use a reputable agency.  Look at the map before you leave the hotel, not while you are on the street. Best to write down directions on a piece of paper and leave the map folded in your pocket.  
  
8. Keep the hotel's address and telephone number with you at all times and do not keep it in your wallet.  Also if your country has an embassy or consulate in the city (cities) that you intend to visit, then let them know who you are before you arrive.  If lost, do not panic but rather ask a police officer for help or call the hotel and ask them to guide you. Always carry local emergency numbers with you!  
  
9. Dress down, not up and keep track of your personal items.  Travel is not a fashion show.  When touring do not wear your best clothing and leave your jewelry at home.  Keep it simple and remember if you cannot afford to lose it or will be emotionally distraught then leave it at home.  Do not leave bags, briefcases or backpacks unguarded.  Make an inventory of what you have before you leave home.  
10. Trust but also verify!  When traveling it is a good thing to be skeptical.  Do not share your trip itinerary with unknown persons.  If someone wants to know where you are going,ask yourself the question, "what for?"  The best is to learn to answer without giving information.  Never allow yourself to be pressured into doing what feels uncomfortable to you.  
10. Do not be over trusting!  It is a good idea to be a bit overly cautious. Do not share your itinerary with anyone.  If someone wants to know where you are going, then ask yourself, why does this person want to know.  You do not need to answer a question and when so doing, be vague!  
  
11. Never accept a drink from someone you do not know.  If you need to use the rest room, do not leave your drink on the counter.  Remember that men are as likely to be victims as are women.  An often-overlooked fact is that men are from a percentage point of view more likely than young women to be victims of crime.  
  
12. Whenever possible avoid taxis on the street.  Take only taxis that have been approved by the hotel in which you are staying. If other passengers are in the taxi, let it go!  
  
13. Be aware of the dangers on the road.  If driving a rental car, make sure to park it in a well it place or in the hotel parking lot.  If someone hits your vehicle do not stop to inspect a car if you are hit. Drive it to a secure space, but do not get out of the car. Better to lose the car than to be kidnapped.  
  
14. Ask about hotel security prior to renting a room, especially in a foreign land.  Do not receive guests in your room, but rather in the hotel's lobby. If you feel uncomfortable with another person on the elevator, do not enter the elevator, or get off and stand by the soda or vending machines.  
  
15.  If going out at night, make sure that someone knows where you are going and when to expect you back at the hotel.  This is true both for people traveling in groups and by themselves.  Ask at the hotel what the best  route is, what places you should avoid and when it is best to be off the streets.  
  
16.  If attacked, try to get the best look possible at your attacker and try to remember every personal detail. Look for identifying marks such as a tattoo, scar, or other distinguishing characteristics.  However do not end up in a fight with your attacker. It is better to loose one's possessions than to loose one's life.  
  
17. Remember you on not invincible!! There is no person, reputation, or article that cannot be destroyed, stolen, or harmed.  Your personal protection is first and foremost your responsibility.   Be care and you are sure to have a great vacation.