

Title:

Car Hire - What Not To Do

Word Count:

1031

Summary:

What not to do when hiring a car. This is an unfortunate story of a car rental made in haste.

Keywords:

car hire

Article Body:

This is my experience in hiring a rent a car and this is what not to do. My misadventure happened in the late 1980s. I wanted to visit some friends several hundred miles away. At the time I lived in a small town in the country. I didn't own a car and there was no direct convenient bus or train service to where my friends lived. I decided to take the bus, then rent a car, at the nearest place available.

I traveled to the town where the car hire or rent a car place was located. By the time I arrived at their business to rent the car, the sun had set and it was dark. I went in to the business, to enquire about renting a car. The owner had one ready to go. It was a compact blue station wagon. Being dark outside I couldn't see the car too well, but it seemed ok, so we went back to the office to do the paperwork. The car hire form had details about the car, how long I expected to rent the car for, and the insurance coverage choices, so the business owner filled out all that. I was sure that I chose to have the car and myself covered in full by insurance. I thought the insurance box was checked, as covered. He took an imprint of my credit card to pay for the car hire and that was it. He gave me the car keys, and I drove away.

I had a long way to drive in the dark. My route took me through rugged mountainous rural country side, to a large lake, where there was a ferry crossing.

At night when you're driving in a rural mountainous area always be on the lookout for deer, moose and other animals roaming along the road side. You want to see their little shining eyes, so you can slow down and be ready to swerve to avoid hitting them. Sometimes deer become alarmed by the noise and headlights

of the car approaching and they want to dash across the highway in front of you. You want to be ready to slam on the breaks, so as not to damage the hired car you're traveling in.

Another good idea, especially if you are driving at night, is to take a highway map of the area you are traveling through. Then you can mark off where you are and the places to turn ahead, so you don't make a wrong turn, like I did.

I made a wrong turn some where along the way. Instead of taking the direct route to my destination, I ended up taking an indirect route. It was dark and snowy, and I realized that the road and country side, didn't look like where I should be. I kept driving and a sign appeared with the next town ahead and how far to go to get there. Then I realized, it was just a slight detour or side trip for me. I felt a lot better when arriving at the next town, and knew which direction to go. The remainder of my trip went well and I arrived safely at my destination.

I had a good weekend with my friends, catching up, going out to dinner.

The return trip was more interesting because it was day time. I could enjoy the beautiful country side. Every thing went well to begin with. I arrived at the last town before the lake ferry and I thought it might be a good idea to put gasoline in the car, at that point, since it was a long distance to the next town with a gas station.

I checked the time, and it looked like there was just enough time to reach the ferry by driving a little faster than usual. That was a mistake. Give yourself more than enough time when using a car you've hired. So again I'm driving over mountainous rural terrain at the edge of a lake rushing to catch the ferry. I'm watching the scenery and my watch, making calculations of where it is I should be, and how long left to drive to catch the ferry. It looks like I need to go faster, so I do. I step on it. I'm hoping to cut my time of travel down to just arrive before the ferry leaves.

This is definitely not the thing to do when driving a rented car, especially in a rural area where there are birds around. As I am speeding down a hill a rather large dark coloured bird darts in front of the car. This is a big bird, about the size of a chicken. At the high speed I am traveling at I hit the bird. There was a sickening popping sound as the car and bird collided. The feathers and bird flew up and to the side of the car. I keep going and get to the ferry on time. I drive on the ferry and park. Getting out to inspect the car grill, I get a shock. There was a large hole in the plastic car grill. Broken pieces of plastic and feathers showed what had happened. So now I'm sick

about the damage.

I continue on my way to return the car to the rental company. When I arrive at the car rental place I have to tell the owner about the bird collision. He's not too impressed. We look at the rental form where the insurance section is not checked as covering the damage. The owner wants several hundred dollars and that charge goes on my credit card too. So don't do what I did.

Go to a major name car rental company. Be absolutely sure of your insurance coverage details. Check that you are covered for all damage. Know what the insurance deductible amount is. That is the amount that you will need to pay, before the insurance pays the balance of any damage. Read the form over carefully a couple of times before you sign it. Be a careful driver, and take your time. Have a great trip in the car you hire.