PARIS, France (Achieve3000, April 29, 2015). Tourists visit new places. They take photos. Today, many tourists use their camera phones. But those hoping to use a "selfie stick" should check the laws. They're no longer allowed at several famous tourist spots. And they're under review at others.

Camera phones first made it possible to hold a cell phone at arm's length. People could snap photos of themselves. Then, "selfie sticks" came along. They allow users to hold cameras at a distance. People can take better selfies. Simple selfie sticks are $5. They just hold the camera. Other kinds use built-in buttons to trigger the shot. These can cost up to $50.

Many people like selfie sticks. Why is this? They don't have to ask strangers to take pictures. They don't have to worry about bad pictures. And they don't have to worry about strangers running off with their camera phone.

But many tourist locations worldwide no longer allow the sticks. Those places say the sticks bother other tourists. Selfie sticks aren't allowed at the Palace of Versailles near Paris. They're also banned at Britain's National Gallery in London. The sticks aren't allowed in many museums in the U.S., too. One is Washington, D.C.’s Smithsonian museums. Others include New York's Museum of Modern Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago. Museum leaders say the sticks could harm the artwork.

Others say that selfie sticks take away from the travel experience. Why is this? Tourists miss out on meeting people when they ask them to take a picture.
PARIS, FRANCE (Achieve3000, April 29, 2015). Many tourists visit the Louvre in France or the pyramids in Egypt. Most will want to take a photograph. But those hoping to take a picture using a "selfie stick" had better check the laws. The device has been banned at several famous tourist spots. It's under review at others.

Camera phones made it possible to hold a cell phone at arm's length and take a photo. These selfies are limited to the length of the user's arm. The idea called "selfie sticks" took these pictures to a new level. It's now easier to take self-portraits or group shots. The sticks allow users to hold cameras farther away. Simple selfie sticks are only $5. They just grip the camera. Other kinds may use Bluetooth technology or built-in buttons to trigger the shot. These can cost up to $50. Fans say the sticks are convenient. They make it so people don't have to bother passersby to take pictures. People don't have to worry about strangers taking bad pictures or running off with a pricey camera phone.

Selfie sticks have been in use around the world, from Dubai's skyscraper, the Burj Khalifa, to the Eiffel Tower in Paris. In Houston, Texas, the Four Seasons Hotel offers the sticks to guests.

But a number of tourist locations have banned the sticks. They say using the sticks can bother other tourists. In March 2015, officials at the Palace of Versailles near Paris banned selfie sticks. A ban also went into place at Britain's National Gallery in London. The gallery said it needed to protect artwork and other visitors. In the U.S., the sticks are not allowed in a number of museums. These include Washington, D.C.'s Smithsonian museums, New York's Museum of Modern Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago.

The Colosseum in Rome, Italy, banned selfie sticks in February 2015. It was done as a safety measure, both for the objects on exhibit and for the 16,000 daily visitors to the 2,000-year-old monument.

"The twirling around of hundreds of sticks can become [very] dangerous," said Christiano Brughitta. Brughitta is the Colosseum spokesperson.

Others say that selfie sticks take away from the travel experience. Some travelers miss the small conversation that came with asking a stranger to help preserve a memory.

Sarah Kinling of Baltimore, Maryland, went to Italy. She said that she was approached 17 times by people selling selfie sticks. "They're…the quickest way to spot a tourist," she said. "The more I saw them in use, the more I saw how much [attention] people were putting on selfies, and not turning around to see what they were there to see."

When Kinling wanted a photo of herself with her sister and sister-in-law while in Italy, she asked strangers to take the shot.
"Even when the other person didn't speak English, you hold your camera up and make the motion and they understand," she said.

But some travelers say it's better to stage your own vacation photos. Andrea Garcia asked a passerby to take her photo in Egypt. Later, she found that he'd zoomed in on her face. The photo didn't show the pyramids behind her.

"I couldn't really be mad at him. He wasn't my photographer," Garcia said. The experience made her appreciate the selfie sticks she sees tourists using in New York City. "Take control of your image!" she said.

Megan Marrs of Boston writes about travel. She thought the sticks were ridiculous at first.

"It seemed so vain and silly," said Marrs. But she bought one as a gift. She ended up trying it and liked it.

"I don't love [asking others] to take my picture. They're there to enjoy their time, too," she said."Sometimes I feel silly…taking a selfie [on vacation]. But I'm more comfortable doing it myself than asking someone else."