Be Smarter than the Pickpockets

Being smarter than the pickpockets is easy enough if you know the rules of the game.

Pickpockets are looking for the easiest target. Any visual signals that you can give off that you are being prudent will easily turn their glance to another easier target down the street. It takes more than keeping your bags in sight since most pickpockets don't care if you see them snatching as long as they think they can run faster than you. So the goal is to attach your bags to yourself. Do not leave your purse on the floor under the table or on the back of the chair. Rather throw it over your knee or slip your foot through the strap. If your bags are too big or too many to attach to yourself, then use a scarf or jacket to attach them to each other in arms reach of you at all times.

- Lock your important travel documents in a safe or wear them close to your heart.
- Do not keep your travel documents in the same place where you keep your money, credit cards or transportation tickets or anything else you may be accessing regularly in public which would jeopardize the security of anything you keep near them.
- Always keep a scanned copy of your travel documents accessible online.
- Choose a satchel that you can zip closed and hug under your arm when you find yourself in a crowd.
- Anything in your backpack will be stolen, yes especially while you're wearing it, because behind your back you can never identify which child is the culprit, and they will always have a running start even if you feel them unzipping it.
- Do not use cherished electronic gadgets in a crowd.
- Do not pick up loose change off the ground.
- Do not accept gifts (i.e.: rings, bracelets, etc…) just keep walking with a determined stride.
- Attach a jingle bell to the zipper pull of your satchel to further deter prying fingers, or identify/follow your bag if it's lifted in a crowd.
- Feed homeless people with food, not money.
- Don't sign the "fake" petition shoved in your face by the not-so-deaf-and-mute girls who are underage to panhandle in the first place and answer their cell phones every five minutes.
- Learn to spot them in a crowd. In Paris the pickpocket gangs are often teens and preteens dressed like gypsies.
- Châtelet-les-Halles alone sees 1654 thefts a year. Whether you are on the street or underground, put your phone away in proximity to this stop and all train stations.