

A JOURNEY OF A THOUSAND MILES MUST BEGIN WITH A SINGLE STEP. --LAO TZU

We suggest that you approach your study abroad experience as a traveler who is active, eager to explore and who enjoys the search itself. We hope that the information found in this manual will contribute to your successful journey.

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Prepared by: International Affairs, 420 University Terrace University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68588-0682; Tel: (402)472-5358; FAX (402) 472-5383; Website: <http://www.unl.edu/iaffairs>; email: iaffairs@unl.edu

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IT'S AMAZING HOW NICE PEOPLE ARE TO YOU WHEN THEY KNOW YOU ARE GOING AWAY.” —MICHAEL ARLEN



I was well acquainted with the gag that if you looked like your passport picture, you needed a trip.
—FRANCIS KNIGHT

PRACTICAL MATTERS

• Before you Go

1. Have your passport pictures taken and obtain a certified copy of your birth certificate.
2. Order your passport. Don't delay. It can take 6-8 weeks!
3. Read about the places you'll be visiting.
4. Plan your travel and purchase your ticket.
5. Register your camera, lap-top, and other items with the Customs Office in Omaha.
6. Buy batteries. They are cheaper in the U.S.
7. Buy traveler's checks. Record the serial numbers and keep them in a place separate from the checks.
8. If you need it, buy a small amount (\$50) of foreign currency to get you started.
9. Pack a minimum amount of clothing and a good pair of walking shoes. Make sure your luggage has your name and address clearly marked. Remove old tags and stickers.
10. Photocopy the first page of your passport and keep it separate from the passport. Leave a copy with IA and at home.
11. Leave your itinerary with IA, your family and friends.
12. Stop mail service, have someone water your plants, turn the thermostat down, pay your bills.

• On the Day of the Departure

1. Plane ticket
2. Passport (you won't be allowed on the plane without it!)
3. Money
4. Luggage

MONEY

• Debit Cards

Debit cards are the most effective and convenient way of obtaining funds while you are overseas. They can be used at ATMs worldwide to withdraw money from your bank account. The exchange rate you receive is usually better than exchanging cash or traveler's checks; however, be aware of minimum withdrawal amounts and service charges imposed by the bank. Notify your bank that you will be overseas, and be sure to have funds coming from one account as not all ATM's will give you the option of withdrawing from Checking and/or Savings. Remember your PIN!

• Foreign Currency

It may be convenient to convert a small amount of money (\$50) into the local currency of your destination before you leave home. Foreign currency is available in Lincoln at Wells Fargo or US Bank, or in Omaha at US Bank, Wells Fargo and others. Not all banks have International Divisions, so call first to check.

• Credit Cards—Pros and Cons

With credit cards you can obtain emergency funds, charge some hotel and restaurant bills and plane fares, and have extra identification when needed. VISA and MasterCard are honored at many hotels, restaurants and stores.

The main disadvantage is that cards will not be honored at most of the budget places that students frequent. Another is that you pay the exchange rate at the time of billing, not at the time of purchase; if the dollar weakens, you pay more. If it strengthens, you pay less.

- **Traveler's Checks**

Traveler's checks are an easy way of carrying money. If they are lost or stolen, they are replaceable by reporting the serial numbers to the appropriate office. Most companies replace them within 24 hours.

- **How To Exchange Money While Abroad**

You may exchange money at banks, American Express offices, airports, railroad stations, large hotels and travel agencies. Banks usually offer the best rate of exchange; airport and railroad stations offer the next best rate. Avoid exchanging money in shops and hotels.

To get the best rates and lowest service charges, shop around. Rates are usually posted. Try to anticipate how much money you will need so you don't get caught without cash. Remember to exchange or spend all of your coins before leaving a particular country—it is usually not possible to exchange these coins once you move on to the next country.

- **Cutting Costs Abroad**

Eat and drink the specialties of the region. Take public transportation rather than taxi. Learn about the special deals that exist for each mode of public transportation. Utilize them. Better yet, walk. There's a lot to see and discover on foot.

Eat meals in department stores. There are often several restaurants within each store, but one is usually low-budget and has a locally popular menu.

Museums often have free days. Check to see if the free day fits your schedule.

Buy an international student ID card (ISIC). This card will entitle you to discounted museum admissions, theater tickets, airfare and train tickets. You will get a booklet describing the benefits with the ISIC. ISICs are available at IA. Bring a small photo of yourself and proof of student status. Instant photos are available at IA.

Avoid making purchases at hotels. Food, phone calls, theater tickets and postcards will cost less almost anywhere else. Some tourist shops will discount for cash instead of credit cards. They pay the credit company about 7% and sometimes will pass the savings to you.

Most restaurants have menus posted outside. Check the prices before going in. The commonly found fixed-price menu in restaurants is usually a better buy than ordering a la carte.

If you are planning to purchase a specific item abroad, price it in the U.S. first, so you know if it's a bargain or not. Shop the markets. Different shopping skills are required than for department stores. Know the specialties of the market and the area and bargain for a price.

PACKING

Less is more. —MIES VAN DER ROHE

There are really only two types of travelers: the ones who packed light and those who wish they had packed light. Most of us still have a tendency to take too much. The following comments should provide a useful guide.

Your luggage should be lighter than light. You will be trudging around streets, through airports, and up and down the steps of multistory hotels. Pack your bags well in advance and then walk around the block and up the stairs. Then take out whatever is not worth its weight in sore shoulders. Repeat.

Choose inconspicuous clothes with darker colors which will not show the beating and daily wear that they will receive. Make sure that colors are coordinated so that you can wear anything with anything, giving you more choice in your daily selection. Take wrinkle-free clothes that you can wash in a sink or a laundromat. You might take a mild soap in a small plastic bottle and use it for everything from laundry to bathing.

Footwear is the crucial item on your packing list; walking shoes are a must. Don't rely on just your sandals or sneakers to support you for eight hours a day. A pair of sturdy rubber-soled lace-up shoes or lightweight hiking boots (broken-in-never take a new pair of shoes) are advisable. A pair of light shoes that can double as dress shoes may be worth their weight, to give your feet a lift when you are in transit.

There are certain things a person should take along because they may not always be easy to find. Among them are kleenex, perhaps a small bar of soap and a washcloth (not all hotels supply them), a pen or pencil, and maybe even a small sewing kit or just a needle and some thread. A 5'-6' length of string could be handy to use as a clothesline or for wrapping packages to mail home.

Get a haircut before you go. Unruly hair can be quite irritating without the appliances you left at home to take care of it.

Use this packing list as a guide. Change it to suit your individuality; the less you take, the better. If there is any doubt as to whether you'll use the article, leave it at home.

- **Traveling Wardrobe**

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 2 pair of shoes | 1 sweater | 1 pair of pyjamas | 1 tie (men) |
| 3-4 shirts/blouses/sweaters | 1 dress or skirt (women) | winter coat (seasonal) | 4 pair of hose/socks |
| 2-3 pair of pants/trousers | 1 sport coat or jacket | 4 changes of underwear | |

- **General items**

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Copy of passport first page | Writing materials | Diary/journal | Good maps |
| Small flashlight | Address book | Sewing kit | Laundry soap |
| Extra passport photos (3) | Camera and film | Inflatable hangers | Wash and dry packets |
| Medical prescriptions | Small umbrella | Toilet articles | Plastic bag |
| Language phrase book | Toothbrush, brush, comb | Money belt or neck pouch | Watch |
| Business cards | Calculator | Pictures of home | |
| Extra eyeglasses or prescriptions | | | |

- **What To Leave At Home**

Heavy things
Expensive jewelry
Anything uncomfortable

- **Luggage Limits**

U.S. regulations allow you two pieces of luggage which together have a maximum dimension of 107 inches. The dimensions of either bag may not exceed 62 inches and the weight of each bag may not exceed 50 lbs. A different free baggage allowance system may prevail for other flights. Generally speaking, the weight allowance for economy-class travel is 44 lbs.(20 kilos) on flights within Europe.

Carry-on luggage must fit under the seat on the aircraft. The total dimensions must not exceed 45 inches. It is advisable to carry some emergency clothing as well as all medications in your carry-on, in the event your checked-in luggage does not arrive when you do.

ELECTRICITY

Why did my hair dryer blow up? Why did the hotel lights go out? —Former UNL Traveler

Every year thousands of people ask these same questions because they didn't have the proper information before they went abroad. Don't let it happen to you! Read what you need to know before buying appliances for use in other countries.

In the United States, standard household electricity is an alternating current cycling back and forth 60 times per second with a normal voltage ranging from 110 volts to 120 volts. Mexico and Japan use the same voltage. In most other countries, standard household electricity is an alternating current cycling 50 times per second with a normal voltage between 220 volts and 240 volts. Besides the variation in voltage, electrical plugs and outlets differ.

- **What Can I Do?**

A good strategy is to purchase dual voltage appliances. Some appliances are designed to be operated on 110/220 volt 50/60 hz electricity. Some dual voltage appliances must be converted at a service center while others can be converted by flipping a switch. An adapter for the plug will still be necessary.

Another strategy is to use a converter. These are used to either step up 110 volt current to 220 volt or step down 220 volt current to 110 volt. An adapter plug will also be required.

Avoid bringing any electrical appliances with you. Check the local voltage before you plug anything in.

- **Where Can I Buy What I Need?**

Adapters (to change the plugs) and converters (to change the voltage) are available at stores such as Radio Shack and Ace Hardware, and department stores with travel-related articles. Hairdryers and shavers that have dual voltage (110/220 volt) are available at most department and discount stores such as Target and Wal-Mart.

TRANSPORTATION AND GETTING AROUND

• Student Fares

Special low-cost, flexible air tickets are available through STA Travel and other student oriented travel agencies. These air tickets can be purchased in advance, have minimal cancellation charges, and are flexible, changeable tickets.

• By Air/ Jet Lag

International flights are very different from domestic flights. They last longer and are often overnight, taking you through multiple time-zones. These differences contribute to jet lag, which is a temporary condition that occurs, in varying degrees, when the body's inner clock is out of balance with time cues from the external environment. Typical symptoms include fatigue, insomnia, indigestion, irritability and general disorientation. The following suggestions may help lessen the amount of jet lag you experience:

Go light on alcohol; drink lots of water and juice to reduce the risk of dehydration.

Try to sleep through a night flight. Use pillows and blankets to get warm and comfortable. Take off your shoes and put on warm soft slippers.

Loosen tight fitting clothes or better yet, wear only loose fitting clothes.

Take motion sickness tablets if needed and/or a sleeping pill to help you relax.

Get up and stretch occasionally to keep your body relaxed and go easy on food.

To relieve air pressure on ears, chew gum, yawn or simulate one, or try some extra doses of Vitamin C before and during the flight.

On arrival, plan to take a short nap, even if it's daylight outside. Then try to get on a normal as possible schedule for the day.

Normally, the body needs one day to adjust for each time zone crossed. Fortunately, your body will adjust very rapidly and in a few days you will marvel at the time change and your own smooth adjustment.

The anti-jet lag Argonne diet helps travelers adjust in a day or two - even for trips halfway around the world - by outlining an alteration of mealtimes, meal contents and social time cues to help reset the body's clock:

Day 1: Starting three days before departure, feast on high-protein breakfasts and lunches to stimulate the body's active cycle and eat a high-carbohydrate dinner to prepare the body for sleep.

Only drink caffeinated beverages between 3 and 5 p.m. during the first three days.

Day 2: Only eat light meals of salads, soups, fruits and juices. Fast days help deplete the liver's store of carbohydrates and prepare the body's clock for resetting.

Day 3: Feast again.

Day 4: When the departure day arrives, fast again. Only drink caffeinated beverages in the morning when traveling west or between 6 and 11 p.m. when traveling east. Break the final fast at the destination's normal breakfast time. If the flight is long enough, sleep until breakfast time and feast on a high-protein meal.

• By Land

Most major cities will have an extensive public transport network consisting of trolleys, trams, buses and underground systems, or a combination thereof. Learning the routes and the most economical system for your purposes can be a challenge.

It is wise to obtain maps of the transportation systems within each city to be visited and study them before arrival, if possible. After arrival there are many details to consider, such as the most economical ticket package, where the stops are located, and what hours they run.

It is best to avoid taxi cabs if you are on a budget. Frequent cab rides can become a major travel expense. It's worth the cost occasionally, however, just to experience a cab ride for the thrill of it.

Walking is the cheapest and often the most interesting mode of transportation. Unless you're in a hurry or traveling far, experience the city or countryside on foot and enjoy the smell and flavor around you at a leisurely pace.

• Learning from Street Names

Do street names give any indication of which parts of town were built first or which buildings are the oldest?

Did any street names change over the years? If so, what do the changes reveal?

What do street names say about who lived in the city in years past? Who built it?

What activities went on? What streets were most important?

What kinds of trees and other natural features were prominent?

• Street Corner People Watching

1. How are people working here? List all the jobs you see people performing at or near this street corner.

2. How are people getting around? List or draw the kinds of transportation you see people using here. Which kind is predominant? Which appears to be fastest? Which kinds do not use gasoline?

3. What are the written rules here? List signs or symbols that tell people what to do.

4. What are the unwritten rules here? List as many of these as you can figure out.

5. Can you find any rule-breakers? If so, list the rules they are breaking.

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TELEPHONES

The telephone is the greatest nuisance among conveniences, the greatest convenience among nuisances. —ROBERT LYND

• USING TELEPHONES

You may ask why we explain something as simple and second-nature as the telephone. It is because it is not always so simple; it's often very confusing and downright frustrating.

Where do you purchase a phone card? Maybe the tabac shop or kiosk? If you don't have a cell phone, find a phone booth and observe those in line in front of you.

Other bits of information that you need to find out are the international access code, national code, city code and the actual phone number you are dialing. For calls within the city, usually you dial only the actual subscriber's number. Some cities such as London may be divided into two or more city codes.

And when you have finally dialed you will discover new sounds for the ringtone and busy signals: beep (1-2 seconds), pause (3 1/2-5 seconds) beep, etc. or beeeep (2 seconds), pause (7-9 seconds), etc. or beeeep (3 seconds), pause (3 seconds), beep-bip, beep-bip, etc. or beep-beep-beep, etc.

Note: making long distance calls from hotel rooms overseas can cost you as much as a 300% surcharge!

• CELLULAR/MOBILE PHONES

Cellular/mobile phones are very economical and convenient. While overseas, you will be able to rent a phone and chose a plan that best fits your needs. Do your research, however, and don't rush into the purchase. Make sure you understand the terms.

A good strategy for making calls from cellular or mobile phones is to use the "call back" method. Dial directly to your family or friends, and have them call you back. Many overseas cell phone services provide free incoming calls.

• PHONE CARDS

If you are not planning on purchasing a phone overseas, phone cards are an excellent alternative. Do not, however, purchase the international phone cards in the U.S. and attempt to use them overseas. They won't work.

In Western Europe, for example, you may generally purchase cards for 6• or 10• from a kiosk, vending machine, or ATM. Each will allow for hours of conversation.

6 "GOODBYE"

• **MAKING CALLS FROM THE UNITED STATES**

Many phone companies have reasonably priced plans for making international calls. Another option is to purchase a phone card. Generally, calling cards will give you more minutes calling a land-line rather than a cellular/mobile phone.

Friends and family members should know what to expect when preparing to make an international call. The most important thing to remember is to be patient. The ring tones and busy signals will be different. (see above)

To make an international call, dial the international access code (0-11) before the country and city codes and phone number. For example: the country code for Spain is 34, and the city code for Barcelona is 93. So, you would dial 0-11-34-93 and then the number.

Before the connection is made, it would be helpful for friends and family to learn a few words of Spanish, French, Japanese, etc. "May I please speak to...? This is his/her father/mother."

PHOTOS

• **Camera**

Deciding what camera to take with you is a critical decision. Unless you are a very experienced photographer, the simpler the camera, the better. The instamatic and the instant developing-type cameras, however, are too simple and seldom provide a picture worth the weight of the camera. Be sure to shoot a few pictures before you depart so you will feel more comfortable and have better results.

Be sure to protect your camera by keeping it in its case. Dust on a lens can ruin an otherwise good picture.

Also, to avoid import duties upon return, remember to bring receipts or insurance documents with you, or register your camera with the U.S. Customs office in Omaha at 106 South 15 Street, Room 103 (Telephone: 221-4662).

• **Taking Photographs**

Besides the technical aspects of photography, you also need to consider the cultural aspects. Photography is communication. The photos you take and how you take them says as much about you as it does the subject.

Do remember consideration for the people you are photographing. Don't be surprised when an especially photogenic character asks you for payment after you have taken his or her photo. Give a small amount of money.

There are some religious and cultural photography bans which you must respect. Avoid taking pictures of military installations. Museums and galleries may require special permission to take pictures or may not permit photography at all. In most cases, if photography is allowed a flash is prohibited. Don't forget to have some pictures taken of yourself and be ready for the unexpected.

When you are snapping photos, include some of the ordinary things as well as the exotic or different. If you have a special theme or a story to tell through your photography, your slide show or album will be more interesting to your friends after your return. You might try doors, windows, phone booths, mail boxes, people with pets, people with hats, children, etc.

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS

Bureaucracy—a giant mechanism operated by pygmies. —HONORE de BALZAC

All articles purchased abroad and in your possession at the time of your return to the U.S. must be declared, including gifts presented to you while abroad, repairs or alterations to articles taken abroad (even if the repairs or alterations cost you nothing), items brought for another person, and articles you might be intending to sell or use for business purposes.

Again, all articles must be declared, in terms of U.S. currency, whether or not the article was purchased. Customs declaration forms will be distributed on the plane and must be filled out prior to leaving the plane.

Purchases totaling \$800 or less may be brought back to the U.S. free of duty. Travelers may bring in up to 32 oz. of alcoholic beverages without charge, though any amount in excess of 32 oz. is subject to federal tax and import duty (depending on the purchase price). It's also useful to note that only those 21 or over may bring in alcohol. If you're under 21, it will be confiscated or taxed. Anyone can bring in one carton of cigarettes, regardless of age.

For antique lovers, you'll be glad to know that there is no duty on antiques and such items are usually much less costly in Europe. An item must be at least 100 years old to be classified as an antique at customs. If, because of the condition of the item, there might be some doubt as to its age, have it verified in writing at the time of purchase.

There are, of course, certain items prohibited by customs under all circumstances; included are such things as lottery tickets, obscene publications, fireworks, dangerous toys, toxic substances, switchblade knives and drugs. If you have pharmaceuticals you must take, be sure to take the written prescription as well as proof of content. It is also wise to remember to take along enough of your medication to last for your full stay, as well as an extra pair of glasses, if you wear them, and the prescription. Customs will not allow, without special permit, the passage of any plants, fruits, vegetables or seeds. Some canned food will be permitted as well as pastries that require no refrigeration. No canned meat or any kind of fresh meat is allowed. Confections containing alcohol are not admitted.

Finally, at declarations when you return, prepare yourself for lines. Requirements may vary from inspector to inspector. Some ask only for a verbal declaration; others may have you unpack every last bag—including your camera! Officials may require that your camera be opened, possibly ruining some of your travel photos. Unload your camera before you reach customs. Save receipts from everything you buy to prove values of items purchased. Keep them all together in an accessible place.

If you plan to take with you a foreign-made watch, camera, etc., you may be asked to pay duty on it when you return unless you take it to the local customs office (in Omaha, in the Federal Building at 15th and Dodge) and receive a certificate of registration. If you still have the receipt for the item, that would also prove that the article was in your possession prior to this trip. If you have any questions you'd like to ask them, you can call at (402) 221-4661. (The certificates are also available at JFK in New York and O'Hare in Chicago during business hours.)

Don't panic. Chances are good that you will pass through without any problems, but an ounce of prevention . . .

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Etiquette is behaving yourself a little better than is absolutely necessary. —WILL CUPPY

• Personal Safety

IA wants your experience to be a safe one. Studying abroad offers a variety of adjustment challenges ranging from different teaching styles to exotic foods to people. Amidst all these adjustments, PERSONAL SAFETY should not be compromised. As inspiring as it may be to be a "liberated man or woman" in the U.S., outside the context of the United States, this value and associated behaviors are very often misinterpreted. You may be sending messages that you never intended to send. Be aware of how you carry yourself and how you dress. Your smile, your stride or your clothing can mark you as a foreigner and, as one presumed to be less than knowledgeable about the locale and its culture, a potential victim. While not distrusting everyone and every situation, you should be aware of risks and act accordingly. Be careful.

• Keep in mind.

Use your common sense to assess a situation. Trust your instincts. If it feels wrong, uncomfortable, strange, leave at once.

Some places may be off-limits to women.

There may be different behavior standards for men and for women.

Don't judge physical appearance of locals by your standards. You may be encountering a smooth operator.

Use moderation when drinking. Don't accept drinks that you don't see prepared.

Find people to be with (friends, acquaintances) and even mix in with strangers when walking at night.

The definition of rape might be perceived differently across cultures; however, it is your definition that counts when it concerns your body. The effects of such a traumatic experience should not be ignored or tolerated. Get help. Report the incident.

Learn to appreciate another culture's perspective on the development of personal relationships, even if they don't coincide with your beliefs. You don't have to adopt them. Just tolerate them.

Find out about women's issues, the family structure, dating and other sociological aspects of your host country.

Be aware that an intimate relationship could result in a sexually transmitted disease, AIDS or pregnancy. Unprotected sex can be fatal.

Learn how to respond appropriately to whistles and stares brought on just because you are a female or a foreign female. Whether the gestures are compliments, invitations or insults, getting away quickly and quietly is most effective.

These suggestions aren't meant to deter you from experiencing the night life in your host country nor are they meant to instill some "fear of foreigners," but do be cautious. Just as stereotypes are bred in this country from media biases and over-generalizations, your host country will harbor some preconceived notions of how American women and men are 'presumed' to act.

Your sojourn abroad may very well negate these assumptions and, by so doing, contribute to the education of those you meet as well as your own education. This should be an experience which will enable both hosts and visitors to look at one another as individuals and not as typical of their respective cultures.

- **Guarding Valuables During Travel:**

Due to world conflict, airport security is more stringent than ever. To get through security procedures quickly and easily, it's wise to take the following advice:

FIRST RULE: Don't carry everything in one place.

SECOND RULE: Never pack essential documents, medicine—anything you could not do without—in your checked luggage. Put them in your carry-on bag.

CREDIT CARDS: Take only the cards you will use on the trip. Keep a separate list of cards, numbers, and emergency replacement procedures.

LUGGAGE: Mark all luggage—inside and out—with your name and address. If you have an itinerary, put a copy inside each bag. Keep a list of what is in each bag and carry the list with your other documents. Mark your bags in some distinctive way so they are easily found. **COUNT YOUR PIECES OF LUGGAGE EACH TIME YOU MOVE!**

MEDICINES: Take all you need for the trip. Take a copy of your prescription with the generic name of drug. Keep medicines in original drugstore containers. Take extra glasses and prescription for lenses.

PASSPORT: Carry with you—separate from passport—two extra passport pictures, passport number, date and place issued, copy of the first pages of your passport and birth certificate.

TICKET: List your ticket number, all flights included, and name and address of issuing agency, and keep separate. Photocopy your flight ticket or e-ticket. Leave a copy at home and have another one with you.

TRAVELER'S CHECKS: Have three lists of checks. Leave one at home. Carry one with your checks and put another in a separate place. Keep two lists up-to-date as you cash checks. Keep receipt for checks separate from checks.

BE at the airport early to allow extra time for extra measures which may include identifying your luggage at one or more points beyond check-in. For international flights, early means at least two hours before departure.

JOKES about terrorism or hijacking are definitely out. A crack about a hidden gun or knife can get you arrested, charged with a felony or even fined \$25,000.

KNIVES, scissors or anything that resembles a weapon or could be used as a weapon should not be carried-on. This includes chef's knives, manicure scissors and even a child's plastic water pistol. If they show up in a security check, they'll be taken away and you will be searched much more thoroughly.

METAL jewelry, belt buckles or accessories, or a pile of change will sound the metal detector alarm. You'll have to empty your pockets, take off the jewelry, and keep going through the metal detector until it is silent.

GIFT-WRAPPED packages are subject to search. You may have to open them. Carry paper and ribbon separately, and wrap your gifts when you get to your destination.

DON'T argue with security personnel—no matter what. They are there for your protection. Uncooperative behavior will only lead to greater delays and intensive searches.

DIPLOMATIC ASSISTANCE

Embassies and consulates aid diplomatic channels of communication between governments. They are staffed by U.S. citizens and foreign nationals whose numerous functions include helping travelers.

If your passport is lost or stolen, notify authorities and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. After an investigation to determine identification, you will be issued a three-month temporary passport. This is the time to produce the first page copy of your passport you took at home. Travelers should carry at least two extra passport photos in the event that this emergency should occur (in addition to an extra copy of their birth certificate). Carry your passport in a place inaccessible to pickpockets and never pack it in your luggage. Keep it with you.

- **Legal Advice**

U.S. citizens are subject to the laws of the country they are visiting; they are not protected by U.S. laws. The authority of consular officials to intercede on their behalf is very limited. If you're arrested and/or detained abroad, an official can visit

you, inform you of your rights, and provide a list of reliable local attorneys. At your request and expense, they can notify family or friends of your plight. The consular official can arrange supplemental purchases of food or clothing, schedule appointments with doctors and dentists, and obtain visitation permission for family and friends. However, U.S. government funds can't be used to pay for extra purchases or legal and medical fees.

- **Health Problems**

In case of illness or accident, embassy or consulate personnel can make sure you're in an approved hospital, check on fairness in billing procedures, and explain your payment options. They can also provide lists of English speaking doctors.

- **Money Problems**

If you're stranded or broke, notify the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. Officially prohibited from furnishing cash or loaning money, officials can suggest possible sources of financial assistance. Depending upon the ability of your family to get you out of trouble and the current status of State Department funds, you may receive a transportation loan. Unofficial reports claim that some embassies and consulates will give you subsistence-level spending money while you're waiting, but don't count on it.

The United States has an embassy in almost every foreign capital city and a consulate in most major cities. If you should happen to have a concern, the addresses and phone numbers can be found in any telephone book. Don't think that you have to have a problem to make use of the embassies. They will often honor requests from businesses or educational institutions for personal introductions to local society. Travelers can receive information on universities, local binational centers, and private organizations and individuals who are interested in cross-cultural experiences.

- **Common Sense Precautions in Times of World-Wide Threats**

- Keep a low profile and try not to make yourself conspicuous by dress, speech, or behavior. Avoid wearing clothing promoting the United States.
- Avoid crowds, protest groups or other potentially volatile situations, as well as restaurants and entertainment places where Americans are known to congregate. If there should be any political unrest do not get involved.
- Be wary of unexpected packages and stay clear of unattended luggage or parcels in airports, train stations, or other public areas.
- Develop with your family a plan for regular telephone or e-mail contact, so that in times of heightened political tension, you will be able to communicate directly about your safety and well-being.
- Keep informed about political situations. Read local newspapers, listen to local news. Check current State Department advisories and warnings.
- Keep your program director, host family, informed about your travel plans.

Remember that anti-U.S. sentiment exists to varying degrees throughout the world. While in most cases it is nonthreatening, it is best to avoid individuals who are vocally critical and/or make you feel uncomfortable about who you are. In situations where questions are directed at you, it helps greatly to be educated about U.S. policies and history, to the greatest extent possible. Calm explanations can go a long way in diffusing anger and antagonism.

- **In a Serious International Emergency**

Return to your host family, dormitory or apartment and remain there until given further notice.
Contact your program director or consulate for instruction.
Avoid going to the US Embassy or Consulate. You can get the information you need by phone or internet.
Contact your family to let them know that you are safe.

- **Registration at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate**

Registration at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate (in the country you are visiting) makes your presence and whereabouts known, in case it is necessary for a consular officer to contact you in an emergency. During a disaster overseas, American consular officers can assist in evacuation were that to become necessary. But they cannot assist you if they do not know where you are.

Registration is particularly important for those who plan to stay in a country longer than one month, or who will travel to:
*A country that is experiencing civil unrest, has an unstable political climate, or is undergoing a natural disaster, such as an earthquake or a hurricane.

*A country where there are no U.S. officials. In such cases, you should register at the U.S. embassy or consulate in an adjacent country, leave an itinerary with the Consular Section, ask about conditions in the country that you will visit and ask about the third country that may represent U.S. interests there.

If you are traveling with an escorted tour to areas experiencing political uncertainty or other problems, find out if your tour operator is registering your trip through the State Department's travel registration website . If it is not, or if you are traveling on your own, you can still register with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate through the State Department's travel registration website . www.travel.state.gov is the website. Look for *Registration with Embassies*.

HEALTH

• **Ten Healthy Travel Tips for Students**

-- by Eliot C. Heher, MD

For many students, travel is the best part of college or graduate school. Whether you're an American student heading for the London School of Economics, or a Chinese student bound for the University of Southern California, living in a different country can have a profound impact on your outlook and your plans. Here are ten tips to make your excursions safe.

1. Know how to find a doctor and a good hospital in your destination. Find out the names of hospitals that provide quality care. Learn the emergency numbers for your destination—dial 15 (112 from a cell phone) for an ambulance in Paris, 911 in New York, etc.— and know that in some places you should not rely on these emergency numbers. Similarly, in some countries, you're better off taking a taxi to a hospital rather than waiting for an ambulance. HTH Worldwide offers students and travelers access to a community of pre-selected doctors outside the U.S., and to the Beech Street Provider Network within the U.S. HTH's CityHealth Profiles can help you learn what you need to know about hospitals and emergency numbers around the world.

2. Learn about the health and security risks in your destination and get the appropriate vaccinations you need. Can you drink the tap water? Is street crime a problem? Are there insect borne diseases to avoid (such as Malaria, or Lyme Disease, which exists in several areas of the United States)? HTH's CityHealth Profiles can help you learn about relevant health risks, as can the Centers for Disease Control.

3. If you plan to drink, do so moderately. Your parents worry about airplane disasters, terrorism and exotic diseases. In fact, many of the injuries sustained by students studying or traveling abroad are related to drunkenness and the associated condition of temporary stupidity. As the advertisement says, know when to say "no." Stay with your friends and look out for each other.

4. Don't do drugs. In addition to the health risks of using drugs, as a foreigner you will be targeted by the most unscrupulous of all the suppliers. If the drugs you do or their contaminants make you sick, you will also find it much more difficult to get medical care abroad. Finally, if you get arrested with drugs, you may find it much harder to find a decent lawyer and you may face very severe penalties and/or deportation. Drug possession—including marijuana possession—is literally punishable by death in some countries. Rent the film "Midnight Express" if you need this advice dramatized.

5. If you plan to have sex, practice safe sex. Sexually transmitted viruses and bacteria do not respect national borders, regardless of what you might hear. Bring condoms and use them. Approach new partners with at least as much caution as you would at home.

A general point: sometimes students let the glamour and excitement of new friendships lure them into carelessness about drinking, drugs, unsafe sex, and other potentially dangerous behaviors. Making new friends is one valid goal for your trip—but plan ahead to stand by your convictions about what's safe and what isn't.

6. Buy travel health insurance. Health insurance pays the doctor and hospital when you get sick. You may think this is your parents' problem, but they may not know the limitations of their regular health plan, which probably doesn't provide adequate coverage overseas, especially if you're studying abroad for a semester or longer. Their regular plan is also unlikely to pay to evacuate you in the event of an emergency and ill prepared to give a foreign hospital a guarantee of payment (in some parts of the world, you won't be treated until you pay cash, in advance, or provide a payment guarantee). When you shop for insurance, look for a policy that includes an emergency assistance benefit (see below).

7. Have an escape plan. What will you do in the event of a medical emergency, natural disaster or political upheaval? The answer: call an assistance company, like MEDEX or Worldwide Assistance. They're available to help with unplanned disasters, 24/7, in your native language, through their telephone call centers (toll free or collect, because toll free often doesn't work from other countries).

HTH's travel and student insurance programs have an emergency assistance benefit built in—be certain yours does too.

8. Drive safely. Car wrecks are one of the most common ways travelers sustain serious injury. Regardless of how long you've owned your own car, and how many times you've driven eight friends out for late-night munchies, the challenges of driving in a foreign country are significant. Road conditions vary — alot. If you grew up driving in the UK, everything in the US will seem backwards. Think twice before you drive — try to take a bus or train instead. Keep in mind that mopeds are always a bad idea.

9. Prepare for the psychological effects of living abroad. While most students find their study-abroad experience thrilling, all experience some degree of disorientation, confusion, and anxiety as they adjust to a new culture. In addition to the challenges of a foreign language and society, which can get more irritating over time, students often find themselves on a journey of self-discovery, questioning their personal goals, values, and purpose.

You can minimize culture shock by studying your host country's language, culture, and history, and by retaining a sense of humor and positive outlook. Keeping in touch with friends and family at home is important - and fairly easy and cheap with

email. Exercise can contribute to improved mood and better sleep. Like any significant life experience, study abroad can worsen or even precipitate mental illness. If you experience deep and persistent adjustment difficulties or strong emotions such as sadness, hopelessness, or worry, or you observe the same in a fellow student, seek the advice of your parents, and/or a mental health professional, primary care physician, or guidance counselor at your school.

10. Be realistic when setting goals for your trip. In their excitement to take full advantage of the opportunity, many students enumerate goals that are impossible to accomplish in the available time. These students are often disappointed and frustrated when they realize they're going to miss half of the twenty museums or cathedrals they'd hoped to visit. Avoid this letdown by being realistic about the time you have, by adjusting your goals as you learn the realities of life in your host country, and by being flexible. Take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves. And start planning your next trip!

If you have insurance or are covered under a family policy, contact your agent about coverage outside the U.S. Consider additional coverage beyond the basic life and accident/sickness insurance. Types of insurance include:

- Baggage insurance, to cover your personal belongings.
- Emergency evacuation, if due to injury or sickness, you must be moved to an appropriate facility for care.
- Repatriation, to bring back remains.
- Trip cancellation, to reimburse airline cancellation penalties that may apply if you must cancel your trip or change your itinerary because of accident or sickness.
- Traveler's assistance, a 24-hour hotline to help in case of medical, legal or financial emergencies.

UNL study abroad participants will be covered by health insurance as part of the program cost. Others are strongly advised to purchase coverage. In some cases, it will be required by the program sponsor or the foreign government.

Insurance companies **do not** pay directly to individuals or organizations outside of the United States. All expenses for doctors, hospitalization, medication, and so on, must be paid out-of-pocket. You will be reimbursed on return **only** when you present the receipts for the costs that you have incurred.

THE CULTURAL DIMENSION

There aren't any embarrassing questions—just embarrassing answers. —CARL ROWAN

When you leave home and all the things that are familiar, you encounter many new and confusing situations. Some of the differences you will encounter are obvious:

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------|---------|-----------|----------|
| language | food | climate | education | religion |
| absence of family and close friends | | | | |

Other differences are not as obvious:

| | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| how students relate to teachers | how people make decisions | how people spend their leisure time |
| how people resolve conflicts | how people express feelings | meaning of body movements |

These differences cause feelings of uncertainty and anxiety.

| | |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| "Am I speaking properly?" | "Will I be a successful student, intern or traveler?" |
| "Will I find friends?" | "Should I discuss my personal beliefs or my political opinions?" |
| "Should I trust this friendly stranger?" | "What does it mean when someone looks directly into my eyes?" |

2. All of these uncertainties—and more—are confusing. You may also feel that you don't know what to do in certain situations. Probably you did not think about these things at home because you knew what to do and what to expect. You also knew how other people acted and thought. In other words, you understood "the rules" and "the signs." Life was easier at home. Your body and your mind may react in unusual ways to the stress and confusion of living in a new culture. Some of the reactions you experience may be

| | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Feeling isolated or alone | Body pain (head, neck, back, stomach) | Sleeping too much/tiring easily |
| Wanting to return home | Finding it difficult to sleep | Feeling angry toward local people |

3. Remember the ways you have been able to reduce stress in difficult situations in the past and apply those methods in your present circumstances. For example, you might take a long walk, go to a movie theater or write a letter to a close friend or relative. Try to see the humor in confusing situations that you encounter; laughter is often the best "medicine."

4. Accept the difficult challenge of learning how to study and live in a new cultural setting. Believe that you can learn the skills to make a satisfactory transition. Gradually try to apply some of the skills you are learning.

5. Recognize the advantages of having lived in two different cultures. Your life will be enriched by meeting people whose cultural backgrounds are not the same as yours. Share your time with many different people. Avoid having friends only from your country but maintain strong personal ties to your culture while you are away from home. Think about how you can help local residents learn how people from your country believe and act.

6. Acknowledge your progress in adjusting to the new culture. Think of all that you have learned since the day you arrived. Recognize that, like other people who have lived in an unfamiliar country, you can and will make a successful adjustment to the other culture.

• **Traveler's Ten Commandments**

1. Maintain a flexible personality. Flexible personalities tend to cope and adjust more successfully in unfamiliar settings than rigid personalities.

2. Stay motivated. Motivated individuals tend to take the necessary steps to conquer cultural problems to a far greater extent than apathetic individuals.

3. Be patient. You will be able to make substantial headway if you keep your frustration level in check and you approach your job, yourself, and your host with tolerance and perseverance.

4. Take time to become familiar with your surroundings. "People get along in institutions primarily through familiarity rather than through understanding."

5. Behave in a manner you would deem proper for a foreigner in your country. Nice guys or gals in the U.S. will most likely be considered such elsewhere; bad mannered people will probably be judged as bad mannered in whatever culture they reside.

6. Do not cover mistakes with arrogance. Your host will enjoy introducing you to his or her culture. Maintain a docile attitude.

7. Remain open and sensitive. Learning how to operate in your host country requires analytical observation and placing some of your own cultural behaviors on the back burner.

8. Assume positive behavior towards you. Polite behavior may be defined differently in different cultures; you might find that a behavior that appears negative is actually intended in a positive manner.

9. Make your judgment about your host from his/her cultural environment and not your cultural environment. A frequent mistake is to make a judgment about your host within your cultural context and not his or her cultural context.

10. Forget all the academic preparation and interact with your host in as humanely a fashion as possible. We tend to exaggerate the differences between people and the problems of living and working abroad. Most likely, a well-adjusted person will survive a foreign experience in about the same manner he or she would survive a new domestic experience.

• **Cultural Baggage**

A packing list that you may not be aware of is one that you carry with you wherever you go. You have been packing and unpacking since the day you were born. Things that weigh down this heavy suitcase are your values, your stereotypes, your culture and your expectations. You do not want to lose this luggage because it is what makes you yourself; being aware of it and knowing that everyone else has a set, too, can make the load much easier to carry. The following illustrates some of the cultural baggage that a student might carry:

| | | |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Personal Control Over the Environment | Competition and Free Enterprise | Action and Work |
| Change is Good | Informality | Future Orientation/Optimism |
| Time Consciousness | Directness, Openness, Honesty | Self-Help |
| Equality/Egalitarianism | Practicality/Efficiency | Personal Hygiene |
| Individualism/Privacy and Independence | Materialism/Acquisitiveness | |

Remember, these are not the values of many societies.

• **Taking Stock**

Besides the material preparations for a travel experience, devote some time to mental and emotional preparation for a changing experience. Yes, changing. Any person who is learning is changing. You will interact with other cultures, learning so much that cannot be transformed into credits on your transcript. You will discover a difference between knowing about something and actually understanding it. The "knowing" can come from books and courses. Understanding comes from experience. You will also have a better understanding of yourself. Taking an assessment of your expectations at various stages, before, during, and after, will show how your expectations may change as you experience another culture.

My expectations of my _____ in _____ .
(length of time) (country)

Why? (check those that apply)

- to add new dimension to my education
- improve knowledge of countries
- meet new people
- improve self-confidence
- others (add your own)
- improve foreign language ability
- to have fun
- change the ways in which I think of myself
- gain independence

Everyone will experience some degree of culture shock but you can lessen the intensity by developing qualities that allow a more successful international experience. The following skills identified by Robert Kohls in his *Survival Kit for Overseas Living*, Intercultural Press, Yarmouth, Maine 2001.

Tolerance for ambiguity—I can function when I don't have a full understanding of the situation.

Low goal/task orientation—My goals change as interesting things come along.

Open mindedness—There are different ways to look at every situation.

Non-judgmentalness—Ideas different from mine aren't automatically "wrong."

Empathy—Not my style but I can see why it could be done this way.

Communicativeness—I like to share with others and ask about things.

Flexibility; adaptability—If things don't go as expected, I'll enjoy the experience anyhow.

Curiosity—I'll try to understand as much as I can about things.

Warmth in human relationships—My goal is to enjoy people I meet.

Motivation—I'm here because I want to be.

Self-reliance—I can do this and learn from the experience.

Strong sense of self—I'll learn and new ideas won't threaten my identity.

Tolerance for differences—People really do think, act and look differently.

Perceptiveness—I'm going to learn to "read between the lines."

Ability to fail—I'm not out to prove anything.

Sense of humor

• Journaling

I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train. —OSCAR WILDE

Journaling can be a creative expression of yourself and your emotions. It can also be an outlet for your frustrations and insecurities. Your journal can be anything you want it to be. There are no set rules. Your journal can contain your thoughts, feelings, photographs, postcards, newspaper clippings, poetry, sketches, etc. The idea is to put together all the things that help you cope with life that reflect your Individuality and personality.

A few helpful elements:

How often, how long, and when? The frequency with which you write depends on you. The amount of time you spend writing or drawing will vary. Some days you may have a lot to say, while other days you may only have one or two sentences. Try to record unexpected events and encounters.

Setting. You have the freedom to choose where. Some prefer a quiet spot, such as a bench in a park. Others prefer a coffee shop or tea house.

Structure. The format is entirely up to you, but a good idea is to include the date or time of day. This will help you in the future as you try to place something or tell stories.

Spontaneity. The more honest you are, the better. Express yourself freely.

Privacy. Your journal is for your eyes only. Keeping it private has the advantage of you being able to say what you feel, without fearing backlash or causing offense.

COMING HOME

In the planning stage of a trip, your mind is full of preparation for going. The last thing in your mind is preparation for coming home again. Why prepare for something so natural? The experience of most people who spend time in another country is that the “re-entry” adjustment is more traumatic than the initial entry adjustment in the new culture. Why?

One reason is you perhaps won't plan and mentally prepare yourself for coming back like you are for going. You don't realize how much you're going to change in your time overseas, and how many things about home will change. If you're gone for an extended time your friends will get used to getting along without you. If they haven't had a similar experience, they will listen politely, but won't want to listen nearly as much as you will want to talk (and will need to talk, to process your experience). It's common to feel like you don't fit in, to miss your host country, and to be shocked or disgusted by some aspects of U.S. culture that you now begin to notice because of the contrast.

But you can prepare mentally for re-entry by simply being aware that it won't be like coming home after a weekend out of town. Seek out people who have also had overseas experience to talk to—not just about your experience, but about your feelings as you come home. And, don't let fear of re-entry keep you from enjoying your stay abroad! You are going to have an experience of real personal growth.

THE WISE PERSON READS BOTH BOOKS AND LIFE ITSELF —LIN YUTANG

SUGGESTED READING

The Art of Crossing Cultures, by Craig Storti

Published by Intercultural Press, Inc., Yarmouth, Maine 1990

Using excerpts from literature by writers such as Mark Twain, Rudyard Kipling, Noel Coward and others, Storti offers insights into the process of cross-cultural adaptation.

Background Notes, by U.S. Department of State

Published by U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington

Short informative pamphlets that include information about a country's people, land, history, government, political conditions, economy, etc. Updated continuously.

Do's and Taboos Around the World, Edited by Roger E. Axtell

Published by Parker Pen & John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1995

A simple description of protocol, customs and etiquette around the world. Includes phrases and gestures to avoid using as well as gift-giving customs.

Survival Kit for Overseas Living, by L. Robert Kohls

Published by Intercultural Press, Inc., Yarmouth, Maine 2001

Required reading for everyone planning an international experience. Very clearly and concisely written. Topics include stereotypes, definitions of culture, strategies for getting to know a host country and developing communications skills.

The Whole World Guide to Culture Learning, by J. Daniel Hess

Published by Intercultural Press, Inc., Yarmouth, Maine 1994

The best way to learn about another culture and understand its values is to immerse oneself and learn through experience. This book contains self analyses, self-instructional units, exercises, and methods by which the individual can pursue culture learning. This book serves as a handbook for cross-cultural adaptation and a guide to becoming an effective sojourner abroad.

• **Web Sites**

http://www.travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html

Consular information sheets and travel warnings

<http://www.cdc.gov>

Health related information

<http://www.unl.edu/iaffairs>

International Affairs at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Information about study abroad, international student activities and useful links to other sites.

GOODBYE, AND TRAVEL WELL!!!