



## Participants - Preparing for your Trip

Study abroad can be an exciting experience. It is also important to remember that you need to do the proper preparation for your program.

### Packing

- Don't pack clothing that identifies you as an American such as "I Love NY" T-shirts, college sweatshirts, blue jeans, baseball hats and white athletic shoes.
- Learn what is acceptable to wear by the culture's standards. How formal is the day-to-day dress? Do locals generally wear bright or muted clothing? Do they wear shirts tucked in or hanging out? Is there an accessory that is worn or not worn (i.e., scarves and hats)?
- Be aware of differences in table manners and actions that would make you stand out in a crowd.
- Don't pack expensive jewelry

### Locate the American Embassies and Consulates

- Know where the American embassies and consulates are.
- Know how to contact them.
- Carry the information with you at all times.
- The U.S. government through the U.S. Department of State uses a three tiered system to communicate country specific travel information. As this information becomes available, Seminars International stands ready to adjust travel itinerary's as needed. We also enroll all of our participants in the State Department Smart Traveler Enrollment Program. Please use the website below to find out country specific information, travel alerts and travel warnings.  
[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis\\_pa\\_tw\\_1168.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis_pa_tw_1168.html)

### Photocopy Important Documents

- In case your wallet or backpack is lost or stolen, make copies of your passport, airplane tickets, health insurance card, driver's license, credit cards, student ID, etc.
- Store this information in a safe place, preferably not in the same place as the original documents and do not keep them with you.
- You may also want to leave a copy for your parents or emergency contacts back in the States or Canada and e-mail important numbers (like your passport number) to yourself so can access it at any time.

### Electricity

- The electrical current in many foreign countries differs from that of the U.S., which operates at 110 volts alternating at 60 cycles. In much of the rest of the world the standard current is 220 volts at 50 cycles. In addition, plug prongs are often different. Research the proper converter or transformer, and plug adapter, you risk burning out your device and causing an electrical short.
- If an electronic device (such as a hair dryer or shaver) is vital, we recommend you purchase one with a built in converter. For the type of electrical current provided in the country you will be visiting see **Magellan's**.

# Participants - Preparing for your Trip (continued)

## Communication Abroad

- If you are considering with your personal cell phone, check with your cell phone service provider for specific plans and rates.
- Communication options via e-mail and phone are readily available at most international destinations. Travelers should identify how to access their e-mail off-site with their Internet provider before departing.
- If you are planning to take a laptop computer along please be advised of possible airport screening delays. Also, research how to connect while traveling in the countries you will be visiting with your service provider.
- International phone cards are available through many different sources including local and international services. For more information please visit [Global Phone](#), which provides a worldwide calling service at economical rates.

## Money

- Currency exchange is normally not recommended prior to arrival in an international destination. Taking some U.S. cash in small denominations (\$50-\$100 total) is recommended.
- Using a credit card (Visa, Master Card and American Express most commonly accepted) on purchases will usually provide the best exchange rate and security for your purchase.
- Using ATM cards will usually provide the best exchange rate when exchanging for the local currency. Try to use your ATM card at a bank during open hours. That way if the ATM machine keeps the card in error, the bank staff can retrieve it right away. You may consider asking your bank for a back-up ATM card to travel with in case one is destroyed while traveling. For each credit card and ATM card you will be carrying abroad, please contact the bank or credit card company before departure to inform them of your travel plans, confirm how to use the card in other countries and identify any fees that may be associated with using the card internationally.
- Please make photocopies of the front and back of all your credit and ATM cards. The back should have the number to call to cancel your card if it is lost or stolen. Store this photocopy with your belongings but not in the same place as your credit and debit cards. Note that most credit card and ATM card companies will apply an international fee of approximately 3% on top of every credit card transaction or ATM withdrawal. Currently we are aware of only one credit card that does not have an international fee and that is **Capital One**.

# Participants - Preparing for your Trip (continued)

## Staying Healthy

Health and safety are of the utmost importance to the success of your international education experience. Below are some general recommendations.

- **Medical preparation** - Obtain any necessary routine medical/dental care before you leave. Carry a copy of your personal health record with you when you travel.
- **Vaccinations** All routine vaccinations should be current. Required and recommended vaccinations for a specific country can be obtained via the Center for Disease Control (CDC)
- **Colds, Coughs, and upset stomach** - These conditions may be a temporary result of the temperature, climate changes and a differing diet inherent with traveling. Consult with a physician or a medical professional about remedies or medications available to you.
- **Glasses/Contacts** - Pack ample supply of contact lens cleaner/solution with you, as these items are often expensive and difficult to find abroad. Pack a second “back-up” set of glasses and carry your prescription with you.
- **Over the counter and Prescription Medications** - It is important that all medication, including over-the-counter drugs, be clearly labeled and in the original container. Make sure your medication is legal in your host country. Ask your physician to prescribe ample supply for your entire stay abroad.
- **Participants with Dietary Restrictions** - If you need special meals or dietary supplements please make arrangements prior to departure. Some items may need to be taken with you and are subject to the customs laws of the host country. Notify your faculty director and/or program coordinator of any special dietary needs or restrictions. This information is helpful when securing flight and housing arrangements.

## Other Resources to help you prepare

[U.S. Department of State Students Abroad Resource](#): Provides many resources for students as well as a comprehensive checklist for students traveling overseas.

[US Department of State Travel Resources](#): Provides information on travel documents, Travel Warnings and Alerts and the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program.

[National Center for Disease Control](#): Students can verify recommended vaccinations for their program destinations under the “Travelers’ Health” section.

## Insurance suggestions

Travel insurance is recommended for both individuals and groups. Below are two suggested insurance companies.

- Cultural Insurance Services International: <http://www.culturalinsurance.com/>
- Travel Guard Insurance: <http://www.travelguard.com/quickquote/?cmpid=kac-001-IO-Google-8930216&gclid=>

## Health & Safety

- Review our tips of Health and Safety while you are abroad for more information to keep you safe and to enjoy your travel experience to the fullest.