

Travel Tips for Students

Foreword

This pamphlet was prepared by the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs to provide students, who are planning to travel or study abroad, with a few reminders about safety.

Although most trips abroad are trouble free, being prepared will go a long way to avoiding the possibility of serious trouble.

Become familiar with the basic laws and customs of the country you plan to visit before you travel.

Remember: Reckless behavior while in another country can do more than ruin your vacation; it can land you in a foreign jail or worse! To have a safe trip, avoid risky behavior and plan ahead.

Preparing for Your Trip Abroad

Apply early for your passport and, if necessary, any visas: Passports are required to enter and/or depart most countries around the world. Apply for a passport as soon as possible. Some countries also require U.S. citizens to obtain visas before entering. Most countries require visitors who are planning to study or work abroad to obtain visas before entering. Check with the embassy of the foreign country that you are planning to visit for up-to-date visa and other entry requirements. (Passport and visa information is available on the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov>.)

Learn about the countries that you plan to visit. Before departing, take the time to do some research about the people and their culture, and any problems that the country is experiencing that may affect your travel plans. The Department of State publishes [Background Notes](#) on about 170 countries. These brief, factual pamphlets contain information on each country's culture, history, geography, economy, government, and current political situation. [Background Notes](#) are available at www.state.gov.

Read the Consular Information Sheet . Consular Information Sheets provide up-to-date travel information on any country in the world that you plan to visit. They cover topics such as entry regulations, the crime and security situation, drug penalties, road conditions, and the location of the U.S. embassy, consulates, and consular agencies.

Check for Travel Warnings and Public Announcements. Travel Warnings recommend U.S. citizens defer travel to a country because of dangerous conditions. Public Announcements provide fast-breaking information about relatively short-term conditions that may pose risks to the security of travelers.

Register with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate Register with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate through the State Department's [travel registration website](#) . Registration will make your presence and whereabouts known in case it is necessary to contact you in an emergency. **In accordance with the Privacy Act, information on your welfare and whereabouts may not be released without your express authorization. Remember to leave a detailed itinerary and the numbers or copies of your passport or other citizenship documents with a friend or relative in the United States.** (U.S. embassy and consulate locations can be found in the country's Consular Information Sheet.) If your family needs to reach you because of an emergency, they can pass a message to you through the Office of Overseas Citizens Services at 202-647-5225. This office will contact the embassy or consulate in the country where you are traveling and pass a message from your family to you. Remember consular officers cannot cash checks, lend money or serve as your attorney. They can, however, if the need arises, assist you in obtaining emergency funds from your family, help you find an attorney, help you find medical assistance, and replace your lost or stolen passport.

Find out what information your school offers. Find out whether your school offers additional information for students who are planning to study, travel, or work abroad. Many student advisors can provide you with information about studying or working abroad. They may also be able to provide you with information on any travel benefits for students (e.g. how to save money on transportation and accommodations, and other resources.)

Before committing yourself or your finances, find out about the organization and what it offers. The majority of private programs for vacation, study or work abroad are reputable and financially sound. However, some charge exorbitant fees, use deliberately false "educational" claims, and provide working conditions far different from those advertised. Even programs of legitimate organizations can be poorly administered.

How to Access Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings, and Public Announcements

Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings and Public Announcements are updated regularly for countries throughout the world and are accessible through the State Department's travel information website at <http://www.travel.state.gov>. For specific questions regarding an emergency involving an American citizen overseas, you may contact the Office of Overseas Citizens Services, American Citizens Services and Crisis Management at (202) 647-5225

Also available at <http://travel.state.gov>: [passport applications and procedures](#) , [foreign and U.S. visa information](#) , [travel publications](#) (including the pamphlet *Travel Warning on Drugs Abroad*) , and [links to several U.S. embassy and consulate web sites worldwide](#) .

Top Ten Travel Tips for Students

1. Make sure you have a signed, valid passport and visas, if required. Also, before you go, fill in the emergency information page of your passport!
2. Read the Consular Information Sheets (and Public Announcements or Travel Warnings, if applicable) for the countries you plan to visit.
3. Leave copies of your itinerary, passport data page and visas with family or friends at home, so that you can be contacted in case of an emergency. Keep your host program informed of your whereabouts.
4. Make sure you have insurance that will cover your emergency medical needs (including medical evacuation) while you are overseas.
5. Familiarize yourself with local laws and customs of the countries to which you are traveling. Remember, while in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws!
6. Do not leave your luggage unattended in public areas and never accept packages from strangers.
7. While abroad, avoid using illicit drugs or drinking excessive amounts of alcoholic beverages, and associating with people who do.
8. Do not become a target for thieves by wearing conspicuous clothing and expensive jewelry and do not carry excessive amounts of cash or unnecessary credit cards.
9. Deal only with authorized agents when you exchange money to avoid violating local laws.
10. When overseas, avoid demonstrations and other situations that may become unruly or where anti-American sentiments may be expressed.

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http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/brochures/brochures_1219.html