



Berry College International Programs

Berry College International Programs Education Abroad Handbook

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**Berry College International Programs
Education Abroad Handbook
Table of Contents**

Steps to Study Abroad.....	Page 3
Important Nuts and Bolts Information	Page 6
Berry College Campus Resources for Study Abroad Students.....	Page 7
Residence Life Study Abroad Checklist for Current On-Campus Students.....	Page 8
Web-Based Travel Resources.....	Page 9
Obtaining a Passport.....	Page 10
Steps of Travel.....	Page 11
Money and Banking.....	Page 13
Mobile Phones.....	Page 19
Berry College Health Tips for Studying Abroad.....	Page 21
Basic Health and Safety.....	Page 22
Travel-Related Health.....	Page 19
Cultural Adjustment.....	Page 25
Personal Safety.....	Page 27
Strategies for Reducing Risk.....	Page 28
Berry College Emergency Contacts.....	Page 29
Top 10 Safety Tips.....	Page 30
What to Take.....	Page 32
Responsible Study Abroad.....	Page 34



Steps to Study Abroad

Once you have received Berry approval to study abroad, begin the following:

- Collect required documents for your program's application – e.g. passport size pictures, official transcripts, etc. Ask references (if required)* to complete recommendation form(s). Be sure to give your reference plenty of time to complete the form. If the form received by the IP office can serve as your program's reference, contact us about sending this to your program.
- Once you have received Berry approval, apply to the institution/program abroad well before its stated deadline. If your host country requires a visa, you will need the program acceptance letter before you can apply for the visa.
- Talk with returned study abroad students whose names and contact information are available from the IPD. If you haven't already, read student evaluations available in the IP office and attend the International Opportunities Fair.
- If eligible, apply for scholarships awarded by your program and research other scholarship opportunities at <http://www.berry.edu/Templates/general.aspx?id=51539610632>.
- Apply for a passport if you don't have one, or renew your passport if necessary. Information is available at http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html. Attend the November passport fair during International Education Week. Encourage your parent/guardian/friend to apply for a passport if they do not have one. It is good to have in case of emergency or they'd like to visit you!
- If you have concerns, confirm with the financial aid office that your aid will apply to your study abroad semester.
- Start reading about your host country. Order a [Culturegram](#); check out resources at [Intercultural Press](#) or the [Culture Shock](#) series. Contact national tourism and embassies for free information. Try to make contact with natives of your host country living in the US. Purchase a good guidebook such as [DK Eyewitness Travel](#), [Lonely Planet](#) or [Blue Guide](#).
- Start learning the host language (if you don't already know it), particularly directions, how to order food, and basic greetings.
- If you are studying abroad through Berry, register the semester prior for STA 305, a 12 hour holding course.
- Apply for your visa, if required, once you have collected all necessary documents. Be aware of how long the process takes and how early you may apply for the visa. [If you are going to Spain](#) for the semester, make your [visa appointment](#) ASAP!
- Make all necessary housing arrangements for your semester abroad, and pay any security deposits (if applicable). **Do not pay the program's tuition!** If you pay the host institution's tuition, Berry's business office will still hold you responsible for your Berry entire tuition.
- Check whether program includes study abroad insurance coverage. If not, you will need to purchase it from iNext through the IP office. A brochure and order form are available at <http://www.berry.edu/Templates/generalForm.aspx?id=51539612550>.
- Bring a photocopy of your passport and visa to the IP office.
- Contact the billing office to cancel your meal plan and ensure all bills are paid.
- Leave a forwarding address with [Berry's Mail Services](#).

- Inform [Residence Life](#) of your housing plans for the semester after you study abroad.
- Make round-trip flight arrangements. Try www.studentuniverse.com, www.STAtravel.com, www.travelteam.com, www.travelzoon.com, www.kayak.com. Compare costs at www.skyscanner.com. Look into STATravel's [Book Now, Pay Later](#) program
- Apply for an [International Student ID card](#), if desired, through the IP office (required for Spanish Studies Abroad programs).
- Be sure to review your advising check sheet with your academic adviser before departing to ensure you are current with your coursework.
- Students graduating the semester after the study abroad semester need to complete their application for graduation with the Registrar before they leave.
- Attend required pre-departure meetings. Failure to attend could result in revocation of any study abroad scholarships and/or withdrawal from STA 305.
- Finalize all items - pack, photocopy documents, get ATM/credit card. Check with your bank on ATM charges for overseas transactions. Buy host country currency, so you have some when you arrive. Most currencies may be purchased in Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport and other international airports.
- Contact your bank and credit card company to notify them that you will be abroad, and find out their procedures to replace lost or stolen cards abroad. Inquire about international transaction fees. Leave phone number of your banks and credit card companies with your family or friends.
- Read the extensive handout on travel & safety tips, distributed at orientation.
- Remember your Viking Web password. Save it in an email if necessary.
- Keep handy your course substitution form so you know what you've substituted when you register for the following semester's classes. This is emailed to you before departure.
- Don't forget your passport, official letter of acceptance, and any other documents you might need to enter the host country. Put all documents in a binder to take with you.
- Pack all necessary medication in your carry-on luggage. Bring an extra pair of glasses. Be sure to have enough medication to last the entire time you're there, and have the prescription for proof at customs.
- Register with the US State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), <https://step.state.gov/step/>
- Purchase a travel pouch or money belt. See websites in this booklet.
- Purchase small gifts to give to new friends/host family. Pack photos of friends and family for memories and for conversation starters with host family, new friends, etc.
- All students going to the UK should bring a current bank statement with their name on the account, showing the equivalent of £600 for each month of the stay. Immigration might ask for this proof of finances upon entering the UK.

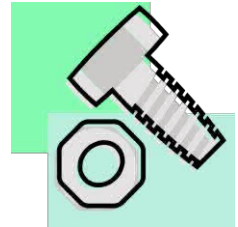
While Abroad:

- Be sure you can access your Berry email and check it regularly so your mail box doesn't get full. IP will correspond with you via your Berry email.
- Email any course changes to the IPD – this includes course name, number and description and how you'd like the new course to count. She will contact your adviser, appropriate department chair and school dean for approval. Please note that approval cannot be guaranteed.
- During pre-registration for the semester you'll be back, check Viking Web for class schedules and choose your course schedule for your return semester.
- Email your adviser during advising with your class choices for the following semester. You will register during your normal time, but your adviser must clear you before you can register.
- If you decide to stay another semester while abroad, you must email the appropriate department chairs, deans and possibly the Provost to approve your courses. Financial Aid may be used only one time to study abroad.
- If you're studying in the spring semester and will be living on campus when you return, remind your proxy to go through room selection for you. If you have any housing issues, contact [Residence Life](#).
- Keep copies of your syllabi to bring back with you in case of discrepancies.
- Request your transcript be sent to the IP office at Berry College: Box 5032, Mt. Berry, GA 30149 USA

Upon returning to Berry:

- Complete the required evaluation form (link will be sent to you).
- Attend the Welcome Back party organized by IP – you'll receive an invitation in campus mail. This often includes an international jobs workshop by Career Center assistant director Sue Tarpley.
- Don't "shoebox" your study abroad experience. It is not something to be put away when you return to Berry – how can you integrate it into your remaining time at Berry? Check out the [re-entry resource page](#) of the IP website.
- All scholarship recipients will complete the report form for IP and sign up for activities to promote study abroad. Endowed scholarship recipients should send a letter to the Office of Advancement describing the STA experience for scholarship donors.
- Be patient as you wait for the host institution to send your official transcript to Berry – this can take up to 8 weeks or longer. See "Nuts & Bolts" section for important information.
- Once your transcript has been processed, confirm that the courses fulfilled your Berry requirements by checking your advising worksheet on Viking Web. Don't wait until your graduation appointment to find out!
- Plan to participate in the [International Opportunities Fair](#), [What is Culture?](#) photo exhibit, BCC 100 class visits and International Education Week activities. Contact Ms. Egerer for more information: ext. 4065 or segerer@berry.edu

IMPORTANT NUTS & BOLTS INFORMATION



- Send Sarah Egerer your final schedule once it is confirmed at your host institution, segerer@berry.edu.
- Any course not receiving Berry College approval will transfer back as general elective credit. We cannot guarantee unapproved courses! Remember the course content – not the credit - is being approved. The class abroad is likely not worth the same number of credits as at Berry. Be sure you know how to calculate US credit hours from your host institution's credit system.
- If you have a schedule change and need a new approval while abroad, send the course name, number, description and how you wish it to “count” to Sarah Egerer. She will contact the relevant chair and dean to request approval.
- Check your email periodically. You are responsible for the information communicated by email unless you have made other arrangements with the International Programs office.
- Students studying abroad as transient students do not receive institutional aid.
- Dropping below 12 hours makes you ineligible for financial aid. If you go below this number, [contact Sarah Egerer immediately](#).
- If you take more than the equivalent of 18 US credit hours, you will be charged a per hour overload (except for the Glasgow program). Be sure any classes you drop will not appear on the host transcript.
- Contact Ms. Tammy Vaughn in the Business office before you leave campus for the semester to make sure your payments, etc. are in order, your meal plan has been dropped, etc. Ext. 2235 or tvaughn@berry.edu.
- If applicable, notify housing that you will not be on campus next semester (see residence life checklist in this handbook).
- For the semester following study abroad, you may register at your regular registration time. You will need to email your adviser to discuss your course schedule, and they will need to clear you before you can register.
- Students studying abroad are exempt from cultural events for the semester(s) they are gone (equivalent to three a semester). The Registrar's office will award three cultural event credits upon your return.
- Berry requires students complete 80% of attempted credit hours per semester. If your transcript is not available by the time Financial Aid calculates this, Berry has no evidence of completed hours. Students for whom no transcript is yet available will receive a notice from Financial Aid, reminding the student of the need to complete the 80% in order to maintain satisfactory progress and eligibility for financial aid. Financial Aid, Student Accounts and the Registrar's office have lists of current study abroad students so are aware of their situation, and students' Financial Aid is not in jeopardy as long as they have maintained eligibility. In order to avoid your next semester's classes being removed from the system, contact Student Business Services Manager Tammy Vaughn at 706-236-2235 to make a minimum payment that will hold your classes.
- If you have completed 90 hours or if you will be graduating the semester you return to Berry, be sure to complete an application for graduation before studying abroad.

Berry College Campus Resources for Study Abroad Students

International Programs:

➔ Ms. Sarah Egerer
Director
Krannert 331, 706-233-4065
segerer@berry.edu

Registrar's office:

➔ Ms. Roberta Trometer
Records Coordinator
Hermann 238, 706-234-1108
rtrometer@berry.edu

Financial Aid:

➔ Ms. Cheryl Huffman
Financial Aid Coordinator
Hermann 105, 706-290-2143
chuffman@berry.edu

Billing:

➔ Ms. Tammy Vaughn, Student Services
Assistant, Office of Business and Finance
Herman 210, 706-236-2235
tvaughn@berry.edu

Residence Life:

➔ Ms. Ellen Hearn
Assistant Director
Ladd 11, 706-236-2209
residencelife@berry.edu

Health and Safety:

➔ Ms. Anita Errickson, Director
Central Medical Services
Ladd Center, 706-233-4050
aerrickson@berry.edu

➔ Mr. Bobby Abrams
Chief, Campus Safety
Hoge 4, 706-290-2173
babrams@berry.edu

Counseling:

➔ Ms. Terri Cordle, Asst. Director
Ladd 17
706-236-2259
tcordle@berry.edu

➔ Mr. Marshall Jenkins, Director
Ladd 18
706-236-2259
mjenkins@berry.edu

Residence Life Study Abroad Checklist for Current On-Campus Students

If you are not planning to return to on-campus housing when you return to Berry College:

1. Complete Off-Campus Application located on the Residence Life website.
2. Approval for living off campus must be given prior to signing an off campus lease or rental agreement

If you are planning to return to on-campus housing:

1. Complete a Study Abroad Form available in Residence Life office or at orientation.
2. Complete a Room Selection Proxy Form if you are studying abroad spring semester. Have a roommate, friend or someone trustworthy serve as your proxy during room selection.
3. Plan to pay the \$200 pre-payment (at the cashier's window) before you leave or remind your parents to pay it before the due date. Students studying abroad in the fall have the option of paying this before you go or closer to spring semester.
4. Return all forms to the Office of Residence Life before you leave the country.

For more information and deadlines, please contact Residence Life at 706-236- 2209.

Bon voyage!

WEB-BASED TRAVEL RESOURCES*

See your airline carrier's website regarding luggage restrictions!

www.studentuniverse.com, www.statravel.com (discount plane tickets for students)

www.lonelyplanet.com (travel guide with general country & travel info), www.ricksteves.com for Europe travel

www.worldwide.edu/travel_planner/index.html (international student travel/study website with links to information about all countries. Includes sections about culture shock, academic credit, currency exchange and safety tips)

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx> (health information for countries worldwide from the Centers for Disease Control, USA)

www.embassy.org (embassy listings worldwide)

www.travel.state.gov (travel information, country-specific information, travel warnings, etc.)

www.travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html (applying for a passport)

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/> (U.S. Dept. of State – background notes on different countries)

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/> (CIA World Factbook with map, data on the people, government by country)

www.miusa.org (resources for students with disabilities)

www.worldtimeserver.com (worldwide time clock)

www.xe.com, www.oanda.com (currency converters)

<http://www.1areacodescountrycodes.com/all-country-names-a-z-country-codes.html> (intl dialing code directory)

www.studyabroad.com (worldwide study abroad link)

<http://www.ipl.org/> (internet public library)

www.onebag.com (packing tips and links to travel items)

www.journeywoman.com/ccc/ (travel tips for women)

www.cellularabroad.com, www.telestial.com (cell phones abroad)

<http://www.lebara.com/global/en> (for some European countries)

www.zaptel.com (calling cards and phone plans)

www.isic.org (International Student Identity Card – available through IP office)

www.eurail.com/, www.raileurope.com/index.html (travel through Europe by train)

www.bmi.com, www.flybudget.com, www.easyjet.com, www.flybe.com (budget flights)

www.magellans.com, www.pac-safe.com, www.eaglecreek.com, www.travelsmith.com (travel items)

<http://www.wsaeeurope.com/> Weekend Student Adventures for students in Europe; www.skyscanner.com weekend travel options

<http://www.howstuffworks.com/us-customs-service.htm> (going through Customs in the US)

The data contained herein is for informational purposes only and is not represented to be error free. They are not intended to nor do they constitute an endorsement by Berry College, Inc.

Obtaining a passport

1. Obtain application online at www.travel.state.gov/passport/forms/forms_847.html, at the Berry Post Office (706-236-2201), or at the US Post Office 1420 Martha Berry Blvd. in Rome at (706-234-9456). *Do not sign the application until instructed to do so by the Acceptance Agent.*
2. You will need to have proof of US citizenship, for example a previous US passport or a birth certificate.
3. You will need to have a proof of identity that contains both your signature and a physical description or photograph, for example a driver's license.
4. Make a photocopy of the identification document.
5. You will need to have two passport size photographs. These can be obtained at the post office or at Clyde Collier Photography, Rome, 706-291-9676. Please note that while passport photos are usually cheaper from drugstores, they do not always meet regulations.
5. Once you have the required documents you need to take them to the US Post Office at 1420 Martha Berry Blvd. in Rome with the necessary fee (approximately \$100 for first time passport). Only personal checks or money orders will be accepted. You must apply in person if
 - You are applying for your **first** U.S. passport **or**
 - Your previous U.S. passport was issued when you were **under age 16**
6. Your passport should arrive within six weeks.
7. For more information, go to www.travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html

Apply for your passport as soon as possible!
You cannot travel outside the US without a passport.
You may not apply for your visa until you have a passport.

Checking your passport application status

1. Go to travel.state.gov
2. At the bottom of the page, find "Passports for US Citizens" and click on "More."
3. On the far left side, click on "Application Status."
4. Notify the IP office if you have trouble receiving your passport.





Your Flight

Start comparing airfares, and purchase your ticket before prices get too high. A good fare compare site is www.skyscanner.com, and then you can purchase the best fare directly from the airline. You can also get fares from student sites www.studentuniverse.com or www.statravel.com, which can sometimes be lower for students. STA also has a deposit program that allows you to hold your reservation for \$300 until a few weeks before your flight. With certain restrictions, of course!

Avoid purchasing your ticket from Expedia, Travelocity or similar travel services. If there is a flight cancellation or you need to make a change to your ticket, the airline will not always be as helpful.

Airport security screening procedures are significantly more stringent than previously. Items in your suitcase that may have passed through before might not be accepted onboard aircraft today. For a current list of prohibited items, visit the Transportation Security Administration's website, <http://www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/prohibited-items>

Complete a personal luggage inventory. Examine everything that you normally pack in your suitcase and evaluate whether an object could be scrutinized by airport security. (This includes items found in manicure kits, etc.) Consider removing anything that could be perceived as threatening, or may raise suspicion at a security-screening checkpoint. **No knives of any size will be accepted.**

Anticipate the possibility that your bag will be opened for a security inspection. Pack efficiently, placing smaller items together in a pouch or bag. Avoid over-packing so that carry-on luggage and checked suitcases can be opened and closed with ease. Make sure that each suitcase has a name tag securely affixed to it. Do not lock your bags unless you use a TSA-approved lock (available at WalMart).

Don't forget your passport! Customers will not be allowed to check-in without proper identification.

Check Your Flight Status

It is important to check your flight status regularly to be prepared for any schedule changes. This is especially important to do before your return flight. Be sure to provide the airline with information to contact you about flight changes.

Arrive early. Passengers are encouraged to arrive at the at least two-and-one-half hours before international flights, but check your airline's recommendations. Remember, once that airplane door is shut, you can't board!

Upon Arrival at Airport

Do not leave your vehicle or baggage unattended. Aircraft security will be completing thorough sweeps of airport properties. Expect to see an increased presence of law enforcement personnel outside and inside the terminal building.

At the Security Checkpoint

Access beyond security is restricted to passengers and employees only. Have your ticket available, along with your photo ID. You will not be permitted past the security check-in area without these documents.

Be metal-free. Airlines have increased the sensitivity of metal detectors. Don't carry knives, tweezers or clippers. Empty pockets of everything – including change and cell phones - before going through security. Store jewelry and metal items that may set off detectors in carry-on bags.

Be prepared to demonstrate the operation of electronic equipment such as laptops, cell phones, etc.

In the US you could be required to remove your shoes and walk through a [scanning unit](#). Be prepared for increased passenger and baggage-security screening. Wand checks and full-body hand searches may be expected.

Please be patient. Do not make jokes about security. Comply with all security instructions.

At the Gate

Leave no bag unattended. Maintain your sense of awareness and keep your possessions with you at all times. Don't be surprised to see law-enforcement personnel and dogs.

Keep your boarding pass and identification on hand and readily available.

Expect to see teams of individuals board the aircraft before general passenger boarding in order to sweep the aircraft as an added security precaution. These individuals may board the aircraft from inside the terminal building, or may enter and exit via jet bridge stairs.

Pay special attention to announcements. Board the aircraft as directed by gate agents. Do not wait until the last minute to board the aircraft.

Immigration and Customs Inspections

Upon entry to any country, you must show your passport and any required visas and possibly proof of required immunizations. Some countries, especially in the UK, require proof of financial support. At an airport, this usually occurs just after you deplane but before you recover your luggage. Remember that admission to the country is entirely at the discretion of the immigration officer. It is wise to be polite and to dress neatly. The immigration officer, who determines the length of stay to be authorized and into your passport, will normally ask you about the purpose of your visit and how long you plan to remain in the country.

After your passport has been stamped and you have collected your luggage, you must pass through a customs inspection. You will probably receive a customs declaration form to be filled out on your plane (or train), and customs officials will examine it when they look at your luggage. Your bags may be examined, and you may be detained or asked to pay duties if there are any irregularities or violations of customs regulations. You may also be waved through with no special attention whatsoever.

Note: DO NOT joke about bombs or smuggled items!

Returning to the United States

When you fly back to the US, you will be asked to complete a Customs Declaration Form. Familiarize yourself with this form by visiting

<http://www.cbp.gov/travel/us-citizens/sample-declaration-form>



Money and Banking

Budgeting

The overall costs of living in another country can sometimes be higher than at home because you are in an unfamiliar environment making transactions with unfamiliar currency. Depending on your program site, you may also be confronted with an almost endless array of entertainment possibilities and attractions. A go-slow approach to buying makes sense. It also makes sense to try to live within a prudent budget, which will allow you to keep your finances in shape. There is little that is more dismaying than to run out of funds overseas without easy or quick means of replenishment. The following suggestions may prove helpful.

- \$ Learn the “value” of money (i.e. in relation to the currency you know, the US Dollar) wherever you are, as quickly as possible.
- \$ Be consistently alert to special student rates and discounts wherever you go, and know what is available through the use of your International Student Identification Card (e.g. travel, accommodations, entrance fees, some entertainment etc.).
- \$ Take advantage of less expensive alternatives whenever possible. Cook for yourself (especially breakfasts), or use refectory or student cafeteria meals rather than eating out. Reserve meals at restaurants for special occasions. Note: Many students save money by eating their main meal at lunchtime, taking advantage of the subsidized student cafeterias.
- \$ Plan your entertainment and recreation around the availability of free or inexpensive events on campus or in the surrounding community.
- \$ Whenever possible, shop at street markets or major chain supermarkets, and avoid specialty shops and convenience stores (that add 20-30% mark-up). Withhold from making major purchases until you have learned the range of available prices, or learned that you don't really need that expensive item, after all.
- \$ When traveling, stay in hostels or in modest bed-and-breakfast accommodations, as opposed to hotels, which cater to tourists and business travelers and charge accordingly.
- \$ Take care of your belongings and safeguard your cash. Loss of personal possessions is upsetting at any time, but even more troubling and inconvenient abroad. Keep in mind that pick-pocketing is common. It is a good idea to carry cash and credit cards in a traveler pouch or money belt.
- \$ Sales taxes, as Americans know them, generally do not exist in other countries. But many now impose a Value-Added Tax (VAT) on certain goods and services, especially more expensive ones. As a visitor, you may be able to reclaim the amount you have spent on the VAT at the international airport when you leave the country, but you will need to show receipts of all your purchases and be able to prove that you did not use the item in the country where it was purchased in order to claim this refund.
- \$ Join local organizations, such as churches and sports teams, that offer subsidized travel opportunities.

Other money-saving hints by Anna Pinnow (fall '07 – Costa Rica)

1. Walk or take a bus or the subway instead of a taxi. Rent a bike!
2. Know whether your credit/debit card company will charge you every time you withdraw money. If so, withdraw larger amounts of money less often vs. small amounts frequently.
3. Live like a local! Pay attention to where the locals shop, where and what they eat, how they travel...following their lead will probably be your cheapest route! It's always a good idea to ask a local you trust for advice!
4. Avoid American stuff. Although much of the world is Americanized and will have imported U.S. goods and American-style restaurants and stores, they will almost always be much more expensive than the local alternative.

5. Try to bargain! In many marketplaces vendors will lower the price for you if you play hard to get. Check with locals to see if this is appropriate.
6. If meals are provided for you through your program, avoid eating out.
7. Consider exploring the city where you are living and the surrounding area instead of traveling to other countries every weekend. Students often spend the most money traveling! Once again, ask locals what the cheapest options are!!!
8. Take advantage of excursions offered by your university – they are often subsidized.
9. Ask about Student Discounts. Many Museums and National Parks offer discounts to students. Apply for an International Student ID Card through the IP office.
10. Budget! Make a weekly or monthly budget and stick to it!

Be sure to read any information sent by your program in your pre-departure packet about managing finances in the host country.

Currency exchange rates are updated daily at: www.oanda.com/convert/cheatsheet and www.xe.com.

Cash

Carrying large amounts of cash is not recommended. However, it is a good idea to carry a minimum of \$100 in U.S. currency for incidental expenses when traveling to your destination. Once you arrive, you may want to put it away until you are ready to return home. Local money on hand upon arrival is useful for tips, cab or bus fares and minor purchases. U.S. currency can be exchanged for foreign currency at most international airports prior to your departure (in general, exchange rates are unfavorable), at the international airport of your destination, and at most major banks and railroad stations abroad.

Banks abroad offer the fairest exchange rates available, but you can expect to pay a commission (which varies by country) every time you exchange currency. In some countries the commission is based on the amount you exchange, while in others there is a flat fee regardless of the transaction amount. The flat fee makes it advantageous to exchange larger amounts of money to avoid repeat visits to the bank window, though this may mean you may be carrying more cash than advisable. You will need to find a medium between carrying large amounts of cash and paying bank commissions.

Currency packs containing an assortment of coins and currency for the countries you plan to visit may be obtained from U.S. banks, currency dealers, and international airport terminals. Black market currency exchange transactions are unwise, and in most countries, illegal.

Bank or ATM Cards

Many countries still operate more on cash than credit cards, so be sure you have access to local currency.

The best rates are usually through ATM withdrawals. Check the back of your ATM card to see which network it is on (such as Visa) so you know which machines you should be able to withdraw money from abroad. Although this way of accessing money is convenient, you are warned not to use it as your only form of getting cash. Be sure to check with your bank at home, to ensure that your Personal Identification Number (PIN) is valid overseas and to clarify what sort of charges will be applied. The banking arm of [Charles Schwab](http://www.charleschwab.com) does not charge ATM fees within or outside the US.

Be sure to find out if there is a service charge involved. ATM cards for savings accounts may not work when used abroad. It is advisable to transfer money into your checking account before departure if you wish to have access to these funds.

In the UK, the [Chip and PIN](http://www.bankofengland.co.uk) system is common. This is a card with an embedded microchip and when making purchases, a customer swipes the card and inputs a 4 digit PIN. Travelers without such a card may encounter inconveniences when making purchases without cash, so consult your bank prior to departure.

AMT card skimming and trapping have become more prevalent. In order to prevent becoming the victim of these and other ATM scams:

1. If possible, use ATMs located inside buildings or in bustling public places where it is difficult for criminals to tamper with the machines. Do not use machines in isolated areas or at night.



2. Avoid ATMs where the card slots appear to have been mounted on the machine. Card entry slots should be flush with the surface of the ATM or recessed from it. If you see a card entry slot that is raised above the machine, it should raise your suspicions and you should not use it.
3. If you find it awkward to read the screen or enter your PIN, do not use the machine. It may have been altered. Legitimate displays are never mounted in front of ATMs. Anything that blocks or partially obscures a sign may house a camera.
4. Guard your PIN, especially when entering it, by shielding the keypad with one of your hands.
5. If possible, have a friend or partner accompany you while you make a withdrawal.
6. If you are distracted at all during an ATM transaction, immediately press cancel and collect your card before responding to anyone who has accosted you.
7. If a machine swallows your card, call the bank's toll-free number (usually posted on or near the ATM) and report it.
8. Change your PIN from the original number given when you first got your card (this number is sometimes contained in the data on the magnetic strip and can be discovered by thieves who have stolen your card). Do not keep your account number and PIN together.

Credit Cards

Credit cards make foreign currency transactions easy, and they are invaluable in a financial emergency. Do take a credit card along, but use it wisely; plastic can be dangerous because overspending is so easy. Service fees and interest charges can be costly, and the loss or theft of a card abroad can be a serious inconvenience when you are traveling. Look into obtaining a Capitol One credit card, as they currently do not charge a fee for using the card outside the US. Check to see if your card has a grace period for payments.

Possession of a VISA card, MasterCard, or American Express card will be helpful should you need emergency funds while awaiting money from home. As of this writing, you can go to an American Express office and cash a personal check for up to \$1,000 (only the first \$50 will be provided in cash, the balance in traveler's checks). If you do not have any personal checks with you, American Express can provide you with a blank check if you can provide pertinent information such as your personal checking account number and your banking institution's name and address. However, a Visa or MasterCard is more likely to be accepted in shops and restaurants than American Express.

With many credit cards you can obtain a cash advance against your account from a foreign bank. This is an easy procedure used by many students. The bank will take your passport number and your credit card number and enter the information into a central computer to prevent you from exceeding the established limit.

Credit cards can also come in handy when making purchases. Not all merchants abroad, however, accept credit cards, regardless of the name brand. Research credit card use in your host country prior to travel. The amount charged to your credit card bill is based on the exchange rate on the day that your bank or credit card company processes the transaction. If the merchant is slow in submitting your charge slip, the bill could be a bit different from what you might have expected. Currently the [Capitol One](#) credit card charges no fees for foreign transactions.

For all financial transactions abroad be sure to have adequate identification with you (e.g. your passport). Leave credit card account numbers and bank telephone numbers with someone at home and take a copy with you. If your cards are stolen, it will be easier to communicate with the bank.

NOTE: Not all of the preceding advice may apply in every country. Indeed, it is probably more accurate for the major Western European countries than for the rest of the world. But banking has become more uniform these days, so the above advice is likely to be useful for most locations. Before leaving the U.S., try to get accurate information from your current bank and credit card agencies.

Be sure to inform your bank and credit card companies of all the countries you will be traveling to; otherwise, they may block transactions. Remember to do this when you are traveling to other countries from your host country.

Traveler's checks & pre-paid cards

Traveler's checks are safer than cash but not always more convenient. While lost or stolen cash cannot be replaced, traveler's checks can be refunded. Be sure to keep a separate record of serial numbers of your traveler's checks. It is best to have three copies of these. Should the checks be lost or stolen, it's important to have these numbers available in order to obtain a refund. You will need to cash the traveler's check at a local bank and have the amount converted into local currency (if check is in US\$). Banks also usually charge a commission for this. Make a note of your host country's banking hours before you leave.

Traveler's checks are available in various denominations of different currencies and can be obtained at most banks. The major companies dealing in traveler's checks are Citicorp (First National City Bank), American Express, Thomas Cook, Bank of America, American Express, and Visa. There will be a commission charge for the purchase of traveler's checks. It might be to your benefit to contact American Automobile Association (AAA) since they do not charge members a fee for the purchase of American Express or Thomas Cook traveler's checks. Although purchasing traveler's checks in small denominations means carrying a bulkier package of checks with you, it also means that you can better control the amount of cash you carry.

[Visa TravelMoney](#) is an alternative to traveler's checks. The card is prepaid, so you can spend up to the card value anywhere Visa debit cards are accepted, including stores, online, over the phone, and via mail. You can also get cash at Visa/PLUS ATMs worldwide. Each time you make a purchase, the purchase amount is automatically deducted from the card. Be sure you are aware of all the fees and rates associated with such a card.

Banking

If studying abroad for a semester or less, students do not usually open a bank account in the host country (unless it is required for accommodation or other fees to be withdrawn). Most students wait until arrival in the host country to establish a bank account – your program orientation is likely to explain the procedures. This allows you to become acquainted with the various banks and the services they offer, and also allows you to familiarize yourself with the different type of bank accounts and to find the bank office most convenient for your use. If you already know of a particular bank and have the exact address of a convenient bank location, however, you may want to write in advance to see if you can open an account before you arrive. This way, you can have funds waiting for you. You will need to provide a reference from your current bank. Many banks have their own bankcards, allowing you to make withdrawals from their ATMs.

Transferring Money from U.S. Accounts

Should you run short of cash while abroad, money can be sent from home in a variety of ways. The quickest (and most expensive) way is by cable transfer from your U.S. bank to a bank abroad. You might want to visit your hometown bank before your departure to obtain a list of the overseas correspondence banks to which money can be transferred by cable and let the bank know who is authorized to initiate cable transfers on your behalf. To pick up the money at an overseas bank, you will need a form of identification (e.g. your passport). It may be necessary for your hometown bank to process cable transfers through a major, internationally recognized U.S. bank which in turn will probably have to deal with a comparable internationally recognized bank overseas. The correspondent bank abroad (e.g. in Paris, Madrid, etc.) can then complete the transfer to a local bank at your study abroad location.



American Express money orders are also relatively fast. Transactions must be initiated at an American Express office in the United States and completed at one of the branch offices abroad. However, not all American Express offices can prepare money orders or deal with cable transfers; it pays to call your local American Express office for a list of offices abroad that can provide these services.

Personal checks drawn against your local hometown bank will be virtually worthless because of the time it takes each bank to clear the check, unless you are working with American Express (see "Credit Cards").



Mobile phones and study abroad

by Michael McGuire, Editor / Contributor

Using a cell phone abroad is still an expensive endeavor. Most wireless carriers in the U.S. now offer packages to customers that allow them certain amounts of minutes and data to use while roaming on foreign networks. But those charges are paid in addition to the monthly charges you normally pay at home — not in lieu of them. This means, while going abroad, students may have to pay double or more of what they normally pay to continue to use their phones.

Luckily, with the evolution of global smartphones and cheaper plans in other countries, overbilling isn't your only choice. Here are a few tips to keep you connected — for a

reasonable price — while you're abroad.

(Note: Students studying in Puerto Rico will be covered, in most cases, by nationwide calling, text messaging and data plans. There will likely be no need to change your plan or purchase additional services. But it is always best to confirm with your wireless carrier before you do.)

Don't let them talk you into buying minutes and data packages!

Not only will you pay for service at home — service you aren't using — but you'll have to pay extra for whatever calls you make or messages you send in Spain, Cuba or Argentina. The fees charged by networks aren't cheap either. Verizon Wireless charges customers \$25 for every 100MB of data used abroad. (That means the average 2GB data plan abroad would cost Verizon customers \$500 a month.) Text messages from AT&T phones cost around \$0.50 for every message sent and \$0.20 for each message received. And phone calls cost, on average, more than \$1.00 per minute.

Suspend your service at home.

Why pay for something when you won't be around to use it? Before you leave the country, especially if your trip will last more than a month, temporarily suspend your service. This way, you won't be stuck paying Verizon or AT&T when you haven't sent one text message or made one call from your device. The process is simple and free with most carriers. Just call customer service and tell them you're leaving the country and want to temporarily suspend — not cancel — your service.

Before leaving the country with your phone, make sure it is unlocked and compatible with the networks you'll be using abroad.

Bring a compatible device with you.

You can save the cost of buying or renting a phone abroad if you take the right phone on your trip. Most mobile networks around the world use GSM radio systems, but many carriers in the U.S. do not. Verizon Wireless, Sprint, MetroPCS, Cricket and U.S. Cellular all operate using CDMA radio systems. This means that a device that works on Verizon's network may not work on AT&T's network, which is a GSM network. That same device then, most likely, wouldn't work with a carrier in Spain, Cuba or Argentina.

However, many smartphones sold to Verizon and Sprint customers are global-ready, meaning they have the proper GSM bands installed on the phone to work on other networks while roaming internationally. If you have one of these phones (most 4G phones are set up this way), it should be easy to remove your U.S. SIM card and put in a SIM card from a carrier from the country in which you're studying. This way, you'll only have to pay for a phone plan and not for a new device for your semester abroad.

If you're bringing a device, make sure it has been unlocked by your carrier.

Another thing to consider is whether or not your GSM-compatible phone is unlocked. Many phones purchased from carriers in the U.S. are locked for use on only one network. This discourages customers from switching networks mid-contract because the phone you've purchased won't work anywhere else. There are websites dedicated to providing unlocking codes for cell phones for a fee. But your best option, if you've been a loyal customer for at least a year, is to call your carrier's customer support and ask to have the phone unlocked for a trip abroad. Most carriers will walk you through the necessary steps to get your phone ready for use on other networks, and they won't charge a fee to do it.

Use an internet-based messaging client — never SMS.

It's almost a guarantee that even you haven't heard of applications like BlackBerry Messenger (BBM), Google Talk or WhatsApp before your semester abroad, you will be familiar with them before going back to the U.S. These internet-based apps allow for free messaging between users from all around the world. This means you can send text and photo messages to Mom and Dad without paying for a texting plan while you're abroad. The programs use your data plan or Wi-Fi to send messages, which means you won't be paying anything for each message sent and received. (That's a savings of \$0.50 per message.)

Most European and Latin American carriers do not have the unlimited text-messaging plans that many U.S. students have. Young people in those countries rely solely on BBM and WhatsApp to communicate. Any new friends you make in Spain or Argentina will certainly appreciate it if you use those applications too.

Keep your phone in your pocket whenever possible.

There's no technical reason for doing this, and it won't really save you money — aside from the fact that you won't be making calls or sending messages with your phone tucked away. But the less you use your phone while abroad, the more you're going to gain from the experience. You'll be less distracted. You'll notice colors and smells and sounds that you might miss with a screen in front of your face. You'll spend more time engaged in conversations in the language you're trying to learn. Save conversations with friends and family back home for the last hour or half-hour before you go to bed.

Berry College Health Tips for Studying Abroad

1. Disclose any physical or mental health problems to the IP Director or your program directors *before* you go. Make sure they are aware of any medical support you will need.
2. If you are currently undergoing counseling, share your study abroad plans with your mental health care provider so they can help you prepare. Many of the most common crises overseas involve students whose emotional problems are exacerbated by the stresses of new living and learning experiences.
3. If you are taking a prescription drug, be sure it is legal to bring this into the host country. Check the official government website of the country where you will be studying.
4. If possible, bring enough of any prescription drug you are currently taking with you for the duration of your stay. Check with your insurance company to see if this is possible.
5. Prescription medicine should be in its original bottles. If possible, bring a copy of the prescription with you.
6. Pack most of your medication in your carry-on; some people pack some prescription medicines in their checked luggage in case their carry-on is stolen.
7. Bring an extra pair of glasses, if you wear them, along with the prescription.
8. Pack a first-aid kit, including:
 - a. sunscreen
 - b. bandages
 - c. sterile pads
 - d. insect repellent
 - e. aspirin, Tylenol, etc.
 - f. antacid
 - g. anti-diarrhea tablets like Imodium AD
 - h. anti-bacterial cream
9. Stay hydrated! If you experience travelers' diarrhea, mix one liter treated water with 2 tbs. sugar, 1/2 tsp. salt; administer one cup after each loose bowel movement.
10. Check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, www.cdc.gov, for country-specific health information.
11. Pack a hat or bandana.
12. You have study abroad insurance, but do not discontinue your current health coverage.
13. If you have additional concerns, make an appointment with Dr. John Hostetler, MD, Travel & Tropical Medicine, Harbin Clinic, 706-236-6460, or check the CDC website for a travel clinic near you.
14. For more info & resources:
www.studentsabroad.com
http://www.ciee.org/health_safety/health/pre-departure_checklist.aspx
Mental Disability Rights International, <http://www.mdri.org>
Facts on Tap, <http://www.factson tap.org>
Academy for Eating Disorders, <http://www.aedweb.org/>
Anxiety Disorders Association of America, <http://www.adaa.org/>
National Mental Health Information Center, <http://www.samhsa.gov/>
Mobility International USA/National Clearinghouse and Exchange <http://www.miusa.org/ncde>

BASIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

In this section, you will find information on how to stay well while abroad. The process of wellness starts before you go abroad with a visit to your doctor. You may need to get inoculations to protect yourself from infectious diseases endemic in the countries you will visit. You will also learn some tips to ensure you drink clean water and eat uncontaminated food.

- **What to Know About Your Country:** Learn all you can about the health and safety issues of the countries you plan to visit. This includes reading about the cultural and political climate of those countries, as well as learning about how others view people from your country, race, ethnic group, religion, gender and sexual orientation.
- **Infectious Diseases and Inoculations:** Find out about the infectious diseases endemic in countries to which you will be traveling, and get the appropriate shots and pills, and take the appropriate medications with you if your doctor thinks it's necessary. Find out about any potential side-effects of shots and pills that you may take.
- **Physicals and Check-ups:** Get a complete physical, eye exam and dental check-up before going abroad.
- **Can You Drink the Water?:** Find out if water is safe to drink in the countries to which you will be traveling. [Purify unsafe water](#) before you drink it by boiling it or adding iodine. Make sure water bottles come sealed when you buy them. Remember that ice and the water you use to brush your teeth can also be unsafe.
- **Food Safety:** Poor refrigeration, undercooked meat, and roadside/outdoor vendors could pose problems related to food contamination. If you get diarrhea or food poisoning, remember to drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated. As with any illness, consider seeing a doctor if your condition worsens. Give your body time to adjust to new types of foods you will be eating.
- **Laws and Codes of Conduct:** Make yourself aware of both the rules and regulations of the study abroad program sponsor, and the local laws and customs of the countries which you will be visiting. Understand that you will not only have to conform to the legal system of the country you will be visiting, but also obey the codes of conduct required of program participants.
- **Mental and Physical Health:** Consider your own mental and physical health issues when applying for a study abroad program, and make all your necessary health information available to the program's administrators so they can assist you with any special needs, or advise you on the risks you might face. Study abroad may include both physical and mental challenges for students.
- **Prescriptions:** Get a doctor's signed prescription for any medication you have to bring abroad. Some prescriptions may need to be translated if you wish to fill them abroad. Include your glasses or contact lens prescription. Bring an extra pair of glasses.
- **First-Aid Kit:** Consider a well-stocked first-aid kit as a first line of defense. Some items to include are: sunscreen, bandages, flashlight, sterile pads, insect repellent, adhesive tape, aspirin, antacid, anti-diarrhea tablets, anti-malarial medication, extra bottled water, feminine protection, condoms, rubber gloves, etc.
- **Fitness and Exercise:** Try to get fit in the time you have before departing overseas. A healthy body can help you to fight off illness and recover faster if you do get sick. Also, try to stay fit while abroad, even though it may be harder to follow a structured workout routine.
- **Walking:** Get a good pair of comfortable walking shoes. Without access to a car or public transportation abroad, you may have to do quite a bit of walking. Break in your shoes before you go.
- **Emergency Contacts:** Keep the program staff and an emergency contact at home well informed of your whereabouts and activities and provide these people with copies of your important travel documents (i.e. passport, visa, plane tickets, traveler's checks, and prescriptions).
- **Air Travel:** When you travel by air, drink a lot of non-alcoholic fluids, stay away from caffeine, eat light, and stretch often to avoid jetlag. A direct flight is usually easier for most travelers, but flights broken up by stops can also lessen jet lag.
- **Transportation:** Accidents involving in-country travel, whether by air, bus, train, taxi, car, etc., are a major cause of injury to students abroad. It is important to understand what the safe modes of travel are abroad.
- **Alcohol and Drugs:** Use and abuse of alcohol and drugs abroad can increase the risk of accident and injury. Many study abroad accidents and injury are related to the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs.

abroad. Violating drug laws abroad may result in very serious consequences. In some countries, being found guilty of violating drug laws can result in consequences as serious as death.

- **Setting an Example:** Set a good example. Remember you are like an ambassador for your U.S. college or university. Behave in a way that is respectful of others' rights and well-being and encourage others to do the same.

JET LAG

Jet lag is a disruption of the circadian rhythm (the body's 24-hour inner clock) and is caused by time-zone changes. For example, if you fly from Michigan to France, you've probably missed a night, and although it is midnight on your inner clock, the outer clock reads 7 am. At midnight, when the country is asleep, you may feel hungry and energetic. In the daytime, when the country is awake, you may feel completely beat.

What are symptoms?

Physically, you may experience fatigue, insomnia, irritation of the eyes/nose/ears, lightheadedness, headaches, swollen limbs, dehydration, and bowel irregularity. Mentally, you may be tired, irritable, aloof, and disoriented.

How do you overcome it?

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----|---|
| 1. | Gets lots of rest before you leave | 7. | Stretch and walk around on the plane, hourly. |
| 2. | Eat well and take vitamins (esp. Vitamin B). | 8. | Avoid crossing your legs at the knees and ankles. |
| 3. | Set your watch to the time of your destination. | 9. | Yawn or chew gum to pop pressure in the ears. |
| 4. | Avoid alcohol before and during the flight. | 10. | Start operating on local time right away. |
| 5. | Drink lots of water to avoid dehydration. | 11. | Exercise to increase your energy levels. |
| 6. | Dress comfortably on the flight so you can relax. | 12. | Be patient with yourself and you'll adjust. |

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a condition in which a blood clot (thrombus) forms in one or more of the deep veins in your body, usually in your legs. Deep vein thrombosis can cause leg pain, but often occurs without any symptoms. It can develop if you're sitting still for a long time, such as when traveling by plane or car, or if you have certain medical conditions that affect how your blood clots. Deep vein thrombosis is a serious condition because a blood clot that has formed in your vein can break loose, travel through your bloodstream and lodge in your lungs, blocking blood flow (pulmonary embolism).

What are symptoms?

When deep vein thrombosis symptoms occur, they can include:

Swelling in the affected leg, including swelling in your ankle and foot.

Pain in your leg; this can include pain in your ankle and foot. The pain often starts in your calf and can feel like cramping or a charley horse.

Warmth over the affected area.

Changes in your skin color, such as turning pale, red or blue.

How do you overcome it?

- Exercise your calf and foot muscles regularly:
 - Every half hour or so, bend and straighten your legs, feet and toes when you are seated.
 - Press the balls of your feet down hard against the floor or foot rest every so often. This helps to increase the blood flow in your legs.
 - Take a walk up and down the aisle every hour or so, when the aircraft crew say it is safe to do so.

- Make sure you have as much space as possible in front of you for your legs to move. So avoid having bags under the seat in front of you, and recline your seat where possible.
- Take all opportunities to get up to stretch your legs, when there are stops in your journey.
- Drink plenty of water to avoid a lack of fluid in the body (dehydration).
- Do not drink too much alcohol. (Alcohol can cause dehydration and immobility.)
- Do not take sleeping tablets, which cause immobility.

A Word About STDs and HIV

Often when people travel or study outside the US, they experience “magical thinking,” which means they don’t “count” this time as real life. Thus, they don’t always consider the consequences of their actions, and they tend to take more risks. Many travelers acquire sexually transmitted diseases or HIV because the perceived dangers of sex are also diminished and de-emphasized. Everything is new and exciting. The customs and culture of the host country are unfamiliar; people might not know the culturally appropriate way to say “no.” Be aware of your actions and their consequences, and make your decisions carefully.

Adapted from Williamson, W. Study Abroad 101. 2004. Agapy Publishing.

Cultural Adjustment

Living and studying abroad is an exciting and enriching opportunity. However, the ways in which you view the world and the views, values, and customs of people of other cultures may be vastly different. Culture shock is the stress of the psychological disorientation experienced living in a culture different from your own. Symptoms of culture shock may include the following: discomfort, irritability, homesickness, hostility towards the host culture, frustration, and other physical symptoms of stress. Culture shock has identifiable cycles. They are as follows:

Stage One: Initial euphoria (0-3 weeks) – “It’s great to be here! Look at how much our cultures have in common!”

Possible clues: excitement with new sounds and sights; superficial involvement (like a tourist); intrigue with both similarities and differences between host and U.S. culture; high initial interest in learning; high motivation; cooperative spirit; feeling that with time, patience, and hard work he/she can handle anything.

Stage Two: Irritation and hostility (3-5 weeks) – “Why are they so different? Why can’t I do anything right?”

Possible clues: novelty has worn off; cultural differences begin to intrude; greater involvement in petty personal problems; some prejudices develop against host nationals and the culture is seen as strange; isolation; searching out friends from home culture; uncooperativeness; helplessness and frustration; nostalgia for home country.

Stage Three: Gradual adjustment (5-7 weeks) – Reorientation into the host culture’s cues and norms.

Possible clues: greater participation in culture with sense of humor; acceptance of some values of the new culture; feeling that “if I am here, better make the most of it”; tempering of radical feelings toward the new culture; feeling of being at home; more pride in work and the ability to communicate; periodic personal highs and lows as adjustment gradually takes place.

Stage Four: Adaptation / Biculturalism – Learning to live in and feel comfortable in another culture.

Here are some strategies to help you cope with culture shock:

- ➔ Know the culture prior to living there. Find out all you can. Talk with people from the culture if possible.
- ➔ Be curious. Explore the values and traditions behind the cultural behaviors.
- ➔ Bring familiar items from home – things that make you feel most comfortable.
- ➔ Observe before you act.
- ➔ Have a sense of humor! You will be making lots of mistakes and it’s okay!
- ➔ Set realistic goals for yourself. Attempting to be perfect is a sure way to increase your frustration. Also, have the ability to tolerate failure.

Fitting In

Social customs differ greatly from one country to another. It is therefore impossible to give guidelines that will be applicable in every culture. Generally speaking, you can be yourself as long as you remain friendly, courteous, and dignified. Always keep in mind that you are the guest in someone else’s country. Therefore, you would be safe to assume that your behavior should be regulated pretty much in the same manner as if you were the guest in someone else’s home. On the other hand, as an outsider, especially if you err on the side of being respectful, some allowances are likely to be made for the things you do not immediately understand or feel comfortable with.

Politeness

In keeping with the relatively formal manner of social customs abroad, you should place much more emphasis on the simple niceties of polite social intercourse than you might at home. Be prepared to offer a formal word of greeting to whomever you meet in your day-to-day activities. For example, should you approach a clerk in the local market in Strasbourg always be courteous enough to begin your conversation with, “Bonjour, Madame

(Monsieur, Mademoiselle)” before you launch into your inquiries about the products, and become familiar with the appropriate expressions of gratitude in response to your hosts’ hospitality.

Humor

While each country has its own particular brand of wit and humor, very few cultures appreciate the kind of “kidding” to which Americans are accustomed. Comments, even when intended to be humorous, can often be taken quite literally.

Speaking the language

When it comes to language, most people will be extremely flattered rather than amused at your efforts to communicate in their native language. Do not be intimidated or inhibited when practicing your own limited command of the language. A couple of words of caution might be in order: do your best to avoid slang expressions, which are usually unique to the particular culture, and which may therefore be totally meaningless or inappropriate in the context of another culture. Be aware of the differences between the “familiar” and the “polite” forms of address and be sure to use them properly.

Do not try to translate American idiomatic expressions direct into the native language. Idioms as a whole may be complete nonsense when translated to another language. While it is not true that all people speak English, it is true enough for you to be wary of making impolite or tactless comments on the presumption that those within hearing distance will not understand what you are saying.

Physical contact

When establishing social relationships, “play it by ear” in determining the level of familiarity that you should adopt at the various stages of your relationship. Physical contact, for example, may not be especially appreciated or understood by someone unfamiliar with the American idea of camaraderie; a cheerful pat on the back or a warm hug may be quite embarrassing and uncomfortable in certain cultures. All cultures have different notions about social space, for instance how far away to stand or sit when conversing, how to shake hands, or wave farewell. Restraint is advisable until you learn how the locals do it and what they expect of you.

Personal questions

Let your hosts point the way when in engaging in “small talk.” While Americans may find it easy and quite appropriate to talk about themselves, in some countries, your hosts may view this as being as impolite as asking personal questions of them.

Drinking and drunkenness

Be extremely sensitive of others’ attitudes and feelings when it comes to drinking. You may find that your hosts enjoy drinking, but look upon drunkenness as intolerable.

Price bargaining

Haggling over prices can be another sensitive and vague subject. Haggling is not only appropriate but also even expected in some circumstances. The trick is to know under which circumstances haggling is appropriate. Unless you clearly understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate circumstances for this sort of social bargaining, you may very well find yourself insulting the merchant and further reinforcing a negative stereotype of Americans. You can always test the waters by politely indicating that you like the product very much, but that it is a bit more than you had anticipated spending. If the merchant wishes to bargain further, this will give him the opening he needs to offer the product at a lower price. If it is not that kind of an establishment, you can simply (and politely) terminate the conversation.

Talking politics

Expect people abroad to be very articulate and well informed when it comes to matters of politics and international relations. Do not be at all surprised if your counterparts try to engage you in political debate. There is certainly no reason for you to modify your own convictions, but you should be discreet and rational in your defense of those convictions. Here again you may very well find yourself butting heads with another of those unfortunate stereotypes, such as the arrogant American who thinks everyone must fall in line with the United States.

PERSONAL SAFETY

According to the Peace Corps, the number and severity of personal safety and security issues is rising in virtually all countries. Problems range from minor verbal harassment to theft and robbery to serious physical and sexual assault. These incidents are of concern to all students and staff.

Try to obtain country and region specific statistics on physical and sexual assault.

Some incidents are not avoidable, but many are.

CONDITIONS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO RISK

According to Peace Corps records, the situations which place students at greatest risk are:

- Being out after midnight
- Being alone at night in an isolated area
- Being in a known high crime area
- Sleeping in an unlocked place
- Being out after a local curfew
- Being intoxicated

STRATEGIES USED BY STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES TO REDUCE RISK

It is useful to remind students that they have been using a variety of strategies to avoid harm while living in the United States and to review what those strategies are:

- Listening for what is being said around them
- Keeping watch for suspicious people and vehicles
- Knowing what hours of the night are more dangerous than others
- Staying in and walking only in those areas that are well lit
- Avoiding being alone in unfamiliar neighborhoods
- Knowing where to get help (stores, phones, fire station, etc.)

It is important to discuss the extent to which these strategies are or are not applicable during your time abroad.

FACTORS PLACING STUDENTS AT RISK

Your circumstance as foreigners place you at some increased risk. Specifically, you:

- Are new to this country
- May not speak the local language well
- Are traveling to new places and making new friends
- Will generally be traveling by public transportation
- Are curious about your new home and the new culture you are living in
- Probably stand out in a crowd
- Have not yet learned the best way to say no in this culture
- May not yet pick up the "clues" in this culture that you are in danger
- Have not yet established personal daily routines in your new home

STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING RISK

Safety is ultimately the responsibility of each individual student and each person should actively develop his or her own personal safety strategies. Administrators can assist you in developing personal awareness and personal safety strategies. Some suggestions include:

At site:

- Establishing relationships with hosts, neighbors, and local authorities
- Improving structural security of residence (shuttered/barred window, door locks, sealed walls/ceilings, etc.)
- Ensuring access to emergency medical care
- Developing emergency support/communications network
- Screening night visitors

Traveling:

- Notifying the study abroad office of travel plans
- Wearing prudent attire
- Restricting night travel
- Projecting certainty of route and destination
- Avoiding "high risk" regions
- Traveling with a friend/ trusted other
- Inspecting vehicle for safety (tires, overloading, brakes, etc.)
- Establishing rapport with regular drivers
- Determining risk levels of varying means of transport (bus, train, taxi, hitch hiking, etc.)
- (Women) sitting with other women or middle aged couples

Urban Area:

- Demonstrating vigilance/confidence/"street smarts"
- Being aware of surroundings
- Avoiding "high risk" areas
- Identifying "safe zones"
- Using "buddy system"
- Carrying whistle or other personal safety device
- Locating safe hotels/guest houses
- Moderating alcohol consumption
- Carrying only sufficient cash in safe place (pouch, money belt)

REPORTING

If you are a victim of an assault, reporting this incident to the administrator is important because:

- You may need medical attention
- You may need to or choose to talk with someone about what has happened
- You may want or need assistance in working with the local authorities
- You should be aware of whether the discussion is confidential

BERRY COLLEGE EMERGENCY NUMBERS
Please print, complete and take with you.

AT&T International Operator

“00”

State Department Telephone Numbers

Overseas Citizens Services:

(202) 501-4444

OCS from the US:

(888) 407-4747

State Department Switchboard:

(202) 647-4000 (Ask for the country desk)

Consular Affairs:

(202) 736-9178

After Hours Duty Officer:

(202) 647-4000

US Embassy/Consulate in host country:

Overseas Security Advisory Council

Emergency Duty Officer

202-309-5056, osac_risc@state.gov

Lost/Stolen passport - <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/emergencies/lost-or-stolen-passports-abroad.html>

iNext Insurance emergency/medical

+1-317-582-2684 (collect/outside US)

1-877-852-6767 (toll free inside the US)

Berry College Numbers

Campus Safety emergency number:

(706) 236-2262 *will accept collect calls*

Switchboard:

(706) 232-5374

International Programs

Office: (706) 233-4065 Skype: berry_intlprogs

Fax: (706) 378-2885

Sarah Egerer (Director)

Home: (706) 292-0768 Skype: sarahje06

segerer@berry.edu

Provost

Dr. Kathy Richardson

Office: (706) 236-2216

krichardson@berry.edu

VP for Student Affairs & Dean of Students

Debbie Heida

Office: (706) 236-2207

Home: (706) 378-2929 dheida@berry.edu

Chaplain

Rev. Jonathan Huggins

Office: (706) 236-2217

jhuggins@berry.edu

To be completed by student

Host institution telephone numbers:

Host country emergency number (“911” equivalent):

Banks & credit card companies:

If your credit cards are stolen, call* the three credit bureaus to place a fraud alert on your name and SSN
[Equifax](http://www.equifax.com), 800-685-1111 Fraud Hotline: 888-766-0008 [Experian](http://www.experian.com), 888-397-3742 Fraud Hotline: 888-397-3742
[TransUnion](http://www.transunion.com), 800-916-8800 Fraud Hotline: 800-680-7289

Money can be wired to you at the US embassy in case of emergency:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/abroad/legal-matters/benefits/sending-money.html>

Insurance company:

Home doctor:

* Because these are 800 numbers, calls will need to be made by friends or family within the US.

Top 10 Safety Tips

1. Be Informed About the Country, City and Safety Issues Abroad

Orientation materials and country guides can help you better understand the countries and cities where you will be studying and traveling. Check out the US State Department (www.travel.state.gov) and CDC (www.cdc.gov) information. Know where you're going and what to do and not do once you get there.



2. Avoid High-Risk Activities

Certain activities like bungee jumping, whitewater rafting, mountain climbing, shark diving adventures, etc. can put you into danger. Berry College strongly discourages participation in these activities and is not responsible if you are injured while engaging in them!

3. Be Prepared to Respond to Emergencies

The more prepared you are for emergencies the better able you will be to respond. Where will you go to leave the country? What will you do if you are a victim of a crime or are injured? What if someone else needs help? What is your host country's emergency number (911 equivalent)?

4. Avoid Crime and Violence, Including Sexual Harassment and Assault

Be aware of the safe and unsafe areas where you are living and traveling. Use the safety skills from the US while abroad: don't travel or go out alone (buddy system), don't go into bad neighborhoods, be more careful at night, etc. Be aware of stereotypes of US men and women; understand local verbal and non-verbal communication.

5. Make Sure Your Mode of Transportation is Safe



Whether you are arranging your own transportation or you are being led by your program provider, look closely at what the safest type of transportation is for where you're going, what routes you're taking, and at what time you're traveling.

6. The Effects of Alcohol and Drugs Can Hurt You

Although alcohol may be legal at a younger age abroad, its use and abuse is many times tied to being a victim of crime, violence, accident and injury. Drug use abroad can result in severe consequences and plan on being treated as guilty (in jail) until proven innocent outside the US.



7. Be Able to Communicate at All Times

Methods of communication for you and those that are trying to find you are: cellular phone, regular phone, e-mail, faxes, and for those of you in remote locations, see if there's a satellite phone available.

8. Take Care of Your Physical, Dental and Mental Health

Prior to going abroad, get a physical, complete foreseeable dental work, and consider your psychological stability. Talk with your study abroad or academic advisor if you have concerns. Be prepared for the physical and mental challenges abroad. When you get abroad, find suitable care/support facilities.

9. Have Adequate Insurance and 24 Hour Emergency Assistance

Types of insurance to consider purchasing include major medical (in the US and abroad), emergency assistance & repatriation of remains. Most of Berry's programs include this; you may also wish to purchase travel and kidnapping & ransom insurance.

10. Choose a Quality Program Provider

There are no minimum standards in the study abroad field. You need to carefully pick a quality study abroad provider in terms of both academics and student services. Along with costs and courses, find out about the safety problems faced by students in the past. Berry College affiliates itself with only quality programs, and evaluations completed by previous students are available.

What to Take

The following serves as a general guide – pack according to the climate and purpose of travel. Prepare a checklist as you pack. Check with your airline – **luggage requirements are changing.** You will likely be allowed 2 checked bags, 1 carry-on & 1 small bag, such as a purse. One suitcase with wheels, a large travel backpack and a daypack should be sufficient. After you've packed, carry your luggage around the block. If it's too heavy, remove things you can live without! Remember flying within the host country/continent usually is a lower limit than your flight from the US to your host country.

Necessities

- Passport/Visa/Plane ticket (or copy of e-ticket)
- Money (to change into local currency and for re-entering the US)
- Student ID (ISIC, ISEC or Student Advantage)
- 1 or 2 credit cards (Visa, MasterCard or AMEX)
- 1 or 2 ATM cards (usable with checking accounts)
- Phone numbers of all banks and credit card companies
- Traveler's checks (emergency reserve)
- Photocopies of all documents
- Extra passport-size photos
- Supply of prescription drugs in original bottles to last your entire stay; also bring original prescription (pack in carry-on)
- Travel alarm clock
- Camera
- Batteries (they are often less expensive in the US)
- Travel guides, phrase books, map

Clothes & Accessories Take dark colors to hide dirt; bring clothing you can layer.

- 5 tops/shirts, 1 sweater
- 1 coat (waterproof)
- 3 pants (most countries do not wear shorts)
- 1 dressier outfit
- 1 hat to protect from sun or cold
- 7 pairs of socks and underwear
- 2 or 3 pairs of rainproof shoes (1 for walking, 1 for dress, 1 for exercise)
- 1 swimsuit & shower flip flops
- 2 pajamas
- 1 belt
- 1 bandana (napkin/scarf/handkerchief)

Useful Items

- Mobile phone that works in host country (see http://www.studyabroad.com/pages/sitecontent/parent_guide_cell.aspx)
- Water bottle that doesn't leak
- Travel umbrella
- Small piece of light nylon rope for clothesline/shoelace
- Address book
- Wristwatch
- Passport pouch/ money belt
- Sleeping bag or sleep sack
- Cold water detergent, spot remover
- Compass—can be handy even in the most urban areas
- Some reading material
- Journal, sturdy ballpoint pens
- Earplugs
- Ziploc bags for maps, books, journals, and anything else you want to keep dry
- Plastic bags for dirty clothes

Voltage converter AND plug adapter if you are bringing any appliances
Knife, fork and spoon that fit together (put in checked bag)
Gift items to give away—anything with your hometown or other American city or Berry College printed on it – do not wrap, as airport screeners might unwrap them
Small gifts or toys for children. Balloon animals are a good way to break the ice with children, and children are a good way to break the ice with adults.
Frisbee, ball, playing cards, some small toy
Photos of your home and family (for memories and also breaking the ice)
Universal drain plug (flat rubber circle) will help you wash your laundry in public sinks
Sewing kit, safety pins, First Aid kit, small flashlight, Pocket knife (pack in checked luggage – do not carry on!)
Sunglasses
Change purse
Small combination locks

Toiletries & Health Related Items

(Many items can easily be purchased abroad; bring with you only a starter supply.)

Toothbrush/small tube of toothpaste, dental floss
Shampoo
Deodorant
Soap in plastic container
Comb/brush
Small towel/washcloth
Nail clippers, Tweezers
Shaving materials
Feminine hygiene products
Band-Aids
Aspirin, multi-vitamins, anti-diarrhea medicine
Insect repellent, Sunscreen (sunblocks adhere to the skin to create a barrier; insect repellents work by evaporation, so sunblock goes on first)
Moist towelettes & small packets of tissues

Useful Websites

For packing tips: <http://www.onebag.com/>
For information on cell phones abroad: www.cellularabroad.com
For calling cards and phone plans: www.zaptel.com
For ID cards: www.isic.com, this can be ordered through the IP office
For travel items: www.magellans.com, www.pac-safe.com, www.eaglecreek.com
For info on US Customs: <http://www.howstuffworks.com/us-customs-service.htm>

This information compiled from University of Minnesota Learning Abroad Center and Williamson, W. *Study Abroad 101*. 2004. Agapy Publishing.

Responsible Study Abroad: Good Practices for Health and Safety
from NAFSA: Association of International Educators

Because the health and safety of study abroad participants are primary concerns, these statements of good practice have been developed to provide guidance to institutions, participants and parents/guardians/families.

I. Program Sponsor Guidelines

Program sponsors should:

- A. Conduct periodic assessments of health and safety conditions for their programs, and develop and maintain emergency preparedness processes and a crisis response plan.
 - B. Provide health and safety information for prospective participants so that they and their parents/guardians/families can make informed decisions concerning preparation, participation and behavior while on the program.
 - C. Provide information concerning aspects of home campus services and conditions that cannot be replicated at overseas locations.
 - D. Provide orientation to participants prior to the program and as needed on site, which includes information on safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host country. In addition to dealing with health and safety issues, the orientation should address potential health and safety risks, and appropriate emergency response measures.
 - E. Consider health and safety issues in evaluating the appropriateness of an individual's participation in a study abroad program.
 - F. Determine criteria for an individual's removal from an overseas program taking into account participant behavior, health, and safety factors.
 - G. Require that participants be insured. Either provide health and travel accident (emergency evacuation, repatriation) insurance to participants, or provide information about how to obtain such coverage.
 - H. Conduct inquiries regarding the potential health, safety and security risks of the local environment of the program, including program-sponsored accommodation, events, excursions and other activities, prior to the program. Monitor possible changes in country conditions. Provide information about changes and advise participants and their parents/guardians/families as needed.
 - I. Hire vendors and contractors (e.g. travel and tour agents) that have provided reputable services in the country in which the program takes place. Advise such vendors and contractors of the program sponsor's expectations with respect to their role in the health and safety of participants.
 - J. Conduct appropriate inquiry regarding available medical and professional services. Provide information about these services for participants and their parents/guardians/families, and help participants obtain the services they may need.
 - K. Develop and provide health and safety training for program directors and staff, including guidelines with respect to intervention and referral that take into account the nature and location of the study abroad program.
- Responsible Study Abroad: Good Practices for Health and Safety page 2 Revised November 8, 2002
- L. Develop codes of conduct for their programs; communicate codes of conduct and the consequences of noncompliance to participants. Take appropriate action when aware that participants are in violation.
 - M. In cases of serious health problems, injury, or other significant health and safety circumstances, maintain good communication among all program sponsors and others who need to know.
 - N. In the participant screening process, consider factors such as disciplinary history that may impact on the safety of the individual or the group.
 - O. Provide information for participants and their parents/guardians/families regarding when and where the sponsor's responsibility ends and the range of aspects of participants' overseas experiences that are beyond the sponsor's control.

In particular, program sponsors generally:

- A. Cannot guarantee or assure the safety and/or security of participants or eliminate all risks from the study abroad environments.
- B. Cannot monitor or control all of the daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of participants.
- C. Cannot prevent participants from engaging in illegal, dangerous or unwise activities.
- D. Cannot assure that U.S. standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings or provide or pay for legal representation for participants.

- E. Cannot assume responsibility for actions or for events that are not part of the program, nor for those that are beyond the control of the sponsor and its subcontractors, or for situations that may arise due to the failure of a participant to disclose pertinent information.
- F. Cannot assure that home-country cultural values and norms will apply in the host country.

II. Responsibilities of Participants

In study abroad, as in other settings, participants can have a major impact on their own health and safety through the decisions they make before and during their program and by their day-to-day choices and behaviors.

Participants should:

- A. Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for their personal preparation for the program and participate fully in orientations.
Responsible Study Abroad: Good Practices for Health and Safety page 3 Revised November 8, 2002
- B. Read and carefully consider all materials issued by the sponsor that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host country(ies).
- C. Conduct their own research on the country(ies) they plan to visit with particular emphasis on health and safety concerns, as well as the social, cultural, and political situations.
- D. Consider their physical and mental health, and other personal circumstances when applying for or accepting a place in a program, and make available to the sponsor accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy study abroad experience.
- E. Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance coverage and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
- F. Inform parents/guardians/families and any others who may need to know about their participation in the study abroad program, provide them with emergency contact information, and keep them informed of their whereabouts and activities.
- G. Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program.
- H. Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program staff or other appropriate individuals before and/or during the program.
- I. Accept responsibility for their own decisions and actions.
- J. Obey host-country laws.
- K. Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
- L. Avoid illegal drugs and excessive or irresponsible consumption of alcohol.
- M. Follow the program policies for keeping program staff informed of their whereabouts and well being.
- N. Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and legal system services in the host county.

III. Recommendations to Parents/Guardians/Families

In study abroad, as in other settings, parents, guardians, and families can play an important role in the health and safety of participants by helping them make decisions and by influencing their behavior overseas.

Parents/guardians/families should:

- A. Be informed about and involved in the decision of the participant to enroll in a particular program.
- B. Obtain and carefully evaluate participant program materials, as well as related health, safety and security information.
Responsible Study Abroad: Good Practices for Health and Safety page 4 Revised November 8, 2002
Responsible Study Abroad: Good Practices for Health and Safety page 5 Revised November 8, 2002
- C. Discuss with the participant any of his/her travel plans and activities that may be independent of the study abroad program.
- D. Engage the participant in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues, insurance needs, and emergency procedures related to living abroad.
- E. Be responsive to requests from the program sponsor for information regarding the participant.
- F. Keep in touch with the participant.
- G. Be aware that the participant rather than the program may most appropriately provide some information.