Whether you are traveling to another country for vacation or on a traditional study abroad program, the Office of International Affairs can help students be better prepared. The study abroad section of our web site contains information about passports, money, packing, cultural adjustment, and more. A list of web sites also directs students to accommodations both in hotels and hostels, information about European rail travel, currency exchange rates and a host of online travel guides.

Some tips to help get you safely started for traveling abroad

Protect yourself

- Know the basic help phrases in the local language.
- If you go out alone, always tell someone where you are going.
- Do not give your home phone number or address to someone you have just met.
- Do not hitchhike. Only use licensed and regulated taxis.
- Do not carry weapons.
- Choose clothing which will not draw attention to yourself. Avoid camouflage clothing and T-shirts with slogans and/or words that could be offensive to the host culture.
- Avoid participating in demonstrations and other political activities.
- Don't import, use, or have drugs in your possession.
- Avoid underage and excessive alcohol consumption.

Be vigilant

- Do not stand out as a group or individual. Try to blend with your surroundings the best you can.
- Adopt an attitude of watchfulness and notice the people in your proximity. If someone seems to be following you, vary your route. Go to a store or a populated place or flag down a taxi.
- Do not go out alone with someone you have just met. Try to meet in a public place.
- Know the local laws. Laws and systems of justice are not universal. You are subject to the laws of the host country while abroad.

Protect your possessions

- Wear a concealed money belt or neck pouch.
- Keep your money in two places. If you are robbed or lose some money, you will have a backup.
Do not leave luggage unattended or accept packages from strangers.
Leave copies of all important documents in more than one place (e.g., at home in the U.S. and in your bags or room in-country).
Leave your passport and other valuables in your room or in a hotel safe. You do not need to carry your passport on a daily basis, unless you are going to cash traveler’s checks.

Before you go

Make sure your passport is valid and you have the appropriate visa if necessary.
Make copies of your passport and credit cards and keep them in a separate location from the original documents.
Take only the credit cards and personal identification that you will actually need.
Carry any required prescriptions in the original containers.
Carry a list of any known allergies or special medical conditions.
Leave all expensive and unnecessary personal items at home.
Don't transport items for other people.
Dress casually when traveling.
Never leave your bags unattended.
Do not exchange items between bags while waiting for customs or security screenings.
Know what you are carrying and be able to describe it to security and customs personnel.