Pre-Departure Guide

Emory Abroad Short-Term Programs

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# Table of Contents

**Before You Go** ........................................................................................................................................... 3  
  Why Study Abroad? .................................................................................................................................... 3  
  What to Bring ............................................................................................................................................... 3  
  Travel Documents ....................................................................................................................................... 3  
  Checklist of Copies to Bring ......................................................................................................................... 6  
  Packing and Baggage ................................................................................................................................. 6  
  TSA Guidelines ........................................................................................................................................... 8  
  Sample Packing List .................................................................................................................................... 9  
  Health ......................................................................................................................................................... 11  
  Lodging ....................................................................................................................................................... 12  
  Right Before You Go ............................................................................................................................... 12  
  Helpful Links ............................................................................................................................................ 12  

**In the Air** ................................................................................................................................................... 14  
  Jet Lag ....................................................................................................................................................... 14  

**While You’re There** .............................................................................................................................. 15  
  Coping With Culture Shock ....................................................................................................................... 15  
  Cultural Differences ................................................................................................................................. 15  
  Conduct and Safety ................................................................................................................................. 16  
  Money ....................................................................................................................................................... 17  
  Political Conflict ........................................................................................................................................ 19  
  Alcohol and Drugs ................................................................................................................................. 19  
  Sexual Harassment and Assault ............................................................................................................. 19
**Before You Go**

**Why Study Abroad?**

Study abroad is an educational tool that allows for the development of skills—critical, reflective, cross-cultural and intrapersonal—that are integral to a liberal arts education. Studying and living in another culture can also be an exhilarating challenge that, with the proper outlook and preparation, can open windows to the world and to a self you hardly knew existed. In short, by participating in a study abroad program, a student can achieve personal growth and a new perspective on the world. The knowledge and skills acquired by studying abroad are also attractive to prospective employers as well as graduate schools. Having spent time in another culture, regardless of the discipline studied, not only helps students in their future careers, but also in understanding the interconnectedness of all peoples of the world.

**What to Bring**

**Travel Documents**

These documents are mandatory for travel abroad:

**Passport**

You will need a valid passport to travel outside the United States. Obtaining a passport is your responsibility. It usually takes 4-6 weeks to process a passport application, but please be aware that the process may take longer, especially during peak travel times. Many local post offices will accept applications for passports. For more information and to find a location that accepts applications, visit [http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html). In the Emory area, you can apply for a passport at the Abingdon post office.

You must have the following documents to apply for a passport:

- Two passport photographs. (You can get these at CVS, Wal-Mart, or other photo shops that advertise this service.)
- Either an expired passport or proof of US citizenship, typically a **certified** Birth Certificate. A certified birth certificate generally has an embossed seal (If you need a certified copy, visit [www.cdc.gov/nchs/howto/w2w/](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/howto/w2w/) and choose the state in which you were born. Depending on the state, copies cost about $15). You can also get this from your hometown courthouse records department.
- Proof of identification with photograph (e.g., driver’s license)
- Fee: $135 ($110 + $25 processing fee) for first-time applicants or $110 for renewals.

**Entry Visa(s)**

A travel visa is an official government document that temporarily authorizes you to be in the country you are visiting. Some countries require a visa to gain entry. The visa usually is in the form of a stamp or sticker placed in the passport and is obtained from the country you are visiting. Your program will let you know if a visa is necessary and how to obtain one. For country-specific information about visas, visit [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4965.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4965.html) or contact the embassy or nearest consulate of the country(ies) you plan to visit. Some countries require transit visas for people to change planes at their airports -- particularly the Schengen countries in Europe. For more information, see: [http://www.eurovisa.info/SchengenCountries.htm](http://www.eurovisa.info/SchengenCountries.htm).

- Obtaining a visa can be a long and complicated process (up to 3-4 months). You cannot get your visa until you have a passport, so begin the process as soon as possible.
- You may be required to visit the embassy in person to apply for a visa. Make time for this.

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*Updated January 2014*
Important: If you are traveling on a passport other than a U.S. passport, you should check with the nearest consulate of the country to which you are traveling in order to determine whether a visa will be required. Do this as far in advance as possible, and notify the Office of International Education (OIE) of the documentation you will need to apply for your visa. You should check with the local consulate of your home country to determine whether there are any passport or travel regulations of which you need to be aware. You should also investigate whether you will need to apply for a new visa to re-enter the U.S. upon completion of the program.

Accident and Sickness Insurance Card
Keep a copy of your medical insurance card in your wallet. If your insurance agency does not provide a card, write down the name and number of your policy and the address of the insurance company. Your regular insurance may not cover international travel. You should check with your insurance company before you leave the U.S. Your program may include or require the purchase of additional travel insurance.

Emory & Henry College contracts with EIIA (Educational & Institutional Insurance Administrators), which provides all students and faculty with medical insurance while travelling internationally with college programs. The Office of International Education will provide students with an EIIA insurance card and information regarding the amount of coverage. Students can purchase additional medical insurance if desired.

International Student Identity Card (ISIC) or iNext Card
Students may purchase ISIC iNext student cards that provide discounts while abroad. Your ISIC will provide basic insurance as well as proof of student status required for student discounts around the world. For more information and to purchase your ISIC, visit www.myisic.com or http://www.inext.com

Contact with Home
If you plan to use your cell phone while abroad, contact your provider to make sure your phone will work in the location and also to change to an international plan. Make sure you find out about additional fees related to use of your phone abroad including data and text fees. If you are taking your laptop computer with you, Skype is a low-cost (free) way to communicate with family and friends back home. Most hotels have wifi that will allow for email and Skype use.

You can also purchase a pre-paid calling card before departure; however, pay phones are often difficult to find and hotel phones sometimes require fees to make outside calls. Most phone companies offer these cards or special calling plans for international calls. If you choose to use a pre-paid card, be sure to obtain the international access code for your carrier. This allows you to dial the access code, the 800 number on the back of your card, and have access to the carrier’s system. Please note that some hotels may not have in-room phones and that many phones abroad require phone cards instead of coins. The cards are inserted into a phone slot and debited as you place calls. You can purchase them at train stations, post offices and other locations for a fixed price. You can also rent a phone for your time abroad.

Make sure you know how to call home once abroad, and tell your family and friends how to make an international call from the US. For dialing instructions and country codes, visit http://www.countrycallingcodes.com/index.php. To dial out of the U.S. to another country, you must
dial 011 before dialing the number. To call the U.S. from most countries, you will dial 001 + (area code) + (local number) or follow the instructions on your pre-paid card.

**Photocopies of Passport**
You need to take a photocopy of the information page of your passport. This is handy in the event you have to replace a lost or stolen passport. Pack these copies in your carry-on bag or a bag you will not have on your person. You will also provide your professor with copies of this document. You should also leave a photocopy of important documents with your family or other people at home.

**ATM/Debit Card or Traveler’s Checks**
Traveler’s checks can be a headache. Most countries have readily available ATM machines where you can access cash via your bankcard (with Visa logo) or credit card. Using the ATM is the easiest and least expensive way to get cash. Avoid carrying large amounts of money. Using an ATM card allows you to have someone in the U.S. deposit money in your checking account while you are abroad. Keep the following in mind:

- The transaction will debit the money from your checking account in the United States at that day's exchange rate. **Know the exchange rate before withdrawing money to stay within your budget.**
- There are usually transaction fees, and the fees vary significantly. Be sure to call your bank and check on the fees charged per each transaction. For larger transaction fees, be sure to withdraw larger amounts each time to avoid multiple fees.
- Before leaving home, be sure to inform your bank that you will be traveling abroad so that activity in a foreign country does not cause them to close your account due to suspected identity theft.
- Ask your bank about special procedures such as an international PIN number.
- There may be a limit in the amount that you can withdraw at one time.
- A family member should have access to your account from the U.S. in case of access problems.
- ATM cards should be tied to checking (NOT savings) accounts.
- Bring a duplicate card or backup card along with you in case the card gets taken in a teller machine, as can happen anywhere. For example, you may plan to bring your ATM card, but bring a credit card just in case.
- Finding an ATM machine:

**Credit Card**
These can be extremely useful in an emergency. Again, inform your home bank that you will be abroad. When you use a credit card the company makes the exchange rate purchase for you, reflecting the exchange rate on the day your credit card transaction is processed. This amount may be more or less than what you thought you were paying at the time of your purchase. You will be billed in US dollars on your statement, and sometimes you will see the foreign exchange conversion listed as well. You may also be charged an international conversion fee. This fee varies by bank. Visa is often more accepted than other cards. You need to call the issuing bank before departure and tell them you will be traveling outside the country.

If your ATM or credit card is lost or stolen, call the company to cancel it immediately. Often, you are only responsible for charges up to $50 if a thief has used your card.
For both ATM and credit cards, you should have a copy of the last four digits of your number and the international toll free number for the issuing company (usually found on back of card).

**Checklist of Copies to Bring**
Make at least two copies of these important documents. **Leave one copy with your family and take the other with you.** Keep them separate from the original documents.

1. The information page of your passport (plus one copy for your professor)
2. Any entrance visas you may have
3. Insurance card (plus one copy for your professor)
4. The numbers from your credit/ATM cards you take with you. Do NOT list the names or expiration dates from these cards.
5. The names of the banks and international toll free numbers for credit/debit card replacement (usually found on the back of the card).
6. A list of the contents of your wallet
7. Prescriptions for medication and eyeglasses, etc. (See “Health” for more details)

**Packing and Baggage**
Two pieces of packing advice:

“Pack your bags, then take out half of the stuff and put it away. You can live very comfortably with very little.”

“If you can’t carry everything you’re taking up and down a flight of stairs by yourself, you’re taking too much.”

It is nearly impossible to pack everything you want. The trick is to pack what you need and what you can carry! Remember the airline will limit your checked and carry-on luggage by weight and dimensions. Some students use a backpack as one piece of luggage because it comes in handy on side trips. You might do a lot of traveling with buses, trains and stay at different hotels. Keep in mind that you will always have to carry your luggage to your hotel room (often up several flights of stairs) and in and out of your bus and train.

Take only what you will need. Students often say, “I took too many clothes!” No matter how much clothing you take, pack basic wardrobe items that can be mixed and matched, layered, and worn again. Casual clothes are appropriate for sightseeing, but you may need at least one dressy outfit for special occasions and special visits. Leave room in your bags for items acquired abroad. If you have forgotten one thing to bring, you will always have the possibility to buy something abroad.

You will be walking far more than usual. Bringing a good pair of comfortable shoes is a must! **Your professor will instruct you on what type of shoes to bring.** For instance, hiking boots and sandals may be best for the tropics, whereas in Europe, your feet may get cold and dirty and flip-flops make it hard to navigate cobblestone.

Please do not take extremely valuable jewelry or watches with you when you travel. These are difficult to keep track of while you are away, and you will have less to worry about if you leave it at home.

Ensure that your luggage has your name and address on both the inside and outside. Never leave your bags unattended!

**Luggage locks**
The airline may need to search your bags. If you use a standard lock, they will break this to open your luggage. If you need to lock your bags, compatible locks recognized by the Transportation Security Authority (TSA) are a must!
Administration (TSA) are available from travel stores. You can carry luggage locks in your checked baggage for use when you reach your destination.

**Carry-on**

Be sure to pack your passport, your itinerary, a change of clothes and essential toiletries, snacks, and any medication you may need on the plane or within the first couple of days upon arrival in your carry-on bag! You may be required to show your written prescription at customs. If you wear contact lenses, bring an extra set of contacts, cleaning solutions, your written eye prescription and extra glasses. You will need your documents to clear immigration prior to picking up your checked bags. The other items will be handy if your luggage is temporarily lost. Liquid containers must be 3 oz. or smaller to carry on the plane. You can have larger liquid containers in your checked baggage. Check with your airline to make sure of specific restrictions concerning checked baggage. Knives cannot be carried on the plane.

**Electrical appliances**

You will need a plug adapter to use your appliances in most countries. Your professor will discuss adapters in regard to your particular location. Although most newer appliance convert voltage currents, you may also need to bring a voltage converter (or dual voltage appliances, such as certain hair dryers) if the country’s voltage differs from that in the US (110V). The voltage current in other countries may be 220-240 volts. Make sure you purchase the correct ones for the countries you will visit. These items can easily be found online or at most hardware stores. Your electrical appliances may work well abroad, but even with an adapter, there is always the risk that they will burn out. Electrical services vary throughout the world. Some appliances will not work even with an adapter and converter, so don’t count on having the use of these items.

**Laptops**

You have to decide for yourself if you want to take your laptop with you. Ask your professor if you will need it while you are abroad. Because it is an easy way to contact family and friends at home, more students are taking their laptops on Emory Abroad programs. Just remember that you will have to carry the laptop in your carry-on luggage and that there is always a chance of theft.

**Weather**

Before your trip, check www.weather.com for the weather at your destination. Pack accordingly. An umbrella is a necessity, even if there is no rain in the forecast.

**Address book**

Family and friends will love getting postcards from you so bring a list of the addresses you plan to use. It is possible that you will arrive home before the cards are received. It may be worth it to pay the hotel attendants to mail your postcards if you cannot locate a mailbox.
The following rules apply to all liquids, gels, and aerosols carried through security checkpoints:

1. **All liquids, gels and aerosols must be in three-ounce or smaller containers.** Larger containers that are half-full or toothpaste tubes rolled up are not allowed.

2. All liquids, gels and aerosols must be placed in a single, quart-size, zip-top, clear plastic bag. Gallon size bags or bags that are not zip-top such as fold-over sandwich bags are not allowed. **Each traveler can use only one, quart-size, zip-top, clear plastic bag.** Cosmetic items must be in the plastic bag.

3. Each traveler must remove their quart-sized plastic, zip-top bag from their carry-on and place it in a bin or on the conveyor belt for X-ray screening. X-raying separately will allow TSA security officers to more easily examine the declared items.

Because TSA guidelines can change unexpectedly, if you have a question about a specific item, go to http://www.tsa.gov/traveler-information for answers.
Sample packing list
Cross-Cultural Psychology (Central Europe: 12 days)
*Your professor may have a different list depending upon your destination.

Suggested Packing List- PACK LIGHT, PACK LIGHT, PACK LIGHT

Tips:
*Try to bring clothes that don’t wrinkle easily and that can be hand washed if needed
*Try to choose dark clothing that won’t stain easily
*Bring woolite/handwash soap and clothesline if you plan to wash clothes

Women
- 3-4 shirts (some short sleeve, some long-layering is good)
- 2-3 pr. pants/Leggings
- 1-2 skirts and/or
- 1-2 dresses (you want at least one nice outfit to wear out to concerts) or nice pants
- 1-2 tanks to layer
- Swimsuit (Who knows? There is a pool in hotel in Warsaw)/Flip-flops/sandals
- 7-10 pr. underwear
- Light sweater or pullover
- 1-2 light/medium jacket (something for rain w/hood or bring hat)
- Something to keep you warm
- 2 -3 pr. shoes (wear one-comfortable walking shoes/boots are good). Make sure they are COMFORTABLE; we will be walking all day! Try to find shoes that will look ok with a nice outfit for concerts, but are not too uncomfortable. It may be too cold for sandals-No flimsy flip-flops please, they are not good for cobblestones. I promise! You should have one pair of shoes that is relatively waterproof for walking in rain.
- 4-5 pr. socks
- Sleepwear/Robe
- Shorts and revealing clothing not recommended (some cathedrals don’t allow shorts or sleeveless tops)
- Scarf
- Hat/Gloves

Men
- 3-4 shirts (not all t-shirts)
- 3-4 pr. pants
- 3-5 undershirts
- 5-7 pr. underwear
- 4-5 pr. socks
- 1-2 long sleeve nice shirts (you can bring knit long-sleeved pullover)
- Dressy casual outfit (khakis and nice shirt) for concerts/dinner
- Swim trunks or shorts for swimming /Flip-Flops/Sandals
- 1-2 light sweaters
- 1-2 light/medium jacket (something for rain w/hood or bring hat)
- Something to keep you warm
- Shorts and t-shirts are not commonly worn (except by tourists)
- 2 -3 pr. Shoes (wear one-comfortable walking shoes/boots are good). Make sure they are COMFORTABLE; we will be walking all day! Try to find shoes that will look ok with a nice outfit for concerts, but are not too uncomfortable. It may be too cold for sandals-No flimsy flip-flops please, they are not good for cobblestones. I promise! You should have one pair of shoes that is relatively waterproof for walking in rain.
- Hat/Gloves/Scarf
Things to Avoid:
Lots of jewelry/expensive jewelry
Clothing with college/brand logo
Overly casual clothing (sweat pants, sweatshirts, torn jeans, shorts)
Revealing clothing
Fanny packs or other items that scream “I am a tourist!”

Other miscellaneous items
Money belt/pouch/secure purse
Photocopies of insurance card, ATM/credit card-numbers to call if stolen, passport (leave copies at home too)
Money/ATM card/credit card
Passport
Airplane Itinerary
Course itinerary
Small daypack
Camera
Zip lock baggies (great for storing things)
Any prescriptions you might need (bring copy of prescription with you if essential)
I would also bring copies of eyeglass/contact prescriptions if you can’t live without your glasses.
Toiletries (e.g., shampoo, small bar of soap, lotion, razor, hair products, cosmetics)
Travel hair dryer that can be used with 220/240 volts
Electric adapter plugs & Converter (if needed)
Hand-wash soap for clothes
Small towel/wash cloth
Journal, pens, course syllabus, and guide books
Language phrase books if you bought them
Address list of people to whom you want to send cards
Sewing kit (including safety pins)
Small umbrella
Hat
Book(s) to read
Sunscreen
Small snacks (power bar, etc.)
Alarm Clock/Phone
Ibuprofen/acetaminophen
Contacts/Solution/Glasses
Phone to Skype/email when you have wifi

*Many US cell phones do not work or cost much $$$ to use in Europe.
*Remember that any sharp objects (e.g. knives, etc.) must be checked with baggage.

As you pack, be mindful that you will have to carry your luggage many times—for example, in the airport from baggage check to exit (can be a long way); from the taxi up stairs to hotel rooms (there may be no elevator, in other hotels, the lift is very small); within train stations (including up large staircases); from/to train station in Krakow (~1/4 mile walk); through customs. It’s amazing how heavy bags become when you walk for a while.

**Also, you need to bring a carry on with a change of clothes and what you could NOT live without. There is always the possibility of lost luggage.
Health
Visit the Travel website of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/ for health information specific to your destination. Another useful source of current information is http://travel.state.gov, where you can view travel warnings released by the US Department of State.

Medical Expenses
The Emory & Henry College EIA Insurance provides basic coverage for international travel. Also check with your regular insurance company for information about international coverage.

Visit Your Doctor
Please remember that traveling abroad can be both physically and mentally stressful. If you are experiencing any physical or emotional problems, please address them before leaving the U.S. If you haven’t felt well, make an appointment with your doctor for a check-up; if you anticipate any dental work, get it done well before departure; it is recommended that you have no tattoos or piercings within the two months prior to departure, as these procedures can lead to infection. If you are experiencing any emotional, eating, or substance abuse problems, seek professional advice and consider deferring your participation in an overseas program until you have the problem well under control. The pressures that lead to eating disorders, emotional, or dependency problems are only exacerbated when you are coping with adjustment to a new culture, language, and way of life. Leaving the country will not make your problems go away—if anything, it will make them worse.

For your safety and well-being, it is vital that you inform OIE and your professor of any physical, emotional, or psychological difficulties or special needs you may have. On the other hand, if you are simply nervous about experiencing a different culture, do not worry. You are not alone. Stop by or call our office or your professor’s office to talk about your concerns.

Immunizations
Depending on your program, you may need immunizations. Your professor will tell you what is required. Some immunizations must be given in a specific sequence, so do not delay in getting them. Immunizations are available from your doctor or local health department.

Obtain Copies of Your Prescriptions
You should be sure to bring copies of prescriptions for any medications you may need and for glasses or contact lenses. Make sure the physician indicates the generic name of the medicine. This will also help you avoid problems with Customs. Since medications tend to be expensive overseas and because it can be difficult to get the appropriate equivalent medication, we recommend that you bring an adequate supply of whatever you may need while abroad. Any medications you bring should be in the original, properly labeled containers. If you wear glasses or contacts, bring an extra pair in case you damage or lose your original pair.

If you are diabetic or have another medical condition in which a syringe is needed to administer medication, bring a supply of disposable syringes. These are not available in all countries, and are essential to protect against HIV, hepatitis, and other communicable illnesses. Even if you do not routinely inject medication, it is a good idea to bring a few disposable syringes if you will be traveling in a country where they are not available. Some countries, however, restrict the import of syringes - as well as certain medications and contraceptives. Before departure, find out if this applies to your destination.
For certain conditions such as diabetes, asthma, mild epilepsy, or allergy to penicillin, it would be wise to wear a tag or a bracelet or carry a card to identify the condition so that you can be treated properly.

Medications MUST be packed in your carry-on luggage.

For medical emergencies:
- Learn the emergency telephone numbers in your host country: http://www.sccfd.org/travel.html
- If possible, avoid blood transfusions in developing countries; some countries do not screen blood for HIV, hepatitis, or other diseases.
- If you are sexually active, always use a latex condom. Bring these with you, as quality cannot be assured in certain locations.
- Many countries re-use syringes. If you cannot avoid an injection, make sure the syringe comes from a new package or is sterilized.

Diet
The food available in your destination will likely differ from the food you are used to at home. Be open to new foods, as this is an important part of a country’s culture. Research common foods and national dishes in your destination, and let your professor know if you are vegetarian or have any other dietary restrictions.

Family Emergencies
You should discuss with your family what to do in the event of a family emergency, illness or death. It is much easier to have these conversations around the kitchen table prior to departure than in an intercontinental phone call in the midst of a crisis.

Lodging
Lodging varies by program and range from a local household to a downtown hotel. Given that standards of living vary from country to country, you should expect certain fundamental differences with respect to comfort. Electrical systems, heating systems, even the water pressure may be different from what you are accustomed to at home or on campus. Storage room, including closet space, is usually at a premium wherever you stay, so keep packed luggage to a minimum. Keep in mind that the lodging is not the reason you have decided to take this trip.

Bathrooms and Toilets
Restrooms in many countries do not provide toilet paper, so it is a good idea to carry a pocket pack of tissues with you. Toilets can vary widely, from a hole in the ground to a typical American toilet. Since running water and soap may not be provided for hand washing, many students like to bring a small bottle of hand sanitizer. You may also be expected to pay a small fee for public restrooms, so always carry change. Take advantage of free restrooms when you are a paying customer in restaurants and museums. Some countries may not allow flushing of toilet paper.

Right before you go
- Check monetary exchange rates at www.xe.com
- Tell family/friends that you will contact them as soon as it is convenient after your arrival, rather than as soon as you arrive. This will avoid unnecessary worry from those at home.
- Re-read your Pre-Departure Guide
- Enjoy your Study Abroad Experience!
Helpful Links
In the Online Resources section of The Office of International Education’s website http://www.ehc.edu/academics/study-abroad/resources you will find useful websites with information on topics including the following:

- Travel Resources
- Health and Safety
- Money and Exchange
- Governmental Information
In the Air

Jet lag
What causes jet lag? The most important factor in jet lag is how many time zones you cross, and traveling east seems to be worst for most people. Jet lag occurs when you cross over a number of time zones and disrupt the normal Circadian rhythms that help you wake up in the morning and go to sleep at night - your body clock. If you have a rigid routine, it is likely that you might suffer more than someone who adapts easily to change.

The symptoms of jet lag can include fatigue or exhaustion, a feeling of disorientation or fuzziness, and the inability to sleep. You may also feel dehydrated from being stuck in an air-conditioned cabin for hours, which in turn can cause headaches, make your skin dry and make you more susceptible to colds or viruses. Everybody has his/her own method of trying to combat jet lag, find here some helpful ways to counteract jet lag:

- Change your watch as soon as you get on the flight; the quicker you adapt to the time zone the lower level of jet lag is likely to be.
- When you arrive in the new time zone spend some time outside during daylight hours. Natural light can help cue your body clock.
- The impact of alcohol on the body can be two to three times more potent when your are flying, so one glass of wine in-flight has the effect of two to three glasses on the ground. Avoid feeling even worse with a hangover by reducing alcohol intake before and during your flight.
- Get as much exercise as you can. Walking up and down the aisle, rotating your ankles and doing gentle stretching exercises in your seat can help to reduce discomfort, and allow you to have a more relaxed flight.
- When you arrive at your destination try to stay awake until it is time to go to sleep in the context of the destination time, not your home time.
- Eat meals that match the destination daily cycle, not your home cycle.
While You're There

You've arrived at your destination! You are probably attempting to recover from jetlag while adjusting to your new environment.

Coping with Culture Shock
There’s no doubt you’ve heard of culture shock, and you may be thinking, “I know enough about the country so the cultural differences won’t present a problem for me.” It’s true the more you know about your host country, including the language, the easier it will be to adjust. Expecting the differences is helpful, but keep in mind that it’s the actual cultural confrontation that brings about the physical and emotional reactions. In most cases, culture shock is caused less by one single incident and more by a gradual accumulation of anxiety, frustration, and confusion from living in an unfamiliar environment. Some prefer the terms “culture fatigue” or “culture bumps.” And while not everyone experiences some kind of “shock,” everyone does go through some adjustment to the new environment.

You will likely stay busy with planned activities, which will help you adjust. While it may be somewhat painful, culture shock can be a very valuable learning experience that will leave you with broader perspectives, deeper insight into yourself, and a wider tolerance for other people.

Cultural Differences
We all share certain living habits. When living at home, you take for granted that everyone follows similar cultural norms; but when you go abroad, the local cultural norms may be unfamiliar. Encountering cultural differences is part of the excitement of going abroad, but it also poses a challenge. Upon arrival in a foreign country, you may experience an immediate sense of euphoria as everything that is new seems intriguing and exciting. Inevitably, however, the newness wears off. You may feel frustrated or isolated; what was once an inviting cultural difference may become annoying. When the idiosyncrasies of a culture begin to frustrate you, you may notice that at the same time you are wrestling with a bout of homesickness or slight depression. You may blame these problems on the cultural differences to which you are adapting. However, more than likely the root of your problem is something other than adapting to cultural particularities. It is important to discover the source of your troubles and not succumb to the temptation to blame and disparage the new culture you are experiencing. Keep your sense of humor!

Understanding local customs will help you to feel as a part of the new culture and avoid potentially embarrassing situations. Especially if someone is not fluent in the local language, body language is often our first form of expression. Saying hello or goodbye via a simple hand gesture is, for example, done quite differently from place to place. When to shake hands or kiss is signaled between people in different ways from country to country. How close to sit or stand when talking also varies greatly. These are just a few of the many simple habits for your group to learn and then follow in order not to give unintended offense.

Take an Active Role
Prepare to learn from your experience:
- Clarify why you are going on the program
- Find out what you will be doing
- Identify what you might learn
- Set goals for yourself
- Learn on-site during your program
- Note how you feel about the experience
- Identify the skills you are developing
- Reflect on what you have learned
- Compare what you had expected with what you actually did
- Identify your impressions of your international experience
- Consider how your semester abroad can lead to other opportunities
- Keep a travel journal

**Stages of Adjustment**

- **Stage 1: Cultural Euphoria**
  At the start of your study abroad there is an initial excitement about being in a new culture. This is often called the "honeymoon stage." Everything is new and wonderful, and you are eager to explore it all.

- **Stage 2: Cultural Confrontation**
  In the next stage (typically one third to one half the way through an experience), the initial excitement you felt when you arrived diminishes and the process of cultural adjustment begins. This stage is typically characterized by confusion and frustration and, as such, is the most difficult stage. Your feelings can shift from very positive to very negative.

- **Stage 3: Cultural Adjustment**
  This stage represents the transition out of culture shock into significant cultural adjustment. You feel increasingly comfortable and competent in the culture, and these feelings prevail over the times you have felt frustrated or out of place.

- **Stage 4: Cultural Adaptation**
  In this stage, you have reached a point at which you have a great deal of confidence in your ability to communicate and interact effectively. You have a deeper understanding of the influence culture has in peoples’ lives. You have acquired considerable cultural knowledge, but you also recognize that there is much you still don’t know or understand.

**Conduct and Safety**

**American Consuls**
Your professor will register your group with the nearest embassy or consulate so you can be contacted in case of an emergency. Your family will also be able to reach you in an emergency by calling the Office of Overseas Citizens Services: From within the U.S. 1-888-407-4747; From outside the U.S. 1-202-501-4444.

**Student Conduct**
While overseas, you are subject to not only the Emory & Henry Code of Conduct and Honor Code, but also to the local laws and sanctions of the particular country in which you are studying. In many countries, the punishment for possession and/or distribution of controlled substances and for driving while under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances is much more severe than in the United States. You should be aware that if arrested for a crime overseas, there is little Emory & Henry College or the local U.S. Consular authorities can do to intercede on your behalf.

Your professor also has the authority to establish rules of conduct necessary for the operation of the program and to reserve the right to require a student to withdraw from the program. In such cases, students are responsible for the expense of their travel home and will receive a failing grade for the course.

**General Safety in Public Places**
You will soon be entering cities and cultures that are probably foreign to you. Because of this, you may miss some of the danger signals that a local person would automatically take into consideration. You
should also realize that many cultures may exist within one country. Please be aware of, and sensitive to, the majority culture, as well as the minority cultures in your host country.

Many people’s impressions of Americans come from what they see on television shows such as “Friends” and “Frasier.” Americans are portrayed as wealthy, particularly in developing countries, and in many locations you really will be better off than the local population. The following “American” traits will clearly tell the local residents that you are from the United States:

- Dressing differently from the local residents
- Speaking loudly in groups in the unmistakable American accent
- Carrying backpacks everywhere
- Wearing tennis shoes
- Wearing U.S. college or university insignia clothing or heavily patriotic American clothing
- Wearing baseball caps

**By following the suggestions below, you can minimize your exposure to unsafe situations:**

- NEVER go anywhere alone. You should always be with at least one other student or faculty member. Use the buddy system (or in the evening, a small group). Walking with someone helps to deflect approaches by would-be harassers.
- Do not leave bag(s) or belongings unattended at anytime. Security staffs in airports or train stations are instructed to remove or destroy any unattended bag(s). Do not agree to carry or look after packages or suitcases for anyone, under any circumstances. Make sure no one puts anything in your luggage.
- When traveling, use a waist pouch to carry your passport, credit cards, and traveler’s checks. Wear the pouch under your clothes. Keep a separate record of your traveler’s checks in another part of your belongings so that you will have a record if the checks are lost or stolen. Also, make photocopies of all essential documents and leave them with someone at home.
- Be as inconspicuous in dress and demeanor as possible. Downplay those elements of your appearance and manner that broadcast your nationality.
- If possible, try to speak the local language in public, even with other Americans. Even if you have a heavy accent, you will not attract as much attention, particularly if you take a cue from the locals and speak quietly.
- Be careful how late you come home at night. Try to get home while public transportation is still running or plan to take a taxi. Do not accept rides from individuals not in your group.
- Be careful to observe traffic lights. Stay on sidewalks away from the curb, and walk facing oncoming traffic whenever possible. Drivers in large cities can be aggressive, and often erratic. Never assume a car will stop for you or steer out of your way. For those of you in countries where drivers drive on the left-hand side of the road, you will have to make an extra effort to check before crossing the street.

**Use Common Sense**

Use common sense and be as cautious as you would be in any large city in the United States. Be aware of your surroundings. If you want to visit a new neighborhood, try to go during the day first. Look at a map before you leave, and note the nearest metro stops and bus/trolley routes. Walk at your own pace, but look alert and purposeful. If you find yourself in uncomfortable surroundings, act like you know what you are doing and where you are going, and move to a place where you are comfortable.

**Money**

**Determine your Budget for Your Time Abroad**

You (and your family) will find it helpful if you put together an estimated budget for your semester...
abroad. Depending on the program, in which you are enrolled, fees may include tuition, housing, airfare, board, and/or excursions. You should plan to bring additional money to cover personal expenses, textbooks, and course materials, and any other costs not included in your program fee. Also, remember to factor in the possibility of exchange rate fluctuations.

To get the most from your money, follow these tips:\footnote{from the Maryville College Study Abroad Handbook}

- Make both weekly & daily budgets and stick to them!
- Expect to spend more money in your first week in a foreign country than during any other week there. Budget for this.
- Learn the value of the local currency in relation to US dollars quickly. Carry a pocket calculator for quick conversions!
- Look for student rates or discounts.
- Take advantage of less expensive alternatives - cook for yourself when possible. Eat in the student cafeterias rather than restaurants.
- Look for free, inexpensive or discounted entertainment events such as outdoor concerts and festivals.
- Buy transportation passes that offer discounts on multiple-day bus or train travel.
- Travel overnight and sleep on the train to avoid accommodation charges.
Advice on handling money abroad:
- Keep your cash and other valuables (traveler’s checks, passport and visa, airline ticket) in a locked suitcase in your room.
- Avoid putting things in the back pocket of your pants or backpack. Wear your backpack in front of you in crowded places. It is highly recommended that you bring a money belt to wear concealed around your waist under your clothes.
- Do not handle or display large quantities of money (dollars or local currency) on the street.
- Only bring as much money with you as you need for the day or night.
- Always keep an eye, and/or hands, on your purse/bag/wallet, especially in crowded public areas (public transportation, crowded sidewalks, markets, and metro stations).
- Be particularly vigilant in areas where there have been numerous reports of pick pocketing and purse snatching, especially tourist areas. Be aware that thieves on mopeds snatch purses, so have your bag face away from the street.
- If you suddenly find yourself being “crowded” in a market, move away from the crowd. Thieves may be slicing open your purse or backpack with a razor.

Political Conflict
- When in large cities and other popular tourist destinations, avoid or spend as little time as possible in potential target areas for terrorist activities. These especially include places frequented by Americans: bars, discos, and U.S. fast food restaurants; branches of American banks; American churches; and American consulates and embassies.
- Keep away from areas known to have large concentrations of residents with interests unfriendly to the U.S. and its allies.
- Keep away from political demonstrations, which can easily result in clashes between demonstrators and authorities, particularly those authorities seen as aligned with the U.S. If you see a situation developing, resist the temptation to satisfy your curiosity and investigate what is happening. Walk the other way.
- Do not agree to newspaper or other media interviews regarding political conflicts or controversial issues. It is important to remain as inconspicuous as possible. Do not refer to your program group. In such cases, always say “no comment” and hang up or walk the other way.

Alcohol and Drugs
It is important to keep the following in mind so that you do not find yourself in a situation that could lead to violation of the Emory & Henry Code of Conduct:
- Avoid consuming large quantities of alcohol in public (e.g., in cafes, bars, and parties), particularly with people you do not know well. Be careful and constantly aware in public places where alcohol might be consumed, and remember you are in another country with different social customs. You should err on the cautious side.
- If you consume alcohol, please remember that your ability to make sound judgments is impaired, and therefore you may be putting yourself in danger.
- Many drugs are available in other countries over-the-counter that would not normally be available in the U.S. Be certain when purchasing medication that you know the ingredients and understand their effects, especially if you are taking other medications.
- Do not consume alcohol while taking any medication.

Sexual Harassment and Assault
- Be aware of how you carry yourself and dress. Even things as seemingly insignificant as smiling and your stride will mark you as a foreigner. Avoid looking like a stereotypical American; dressing conservatively can possibly help deflect potential harassers. In some countries, particularly Islamic ones, normal American female dress could be viewed as that of a prostitute.
Try to avoid making eye contact with men in public places. In many parts of the world, meeting a man’s gaze is widely viewed as sexually provocative. You may be followed, verbally harassed and, as a result, touched.

Usually the best response to unwanted stares, comments, or touches is to ignore the harasser and to remove yourself from the situation quickly and calmly. Although verbal responses often work, cursing your harasser in the local language or English may result in violence. Avoidance is the safest tactic.

If you continue to be followed, spoken to, or touched after repeated attempts to get away, try to remove yourself to a very public place. Tell your harasser firmly and calmly to leave you alone. Sometimes threatening to go to the police is effective, but sometimes the police are less than supportive.

Do not judge the physical appearance locals by American standards. You may be inclined to trust someone because he or she is nicely or fashionably dressed, well groomed, self-confident and outgoing. Sometimes, however, the most fashionable people are those who are the most skilled con artists, or who make a mission of befriending Americans in order to gain money, goods, passports, or sex from them. Be wary of smooth operators!

Advice Especially for Women
What may be appropriate or friendly behavior in the U.S. may bring you unwanted, even dangerous, attention in another culture. Try not to take offense at whistles and other gestures, regardless of whether they are compliments, invitations, or insults. Realize these gestures are as much a part of the culture as its food, history, and language, but if your intuition tells you a situation is dangerous, then act as if it is. Be extra careful with giving your trust. This applies generally, but is especially important when traveling alone.