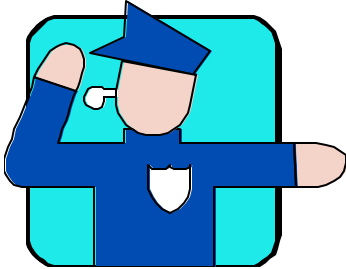


# SAFETY AND LEGAL MATTERS

## Security

No matter how safe yourself with your provides once you during the day and staff members about telephone number of Become familiar with



your site and community appears to be, you should acquaint new environment by reading information that your host institution arrive on-site. Explore your new neighborhood and campus become familiar with areas around you. Ask fellow students or areas you should avoid at night. Always carry the address and your new home with you until you have memorized them. common laws and customs of the host country.

### 1. Be Cautious

Exercise the same precautions you would in any U.S. city; in unfamiliar surroundings you may not know the real concerns. Do not walk alone at night. It is better to get a cab or walk with a friend. Never carry large amounts of cash! Use money belts or a concealed purse for your passport, visa, money, credit cards and other documents. Don't leave your luggage alone; if you want to explore a city, leave your belongings in the "checked luggage" area, which will probably only be a couple of dollars in local currency.

### 2. Stay Informed

Within the last several years there have been some serious security issues for study abroad students, especially within countries that are facing internal strife or anti-American sentiment. Also, in many European countries, there have been series of train delays and strikes. Stay well informed about local and regional news and conditions. Read newspapers with international coverage of local issues.

Growing anti-American displays of violence require that U.S. students be extra prudent and cautious. Check the U.S. State Department Travel Advisories regularly:

<http://travel.state.gov/>

### 3. Keep in Contact with Home

Your parents and friends will have concerns while you are away. Please keep in contact with them on a regular basis and let them know how you are. Also if you plan to travel during your stay, leave your itinerary with the host coordinator and with your family.

### 4. Be Alert

Be aware of your surroundings, including unknown individuals "hanging out" in your building or any strange activity nearby. Be careful who you give access to your room or apartment.

### 5. Take Precautions

Take the same precautions you would at home. Do not give out your name or address to unknown people. Know where the nearest police station and hospital is, and keep emergency numbers handy. Do not go into unsafe or unknown areas alone after dark.

## TRAVELING SAFETY

You will probably be doing a lot more traveling than you would normally do at home. This means that you will be using a variety of public transportation such as buses, trains, metros, taxis, and planes. There are several things to be aware of during your travels.

## 1. International Driving

Automobile accidents are the #1 cause of injury to U.S. study abroad students. Because signs, roads, and laws are quite different in other countries it is NOT recommended that students drive while overseas. However, If you intend to drive while you are abroad, you should inquire as to the identification required in the countries in which you will be traveling. Some countries require an International Driver's Permit, while others will accept your own state license.

## 2. Train, Rail or Bus Passes

Depending on where you are traveling, investing in a train/rail pass may be a wise and economical decision. Council Travel and other agencies sell Britrail and Eurail passes. For those students under 26, you may receive a discounted rail fare. Also, some passes you MUST buy in the United States before you leave (i.e. Eurail) while others you may purchase in the host country. For more information, see a travel agent.

SAFETY AND LEGAL MATTERS, continued

## 3. Traveling Tips

What to be aware of while you are on the road, on the train, or in the air.

- Do not display money, wallet, or other valuable items.
- Use a money belt to carry passport and money.
- Be careful on overnight trains. Choose a car or compartment in a train or metro in which others are riding.
- Note the location of emergency equipment.
- Do not stand on the edge of a train or metro platform.
- Never leave luggage unattended.
- Buy a lock for you backpack or luggage.
- If someone is bothering you, inform the porter or train operator.
- Avoid unwanted attention & confrontations.
- Beware of pickpockets and purse-snatchers, especially in crowded metro and bus stations. You may be bumped casually and be unaware of any violation.



## WOMEN'S ISSUES

right to do around the world, we need culture we are visiting. Women face meet new people, we also have to think about our personal safety. Understanding cultural differences in the areas of sex roles, verbal and non-verbal communication and the reputation of foreign women can empower us as we go abroad."

*from American Women Abroad by Holly Wilkinson-Ray*

"Despite our personal beliefs about what women should have the to reach a balance of maintaining our identity and respecting the unique challenges as we travel abroad. While we are excited to

## 1. Challenges for Women Abroad

Many American women traveling abroad are adventuresome, independent and eager to meet people. Make the most of your time overseas and become involved in a variety of activities. In the United States, women are used to being active: talking with people they don't know, making friends quickly, and going out at night. Yet, in some parts of the world the role of women is to stay at home. Friends are made through family ties, not at night in a bar. And there are often strong differences between how women are expected to act in public and in private. Dress, behavior, activity, eye contact, and topics of conversation are shaped by spoken and unspoken cultural norms.

Traveling alone, frequenting bars at night, and making eye contact with men is sometimes dangerous. The non-verbal messages that we send in a different cultural context may surprise us all. Media images of Madonna and Melrose Place have created powerful, lingering stereotypes of American women. As women jog in the streets of Cairo, wear shorts in Kenya and smile at people in the Paris metro, they may reinforce stereotypes unintentionally.

## 2. Tips for Women Travelers

Here are a few tips for gaining cultural sensitivity as women traveling abroad:

\* **Research the country.** Find out what the dress code is for women, which locations and situations are best to avoid as women, what message non-verbal communication such as eye-contact sends, etc. Begin gathering this information by

talking to women who are either from that part of the world or have traveled there.

- \* **Get to know the women of the country.** Begin by reading books by and about women from this country. Take advantage of your new home, learn from other women that you are living with, ask questions, and take the time to get to know how they interact with their native culture.

- \* **Observe.** Women can learn a lot about roles, attitudes and customs by watching. How do women carry themselves in public? What is the role of women in the host culture? What is the reputation of foreign women?

- \* **Honor the customs.** Women travel to other countries to learn, so women need to make the effort it takes to show them respect. That might mean packing away our T-shirts and jeans and putting on a sari or long skirt.

- \* **Be aware of different cultures.** If you have lived in Germany for a year and feel comfortable with male/female relationships, don't assume your expectations hold true in other countries. As you cross borders, take on the challenge of learning about each culture you encounter.

- \* **Learn the language.** Whether you are in a country for a few days or a year, you will make a stronger connection with people by trying to talk to people in their language.

#### SAFETY AND LEGAL MATTERS, continued

- \* **Avoid generalizations.** You might have a bad experience interacting with one Briton; that doesn't mean that all British men and the whole country are unlikable. Focus on what you can learn about yourself and your own culture from each experience.

- \* **Listen to and trust your instincts.** While women need to make efforts to adapt to a new culture, they also need to pay attention to what feels comfortable. When women are in a situation that makes them feel uncomfortable, they need to follow their instincts and leave.

- \* **Express yourself** and the difficulties you experience to someone who can understand or in a journal. We all need an outlet.

- \* **Use common sense.** Be constantly aware of your environment, take the usual precautions with strangers, and never walk alone after dark. Learn about the safest way to return to your home. While we take our nationality and gender with us abroad, one of the best tools women can also take along is cultural sensitivity. With this type of knowledge backing us up, women have a big world out there to explore.

### 3. Personal Reactions from Women Travelers

"There were times, however, when it was very lonely being in a culture (Mexico) that put so much emphasis on a woman always being with her family, or at the least with an escort. As a result I found myself accepting invitations from men that could have been dangerous. In one situation I went out to dinner with a man I met at the Guadalajara bus station. We went to a famous mariachi nightclub where I seemed to be the only foreigner and I was delighted when the whole place joined in singing the high-spirited romantic songs along with the performers. My 'date' had the idea that romance would continue in the taxi on the way back to my hotel."

*from Alone on the Northern Circuit, by Esther Berick*

"A woman alone, however, is considered an oddity in this patriarchal country (Mexico) and everyone wants to know if you are married and have children. Men will ask outrageous questions about your sex life. It's easy to pass this off as proof of his blatant sexism only to be expected of a macho culture, but it's not as simple as that. Attitudes to gringos and gringas are also about the hate and envy of an oppressed and exploited people. Any glance at the television screen makes it immediately obvious that white skin equals wealth and class in the Mexican popular imagination. Hence many Mexican men's desire to 'have' a white woman is matched by their secret (or sometimes not so secret) contempt."

*from A Place to Return To, by Valerie Walkerdine*

"Women were my window into the Indian interior world and into the issues of family, culture, history, religion, poverty, over-population, national unity, indeed, the very problems I thought were unrelated to the concerns of women. By this time I had begun to make friends with several Indian women...They had seemed, at first, so much like me. I soon learned that they were but they weren't, and the differences opened a window."

from *May You Be The Mother of a Hundred Sons: A Journey among Women of India*, by Elizabeth Bumiller

"It was my first solo walk through the streets of Nairobi. Having just arrived from Latin America, where I learned that streetwise means ready to run or ready to fend off catcalls, comments and unwelcome hands, I was on my guard, but in Nairobi no man bothered me. I was proffered the occasional elephant hair bracelet, the odd batik, but no one tried to touch or waylay me. Some months later, a Norwegian woman friend arrived on her first trip outside Europe. As I showed her around Nairobi that afternoon, men shouted and stared at her. Talking to other women later, I understood the problem; because I had already learned to walk with confidence and aggression, no one perceived that I was vulnerable. But my friend gave off an aura of uncertainty - she was obviously a newcomer, a tourist and, as such, was fair game."

-from *Knowing Nairobi* by Lindset Hisum

"Western women face an additional problem in that the only contact many Koreans have had with foreign women is through soft-porn films shown regularly at the cinemas here. Many Korean men assume that all Western women jump into bed with the first man they see. This can cause some harassment, though usually opportunistic rather than intimidating, along the lines of 'Do you live alone? You are beautiful. What's your telephone number?' It is very unusual to live alone in Korea - the only women who do so are considered 'bad', i.e. prostitutes."

from *Accepting the Rules* by Jane Richardson

## **RACIAL AND ETHNIC CONCERNS**

"No two students studying abroad ever have quite the same experience, even in the same program and country. This same variety is true for students of color and those from U.S. minority ethnic or racial backgrounds. Reports from past participants vary from those who felt exhilarated by being free of the American context of race relations, to those who experienced different degrees of 'innocent' curiosity about their ethnicity, to those who felt they met both familiar and new types of ostracism and prejudice and

SAFETY AND LEGAL MATTERS, continued

had to learn new coping strategies. Very few minority students conclude that racial or ethnic problems which can be encountered in other countries represent sufficient reasons for not going. On the other hand, they advise knowing what you are getting into and preparing yourself for it. Try to find others on your campus who have studied abroad and who can provide you with some counsel."

*Studyabroad.com*

## **BEING GAY, LESBIAN, OR BISEXUAL ABROAD**

"It is important to be aware of the laws pertaining to homosexuality in other countries, as well as the general attitudes of the populace toward gay, lesbian, and bisexual members of their community. The countries you visit may be more, or may be less, 'liberated' (on a general U.S. scale of values) in these regards, but will in all cases be at least somewhat unique. Moreover, whatever the general rule, there will always be pockets of difference and personal idiosyncrasies. Country-specific information is often available from campus offices, personnel, and student groups. You should certainly talk with other students who have been where you will be.

For information on issues and resources pertaining to gay, lesbian, and bisexual travel, you also may want to consult publications available in some bookstores and libraries which carry such literature." For a comprehensive list of resources, including travel guides, web links, and other types of information for GLBT students, contact:

<http://indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay>

*Studyabroad.com*

# Legal Matters

There are a number of country. Some of them that you are aware of

## 1. Arriving at the

Upon arrival in your checkpoints in the



This may occur before your passport and your as a student, and in countries that require it - your visa paperwork. If the Immigration officer is satisfied with the proof of your student status they will stamp your passport. The Customs inspection is to check if you are bringing any "illegal" items into the country. The airlines usually give you a Customs Declaration form that you can fill out on the plane and you will just hand this to the Customs officer, although some countries conduct actual inspections of your luggage and personal effects.

common legal matters you should be aware of, regardless of your host are much more serious than others, so please read each carefully so the liability involved.

## Airport

host country, you will go through Immigration and Customs airport.

or after you collect your luggage. The Immigration officer will ask for acceptance letter to your host institution to prove that you are entering. If the Immigration officer is satisfied with the proof of your student status they will stamp your passport. The Customs inspection is to check if you are bringing any "illegal" items into the country. The airlines usually give you a Customs Declaration form that you can fill out on the plane and you will just hand this to the Customs officer, although some countries conduct actual inspections of your luggage and personal effects.

## 2. Registering

Some countries require students to "register" with the local police department. Your host coordinator should advise you if you need to do this. It is always a good idea to register with the local American consulate, but this is not mandatory.

## 3. Local Laws

It is critical to remember that you are a guest in another country and **you are subject to all of their laws**. Ignorance of the local laws will not excuse you from local prosecution and/or fines.

## 4. Illegal Drugs

NEVER, NEVER travel with marijuana or any other contraband drugs. The United States government can assume no responsibility if you are apprehended for drug use. Even in places, and you know there are many of them, where the use of drugs by local citizens is either ignored or treated very lightly, when American students are apprehended indulging in or in possession of contraband, they can be dealt with in a very harsh manner. You can jeopardize your experience abroad by taking such a risk.

If approached by someone selling drugs, walk away. Do not even talk to that person, because a conversation with a suspected narcotics pusher is seen as an act of intent to purchase by some countries. Penalties can be much more severe in Latin America, Asia and Europe than in the U.S. Conditions of imprisonment in a foreign jail are not something you want to check out. Remember that being a citizen of the United States does not matter. You are subject to the law of the country you are in, so the U.S. Consulate cannot get you released if you are arrested. They can only help notify family and arrange for legal representation.

SAFETY AND LEGAL MATTERS, continued

## 5. U.S. Customs

Upon returning home you will have to go through U.S. Customs. Returning residents and citizens are allowed up to \$400 worth of foreign purchases. Duty ranging from 5-50% or more will be charged on anything over the \$400. Make sure to keep all receipts for purchases, as you will need them when you go through customs upon your return. If you are taking a foreign made item with you, such as a camera or watch, U.S. Customs Officials suggest you register it at the airport before you leave the country. Failure to do so may result in having to pay duty on it upon your return. Under no circumstances will you be allowed to bring back fresh fruits and vegetables of any type.

## FACTS ABOUT AMERICANS ARRESTED ABROAD

### 1. Rights Abroad

- Once travelers leave U.S. jurisdiction, they are not covered by U.S. laws or U.S. Constitutional Rights.
- Few foreign countries provide trial by jury.
- Pretrial detention may involve months of confinement in primitive prison conditions.
- Trials frequently involve lengthy delays or postponements and are conducted in the language of the foreign country.

### 2. Drug Arrests Abroad

- Sentences for possession or trafficking drugs can range from 2 to 25 years and possible heavy fines.
- Some countries like Turkey, Egypt, Malaysia, and Thailand -conviction may lead to a life sentence or even death penalty.
- In Saudi Arabia, drug smugglers and traffickers convicted of a second offense receive the death penalty.
- The Dominican Republic imposes 20 years imprisonment on anyone caught bringing narcotics into or out of the country.

