

Tips for Staying Safe Abroad

The U.S. Department of State offers valuable resources to U.S. citizens abroad. U.S. Consular Officers are in over 300 locations around the globe, providing passport replacements and other citizen services like lists of local hospitals and medical facilities and tips on what to do in an emergency. They also are who you'll want to contact if you are the victim of a crime abroad. Visit <http://studentsabroad.state.gov> for more information.

Before all travel, register your plans with the U.S. Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). Be sure to include all ways a consular officer can contact you, which may be residence hall phones, hotel phones, cell phones, etc. If there is an emergency in the States or in the location to which you are traveling, they will use those numbers to contact you directly. Access the STEP program at <http://travel.state.gov> (click on blue suitcase with white checkmark) or download the smartphone app from your app store.

Research your host country and become familiar with their local laws. Then, follow those local laws. Your U.S. citizenship does not make you exempt from full prosecution under another country's criminal justice system, and the U.S. government cannot bail you out. Many countries impose harsh penalties for violations that would be considered minor in the United States, and unlike the U.S., you may be considered guilty until proven innocent. Ignorance of the law is no excuse, so be informed.

Some of the best advice to stay safe abroad is to keep a clear mind and think/plan ahead. More than likely, you'll find that the local citizens are not as visible (volume, appearance, vocabulary, etc.) as a "typical" American. Remember that you are a guest in their country. Observe their actions and respect their culture. Try not to stick out like a tourist. When in doubt, ask a friend who better understands the actions and norms of people in your host country.

Worldwide Caution

Many times, cautions are issued to make people aware of events occurring around the world. If you hear a caution has been issued, do not panic. Exercise heightened security awareness which may lessen the potential for "wrong place, wrong time" scenarios by practicing the following general security best practices:

- Avoid crowds or large gatherings when traveling in public.
- Know where you are going and have a plan of what to do if you encounter demonstrations or violence.
- Identify safe areas (e.g., police stations, hospitals) in your area and how to get to them quickly.
- Tell classmates, roommates, or neighbors where you're going and when you intend to return.
- Minimize your profile while in public.
- Always carry a cell phone and make sure you have emergency numbers pre-programmed into your phone, such as the contact information for the nearest embassy or consulate, host university staff, and your study abroad advisors.
- Be prepared to postpone or cancel activities for personal safety concerns.
- Report any concerns you have to the nearest embassy or consulate.

Major Events—Planned or Unplanned

It's important to remain aware of local news and current events, so you can be informed about scheduled protests and elections, as well as predicted or occurring riots, acts of terrorism, or natural disasters.

If something in your local area or a nearby country occurs, do not panic. You want to make sure that you are well-informed of the situation, and you want to pay close attention to the instructions provided for your health and safety. Stay up to date on the news. Be mindful of the advice provided by your host university staff, the local police, and the U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

Visit the U.S. Embassy's webpage for security messages, which will give you a specific set of instructions for the given situation. For example: "The U.S. Embassy [host location] has issued a Security Message advising U.S. citizens to pay particular attention to suspicious activity, persons, and parcels and report anything unusual to police." Also practice the general security best practices listed above.

You may also receive emailed or texted communication from the Office of Global Education asking about your welfare. As soon as you are safe and able to do so, please reply to these messages to let us know about your wellbeing.

Review the U.S. Department of State's website at <http://travel.state.gov> for Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts.

Lost or Stolen Passports

It happens to a lot of travelers, and while inconvenient, a lost or stolen passport can be replaced. Before departing for any travel, make a photocopy of your passport to leave with a friend or family member, as well as the Office of Global Education. When traveling, pack a photocopy of your passport in your checked luggage, but always carry your official passport book on your person. Then, while abroad, keep your official passport book in a secured location and carry your photocopy in your wallet.

If your passport is lost or stolen, don't panic! When you are certain your passport is missing, notify the local U.S. Embassy or Consulate. You'll have to apply for a replacement passport book or travel document in person at the embassy or consulate. Schedule an appointment and be certain you know what documents are required. You may be asked to file an official police report or give a sworn testimony to the consular official.

Until you have a replacement document, your travel will be limited. Listen carefully to the instructions provided by the American Citizen Services unit and ask questions when you are unsure. Realize this process may take some time and, although it is an inconvenience, a lost passport may not be seen as an emergency.

International Insurance

For students participating on HPU Global Experience and Maymester programs, international insurance is provided through AIG in partnership with International SOS, our international health & risk management provider. Students studying abroad on non-HPU summer programs should determine if insurance is provided by their program. If it's not, contact the Office of Global Education for information on purchasing insurance through International SOS & AIG. First point of contact for all insurance needs is to International SOS. They offer 24/7 support and can help you find care. **Before departing the U.S., download the International SOS Assistance App to your smartphone and login with your HPU email account!**

Prescription Medicine

It is important to know if you can take your prescription medicine into your host country. Some medicines, including over-the-counter medicines available in the U.S. and those frequently prescribed in the U.S. for ADHD, pain, depression, and anxiety, may be considered illegal. Check the Consulate's website and your international health insurance provider before departure, giving yourself time to make alternate arrangements if needed.

If you are permitted to enter with your medicine, follow these travel tips:

- Always carry medicines and written prescriptions with you, not packed away in checked luggage.
- Always carry medicines in their original packaging. Do not use day-by-day sorters, pill boxes, or baggies.
- Carry enough medicine for your stay and know whether you can get your prescription filled in your host country.