

Ten Rules of Travel

1. Thou shalt not expect to find things as they are at home; remember you left home to find things different. Cheddar cheese and peanut butter may not be available.
2. Thou shalt not take anything too seriously; a sense of humor is a prerequisite for successful studying and living abroad.
3. Thou shalt not let the other travelers get on thy nerves; find ways to relieve tension and practice accepting people for who they are as you expect them to accept you.
4. Thou shalt take half as many clothes as you think you *might* need and twice the money. If you lose your credit/debit cards what is Plan B?
5. Thou shalt know at all times where your passport lives; a person without a passport is in deep trouble. Do you have a Plan B if your passport runs away from home?
6. Thou shalt remember that if we had been expected to stay in one place; we would have been born with roots. Walking is a primary mode of travel in most countries.
7. Thou shalt not worry about everything; especially those things you cannot control. Remember, some of the things you experience will make a great story later. It might even be humorous---in time.
8. Thou shalt be prepared to do somewhat as the Romans do while in Rome; adapt and find the uniqueness in your situation.
9. Thou shalt not judge the people of the country by the person who has just given you a hard time.
10. Thou shalt remember that thou art a guest in another country and to use *appropriate* manners and treat your host(s) with respect.

Your Passport

A passport is an official government document proving your citizenship. All United States citizens need a valid passport to travel outside the United States, including Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, Caribbean and Bermuda beginning Dec. 31, 2006. Once issued, US passports are valid for ten (10) years.

If you already have a passport, verify that it will be valid for at least six (6) months beyond your anticipated return to the United States. In addition, make sure that the legal name on your passport is the legal name you currently use (i.e. your married name rather than your maiden name).

If you do not already have a passport, begin the application process immediately. The average processing time for a first-time passport application is approximately six weeks—longer if there are delays within the government.

To apply for a passport for the first time you will need the following documents:

- Completed application form - available online at www.travel.state.gov/passport_services.html , at your local post office, or at the Elections and Passports section of the county courthouse
- Two passport size photographs taken within the last six (6) months – guidelines are available online at www.travel.state.gov website. Some post offices offer to take the picture for you for a small fee.
- Proof of US citizenship - a certified copy of your birth certificate (must include the full names of the applicant's parent(s)) Some short versions of birth certificates are not acceptable.
- Proof of your identity - a valid driver's license (if you apply outside of your state of permanent residence, i.e. college students, you will need a second form of ID such as a student ID).

To find the most up to date information on fees for first time applicants as well as passport renewal, documents needed, passport agencies, etc visit www.travel.state.gov .

Upon receiving your passport, sign it and make several copies of the identification and photo pages (the first two pages). **The passport will not be valid unless it is signed.**

While traveling, keep a copy of the identification and picture pages of your passport separate from the passport itself. Also, leave a copy with a family member or friend in the United States.

If your passport is lost, contact the local authorities and the nearest American Embassy immediately. After an investigation to confirm your identity, the Embassy will issue you a three-month temporary passport. This process will be expedited if you have a photocopy of the first two pages of your passport. In addition, an official, state-certified birth certificate with a raised seal is invaluable when your passport is lost or stolen. The National Passport Agency website, listed above, contains information on obtaining certified copies of your birth certificate.

Your passport is your most valuable possession. Never pack it and always keep it on your person when traveling.

Money

Credit Cards

All major credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, etc.) are widely used in most countries.

Any bank that honors your type of credit card will help you draw funds in local currency as a cash advance (with proper ID). This type of cash advance is considered a loan and must be paid back immediately to avoid incurring interest charges. If the advance is not paid back within a month, a higher interest rate is charged. You can only get a cash advance up to your line of credit.

Your credit card bill will reflect the exchange rate on the day your credit card transaction is processed, which may be more or less than what you thought you were paying at the time of purchase. Generally the exchange rate on credit card transactions is favorable compared to other currency conversion locations.

Debit Cards

A debit card with access to any of the major networks (Cirrus, Most, Plus, etc) will enable you to withdraw money directly from your home bank account in local currency at automatic teller machines. If you plan on using your debit card overseas, be sure that it is backed by Visa or MasterCard.

When you use your debit card, you will be given a choice of languages and then will be asked how much money you want to withdraw in the currency of the country you are in. You only need to take out what you want. The transaction will debit the money from your US checking account at that day's exchange rate.

Check with your bank to see if they charge a fee for using the debit card overseas.

Average commission is about \$1 per transaction. Be aware, you may also be charged a transaction fee from the foreign bank. These fees can add up quickly. Before you leave, you might check with your bank to determine if your bank has a correspondent bank in your host country where your debit card can be used without incurring local bank fees.

IF YOU PLAN ON USING YOUR DEBIT CARD, contact your bank and ask if it will work in the country(s) you will be traveling to. Obtain the name and direct phone number of a person at your home branch that can help you if there are any irregularities while abroad. Contact your bank and credit card company so that when spending money on a daily basis in another country, the bank will not think it is suspicious.

American Express

American Express offices worldwide offer check-cashing privileges to its clients; most notable is the 24-hour travel assistance program. American Express has offices in all major cities worldwide. American Express credit cards, however, are not as widely accepted as Visa and MasterCard.

Cash

It is wise to have enough cash with you to cover your initial expenses. You should avoid, however, carrying large amounts of currency. It is possible to order foreign currency through your bank or American Express prior to leaving the United States. The cost of

doing so is usually greater than the conversion fees overseas and you generally need to order the currency some period of time before you need it. If you do not want to buy foreign currency from a US bank, you may change a small amount of money at the airport.

Be advised, that currency conversion counters in airports often have high commissions and horrible exchange rates. You can usually withdraw money from an ATM machine at the airport upon your arrival and receive a better exchange rate. You should still have some local currency with you just in case, especially if you are arriving late at night, on a holiday or during the weekend.

Exchange Rates

Shop around before converting money as the exchange rate fluctuates drastically from place to place. Also, be advised that the quoted rates will be different for buying than for selling. When traveling, before you leave a country, convert any loose change into bills. Most places will not convert loose change into another currency.

There are also containers in many international airports that collect loose change for charity. This is convenient and helpful way to get rid of any money that you cannot or do not want to convert back to US dollars.

HEALTH ISSUES

Medical and Dental Checkups

Complete medical and dental checkups prior to departure are recommended. Frequently, health statements from your American doctors are required to obtain a visa or a long stay permit for your host country.

Vaccinations

Before you leave the United States, visit the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) websites for complete information on required and recommended vaccinations for the country to which you will be traveling: <http://www.cdc.gov> . This website contains a wealth of information including a summary of health information for all foreign travel; precautions for specific diseases and conditions; food and water problems travelers might encounter; and important news about disease outbreaks.

For more information about disease prevention, call the CDC at 1-800-232-4636 or visit the website listed above.

The World Health Organization also can be a very good resource for information on certain countries; visit it at: <http://www.who.int/en>

Before departure, make sure your immunization records are complete and up-to-date. At a minimum, you should be immune to measles, mumps and rubella through vaccine or physician-diagnosed cases of the diseases. Be sure that any inoculation is recorded with the officially approved stamp on the International Certificate of Vaccination.

Even though no specific immunizations are required for travel to most of Western Europe, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Mexico, make sure your tetanus and diphtheria boosters are current. Additionally, consider a vaccination for Hepatitis A and B, which can be caused by contamination of food and water. A Meningitis immunization is advisable as well. In addition, the CDC generally recommends a polio booster, as many countries are not free of endemic polio.

Some vaccination shot series must be started as much as six (6) months in advance of departure, so plan ahead and research immunizations early.

All vaccination shots may be obtained from a local health department or your physician. The cost will vary depending on the type of immunization, insurance coverage, and administrative fees at different locations.

HIV Antibody Testing: Requirements and Procedures

Many countries have specific requirements regarding HIV antibody testing. What are the regulations for your host country? This information can be obtained from the consular offices of the individual countries.

If you decide to be tested before departure, keep in mind that the testing process takes at least two weeks. Pre and post-test counseling is recommended and available at most clinics that perform HIV antibody testing.

Emergency Care

Know how to locate English-speaking physicians in the countries you wish to visit. The International Association for Medical Assistance (IAMA) has information about English speaking physicians around the world, as well as information about any health

precautions you may need to take. Write to IAMA at 1623 Military Rd #279 Niagara Falls, NY 14304 or call them at 1-716-754-4883 for more information. Their web site is: <http://www.iamat.org>

Medical Records

Keep personal medical records with you at all times in case of accident or illness. Guard them with as much security as you do your passport and credit cards.

Make several photocopies of your medical records in case of loss. Keep a copy with a parent or friend in the United States. Medical records should mention ALL drugs that you are taking as well as identify any chronic ailments, allergies, or hypersensitivities.

Additionally, medical records should list your immunization history, blood type (very important when in need of emergency medical attention!!), eyeglass prescription, personal physician, health insurance, and religion (if pertinent).

Medic Alert Emblem

If you have a chronic medical condition, such as diabetes or epilepsy, it is advised that you wear a Medic Alert Emblem, which is recognized internationally. For more information about the Medic Alert Emblem visit <http://www.medicalert.org/>

Medical Kit

Always travel with a complete medical kit. You never know when you will need medical supplies and you might be traveling in an area where certain supplies are expensive or difficult to find. Your medical kit should, at a minimum, contain: band-aids, alcohol swabs, antibacterial ointment, pain reliever, sunscreen, anti-diarrhea medication, gauze and adhesive tape. Before carrying around pain relievers, verify that the medicine you are in possession of does not violate local narcotics laws.

In addition to the above items, your medical kit should contain any regular medications that you currently take, contraceptives, feminine hygiene products and other routine health and medical items you think you might need. Check the expiration dates of all medications before including them in your medical kit.

Contact Lens/Glasses

Bring an extra pair of corrective lenses or glasses with you overseas. Your corrective eyewear should also be accompanied by a valid prescription.

General Care

Once you arrive in your host country, you will have to make some adjustments related to your physical and emotional well being. It is highly likely that you will get diarrhea when you first arrive abroad, regardless of the country. Diarrhea is caused by a change in diet and the stress associated with being abroad. Bring some type of anti-diarrhea medicine with you.

Jet Lag

You may also suffer from jet lag upon arrival. In order to minimize the effects of jet lag, get plenty of rest, and eat healthy foods. When traveling by plane, drink plenty of water so you are not dehydrated, and avoid alcoholic beverages. It is also advisable that you

bring your own water and do not drink water out of an airplane faucet—ask for bottled water with a seal. If you are on a long flight (5+ hours) get as much moderate exercise as you can—simply walking the rows, flexing leg muscles, and stretching will be sufficient. When you are on the plane, set your watch to your host country's local time so that you can mentally get accustomed to the time difference. Sleep if possible during the flight.

TRAVEL PREPARATIONS

It is important to arrange your flight as soon as you know the date you are scheduled to arrive in your host country. Waiting until the last minute to make your travel arrangements may increase the cost of your airfare.

When shopping for a plane ticket, compare prices from local travel agencies.

Before purchasing airline tickets, check the regulations for your country of destination. Since September 11th, some airlines and some countries will not honor open-ended or one-way tickets. There are two options when buying plane tickets: round-trip (there and back) or one-way (there only). If you know your exact return date and that date is less than one year from the date of purchase, you may buy a round-trip ticket booking your specific return flight. Be aware, however, that if you change your return date after purchasing the ticket, you will incur extra fees. These extra fees may simply include a \$25-\$100 “date change” fee, but could also include the difference in the fare price. Be aware and understand the rules and restrictions involved in student fares since they can vary dramatically.

If you do not know when you want to return, or if you plan on traveling after the conference, you may want to buy two one-way tickets. This option can be very expensive, so be sure you have a good idea of how much each ticket is going to cost before you buy your first one-way ticket. Keep in mind that buying a round-trip ticket and paying the “date change” fees and any difference in fare may be a cheaper alternative to buying two one-way tickets.

Luggage & Airline Baggage Allowances

The best resource for luggage requirements, including carry on allowances, and weight and size restrictions, is YOUR airline’s web site. Do not rely on friends or other airlines’ web sites for information. If you are traveling on more than one airline, be sure to check all the airlines’ websites for information. Some European carriers have 15 kilo (33 pound) limit on bags and may charge for extra bags.

Oversized and Overweight Baggage

The charge for oversized baggage and the charge for overweight baggage will be added together. CHECK WITH YOUR AIRLINE BEFORE TRAVELLING!

Hard-sided suitcases are heavy before they are packed; you should only need one hard suitcase to carry breakable items. Soft luggage, duffel bags, and backpacks are lighter and will give you greater flexibility. Luggage with wheels can make navigating airports easier. Be warned, however, they do not always work well on streets and sidewalks.

Wardrobe

In the interest of saving space, pack only clothes that can be layered to adapt to varying temperature. Interchangeability is essential. Pack only the most functional mix and match wardrobes you can put together. With a few pieces of well thought out clothing, it is possible to create several different outfits for all sorts of occasions. You should have more in the way of socks and underwear than you do of other clothing items.

<http://weatherspark.com> is a good website to use to find what the typical weather is like in the area you will be traveling during the months of travel.

Tips on Packing

Some universal rules:

- Travel lightly. What you pack you have to carry. Begin packing by setting out all items that you wish to take. Then, divide it in half and leave one-half at home. Everything you take with you will have to bring back.
- Be culturally sensitive. This is especially true for women travelers. Some countries and cultures have strict customs regarding dress. Shorts are often frowned upon. In certain churches, bare arms and legs are not acceptable. Excessive informality can be seen as an insult in certain cultures and religions—be culturally aware!
- Take clothing that is easily washable. Durable and permanent press articles are easier to care for. Dark colors are great. The optimum articles are lightweight, washable, and drip dry.
- Interchangeability is essential. Dress in layers and bring mix and match items.
- Be prepared for all types of weather that you may encounter.
- Leave room in your suitcase to bring back souvenirs. You will most certainly buy things while you are traveling. You may want to pack an empty duffel bag or expandable backpack.
- It is easier to have two smaller bags than one large one.
- Put your address on a luggage tag *inside your suitcase as well as on the outside* in case the suitcase breaks or is lost.
- Put a copy of your travel itinerary and temporary address on the inside of all luggage in case your bag is lost.
- Leave any irreplaceable items at home. It is risky to take such items overseas. Things get lost and stolen during travel.
- Distribute the weight evenly. Breakables and light- to-medium weight clothing can be packed in the hard-sided suitcases and heavy sweaters, shoes and the like placed in your pack or duffel bag.
- While preparing your suitcase, check all container caps and put shampoo, toothpaste, etc. in sealed plastic bags to prevent them from leaking. Verify that you have not packed any item that could be considered potentially hazardous. In the aftermath of September 11th, airlines and Federal agencies have imposed strict regulations on luggage and hazardous materials. If you are not sure whether a particular item is permitted on board, **call the airline and ask**. When in doubt, leave it at home. It is very important to double-check airline regulations and verify that you have not packed any item which is prohibited by the airline industry or by customs laws in your host country.
- <http://www.ricksteves.com> has packing and travel tips as well as a travel store to purchase bags, accessories, etc for travel in Europe.

Important documents such as your passport, immigration documents and credit cards should be carried with you at all times. They should never be packed in checked luggage! Keep these documents secure yet readily accessible for immigration.

A reminder: If you are on regularly prescribed medications, be sure to pack an extra supply IN YOUR CARRY ON. Prescription medications **MUST** be packed in their

original containers. Bring copies of your prescriptions with you (including the generic name of the drug) and keep them with your important documents. You may be asked to show proof of medical necessity when you go through customs. Having a copy of your prescriptions will save you a lot of time and hassle. If you wear eyeglasses or corrective lenses, bring an extra set with you along with a copy of the prescription. It can be very expensive to replace eyewear while abroad and doing so will necessitate a doctor's visit. When packing electrical items, keep in mind that electrical currents in foreign countries are different. Electrical adaptors are required to plug into the voltage used in your host country. In addition to adaptors, some major electrical appliances require a converter to convert the voltage—it is important that you understand that the United States uses 110 volts and most foreign destinations use 220/240 volts. Examples of appliances that need converters include laptop computers (however, newer laptops have converters built into them!!), hair-dryers, electric razors, etc. You can buy converters on line at travel supply stores and luggage stores.

Help from the US Consulate

The powers of United States Consular officials are limited by American and foreign laws. Although they will do everything they can to help you if you are arrested abroad, it is important to understand exactly what consular officials are capable of doing. Consular officials can ensure, insofar as possible, that the detainee's rights under local laws are fully observed and that humane treatment is accorded under internationally accepted standards. These standards will not be the same as American standards. Consular officials may visit the United States citizen as soon as possible after the US embassy or consulate has been notified of the arrest. At this point, they can provide the detainee with a list of local attorneys from which to select defense counsel. If requested to do so by the detainee, consular officials will contact family and friends in the United States for financial or medical aid and food.

If you become extremely ill while abroad and require emergency medical care, the duty officer will help you contact an appropriate doctor or clinic to ensure swift and adequate medical attention.

If you become destitute while abroad, the US consul will help you contact your family, friends, bank, or employer and advise you on having funds wired to you overseas. *They cannot lend you money.* If your money is lost or stolen, the consul will help you contact the local police and, if the money is in traveler's checks, notify the issuing authority.

What Consular Officers CANNOT Do

Since the consular officer's powers are limited, the consular official cannot demand a US citizen's release. They are not allowed to represent the detainee at trial, give legal counsel, or pay legal fees or other related expenses with US government funds. Consular officials cannot intervene in a foreign country's court system or judicial process to obtain special treatment for an American prisoner. While in prison, you are subject to the same rules and treatment as everyone else in the system.

Do not assume that what is legal in the United States is also legal in other countries. Adhere to local laws strictly. The penalties you risk for non-compliance are severe. When you are in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws. There are no exceptions, so use common sense.

In many countries, when you cross the border or check into hotels, you may be asked to complete a police information card listing your name, passport number, destination, local address (if applicable), and reason for traveling. If you are asked to complete such a form, do not be alarmed. It is standard government procedure in many countries.

While traveling in some countries, you may be asked to leave your passport at the hotel reception desk overnight in order for it to be checked by local police. If asked to leave your passport, only leave it with a hotel employee. Do not leave your passport with a non-employee or in any situation that appears awkward.

You are governed by the judicial system of the country in which you are arrested. While on foreign soil, you are not protected by the US Constitution or the Bill of Rights.

Health and Safety Issues

Be Informed About the Country, City, and Safety Issues Abroad:

Knowledge is one of the best ways to combat fear and anxiety; the more you learn about a country or culture ahead of time, the less nervous and disoriented you will be upon arrival. Orientation materials and country guides can help you better understand the countries and cities in which you will be studying and traveling. Review information from the US State Department, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other sources. Know where you are going; know what to do and not do once you are there. Consider how current world events, like war, political instability, terrorism, and disease outbreaks (like SARS) may affect your ability to interact with locals or travel to certain regions.

Avoid High-Risk Activities: Certain activities like: consuming alcohol or drugs, using poor transportation, being out alone at night, etc. can put you into danger. Make sure that you have adequate medical support and that your insurance plan covers ALL activities in which you might be injured. Use common sense and avoid participating in high-risk activities, especially while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.

Be Prepared to Respond to Emergencies:

The more prepared you are for emergencies, the better able you will be to respond. Where will you get help in case of an emergency? What will you do if you are a victim of a crime or are injured? What if someone else needs help? How will you get help to leave a country? Be prepared for what might happen, but don't let fear rule your experience.

Be Street Smart. Avoid Crime, Violence, Sexual Harassment, and Assault:

Be aware of the safe and unsafe areas where you are living and traveling. Use the same safety skills you use in the United States while abroad: don't travel or go out alone, don't go into "unsafe" neighborhoods, be more careful at night, etc. Be aware of stereotypes of US men and women, and of certain racial, ethnic, and religious groups. Be aware of stigmas surrounding sexual orientation and practices, and understand local verbal and non-verbal communication. Try not to let other people's negative attitudes or behaviors make you feel afraid; simple safety skills can help ensure your experience is not compromised.

Make Sure Your Mode of Transportation is Safe:

Whether you are arranging your own transportation or are being led by someone else, 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.

The Effects of Alcohol and Drugs Can Hurt You:

Although you may be legally allowed to drink alcohol 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. The risks associated with alcohol and drug use and abuse don't have to stop you from enjoying nightlife and culture abroad; using good common sense can help reduce your risks.

Be Able to Communicate at ALL Times:

Methods of communication for you and those that are trying to find you are: cellular phones, regular phones, e-mail, fax, PDA, etc. Given the many available types of communication abroad, you should be able to remain in close contact with home. The ability to communicate with family, friends, insurance, 24-hour emergency assistance companies, and local crime or medical emergency response, remain the most critical aspects related to study abroad. Develop an emergency communication plan, especially in the event of a crisis like a natural disaster, an act of terrorism, war, or a disease outbreak.

Take Care of Your Physical, Dental, and Mental Health:

Prior to going abroad, get a physical and complete any foreseeable dental work. Consider your psychological stability. Even though you will face physical and mental challenges abroad, being prepared in advance to deal with them is the best way to avoid worrying about them. When you arrive in your host city, find suitable care/support facilities. If you take prescription medication, bring your translated prescription, and your medicine abroad.

Have Adequate Insurance and 24-Hour Emergency Assistance:

Having insurance allows you to enjoy your time abroad without having to worry about getting help when you need it. Types of insurance to consider purchasing include major medical (in the US and abroad), emergency assistance, repatriation, travel and property. If you are studying in a higher-risk area or taking part in high-risk activities, both the amount of coverage and the types of coverage you purchase should increase; such increased coverage should include kidnapping and ransom insurance. When purchasing insurance, ask if the policy covers SARS, kidnapping, terrorism, and high-risk activities. Also make sure it provides you with access to emergency support services and adequate health care abroad.

(Adopted from the USC Center for Global Education Study Abroad Safety Handbook)

EXPECTATIONS VS. REALITY

Communicating between cultures, even in English speaking countries, can be extremely difficult and can greatly increase the uneasiness you may initially feel in your host country. Just as you bring your own language, you also bring your own methods and manners of communicating, both verbally and non-verbally. Studies have shown that the amount of time and energy needed for simple communications increases rather dramatically as cultural differences increase. You must recognize that other cultures use different verbal and non-verbal communication methods. Body language, the use of personal space, and verbal and non-verbal communication cues can be very different from what you are used to. In many cultures, frank, sarcastic, or confrontational discussions may be considered offensive. These differences are found even in other English speaking countries.

As with all types of cultural adjustment, remember that differences in communication styles are just that—different. These differences in communication are neither good nor bad, they simply exist.

Culture

It is virtually impossible to pinpoint one comprehensive definition of culture. As the term is normally used, and according to the American Heritage Dictionary, it refers to the “arts, values, beliefs, customs, institutions and all other products of human work and thought shared by members of a social group.”

Culture, however, exceeds the above definition and varies from person to person. A person’s culture influences the way in which that person perceives reality. The way we communicate with other members of a group is conditioned by the culture we share.

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS

When entering a foreign country or returning to the United States, you will be required to pass through Immigration and Customs. *Customs regulations and procedures, as well as the purpose, nature, and thoroughness of the customs inspection, vary radically from country to country. At a minimum, however, you will be asked to show your passport and visa (if applicable).* You can consult your host country embassy website to find information about specific customs requirements. In some countries, the customs officers may ask to search your belongings to verify that you are not importing contraband. Customs declaration forms will be distributed on the plane and should be prepared in advance of your arrival for presentation to the immigration and customs inspectors. Whether or not you have anything to declare, you must at least fill out the identification section and form. Upon entering the foreign country, you must show your passport, turn in your customs declaration form and pass through a baggage check.

Upon return to the United States, you will be required to pass through customs. US residents are allowed up to \$400 worth of foreign purchases. A tax (duty), ranging from 5% to 50% will be charged on any amount over \$400.

If you plan to take a foreign-made personal article with you, consider getting a certificate of registration from the customs office nearest you or at any port of exit from the United States. This certificate will offer proof that those articles were not purchased overseas and thus, will help ensure free entry of those items when you return to the US

Articles Prohibited by US Customs Regulations

•Absinthe (a liqueur) •Agricultural products (fruits and vegetables) •Books and tapes violating US copyright laws •Endangered species and their by-products •Hazardous articles and substances •Liquor-filled candy •Lottery tickets •Obscene articles and publications •Products made by convicts or forced labor •Switchblade knives •Drugs and controlled substances •Cuban Cigars

If you fail to declare or understate the value of the foreign goods you are bringing into the United States you may be subject to severe penalties. Declarable goods include items you purchased at duty-free shops abroad, gifts which were given to you and articles of clothes purchased abroad, both new and used.

Duty free goods must be for your personal or household use and cannot include more than 100 cigars, 200 cigarettes, and two (2) liters of liquor. If you are bringing liquor into the United States, you must be at least twenty-one (21) years old, regardless of age requirements in the country of purchase.

If you do not exceed the duty-free limitation, you need only declare the total value of the goods on the customs declaration form that will be distributed on your return flight. If you exceed the allowable limit, you must fill out the written declaration form listing everything acquired abroad together with the purchase price for each item. Therefore, you should keep receipts for all items purchased. All items included on your declaration form must accompany you through Customs.

Travel Checklist

A photocopy of your passport picture page

A photocopy of your visa page

Copy of the front and back of your credit and insurance cards

Extra passport photos

Bilingual dictionary

Travel guide/map

Camera

Cosmetic, toiletry items

Electric outlet adapter (and converter if needed)

Emergency Numbers

Emergency medical information

Emergency Contact information

Bed sheets and towel (a must for hostels)

Umbrella (Lt. Rain coat or poncho)

Map of USA (to show where you live)

Pocket flashlight and batteries

Swiss Army knife (pack, do not carry on)

Health Supplies to Take

General, over-the-counter pain medication (Advil and motion sickness medication)

Contact lens solution

Extra pair of eyeglasses

Dental floss

Feminine products (if applicable)

Medic Alert emblem (if applicable)

Medical health records

Prescription medications and a copy of the prescription with generic equivalents

Sunscreen

Vitamins and First Aid kit

Cold medication

Over counter sleep medication

Anti-diarrhea medication

Allergy medication

Useful Web Resources

A – Z Index of Topics

- http://travel.state.gov/travel/aztopics/aztopics_4187.html

Airports

- <http://www.hotelstravel.com> Provides links to major international airports worldwide
- www.cheapflights.com Can compare flights from various airlines to get the best deal.

Arrest

- <http://travel.state.gov/arrest.html> US State Department Arrest. A description of assistance provided by the Department of State to Americans arrested abroad

ATM's

- <http://www.mastercard.com/cardholderservices/atm> Worldwide ATM Locator. Where to find an ATM even if you are not a MasterCard holder.

CDC

- <http://www.cdc.gov> US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. From the National Center for Infectious Diseases, this site contains a section called “Traveler’s Health” which has information on diseases that can affect travelers.

Communication

- <http://www.goabroad.ekit.com/ekit/home> Global Phone Cards. Tips on how to keep in touch internationally with phone cards

Consulates and Embassies:

- <http://www.goabroad.com/embassy> Goabroad.com Embassy Search – Database of contact information for embassies worldwide, including US embassies in all countries as well as foreign embassies in the US
- <http://www.state.gov> US Department of State official website.
- <http://usembassy.state.gov> US Embassies and Diplomatic Missions. Contains advice on contacting American Embassies and Consulates as well as other diplomatic missions.

Crisis:

- http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html Information about emergencies and crisis in various countries.

Currency:

- <http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic> Calculates the current exchange rate for

Disabilities:

- <http://www.miusa.org> Mobility International
- <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/disabled.html> CDC Information for Travelers with Disabilities. Ways for students with special needs to have as much access as possible while abroad.

Entry Requirements:

- http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4965.html Country specific information.

Finances:

- <http://www.studyabroad.com/student-guide/preparing-study-abroad-fiances.aspx>

Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Travelers:

- <http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay> NAFSA: Association of International

Educators, Lesbian Special Interest Group's site dedicated to lesbians, bisexuals, and gay students traveling and living abroad.

Health:

- <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/health> Lonely Planet: Pills, Ills, and Bellyaches. Health tips for the international traveler.
- <http://drwisetravel.com/index.html> Travel Clinic. Information on travel related health matters.
- <http://www.who.org> Official site of the World Health Organization.

Immunizations:

- www.who.int World Health Organization
- www.cdc.gov Centers for Disease Control

Legal Assistance:

- http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html

Medical and Health:

- http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/travel_abroad/Health%20Issues/Health%20Issues_6114.html US State Department: Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad.

Passports:

- http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html US State Department and Passport Services. Extensive information on passports, passport services, restrictions, fees, where to apply for a passport, etc.

Road Safety:

- <http://www.asirt.org> Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT). Offers road travel reports, seasonal hazards, safety tips and common driver behaviors for various countries.
- http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1179.html

Safety:

- http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/travel_abroad/Safety%20Issues/Safety%20Issues_6116.html

Sexually Transmitted Diseases:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/health/std/hdm> Official website of the Center for Disease Control. Contains links to information on AIDs and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Telephone Numbers:

- http://travel.state.gov/visa/about/how/how_1463.html *US State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs: Important Telephone Numbers.* List of important telephone numbers for overseas citizens: Who to call in case of robbery, arrest, detention, abduction, crisis, or death abroad.

Time Zones:

- <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock> Includes all time zones and running, up-to-date clocks for all capital cities.
- www.worldtimezones.com

Translations:

- <http://translator-bg.com/content/view/15/28/lang.en> On-the-spot translations of words, phrases, and paragraphs into a long list of world languages.
- <http://www.freetranslation.com>

Travel:

- <http://www.towd.com> Tourism Offices Worldwide Directory. List of official government tourism offices, visitor bureaus, and chamber of commerce worldwide.

Travel Documents:

- <http://www.traveldocs.com> Travel Document Systems. Detailed information about specific entry requirements.

Travel Providers:

- <http://www.cheaptickets.com> Online airfare provider.
- <http://www.discountairfares.com> Online airfare provider.
- <http://eurail.com> Provider of discounted rail passes, covering travel in 17 different countries.
- <http://www.lowestfare.com> Online airfare provider.
- <http://www.travelocity.com> Online airfare provider.

Travel Warnings:

- <http://www.state.gov> Links to all US State Department Travel Warnings for American citizens abroad.

Vaccinations:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/vaccinat.htm> *CDC Vaccination Information*. From the National Center for Infectious Diseases, critical information on what vaccinations are necessary or suggested before traveling to certain countries.

Women Travelers

- <http://www.dfat.gov.au/consular/womtrav.html> Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: Tips for Women Travelers. Identifies certain risks and hazards for women travelers, such as traveling alone, public breastfeeding, and dress codes
- <http://www.journeywoman.com> Travel tips geared toward women, including everything from personal travel stories to what to wear.