

INTERNATIONAL TRAVELER HANDBOOK

WINTER 2020-2021 & SPRING 2021



Education Abroad

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

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Contacts

In Case of Emergency

In case of an emergency that cannot wait until the next business day –

Education Abroad Emergency: (303) 653-1671

CU Boulder Police: (303) 492-6666

Education Abroad Staff

Office: 303-492-7741

Email: registertravel@colorado.edu

Sylvie Burnet-Jones

Interim Director, Education Abroad

Office: (303) 492-7631

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Kelsey Mark

**International Travel Registrations Manager,
Education Abroad**

Office: (303) 492-7703

Email: kelsey.mark@colorado.edu

**Education Abroad After-Hours Emergency
Phone Number:**

+1 (303) 653-1671

Other CU Boulder numbers

Police Department: (303) 492-6666 (any time; can also be called if you cannot reach anyone on this list)

Registering with Education Abroad

Each participant will need to register his/her international travel with Education Abroad. We will notify you via email once your online registration is open.

You will have an account with Education Abroad, which will allow you to access important information such as health insurance coverage, health and safety resources, and this comprehensive International Traveler Handbook. We will also ask you to provide emergency contact information, citizenship information, and details of your program if you are traveling independently.

Getting Ready to Go

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Pre-Departure Resources

Tasks and information will be available to you in your [MyCUAbroad](#) account that will prepare you for your experience abroad. Education Abroad students should consult the [Once Accepted page](#) for an overview of pre-departure responsibilities.

If you are going abroad through a partner organization, you will also receive information from them about required forms and tasks. For Education Abroad students, any post-acceptance forms that are requested through your program must be submitted to them directly.

We encourage you to share information with your parents or emergency contacts. Additional resources for parents, family and other emergency contacts are also available on our [Parents and Family page](#).

COVID-19

As you're planning for your time abroad and before paying any program or housing deposits (including independent housing leases), visa fees, flights, etc. consult the [COVID-19 Information on Education Abroad](#) webpage and monitor your CU Boulder email address often for important updates and guidance.

Before You Depart

In addition to the requirements in your [MyCUAbroad](#) account and through your partner organization, there are additional important tasks you should complete before you depart for your program.

Before You Leave Campus

- Optional: if you would like to give your parents access to information at CU Boulder while you are abroad, you must do this in person at the Office of the Registrar; it cannot be done after you leave campus
- Optional: [Appoint Power of Attorney](#)

Before You Leave the U.S.

- [Contact bank\(s\) and credit card company\(ies\)](#)
- [Make copies of important documents](#)
- [Download insurance card and review insurance information](#)
- [Review host country's health, safety, and security information](#)
- Gather important contact information (i.e. your CU Academic Advisor, CU Boulder [Education Abroad Program Manager](#), on-site program staff, group leader, mentor, etc.)
- If applicable: [Plan for income taxes](#)
- If applicable: [Check the voting from abroad process](#)

Passports, Visas & Travel Plans

Passports

Make sure your passport is valid for at least six months after your program ends. Most participants need to have their passports 3-6 months prior to departure in order to apply for visas.

For more information on how and when to apply for a passport, please see our [Passports & Visas resource](#).

Passports for Friends/Family Members

We strongly recommend that your **emergency contacts** have a valid passport while you are abroad. This may be critical in the event of an emergency if your loved one wishes to travel to be with you in a time of need. If friends or family members are planning to visit at the end of the program, we urge them to apply for or renew passports **before** the program begins.

Taking Care of Your Passport and Other Important Documents

- Make two paper copies and electronic scans of the photo page of your passport, visa (if applicable), all airline tickets and/or itineraries, other ID cards, and bank cards.
- Leave copies of all your important documents with your parents or another responsible party, and carry the duplicate copies separately from your wallet or purse. Email yourself the electronic scans so you always have a copy.
- Your passport is a valuable document; guard it carefully! If you must carry your passport, keep it in a money belt worn inside your clothing.
- Important: If you lose your passport abroad, immediately report it to the [U.S. Department of State](#). You will also need to contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate to obtain a replacement, and you may also need to obtain a new visa. See the [U.S. Department of State's FAQs on Lost Passports](#) for more information.

Visas

Many countries require people to obtain a visa in order to study, intern, or even just visit. For some countries, the visa application process is long, complicated and may entail substantial fees as well as out-of-state travel to the appropriate consular office. Processing time for visas can take from a few days to several months.

We have provided a general overview of the visa process and your responsibilities on our [Passports and Visas page](#). Education Abroad participants will receive detailed visa instructions post-acceptance.

If you are not a U.S. passport holder, please refer to the embassy's website of your host country to determine your requirements.

Travel Plans

You should not purchase airline tickets until after you have been instructed to do so and have confirmed your program dates.

Check the official start and end dates of your program (including on-site orientation, if applicable), as listed by your program provider and/or host institution. Arriving late to your program site and/or leaving the

program early is not allowed. Check pre-departure resources from your program provider to find out if a group flight is available (this is rare).

If your program does not have a group flight, start shopping around now for good airfares. Consult the resource [How to Book My Flight](#) for guidance.

If you are nervous about traveling alone, it may be possible to find a traveling partner among the other program participants. You will be provided with names and emails of the other CU students on your program during your program orientation. Many program participants start Facebook groups before departure, so do some searching for your group.

The [Transportation Security Administration \(TSA\)](#) has strict identification procedures for airline travelers. The name on a traveler's ID must match that on the travel documents. Travelers whose reservations do not contain full information will not be permitted to check in online or at airport kiosks, but must instead stand in line to see a ticket agent. Additional airport security screening and/or denied boarding may result.

Be sure to stay up to date with [the most current TSA and international security regulations](#), as international checkpoints may have different regulations.

U.S. Department of State Smart Traveler Enrollment Program

The [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) is a free service provided by the U.S. government to citizens traveling to or living abroad. Registration in this program records information the U.S. Department of State can use to assist you in case of an emergency. Once enrolled, you will receive pertinent email alerts. Make sure to download the [Smart Traveler app](#) on your smartphone.

U.S. embassies and consulates assist nearly 200,000 people each year who are victims of crime, accident, or illness, or whose family and friends need to contact them in an emergency.

When an emergency happens, or if a natural disaster, act of terrorism, or civil unrest strikes during your time abroad, the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate can be your source of assistance and information. By registering, you can help them assist you when you might need it the most.

Global Seminar, Global Intensive, International Travel Registration, and Exchange students:

Education Abroad will register all participants who are U.S. citizens in the STEP program prior to the beginning of your program. Education Abroad will enroll you in STEP for the dates of your program and its location. If you arrive early, stay late, and/or travel in your host country or to other countries during, before, or after the program, we strongly recommend that you register with STEP for your additional travel dates and destinations (if applicable).

All other Education Abroad students:

Before you leave, you should register your travel and residency plans with the U.S. Department of State if you haven't already (note that you have likely already been encouraged to register during the application process by Education Abroad or by your program). Registration is free, and you can enroll via the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) enrollment page. You must include your email address when you register so you can receive email alerts.

Non-U.S. Citizens

If you are not a U.S. citizen, you should register with your embassy in the country or countries where you are traveling or studying. The services that the U.S. government provides to U.S. citizens while abroad (including assistance in an emergency) will not be available to non-U.S. citizens, even if you are hosted by a U.S. program.

Packing For Your Trip

What you should bring depends greatly on where you are going and what you plan to do there. For example, while the French reserve flip-flops exclusively for the beach, in Bali, they are considered appropriate business attire. You should consult your program's materials for additional packing suggestions.

NOTE: Never take more than you can comfortably carry by yourself at one time!

Packing Tips

Important Documents

There are a number of items you need to take with you and keep track of the entire time you are abroad. You should keep them in a safe place, and if you are traveling away from your host city, be aware of where they are at all times.

- ✓ Passport (with visa, if applicable)
- ✓ Accident and Health and Travel Insurance information
- ✓ Credit/Debit Cards
- ✓ Plane tickets or copy of your itinerary
- ✓ Health Documentation
- ✓ Emergency info (medical, itinerary, relatives)

Traveling with Money

It is usually best to assume that you will not have immediate access to an ATM when you arrive in your host country, especially if you are traveling in the developing world. If this is the case, plan on acquiring some local currency prior to your departure. You should have enough to pay for a meal, transportation to your host site, and a night in a hotel. The exact amount will vary by country.

In some countries, U.S. cash, especially untorn dollar bills, come in handy. They can be used for tipping, purchasing small items, etc.

Protecting Your Belongings

Carry anything you can't afford to live without on your person while traveling, not in checked baggage. This includes your passport, documents, and anything you need at all times, such as contact lenses and medication.

Organize your funds into two separate packets, each with a credit card and currency. When in your host country, one of these packets should be left at your residence.

Do not pack more than you can carry, and never let your bags out of your sight. Purchase and use a lock for your luggage. Keep your purse in your lap in public, always have a hand or foot in a loop or strap of your luggage when you set it down, and if you need to sleep on public transportation, use your pack as a pillow.

Be aware of pickpockets, and as a general precaution, do not carry your money or passport in an easily accessible place. Pickpockets often mingle widely in tourist crowds, including but not limited to airports, train stations, travel agencies and museums, so be extra vigilant in touristy areas.

A concealed money belt or neck pouch is a good idea in some areas, but showing that you have one can

make you a target.

Don't bring anything you can't afford to lose. This includes items of sentimental value such as family jewelry or heirlooms.

Clothing and Toiletries

Consult information from your program for culturally appropriate clothing information. In general, pack an interchangeable wardrobe of easy washables in dark colors and neutrals. Dark colors tend not to show dirt as easily. Rolling, not folding, your clothing is more space-efficient and prevents wrinkles.

Prepare to layer. Even if you will be in a location with a hot climate, pack a few warm items. Think about how cold summer nights can be in Colorado!

In many countries, you will be able to purchase all necessary toiletries upon your arrival. Make sure that this is the case if you plan to purchase them abroad.

Pack toiletries in sealable bags, and bring extras – they also work well for keeping wet or dirty clothing separate from clean things.

Medical Considerations

Pack prescription medication in its original container, and carry a letter from your doctor. Prescription medications should always be in your carryon, not in your checked baggage. If you have any ongoing medical conditions, we recommend that you bring photocopies of your medical history, along with prescription information. For more information on taking your prescriptions overseas, see the [Health](#) section.

Students with a U.S. prescription for marijuana should note that according to U.S. Federal law, you cannot fly on a commercial airliner with marijuana or marijuana-containing products even if you have a doctor's written prescription or a medical marijuana identification card (MMIC).

Airline Baggage Allowances

All airlines have guidelines on the weight and size of baggage allowed. You will be charged a fee (often an expensive one) if your baggage exceeds your airline's limit. For most international flights, you are allowed one free checked bag, but many airlines will charge for a second one. Many airlines are now weighing all baggage and assessing fees. Know the baggage policies and weight limits for your airline.

If you plan to take your own bike, skis, or other large items, be prepared to pay an oversize luggage charge. You may want to insure these items if they are of high value.

Computers and Electronics

Electrical systems are different around the world. In most countries, you will need an adapter to plug anything into the wall. In many countries, you will need a converter to use U.S. appliances due to voltage differences. Even with a converter, small appliances, such as hairdryers, might not work properly. For more information on converters and adapters, check [Independent Traveler](#) or [World Standards](#).

If you bring your laptop or tablet overseas, we recommend that you insure it against damage or theft outside the U.S. Before leaving, back up your information on external hard drives or with a data cloud service that

can automatically update. Most new laptops have internal current converters, but you will still need to get the proper plug adapter.

Register imported electronics (cameras, cell phones, etc.) with U.S. Customs before leaving the States. Foreign-made items are subject to duty charges when you reenter the U.S. unless you can prove you purchased them here. Take the items to Customs at the airport and fill out a registration slip.

For battery-operated devices, be aware that batteries can be expensive abroad!

Shipping Baggage

We do not recommend that you ship your baggage, either to your program location or back home upon completion. The cost can be exorbitant, there are often customs regulations that limit what you can send and receive, and you may be charged hefty duty fees or storage fees while baggage is waiting for customs clearance. Your belongings could be held at a customs office far from your program site, and you may have to retrieve them in person at great expense.

The least expensive way to ship baggage is by surface mail through the U.S. Postal Service, but this can take 6-10 weeks.

Prescription medications should always be carried with you and not shipped in baggage.

Packing Lists

Your best sources of specific information are the alumni of your program or materials from your program provider.

There are also a number of useful online packing lists:

- This [interactive checklist](#) from Independent Traveler allows you to customize and print a packing list for your destination.
- Rick Steves' Europe offers a [Packing List for Europe](#).
- [Journeywoman](#) provides country-specific clothing suggestions for women.
- Refer to the [CDC's Healthy Travel Packing List](#) for a list of health-related items to consider packing for your trip. Talk to your doctor about which items are most important for your specific location(s) (insect repellent, diarrhea medication, etc.).

Communicating From Abroad

Contacting Home upon Arrival

Your loved ones will be waiting to hear that you have arrived safely, but it may not be possible to find a phone and figure out a new system the moment you arrive. Arrange to call home by a certain time, and then be sure to do it! Give yourself a time cushion when you arrive to get to your destination and get settled; 48 hours is recommended.

Make sure to determine the time zone difference before you go. [Time and Date](#) has a time zone section that tells you what time it is in other parts of the world.

When your loved ones call you, if you will have a local number abroad, they will need to dial the following numbers to make an international call from the U.S.: 011 (international access code) + [country code](#) + city code + the local number. For more detailed instructions, see howtocallabroad.com.

The many voice-over-IP apps now available for smartphones have made it much easier (and more affordable) to call home from overseas. See below for commonly used apps.

Phones & Computers

Should an emergency occur, it is critical that you can be reached at all times during the program. You have three options for fulfilling this requirement:

1. **You may use your U.S. cell phone abroad with an international calling plan.** Make sure to contact your phone provider prior to departure about the options offered and associated cost. These plans often vary by country, so make sure to do your research, and be **very wary** of overage rates. You should also note that you would still have a U.S. number, which means calling locals in the host country will likely be charged as an international call.
2. **You may use your U.S. cell phone abroad with a local SIM card.** You will need to work with your phone provider to ensure your phone is unlocked prior to departure, and purchase a local SIM card upon arrival (within the first 1-2 days of the program).
3. **You may purchase a local cell phone upon arrival.**

For options 2 and 3, you can usually choose either a monthly or a pay-as-you-go plan. These are generally inexpensive to purchase, but they can be expensive to use for international calls. Note that if you go one of these two routes, you may want to have your U.S. carrier put a hold on your U.S. phone while you are abroad.

Once you have your phone number, make sure to share it with your on-site staff and complete the Phone Number Abroad item in your online application checklist. **You must keep your phone charged, turned on, and with you at all times during the program.**

Using Your Smartphone on Wi-Fi

You must be reachable by phone even when you aren't within range of Wi-Fi. However, using internet-based apps is a common and popular way to stay in touch with friends and family, especially those at home. You should also check with your U.S. carrier, as a few (including T-Mobile and Sprint) are now offering free data coverage abroad in certain locations.

Here is a list of apps that can help you stay in communication with friends and family via free or cheap calling and texting:

- [WhatsApp](#)
- [Pinger](#)
- [KakoaTalk](#)
- [TextMe](#)
- [Viber](#)
- [Text Now](#)
- [Skype](#)
- [Google Voice](#)

- [Facebook](#)

Using Email

Because CU Boulder uses email for all official correspondence, you need to access your CU email account while you are overseas (if applicable). You can add a personal email address by logging in to your MyCUAbroad account and adding a “Carbon Copy email address.”

A Warning: Being Too Connected

While email, Facebook, Skype, etc. can be very effective forms of communication, do not overuse them. The more time you spend communicating with people at home, the less time you spend immersed in your new culture.

An easy way to communicate with friends and family is to set up an email distribution list or blog so that you can share the same report on your abroad experience with everyone. This saves time and gives you a written record that you will have later. You can also share photos and experiences with those back home without having to send separate emails. Many free blog hosting sites are available, including [Blogger.com](#) and [WordPress.com](#).

Security Considerations for Smartphones and Laptops

Travel to certain high-risk countries requires special consideration and preparation with regard to smartphone and laptop usage. Please review the [resources provided](#) by CU Boulder.

Remember that when you travel with a smartphone, you are basically carrying a tiny computer around in your pocket! You likely have personal and sensitive data stored on your phone that may be accessible to others while you connect to a public Wi-Fi network. As much as possible, be sure you are using a secure network when accessing your bank account or completing other sensitive tasks, and only enable GPS services when necessary.

Also, keep in mind that smartphones are popular with pickpockets. If your phone is lost or stolen, you should check with your provider to see if they are able to do a “remote wipe” to remove your data and restore the phone to its factory settings.

Accessing CU Boulder Resources Abroad

CU Boulder students can access many of the electronic resources at the CU Boulder libraries while abroad via the [Chinook On-line catalog](#). You may access most of these resources either via a proxy server or via [Virtual Private Network \(VPN\)](#). The library's [off-campus access page](#) explains both the proxy and the VPN. **This information is also helpful for students traveling to countries where certain websites (such as Google, which also operates CU email) may be restricted.**

Contacting Home by Mail

Mail services and prices in other countries are somewhat different from in the U.S., but things basically work the same way they do here. Please be aware that the postal systems of some countries may be much slower and less reliable. Never mail something you cannot afford to lose.

If you are receiving a package abroad, be aware that any item mailed to you is subject to VAT or an import tax, even if it is not new. This tax can often be 30-90% of the value on top of shipping charges paid. Never mail any prescription medication across any international border.

Parental Access to Your Records

The [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#) of 1974 (FERPA) protects educational records. It limits the information that can be discussed with anyone – even parents – unless you specifically allow them to access your information.

While overseas, you may want a parent to talk to Education Abroad, Office of Financial Aid, Bursar's Office, or your academic advisor if problems arise with bills, registration, financial aid, or advising. We recommend completing a FERPA Consent to Release so that these offices can answer your parents' questions. For information on how to provide this consent, visit [the Office of the Registrar's website](#).

Voting From Abroad

If you will be abroad during an election cycle in the U.S., we encourage you to participate in your civic duty by voting from abroad! There are a few steps you must take to ensure you receive an absentee ballot. All of the information provided below is sourced from the Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) and Overseas Vote website and is subject to change.

Voting from abroad is easy – just follow these steps on the [Federal Voting Assistance Program](#) website.

If you have questions about this process, your best resources are the [Absentee Voting Frequently Asked Questions](#) page and the [Absentee Voting Information](#) provided by the U.S. Department of State.

Sustainable/Responsible Travel and Education Abroad

We all know that the CU Boulder community strives to be “green.” Sustainability has long been a top priority on our campus, and our office wants you to take that mindset with you as you travel the world.

You can consult a [list of related resources](#) in the Appendix.

Tips for Sustainable/Responsible Travel

While you are abroad, you can follow the suggestions below in order to minimize the adverse impact of your presence and maximize its positive impact on your host culture:

- Use water and electricity sparingly.
- Bring a reusable water bottle, and drink tap water where it is potable.
- Learn about local recycling rules and schedules.
- Learn about your travel destination(s) and how it/they might be involved in sustainable practices, such as their human rights record, environmental conservation record, commitment to peace, etc.
- Use the local language as much as you can.
- Learn about cultural norms by talking with and learning from locals.
- Dress appropriately.
- See if there are sustainable accommodations and transportation available when you travel.
- Do not collect, buy or export endangered natural products.
- Choose low-impact recreational activities.

- Do not disturb wildlife.
- Volunteer or intern with a local school or organization to get a better understanding of your host culture and country, or try to find an organization dedicated to environmental work.
- Research local environmental issues and initiatives or write a paper on sustainability for a course.
- Try to buy locally produced goods and food.
- Try to contribute to the local community by using local services as much as possible.
- Always ask people before photographing them, as some religions and cultures forbid photography.

Taking Photographs Abroad

You will undoubtedly be excited to capture your experience abroad by taking pictures of the people and places you encounter. Please keep in mind that there may be cultural and legal differences regarding photography in your host country – some cultures and religions forbid photography altogether. It is always best to ask before using your camera. In many countries, there are prohibitions on taking pictures of strategic locations, such as airports, train stations, major roads and dams. Avoid taking pictures of all police and military installations. Additionally, it can be culturally insensitive or even offensive to take photos of individuals without permission. You are encouraged to research local laws and customs regarding photography in your host country. When you do take photos abroad, avoid harm to or misrepresentation of the subjects as a result of the photo – don't take photos that potentially discriminate or reinforce stereotypes. For more tips on responsible photography abroad, read the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) Report, [Picture This: Dos and Don'ts for Photography](#).

Social Media

An increasing number of people who spend time traveling also do something meaningful and bring positive impacts to the community they are a part of. Language and images can either unify, clarify and create nuanced descriptions, or divide and perpetuate stereotypes of the complex world we live in. It can be difficult to present other people and the surroundings accurately in a brief social media post. Even though harm is not intended, many volunteers and travelers end up sharing images and text that portray local residents as passive, helpless, and pitiful. Think about the following checklist before posting on social media:

- ✓ Ask yourself, "What is my intention of sharing this post?"
- ✓ Gain informed consent from the person in the picture and/ or the caretaker. If you can't explain why you are taking a photo, use a translator.
- ✓ Know the names and backgrounds of the people portrayed.
- ✓ Offer the person in the photo a copy.
- ✓ Avoid sweeping and simplified generalizations; include informative text with names, place, etc.
- ✓ Be respectful of different cultures and traditions.
- ✓ Ask yourself, "Would I appreciate being portrayed in the same manner?"
- ✓ Avoid sensitive, vulnerable situations and locations such as hospitals and health clinics.
- ✓ Do not portray yourself as the hero in the story conveyed.
- ✓ Challenge the perceptions; bring down stereotypes.

Information provided by RadiAid (<http://www.rustyradiator.com>).

International Travel Registration Finances

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Power of Attorney

You may want to assign someone as your Power of Attorney (POA). A POA can handle your business and personal matters while you are abroad. Limited Power of Attorney forms can be found online (search for "legal forms"). Whomever you appoint as POA should keep the original Power of Attorney form. A Power of Attorney cannot sign the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Income Taxes

Please note, Education Abroad cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information below if regulations about filing taxes change after this publication.

Federal Taxes - Internal Revenue Service

- If you are outside the U.S. or Puerto Rico on April 15th, you still have to file a return.
- You may apply for an extension by filing Form 4868 before April 15th.
- Go to the [Internal Revenue Service \(IRS\) website](#) to get the necessary forms.
- Extensions are for filing the tax form, **not** for paying any taxes owed. Interest is calculated on the tax due from April 15th until the day it is paid, and a penalty may be assessed for the delay in payment.
- Tax forms can be filed by your Power of Attorney as long as a copy of the POA is attached.
- For questions about federal tax return filing or extensions, [contact the IRS](#).

Colorado Taxes - State of Colorado Department of Revenue

- State of Colorado income tax forms are due by April 15th.
- The Department of Revenue allows an extension of six months (until October 15th) for the filing of tax forms.
- The extension is for filing the tax form, not for paying the taxes. Interest will be calculated on the tax due from April 15th until the tax is paid.
- Tax forms are available on the State of Colorado [Department of Revenue](#) website.
- Tax forms can be filed by a Power of Attorney as long as a copy of the POA is attached.
- For questions about Colorado tax return filing or extensions, contact the Colorado [Department of Revenue](#).

Other States' Income Tax Filing

If you reside in another state, contact that state's Department of Revenue for more information.

Personal Expenses Overseas

Cost of Living in Your Host Country

It is difficult to estimate how much money you will need for your time abroad, since personal spending habits vary. If you travel a great deal, eat many meals at restaurants, and purchase many clothes or gifts, your monthly expenses will be considerably higher than a frugal person's costs. Shop around when you first arrive so you get used to the pricing structure of your host country -- some things that are inexpensive here will be more expensive in your host country and vice versa. Make sure to budget for local transportation, if applicable, as well as any personal travel plans you have during the program.

Costs for common items can vary greatly from country to country. While building your budget, it is a good idea to look up the cost of common items in your host country. You can do so using the Worldwide Cost Index: <http://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/>.

Exchange Rates and Budgeting

Begin now to familiarize yourself with exchange rates and what they can do to your purchasing power in another country. Exchange rate information is available on websites such as xe.com.

Take a realistic look at what you spend in a week or month, and then budget for what you may spend overseas. You may wish to alter your budget after you have spent some time at your program site. Expenses to consider include books, cell phone and cell phone minutes, meals, toiletries, and gifts and souvenirs, along with the ones mentioned above.

Establish a backup plan for how you will access additional funds if the amount you initially budget is insufficient.

Accessing your Funds Overseas

Plan to have multiple sources of money available while abroad. This ensures that if a problem arises with an account or card, you have access to other funds.

ATM Cards

ATM cards are the easiest way to access cash abroad, though transaction fees may apply, and you cannot assume that cash machines will always be available or will always take your card. You should also be aware of potential scams involving ATM machines, depending on the countries you are visiting.

If you choose to use your ATM card abroad, notify your bank and/or card company to avoid having your account frozen (include your travel dates, location, and any layovers). You will need a four-digit PIN number in order to take out cash. Also, check with them to find out exactly how your cards might work overseas. Questions you should ask include:

- What is the daily limit for withdrawals?
- What is the transaction fee? Is it a percentage of the withdrawal or is there a fixed rate?
- Is there a currency exchange fee? If so, how much is this fee?
- What networks do you have access to?

- [VISA](#) or [MasterCard](#) ATM/debit cards have good networks overseas. Both companies have ATM locator sites on their web pages that you might want to check out.

Credit Cards

A growing number of locations will take major U.S. credit cards, which can be handy for emergencies and cash advances. Check your card's policy on currency conversions, including surcharges for cash advances and purchases. Be sure to check your card's grace period for payments and arrange for your monthly bills to be paid.

Be aware that many countries, especially in Europe, are migrating to a Chip and PIN system for credit cards. Each credit card has an internal microchip, and in order to use it, you will need to set up a PIN. Speak with your credit card provider before you leave to alert them of your travel and determine how you will use your credit card abroad.

Cash

Take some of your host country's currency with you (maybe \$100 worth). This way, you will have cash handy when you arrive if paying for entry fees through customs or a taxi from the airport. However, do not exchange most of your money before you leave the U.S.; you usually get the best exchange rates in your host country. Never carry large sums of cash with you or leave cash in an insecure place.

Bank Account

In some countries, you can open an account at a local bank. This may be recommended if you will be on a calendar or academic year program. In many places, this is difficult to do and not recommended for short programs. Ask program alumni or review your materials from your program for advice.

Transferring Funds Overseas

Some ways to receive funds from home after you have left:

- Direct deposits into a bank account to which you have access via an ATM card.
- International money orders or international postal money orders. Postal money orders are purchased and cashed at Post Offices and are inexpensive.
- Cashier's check in the currency of the host country. These can be purchased at many banks. There is usually a service charge of \$25 or more.
- In case of emergencies, money can be wired to a bank in your host city. This is expensive, for both senders and receivers, but the funds usually arrive in 48 to 72 hours (verify with the bank). You will have to give the person wiring the funds the name and address of the bank you want to use. The money is then wired in your name, and you present your passport to pick it up.
- In cases of extreme emergency, the U.S. Department State may be able to assist in securing funds. See [here](#) for more information.

Health

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COVID-19

As you're planning for your time abroad and before paying any program or housing deposits (including independent housing leases), visa fees, flights, etc. consult the [COVID-19 Information on Education Abroad](#) webpage and monitor your CU Boulder email address often for important updates and guidance. Due to the continued fluidity of the current situation and global response to COVID-19, we also recommend continuing to follow the advice of the [CDC](#), [International SOS](#) and local on-site contacts.

Insurance carriers are classifying COVID-19 as a pandemic disease. This means that the threat of COVID-19 is not considered a trigger for security evacuation, trip interruption and trip cancellation benefits. In addition: COVID-19 testing is not covered unless ordered by a doctor out of medical necessity for a traveler experiencing symptoms of COVID-19; Preventative care is not covered; Expenses related to a quarantine are not covered.

Insurance Coverage While Abroad

Accident and Health Insurance

Every participant on a CU Boulder education abroad program is automatically enrolled in Education Abroad's Travel Accident and Sickness insurance coverage, which is a limited accident and health insurance policy. Most students are also covered under another insurance policy through their on-site provider (SAS, ISA, SIT, CIEE, etc.), host country or host university. That insurance usually applies first in case of incidents and the Education Abroad insurance serves as a secondary policy.

In addition to health insurance coverage, the Education Abroad insurance covers evacuation and repatriation in case of medical and non-medical emergencies. To use the Education Abroad insurance, after consulting with on-site staff, you may call [International SOS](#) (+1-215-942-8478) for support. International SOS will advise you on your medical or security questions. If costs are incurred while using the Education Abroad insurance, International SOS will work with the insurance company to cover your expenses.

Key Education Abroad insurance features:

- The cost of insurance is included in the program fee.
- The policy provides benefits often not available in your personal coverage.
- The Education Abroad insurance is managed by a third party administrator that processes claims for the insurance company.
- The insurance policy and contact information can be accessed on the [CU Boulder Education Abroad Health Insurance Policy & Claim Form](#) page.

Standard Coverage Dates (excluding Global Intensive and International Travel Registration programs)

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Summer Programs | May 1 – August 31 |
| Fall Programs | August 1 – January 31* |
| Academic Year Programs | August 1 – August 31 (following year)* |
| Spring Programs | January 1 – August 31** |
| Winter Programs | January 1 – January 31*** |

** Fall/AY programs that start in late June/July will have health insurance coverage beginning the 1st day of the month in which the program begins, e.g. if the start date is June 23, coverage begins on June 1st.*

*** Spring programs that start in late December will have health insurance coverage beginning December 1st.*

**** Winter programs that start in December will have health insurance coverage extended start December.*

Global Intensive Coverage Dates:

Students will receive one month of coverage. Start and end dates depend on specific program dates.

International Travel Registration Coverage Dates:

Participants will have customized insurance dates based on their programs; refer to your health & safety information email.

Evacuation and Repatriation Coverage

If you become very ill or are badly injured while abroad and require transportation to the nearest medical facility, which may be outside of your host country, this service is covered under your accident and health insurance policy.

Repatriation is also covered to send a body home in the event of a death.

Reimbursement Claims

In the event you sought medical treatment abroad for a minor accident or sickness and paid out of pocket for that treatment, please follow the instructions below to seek reimbursement for your claim:

- Complete your [Claim Form](#)
- Save copies of all itemized doctors' bills and be sure to include proof of payment (receipts)
- Scan and email everything to Global@gallagherstudent.com

Deciding Whether to Keep Your Current Health Insurance Coverage

Since insurance coverage is provided while you are on your program abroad, you may be thinking about dropping your current coverage. **We recommend that you maintain Affordable Care Act-compliant health insurance at all times (even during your time out of the country).** You should contact your insurance provider with any questions about your specific policy. Education Abroad does not sell insurance or in any way guarantee payment of benefits. Do not make any assumptions about your coverage and maintain coverage at all times while you are in the U.S., before, during, and after your program.

The CU [Student Gold Health Insurance Plan](#) (offered through CU's Medical Services), unlike many parental policies, will cover illness and/or accidents outside the U.S. at an in-network coverage level. Additionally, the Student Gold Plan has evacuation and repatriation benefits, not typical on any parent plan, and often required to obtain visas.

If you choose to continue your Gold CU Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP), you must speak with the Health & Wellness Student Insurance Department to complete a manual enrollment. Students enrolled in Education Abroad are not automatically enrolled in SHIP, nor does SHIP carryover to a student's spring account when on education abroad for the spring term. The Student Insurance Department is located in the Wardenburg Health Center, room 332. For more information about enrolling in SHIP, please email studentinsurance@colorado.edu or call 303-492-5107.

Leaving the Program Early

If you need to leave the program early, you may qualify to use the trip interruption benefit in CU Education Abroad Health Insurance policy. The insurance policy and contact information can be accessed on the [CU Boulder Education Abroad Health Insurance Policy & Claim Form](#) page.

In the event of dismissal, your Education Abroad Travel Accident and Sickness insurance coverage may be cancelled. While our insurance provider does not offer individual insurance policies, you may visit <http://www.insuremytrip.com/> to research possible coverage for the remainder of the stay abroad. Please understand these policies may not cover you while you are in your home country.

International SOS Health and Safety Resources

As a student at the University of Colorado Boulder, you have access to location-specific health and safety information provided by International SOS.

To access International SOS's resources:

1. Go to the [International SOS Website](#)
2. Once you log in, you will have access to country-specific reports (see the blue box on the left-hand side)

In addition to these country reports, you can request a customized safety briefing for a specific itinerary (i.e. for an independent trip over a break or long weekend). This is a free service that we recommend. To request a report, send an email with your itinerary to securitysupport@intlsos-cr.com. You may use this [email template](#) to do so.

Health Preparations

Recommended Medical Exams

Have a general physical exam and a dental checkup if you haven't had one recently. You should be up to date on all vaccinations necessary for travel in your program location.

If pertinent, have a gynecological checkup. If you plan to take prescription birth control pills, ask your medical provider about getting a large enough supply to last the duration of your time overseas. International SOS can answer questions you may have about taking large supplies of medication abroad.

If you wear glasses or contacts, bring a typed copy of your prescription and an extra pair of glasses and/or a sufficient supply of contacts. In some countries, contact solution is difficult to come by or requires a prescription; ask your program provider or alumni if you need to bring your own supply.

Important medical information (i.e. allergies, diabetes, etc.) should be translated into the language of your host country.

You should also contact [International SOS](#) prior to departure to learn about health and safety in your host country.

Prescriptions

If you take prescription medication, speak with your medical provider. Some medications may not be available in your host country, may only be available in generic form, or may even be illegal to possess. This is especially true of medications for psychological conditions and ADD/ADHD.

We advise that you consult the U.S. Department of State's [Health Information for Americans Abroad](#) page, which includes advice about traveling and prescription medication. You should contact [International SOS](#) to determine if the prescription medication you plan to bring abroad is legal in your host country.

Prescription medications vary from country to country in name, potency, and purity, and they may NOT be sent to you through international mail.

If possible, take enough medication to last the whole time you are abroad (some doctors and/or insurance companies will not permit you to obtain a large supply in advance). Keep all medication in its original container. Ask your provider for a letter to present to customs officials and overseas medical providers explaining what you need to take, including a generic breakdown (not just a generic name) of the medication.

In some countries, medications that require a prescription in the U.S. are available over-the-counter and for very little cost. It can be tempting to stock up when the opportunity presents itself. However, some FDA-approved medications have the same brand names as medications that are marketed outside the U.S. but contain completely different active ingredients. No international regulatory system exists to ensure that new brand names are sufficiently different from existing ones elsewhere in the world. This could lead to confusion by pharmacists who are filling prescriptions from outside their country.

Be aware that a Colorado medical marijuana prescription is not valid outside of Colorado. Additionally, laws in the State of Colorado, including the legalization of marijuana, do not apply

anywhere outside of the State, including abroad. In many countries, marijuana laws are strictly enforced and can carry serious consequences. Travelers with a U.S. prescription for marijuana can be arrested, prosecuted, and/or deported, if in possession of an illegal substance.

First Aid Kit

Take a small first aid kit (i.e. antibiotic ointment, Band-Aids, pain relievers) and over-the-counter medications for colds, allergies, stomach upset/diarrhea, etc.

Vaccinations

Check with reliable authorities to find out what vaccinations are currently recommended for your program site. Don't delay since you may need several shots taken weeks apart.

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) at (404) 332-4559
- [CU Medical Services Travel Clinic](#) at (303) 492-5432
 - The cost for vaccinations will vary depending on whether or you have the CU Gold plan. Contact Medical Services for information prior to any visit, and be sure to make an appointment if you do intend to use their vaccination services.
- [International SOS](#) at +1-215-942-8478
- Your program organization's pre-departure materials

In addition to the required travel vaccinations, consider getting a flu shot (influenza vaccine). Remember that your immune system may be weakened due to travel and exposure to new germs, making you vulnerable to the flu.

International Certificate of Vaccinations

Some countries require proof of certain immunizations for entry. The [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) has an International Certificate of Vaccinations you can use to maintain a record of your immunizations. You can get this certificate from many physicians, passport offices, or the local Department of Health. You may be asked to present it upon entry to countries that have immunization requirements.

Medical Services Travel Clinic

If you are a fee-paying, CU Boulder student, you can schedule a travel consultation appointment at the [Travel Clinic](#) at [Wardenburg Health Center](#) to prepare for your program. Wardenburg staff can assess individual needs and provide customized advice for your destination, recommend and administer vaccinations, prescribe anti-malaria medications if needed, and complete any required medical clearance paperwork.

Plan ahead, and be sure to make an appointment (you can't drop in). If your program or visa application requires medical paperwork and/or a medical exam, you must schedule an appointment at least two weeks in advance by calling (303) 492-5432. When scheduling your appointment, you will be asked which countries you are planning to visit. Please allow at least one hour for your travel appointment.

For more information on university health insurance coverage, pricing, and travel services, visit the [Travel Clinic](#) website.

Additional Travel Clinic Options & Information

[Passport Health](#) has locations throughout the U.S., including Boulder and Denver.

[Worldwide Travel Clinic at Boulder Community Hospital](#).

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#): Travel precautions, vaccine recommendations, and advice for your destination.

Disclosure of Medical and Disability Needs

Your program might ask you to complete a medical and disability needs form. If they do not ask for a medical and disability needs form, we would recommend, per your comfort level, disclosing this information to your program/group leader. Knowing your medical and disability needs in advance can better enable a healthy, safe, and successful experience. This information will be treated confidentially and shared only with select staff on a need-to-know basis. Consider reporting the following:

- Temporary medical conditions (broken bones, recovering from surgery, etc.)
- Mental health information
- Medications currently taking and/or you will take while abroad
- Disabilities and academic/housing related accommodations
- Allergies and/or dietary restrictions
- Need to see health professional while abroad
- Other

While Abroad

Continuing Treatment

If you will need to see a medical provider on a regular basis, inform your program before you leave. Inform the on-site contacts upon arrival so they will be prepared if you have a medical emergency and need fast assistance.

Take a complete medical record to your program site, along with medical and prescription histories. Know your blood type.

You can also call International SOS prior to departure and provide information about your medical history and destination. The International SOS medical staff will be able to work with you to have your information stored and set up a case. You can provide the case number to the on-site contacts and should an issue arise, you or the staff can call International SOS and International SOS can work with you to coordinate your care. Please note, the information you provide is private.

If You Become Sick While Abroad

Make sure you know who to call and where to go in case of any health concerns that come up. If you become ill, get proper care. Don't hesitate to tell your host family or on-site contacts if you are ill, and don't be afraid to visit a doctor or hospital just because you don't speak the language fluently.

Mental Health

Don't underestimate the impact that cultural adjustment or being in a new environment can have on your mental health. Being away from support networks, such as family and friends, can also be more stressful than expected. Think now about how you handle stress, and plan a healthy response during your time abroad. Start an exercise program, get together with new friends, plan excursions, listen to music, get

involved in a volunteer activity, find a conversation partner, or join a club. If you are having problems with adjustment, talk to the program staff for recommendations and advice. They have all had experience with the challenges of cultural adjustment.

Also, students who have experienced depression or anxiety in the past sometimes find that this can worsen while abroad (it varies from student-to-student). This is due to new and different situations or stressors such as cultural adjustment (commonly referred to as "culture shock"). Studying abroad can be different than traveling abroad and can affect students in ways that they had not anticipated. While we hope that your depression or anxiety does not worsen while abroad, it is best to plan for what you can do if this happens. Prior to departure, we encourage you to speak with your therapist specifically about issues such as cultural adjustment and homesickness, and to determine a course of action should your depression worsen while abroad. If you are taking any kind of medication, you should also speak with your psychiatrist/medical provider about filling prescriptions.

The University of Michigan has created a great [guide to managing stressors](#) while abroad that we recommend.

Mental Health Resources Abroad

On-site program staff are there to ensure your success abroad and should be your first go-to if you feel extra support would be helpful. If applicable, they may refer you to a local therapist/psychiatrist. International SOS +(1-215-942-8478) can connect you with a counselor as well.

While abroad, students have access to mental health support through [International SOS](#). To access these services, students may call International SOS at +1-215-942-8478.

Additionally, CU Boulder students have access to SilverCloud, which is a completely confidential internet-based platform that delivers self-paced online therapeutic and education programs. A variety of programs aim to offer information and support for students experiencing problems related to mental health.

Jet Lag

You should expect to feel jet lag on arrival overseas. It will take a few days for your system to adjust to the time and climate changes, so pace yourself.

To avoid the worst effects of jet lag, get plenty of sleep before your trip, and drink lots of fluids before and during the flight to prevent dehydration. Avoid caffeine and alcohol, and eat light meals on the plane. Here are a couple good resources on conquering jet lag:

- [Rick Steve's Travel Tips](#)
- [Health.com Jet Lag](#)

Protection, Contraception and STIs

Protection and Contraception

Regarding being prepared for sexual contact: To minimize your risk of contracting a sexually transmitted infection (STI), use latex barriers, such as condoms or dental dams. To prevent pregnancy, use a reliable method of contraception, such as condoms or hormonal birth control pills.

You should bring STI protection and/or contraception (if relevant) with you abroad. Each country has a different policy regarding their availability.

HIV/AIDS

Some countries require you to have an HIV test after arrival to get a residency permit. If you are at risk for HIV, have a test done well in advance of your departure. Please note that some countries restrict the entry of people with HIV. Consult the [Factsheet: Travel Restrictions for People with HIV](#) for more information.

If you are traveling in a region where HIV is widespread, you should take additional precautions; the most obvious of these is avoiding sexual contact, or if you do engage in sexual contact, practicing safe sex.

HIV can also be transmitted through blood, and you should be extra cautious in any situation involving needles, such as medical procedures, acupuncture, and tattooing. Needles for blood tests or injections must be sterile, preferably disposable, and come pre-packaged in a sealed container. If in doubt, ask how the equipment has been sterilized. In some countries, you can buy needles and syringes and take them to the hospital for your own use.

For more information, see the [CDC fact sheet](#) on HIV and AIDS.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is much more infectious than HIV and also has no cure. The disease is endemic in Africa, the Pacific Islands, Asia and the Amazon region of South America. You should get the vaccine series before you leave.

Food Allergies & Dietary Restrictions

Be careful what and where you eat, especially in developing countries or if you have a sensitive stomach. Make sure that all fruit and vegetables are peeled and that all foods are thoroughly cooked. Always wash your hands before eating.

If you are unsure about the safety of local water, drink bottled water. Avoid ice cubes or drinks made with ice if the local water is unsafe. Wash produce with boiled water.

Drink plenty of liquids, such as purified water or clear juices, and avoid alcoholic drinks or caffeinated sodas as these are dehydrating.

Take over-the-counter anti-diarrhea medicine for normal traveler's diarrhea, but if the condition lasts more than 24 hours, seek medical attention.

Get a food allergy translation card or app online so you can communicate about your allergies in your host country language.

Celiac Disease and Gluten-Free Diets

If you are a gluten-sensitive traveler, you may wish to do research ahead of your program abroad to determine how you may need to adapt your diet in your host country. The following websites can provide resources, suggestions, and advice that may be helpful in making your preparations:

- [Celiac Disease Awareness Campaign](#)
- [Celiac Travel](#)
- [Gluten-Free Traveler](#)
- [Select Wisely](#)

When You Come Home

If you become sick after returning, tell your health care provider that you have traveled outside of the U.S. Because some diseases have a long incubation period, you may not be sick until after you return. Schedule a tuberculosis skin test for three months after your return if you were in [a risk area](#). If you were exposed to tuberculosis while abroad, you wouldn't necessarily be sick. Testing is the only way to prevent serious problems later.

International SOS is a great resource to use after returning to the U.S. as well.

Also, you may need to complete any immunization series (such as Hepatitis A or B) that you started before travel.

Additional Resources

You can find additional resources on how to stay healthy overseas in the [Appendix](#).

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Thinking about Safety: a Partnership

Your personal safety while you are away from home is very important to you, your friends and family, and to Education Abroad. Travel to another country is not inherently dangerous, but there are risks for participants that are unique to an overseas setting. When an incident occurs, the impact on participants and their loved ones is often more profound because of the unfamiliar context and the distance that separates students from their friends and families.

Education Abroad is committed to promoting a safe support system and to offering reliable information on potential risks and necessary precautions; however, you exercise choice in following these precautions.

The best way to prepare for a healthy and safe experience abroad is to inform yourself and discuss basic health and safety issues with your family, friends, and Education Abroad staff before leaving the U.S. Education Abroad views safety and security as a partnership with you.

Participant Responsibilities

You are ultimately responsible for your own safety. There are basic precautions you should take before you go abroad and while you are outside of the U.S. Do your homework, get to know the culture of your host country before you go, and be aware of the resources available to you. You should:

- Accept responsibility for, and consequences of, your own decisions and actions.
- Consider your own physical and mental health and safety needs when committing to a program abroad.
- Consider disclosing accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy experience abroad.
- Read and carefully consider all materials given to you that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, and cultural conditions in your host country. Participate fully in orientations.
- Follow the program policies for keeping on-site contacts informed of your whereabouts and wellbeing.
- Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health, safety, or security risks when making daily decisions.
- Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country. Be sure to know the in-country equivalent of 911.
- Provide your friends or family with emergency contact information. Keep them informed of any travel away from the program site.
- Be alert, be respectful, be informed, and use your common sense.

The Role of Education Abroad

The office adheres to the following practices regarding its programs:

- We monitor U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories and the Center for Disease Control to assess health, safety, and security conditions at our program sites.
- We provide health, safety, and security information so participants can make informed decisions while abroad.
- We provide orientations that include information on how to deal with health, safety, and security issues, potential risks, and appropriate emergency responses.
- We provide limited accident and health insurance coverage, including coverage for emergency evacuation and repatriation.
- We provide the Travel Tracker system for Exchange programs, Global Seminars and Global Intensives. This mobile app will keep students informed of critical events that may affect them while

abroad and will allow CU Boulder to better assist in the event of an emergency. For students on programs other than the ones listed above, the host organization may provide a similar service on-site.

- We use care when contracting with any third party to provide products or services.
- We communicate applicable codes of conduct and the consequences of noncompliance to participants. We take appropriate action when we become aware of violations. In cases of serious health problems, injury, or other significant health and safety incidents, we maintain good communication with all who need to be informed.

Education Abroad cannot:

1. Guarantee or assure your safety or eliminate all risks while abroad.
2. Monitor or control all of your daily personal decisions, choices, and activities.
3. Guarantee that you will not engage in illegal or dangerous activities.
4. Ensure that U.S. standards of medical care or the process to receive care will be available (even in developed countries).
5. Ensure that U.S. standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings; nor can we provide or pay for legal representation for you.

Involving Your Parents/Guardians and Families

Parents or guardians and families can play an important role by helping make decisions and, sometimes, by influencing behavior overseas. Encourage your loved ones to take an active part in ensuring your safety abroad.

Discuss your emergency plan with your family or friends before you go so that they are familiar with all emergency procedures.

Keep in touch with your loved ones. If you are traveling away from your host city, make sure to share your travel plans in order to prevent any undue alarm.

Make sure that your emergency contacts have up-to-date passports. This will ensure that, in case of illness or injury, they can get to you abroad as quickly as possible.

Take Precautions Abroad to Reduce Risks

There are a number of precautions you should take to better ensure a safe and healthy experience. Remember, as a foreigner, you may be subject to increased scrutiny. Get to know the local culture, be aware of your surroundings, and use your common sense.

General Best Practices

Educate Yourself about Your Host Country

Read newspapers and listen to news (both local and international). Know what's going on in the world. Keep track of travel advisories in your region by checking with program staff or visiting the U.S. Department of State [International Travel Information](https://travel.state.gov) website, the [U.S. Study Abroad Office](https://studyabroad.state.gov) website, and <http://studentsabroad.state.gov/>.

Learn how to ask for help in the local language of every country you visit, and know what to do in case of emergency. Many countries have the [equivalent of 911](#).

Call [International SOS](#) prior to departure to learn how to reduce risks in your host country. Additionally, you can request a customized safety briefing for a specific itinerary (i.e. for an independent trip over a break or long weekend). This is a free service that we recommend. To request a report, send an email with your itinerary to securitysupport@intlsos-cr.com. You may use this [email template](#) to do so.

Having trouble thinking about what to ask? Here are some suggestions:

Medical:

- Do I need a vaccination before traveling to these countries? Is there anything additional if I'll also be traveling to remote areas?
- I'm taking medication for ADHD (or another condition). What happens if I run out? How should I plan?
- I have a pre-existing condition – How can I manage this while I'm abroad?
- Can you recommend a good English speaking general practitioner and/or specialist I can go to if I get sick when I'm studying abroad?
- Is the medication I need accessible in the countries I am traveling to?
- Will the countries' customs allow me to bring in the quantity and type of medication I need for my entire stay?
- How can I get access to mental health support while abroad?

Security and travel:

- Is it safe for me to walk around the area I'm traveling to at night?
- I saw something on the news about this area I'm traveling to – can you provide more information and should I be concerned about the security situation?
- I have checked the International SOS app and see there are warnings or alerts I need to know about where I will be studying or doing side travel, can I get more information about safe hotels and safe routes to take?
- What are some tips to avoid common scams and petty theft?
- I am LGBTQ/a student of color/religious, can you provide advice for my time abroad?

Prepare to Live in a New Environment

You may experience conditions associated with dense urban living anywhere in the world: increased crime, pollution, sexual harassment, and standards of living that are not comparable to life at home. You will need to practice the same safety tips you would in any place you are not familiar with. The more you learn now about these realities, the better prepared you will be to handle the challenges and rewards of living abroad.

Pay Attention to Your Actions and U.S.-themed Appearance

Pay attention to your surroundings. Plan your route and walk confidently. Pedestrians can be at risk, so be especially careful crossing the street. Never assume that you have the right of way.

As a foreigner, you may be subject to increased scrutiny. Try to avoid drawing attention to yourself: avoid looking like a U.S.-American tourist, speaking loudly, etc.

Especially in cities with lots of tourists, look at maps and metro guides before leaving your residence.

If you are being followed, feel threatened, or are lost, go into a store, restaurant, or other public area. Know what feels comfortable and what doesn't. If your instincts tell you a situation is not right, trust them and move along.

Use Common Sense

The same rules of being safe in the U.S. apply while abroad. If you wouldn't do something at home, don't do it abroad.

Avoid walking alone at night. Stay in well-lit, well-trafficked areas. If you plan to travel, go with a friend. Do not hitchhike. Avoid arguments, especially in public places. Be extra cautious if you have been drinking.

Traveling to Other Regions or Countries

Always tell someone where you are going, including your program's on-site contacts. Ensure that your visa will allow you to return to your host country. Whenever possible, avoid traveling alone.

Neighboring countries can be very different culturally and politically. Make sure you do your research and prepare, as you did before entering your host country. The U.S. Department of State provides safety and security information for every country of the world to help you assess the risks of travel. Some countries (or areas of the country) are considered high-risk, so travel to those countries/regions should be carefully considered. CU Boulder and/or your on-site contacts may place restrictions on travel depending on the risks associated with those countries/regions. On any program, CU Boulder strongly discourages independent student travel to countries/regions assigned a Level 3 or Level 4 Travel Advisory by the U.S. Department of State.

Make a list of important telephone numbers and addresses in the locations you will visit. Write down the telephone number of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Socializing Abroad

A truly wonderful part of travel abroad is making friends with people from different cultures. It is fun and educational to exchange ideas and find common ground with people who speak a different language and/or come from a different background. However, there can be risks because of cultural differences and misperceptions about and from U.S.-Americans.

Given the potential additional detriments of language problems or unfair stereotypes, you could unwittingly encounter trouble. Add alcohol or drugs to cloud your judgment, and you could find yourself in a dangerous situation, including the potential threat of a physical or sexual assault. This is true for everyone.

If you find yourself in an encounter that makes you nervous, do what you can to get out of the situation. This may mean overcoming your own concerns about embarrassing yourself or offending others. Keep in mind that dangerous situations are often unpredictable, and what seems like a harmless situation can turn into a threat quickly and without much warning. Do what you can to protect yourself, but you can't always prevent a bad outcome.

While rare, just like in the U.S., it is possible to encounter incapacitating drugs in nightlife abroad. The most common scenario involves an offender secretly dissolving a pill into a victim's drink. In order to protect yourself, don't drink anything you did not open yourself or that you did not see being poured, never leave your drink unattended, and do not accept drinks from anyone you don't know. Make sure you are always with friends and that your cell phone is charged. If you suspect you have been drugged, get help immediately.

CU takes any form of harm very seriously, regardless of the relationship of those involved or the circumstances surrounding an incident. Please remember that you can always get assistance by reaching out to your on-site contacts or CU Education Abroad for support in the event of any incident. If you have been a victim of sexual misconduct, please review the assistance and reporting options provided by the [CU Office of Equity & Compliance](#).

Dating and Relationships

Take time to learn about cultural norms that govern relationship roles and dating. Know that what is seen in the U.S. as casual dating may be seen in some countries as one step away from a lifetime commitment. Some behavior that is acceptable at home may be viewed as provocative overseas.

When considering a romantic relationship, be aware that you may not know very much about appropriate and expected behavior. Having a clear sense of what you want and don't want and communicating this to a potential partner can help ensure that your experiences are within your boundaries. Language barriers and cultural expectations can make this type of communication more difficult but increase its importance.

If you use dating apps before or during your time abroad, in addition to the common risks associated with online dating, please also be aware of the following:

- The same app could be used for different purposes in your host country.
- The vocabulary used in online dating apps in your host country may not have the same meaning as it does in the U.S. This may apply even if English is being used.
- As in the U.S., you don't always know what the intentions of a person really are or if a person is real. Be more cautious of meeting people alone and try to tell friends where you are going if meeting someone.

Check with your on-site support for clarification regarding dating and relationships in your host country.

Look Out for Each Other

Help your friends make safe choices when you're out and about. If you notice a concerning change in a friend's behavior or mood over time, don't hesitate to talk to on-site staff about your concerns as well. Friends alerting staff to a student who is struggling can often prevent a potentially dangerous situation from escalating.

Safety Considerations for Women

From the [U.S. Department of State](#):

Many women travel safely each year without incident. However, when it comes to health and security, women travelers are more likely to be affected by religious and cultural beliefs of the foreign countries they visit. The truth is that women face greater obstacles, especially when travelling alone.

Before You Go

Know the location of the U.S. embassy or consulate for your destination.

Research Your Destination

Visit the Department of State's official website, [Travel.State.Gov](#), where you will find country-specific information for every country of the world and contact information for the closest U.S. embassy and/or consulate. You will also find information about visa requirements, crime and security conditions, health and medical considerations, local laws, areas to avoid, and more. Most foreign countries require a valid passport to enter and leave. There are countries that may require a woman to have a male escort to leave a country.

Pack Accordingly

Each country that you visit will have different local laws and customs regarding women's clothing and appearance. For example, what you wear in a mall in Mexico might not be acceptable in a mall in the United Arab Emirates.

Be Aware of Your Surroundings

It is important for women travelers to understand the cultural norms of the country they will be visiting. Pay attention to local laws and customs, because they can be quite different from the U.S., especially if you intend to travel alone. Avoid dark, isolated areas at night.

The safety of public transportation varies from country to country. In many places, informal taxis or mini-buses pose particular threats to people unfamiliar with the local conditions, especially to women traveling alone. Find out from reliable sources, such as local authorities or tourism officials, what is and is not safe.

Create Boundaries

Be cautious when sharing information about your plans and itinerary with strangers. Do not feel the need to be overly polite if someone bothers you. While it may seem rude to be unfriendly to a stranger, creating boundaries to protect yourself is important. Use facial expressions, body language, and a firm voice to fend off any unwanted attention.

LGBTQIA Concerns

We recognize that not every LGBTQIA participant is going to come out to program contacts or other participants while abroad. If you identify as LGBTQIA, we advise you to learn about your host country's stance on those identities before you travel. Some countries are more accepting than others, and some countries have drastic laws concerning same-sex behavior, gender expression and transgender identification. If you identify as transgender, please disclose this information if your identification documents have a gender other than how you present yourself, so we can work through possible events. If you feel comfortable and would like more resources and support on these issues, please let your on-site contacts or CU Education Abroad know about your concerns.

Also, refer to the [Access & Inclusion section](#) below for more resources.

Hate Speech & Discrimination Abroad

Unfortunately, populist rhetoric supporting hatred of non-nationals and minorities and incidents of hate speech are present around the world. Hate speech can be directed at travelers based off stereotypes that are outside of an individual's control (skin color, religious symbols or clothing, hairstyles, nationality, accents, etc.).

As an education abroad student, you may find yourself or your peers confronted with hate speech. Make sure to research the current climate in your host country, ask program alumni and program staff for their feedback and advice at pre-departure orientation, and again during the on-site orientation. Work with your local program contacts to find effective and culturally appropriate ways to address situations that keep everyone safe. In the event that someone starts making racist, sexist, or otherwise hateful messages, do your best to remove yourself from the situation and get into a public safe space as soon as possible. Never risk or compromise your health or safety by being confrontational. If you can, write down any and all the details of the incident including the perpetrator's gender, age, height, race, weight, clothes and other distinguishing characteristics, as well as any biased comments that were made. Report it to your onsite program staff as soon as possible as they will be able to direct you to the appropriate next step and provide you with resources to help you process what happened.

Please note that upon notification of a hate speech incident, CU Education Abroad advisors are required to notify the [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#) who will then work with students to coordinate the provision of accommodations, safety measures, and interim remedies and connect individuals with support services.

Demonstrations and Protests

It is important that you do not participate in strikes or demonstrations and that you abide by the regulations of the host institution and laws of the country. Although strikes and demonstrations may occur in your host country, be aware that as a foreigner participating in political activities abroad you can be arrested and/or deported. The local constitutions of many countries around the world prohibit political activities by foreigners.

You are urged to avoid the areas of demonstrations, if possible, and to exercise caution if you are within the vicinity of any demonstrations. Anti-U.S. sentiments may be expressed at some political events, and even demonstrations that are intended to be peaceful can sometimes turn violent. You don't want to be caught in the middle of such situations. Participating in a demonstration or strike might not only cause you physical harm, it might also be harmful to CU's relationship with the host institution or country.

Transportation Safety

Road crashes are the leading cause of tourist death and serious injury worldwide. These far exceed deaths resulting from disease, violence or terrorism. University policy prohibits students from operating motor vehicles of any kind (including, but not limited to, scooters, motorbikes, motorcycles, cars, and airplanes) while participating in an education abroad opportunity. Faculty and staff may not drive vehicles abroad in which students are passengers without consulting Education Abroad and University Risk Management prior to departure from the U.S. to discuss liability, insurance coverage, and risks associated with this activity.

As a result, groups should use public transportation wherever that option exists and is safe. Where vehicles and drivers are hired, groups should use only licensed and appropriately insured/bonded professional drivers and vehicles abroad.

University contracts require certain levels of insurance that might be informative for groups. The U.S. Department of State (DOS) [Road Safety](#) resources should be reviewed. Transportation plans should not include roads that the U.S. DOS recommends avoiding or that are indicated as extra risky at certain times.

Breaking the Law

Each year, 2,500 U.S.-Americans are arrested overseas. One-third of the arrests are on drug-related charges. Many assumed that as U.S. citizens they could not be arrested.

When you are overseas, **you are subject to the laws of that country**. U.S. citizenship gives you no immunity from local laws. Make no assumptions about your "rights;" in many countries, legal processes are quite different.

You may be in a country where the principle of "innocent until proven guilty" is not assumed by the legal system. Penalties for crimes can be much more stringent, bail might not be granted when drugs are involved, evidence obtained illegally may be admissible in court, or the prisoner might not be present at the trial.

Fire Safety

Fire safety standards differ drastically from country to country. No matter where you are staying (in a residence hall, homestay, or hotel), you should be aware of fire danger and have an emergency evacuation plan. Exercise additional caution in hotels and older apartment buildings where fire alarms and sprinklers may not exist. If possible, stay on a low floor, and always know where the exits are.

See more information on fire safety and education abroad on the website of the [JUSTICE Foundation](#).

Personal Information Safety

When traveling with your phone, computer, and other technology devices, it is important to reduce your risk that your personal information can be compromised. [See information](#) on ways to keep your personal information safe before, during, and after your travels abroad in regards to your phone, documents, identification and credit cards.

Additional Resources

You can find links to helpful online resources on Education Abroad's [website](#), including U.S. State Department recommendations for safe travel and resources for LGBTQIA, students of color, students with disabilities, and more. We also highly recommend contacting [International SOS](#) for advice.

Additional resources are linked in the [Appendix](#).

Alcohol and Illegal Drugs

Legal Issues

When traveling overseas, it is important to obey the laws and regulations of the country you are visiting, especially those pertaining to drug and alcohol use. Every year, many U.S.-American travelers are arrested abroad on drug charges or because of their behavior under the influence. Ignorance of the law is no excuse, so be informed. It is **your responsibility** to know the drug laws in a foreign country before you go, because "I didn't know it was illegal" will not get you out of jail.

Be aware that a Colorado medical marijuana prescription is not valid outside of Colorado. Additionally, laws in the State of Colorado, including the legalization of marijuana, do not apply anywhere outside of the State, including abroad. In many countries, marijuana laws are strictly enforced and can carry serious consequences.

The U.S. State Department provides a detailed warning about illegal drugs on its [Student Travel site](#):

"Avoid underage and excessive alcohol consumption. Many arrests, accidents, rape, and other violent crimes have occurred in part due to excessive alcohol consumption. While abroad, driving under the influence and drinking on the street or on public transportation may be considered criminal activities by local authorities, as they would be in many places in the United States.

Don't accept packages from anyone. Some U.S.-Americans think it's a good idea to take advantage of an offer for an all-expenses paid vacation abroad in exchange for carrying a small package in their luggage. If you are caught, ignorance is no excuse. If the package contains illegal drugs or substances, the fact that you didn't know will not reduce the charges. You could miss your flight, coursework, or several years of your life during a stay behind bars.

Don't import, purchase, use, or have drugs in your possession. Even if you have a doctor's written prescription for medical marijuana in the U.S., it is illegal to travel with any amount of marijuana or marijuana-containing products. Drug charges can carry severe consequences, including imprisonment without bail for up to a year before a case is tried, physical abuse, and sentences ranging from fines and jail time to years of hard labor. Some crimes even carry the penalty of death. Contraband or paraphernalia associated with illegal drug use can also get you in trouble."

Many countries have enacted stringent drug laws with mandatory jail sentences if convicted of possessing even small amounts of illegal substances.

Social Issues: Use vs. Abuse of Alcohol

It will probably be legal for you to purchase and drink alcohol while you are abroad, though you should inquire about the drinking age in each country you visit. In addition to researching the local laws of your host country, you should also research the local cultural norms to understand how the local community interacts with alcohol.

For some participants, use of alcohol is minimal or moderate and may not cause them or others significant concern. However, a certain percentage of participants go abroad with an existing alcohol or drug abuse problem. A widely agreed-upon definition of alcohol or drug abuse is when a person's use interferes with his or her physical, social, or economic functioning. Alcohol abuse can result in poor grades, social conflicts, accidents and injuries, vandalism, and diminished peer respect.

Keep in mind that beer and wine may be stronger (higher alcohol content) in many other countries, or you may be offered homebrewed or unlabeled alcohol of unknown toxicity. Excessive drinking can leave you vulnerable to crime or assault and reduce acceptance by your host culture.

Practical suggestions for responsible drinking include eating a meal before or along with drinking to slow alcohol's effects, sipping drinks to take in alcohol more slowly, spacing out drinks, and limiting the number of drinks you consume. Know your limit, and stick to it. Always use the buddy system while in situations where alcohol may be present so you have a friend to look out for you (and vice versa), and be sure to guard your drink at all times.

Drunk driving, besides the obvious dangers, often carries even heavier penalties outside the U.S. (and remember that university policy prohibits participants from operating motor vehicles of any kind at all times).

Above all, take personal responsibility for your behavior and its consequences. That said, if you do become a victim of a crime, it is not your fault. If you disclose to your on-site contacts or our office, you can get assistance connecting you to resources. If you choose not to formally disclose, we encourage you to seek resources or find the support that is most helpful to you. [For more information on resources, click here.](#)

Cultural Adjustment

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Cultural Adjustment

The best and fastest way to learn about a language and a culture is total immersion; however, the fastest way can often be the most painful. "Cultural adjustment" can cause discomfort. Those who stay the longest and engage most fully will experience the most discomfort. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

Consider Your Situation

If you are in a country where a different language is spoken, you may, at best, have the communication ability of a two-year-old, depending on how much of the language you've studied and how comfortable you are using it. You will also be jet-lagged and exhausted at first.

You'll be far from your home, family, and familiar surroundings; the food is different, the habits are different, and the rules are different.

The result is known as "culture shock," or more appropriately, "cultural adjustment."

Culture shock is the unpleasant disorientation which afflicts everyone who enters a strange world. Culture shock is what happens when your expectations don't match up with reality or when one is bewildered by things taken for granted by those who've grown up in a certain culture.

It is often true that the more eager you are to enter the host culture, the more severe the adjustment may be. Tourists who come only to gaze, taste, and move on are insulated from much of the shock. If you do

not feel any discomfort during the first few weeks of your program, ask yourself if you are really engaging with the culture or simply living your customary life overseas.

Stereotyping is Normal

The human tendency to simplify and organize information into neat categories is quite normal, but the results are damaging if stereotypes become the only definition of what we see and experience.

Stereotyping works both ways. Just as we have simple ideas about people and places we've never seen, others will have the same about us. If all people know of the U.S. comes from re-runs of unrealistic TV shows or the actions of our government, they will have strange ideas about life in the U.S. You may, for example, be asked by adults whether you know the President personally or if you could call Brad Pitt to say hello.

Stereotypes can be negative or positive. For example, people from the U.S. are often characterized as highly independent, competitive, practical, and generous. These can be viewed as positive traits. However, they can also be viewed negatively: that people from the U.S. are only concerned about themselves or money, are incapable of appreciating the intangibles in life, and are naive.

Gender Roles and Expectations

You might not have the same status or role in your host country that you experience here. The cultural definitions of harassment may be different or seem nonexistent. You could find yourself in situations that cause feelings of anxiety, confusion, fear, powerlessness or anger. Conversely, you may feel uncomfortable because you enjoy a different status than the locals simply because you are from elsewhere.

Past participants have found that many host country nationals have a distorted and stereotyped image of U.S.-American women from ads, TV, and movies. Feel free to discuss these issues with your peers and/or your on-site contacts.

Access & Inclusion among Participants in Education Abroad

Going abroad will be one of the most exciting experiences you will ever have; however, everyone is going to encounter some challenges while abroad. Participants who are members of groups traditionally underrepresented in education abroad (students of color, students with disabilities, religious minorities, LGBTQIA students, etc.) might face particular challenges in the host country setting because of assumptions of what a U.S.-American is like. Alternatively, the host country may be more open than the U.S. The good news is you likely already have cross-cultural navigational skills that will be a great asset to you while abroad, and you may be more prepared than you think. We encourage you to talk with CU Boulder [Education Abroad](#) if there is anything you would like to discuss. Although most will not encounter negative situations, no destination is 100% free of discrimination, so it is always better to be prepared for the possibility.

Be patient while facing challenges. You will have less control in when and how you deal with some of these obstacles, but you still have control of how you react to them. Remember why you wanted to go abroad; it may have been to expand yourself academically, personally, and professionally. Don't allow other's actions to prevent you from experiencing the many benefits of education abroad.

Whether you have been faced with discrimination in the U.S. or not, you may know someone who has and how that experience has affected them. Adjust your behavior appropriately to keep yourself safe, but don't lose your own identity in the process. Your own background can place you in a similar challenge. This doesn't mean that everyone will experience discrimination while abroad; however, even if you are not a victim, you might be able to support someone who is.

For more resources, visit our [Access & Inclusion](#) webpage. [Diversity Abroad](#) also offers valuable information on their website, including their [Diversity Abroad Online Pre-departure Learning Module](#) and [Country Specific Diversity Abroad Destination Guides](#).

Some things to consider:

Matters of personal identity will impact all travelers, including you. How you self-identify in the U.S. may or may not be how you self-identify in the context of your new surroundings abroad. How others perceive you will likely change as well. Take time to research and learn about groups in your host country that have been victims of discrimination.

We encourage you to think about the parts that make up your identity (e.g. sister, student, Latino/a, Jewish, male, etc.). Some parts of your identity may be more easily observed by others (e.g. skin color, age, etc.), while other aspects of your identity are less observable (e.g. religious background, sexual orientation, first-generation status, etc.).

How are you going to approach those aspects of your identity with new people that you meet? How will you react if someone comments on a part of your identity in a way that offends you? Will your identity change while you are abroad? Temporarily? For life?

Just as you have multiple parts to your identity, so do the people you will meet. Be conscientious of the multiple identities of the people you meet abroad and try to learn from them. In turn, they will learn the different parts that make up who you are.

Sometimes what may seem like discrimination may just be curiosity. Your challenge is to figure out the difference. You may get stares or questions that come off as offensive. You might be the first person from your background that somebody in your host country has ever met, and they may be innocently assuming things based off stereotypes.

On the other hand, you may also encounter individuals who are intentionally trying to hurt you. Never risk or compromise your health, safety and security abroad by becoming confrontational. This type of response only encourages such a person to continue their actions.

Exploring and experiencing your familiar, new and changing identities abroad will add challenge and richness to your experience. You can also be an ally to other students on your program as they encounter issues – positive or not – with their identities. Before departing, it is recommended that you watch [this video](#) to prepare yourself.

Visit [our website](#) for resources as you prepare to depart.

Thank you to University of Wisconsin-Madison and Diversity Abroad.

Signs of “Culture Shock”

Experiencing the stress of cultural adjustment is a normal part of living in a new environment. The best defense strategy is to recognize the symptoms and find healthy coping mechanisms.

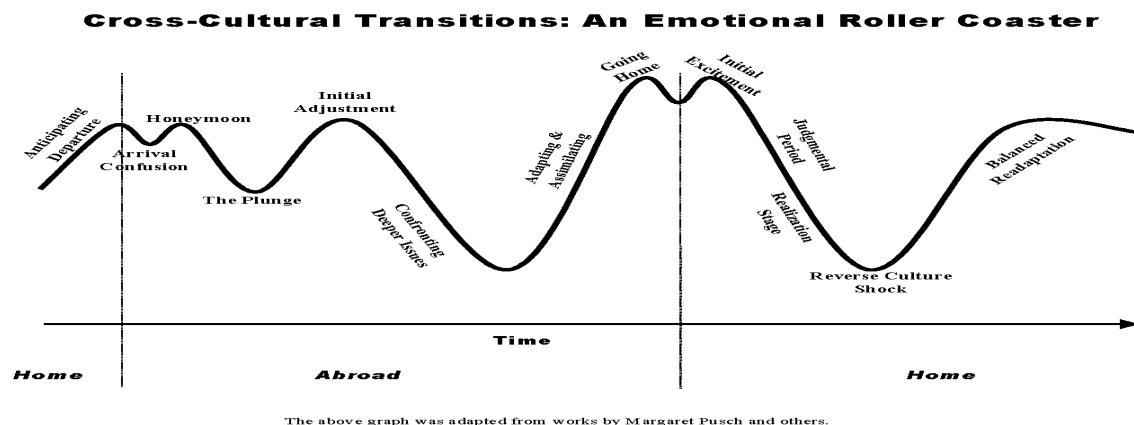
- Be prepared to have a touch of the flu or a miserable cold in the first few weeks. Accept it for what it is: the result of a big change in climate, diet, and routine (not to mention international flights with recycled air!).
- Be prepared to have some moments of sadness and disappointment.
- You will probably miss odd things about life at home, like hamburgers or the ability to buy a tube of toothpaste at midnight.

- Be prepared for some anxiety as you discover the new rules and habits of this new place.
- You may forget you left the U.S. to learn and adapt, which means losing a bit of your cultural identity.

The Cultural Adjustment Cycle

The timing of the cultural adjustment cycle varies by person, the length of time abroad, and how involved one becomes in the culture. Some never go through the cycle because they don't fully engage in the host culture. The experts say that the same thing happens to everyone: Peace Corps volunteers, diplomats, missionaries, soldiers, and foreign students. It happens because it is never easy to live in a new environment.

The chart and text below describe the general stages that many people go through adjusting to another culture and then when returning home (refer to the section on Re-entry or Coming Home Again).



1. **PRE-DEPARTURE ANTICIPATION:** While planning and packing, you may feel exhilarated and nervous. You might lose interest in current activities. You may have some insomnia.
2. **POST-ARRIVAL EXHILARATION:** You may have a heightened sense of enthusiasm; changes in routine are exciting! Some insomnia and stomach queasiness is normal.
3. **EARLY SOJOURN FRUSTRATION:** You might feel impatient or disenchanted with life in your host country, or you might feel restless and irritable. You might rely on familiar activities and foreign friends and start to question your own values and those of your host country. Some minor health problems are normal.
4. **MID-SOJOURN DISCOURAGEMENT:** You may be quite homesick, discouraged, or disoriented and feel hostility towards local people and customs. Colds and headaches are common, as are some stomach problems.
5. **LATE SOJOURN ASSIMILATION AND INTEGRATION:** You begin to reconcile who you are within the local culture and to recognize changes in yourself, including changes in your values. You

experience renewed interest in the host culture and have a more constructive attitude. You feel adapted to the host culture and in equilibrium with the host country. Your health is normal.

Strategies for Coping with Cultural Adjustment

- **Keep a journal:** This helps you keep a sense of perspective and offers an opportunity to vent feelings without having to tell others (read more below).
- **Get your personal life in focus:** If you are leaving a partner behind, you may limit your experience because you are concentrating on a person far away. Similarly, if you attach yourself too strongly to your U.S.-American group, you can also limit your experience.
- **Find a few supportive people:** Don't feel shy about asking for help. Talk to your program coordinator or teachers. They will know what you are going through; they have probably been there themselves.
- **Keep active:** Resist the temptation to withdraw. Keep regular hours. Always go to class. Plan to eat, sleep, and study at about the same time every day. Physical exercise is often the best medicine for anxiety and will help burn off frustration.
- **Be Aware of Alcohol Abuse:** Sometimes the temptation to use alcohol to cope with sadness, isolation, or shyness while abroad can become a true problem. Seek help from on-site contacts if you feel you or a friend may have a problem with alcohol.
- **Explore:** Find a map, strike out on your own, and explore the territory. Observe people closely to pick up subtle nuances about the culture.
- **Visitors from home:** Time learning about your host country will be your most precious possession. If friends or family are planning to visit you, encourage them to wait until a scheduled break or the end of the program.
- **Evaluate your goals:** Remind yourself of the goals you set for the experience. If they were unrealistic, admit it.
- **Hobbies and outside activities:** Engage in hobbies or activities that interest you. Play chess in France, join a rowing team in Italy, play rugby in South Africa, or join a tea ceremony club in Japan.
- **Create Activities to Relax:** Find a place that is comfortable, where you can think and be away from people and culture for an hour or so. Make a cup of tea. Read a chapter of a book. Listen to music. Try to do some things that you enjoy every week.
- **Remember, all this is temporary:** Keep reminding yourself that you will get through this. The satisfaction that you have adjusted to the new culture will be its own reward.
- Above all, **keep your sense of humor!** This is the most important piece of advice that we can give you. If you can do this, you can handle almost anything.

Cultural Identity and the Global Citizen

What You Gain

You probably have a variety of expectations about your upcoming education abroad experience. For many, one outcome is knowledge gained about yourself, your cultural identity, and the transformation towards becoming a globalized citizen.

In learning about your host country's customs, worldviews, religions, communication styles, etc., you will also find yourself examining your own beliefs and values. You will begin to see *how you came to be who you are*. As you learn, you will adapt by combining elements of both cultures into your own value set.

The experience you have depends on many factors, including the cultural identity you bring to your experience. The way you look, speak, and dress, your religion, gender, ethnicity, sexual identity, or whether you are physically challenged all influence how you will approach the experience and how locals will react to you.

Besides getting the opportunity to learn about yourself and your host culture, living in a foreign culture and being an outsider gives you a great opportunity to learn what it's like to be different from the majority culture. If you have never had the experience of being part of a minority, you may gain greater understanding of peoples in the U.S. who are in this situation. These can be very powerful lessons.

We hope you will learn a lot about yourself, your host country and its peoples, and the U.S. in all of its wonderful diversity. We hope, too, that the knowledge you bring home as a world citizen will help you contribute to a country and a world in which we are all free to be different – where others, because they *are* different, are valued and celebrated.

Cultural Re-Adjustment

Strategies for Coping with Cultural Adjustment during Reentry to the U.S.

Be Reflective.

Give some thought to your return and to the types of intellectual and emotional changes that you have undergone as a result of your time abroad.

Understand the Needs of Others.

Be patient with your friends or family, who are trying to understand your experiences. Listen to the changes they underwent while you were away.

Expect to Have Some Negative Feelings about Your "Home" Culture.

You are viewing it, perhaps for the first time, from the perspective of a foreigner. A common tendency is to be highly critical of shortcomings that you did not see before. Remember that there are positive and negative aspects of **all** cultures.

Accentuate the Positive.

Identify what you like about both cultures, and try to incorporate the best aspects of these into your life.

Plug in to International Activities.

Find ways to keep the "international" part of you alive. Become involved in clubs or activities on campus or in the community to maintain your language skills; do volunteer work with ethnic or multicultural groups to use your cross-cultural skills; or host an international student. Check out the [International Activities in the Denver/Boulder Area](#) page on our website.

Use Your Skills.

Use the cross-cultural adaptation skills you developed abroad, e.g. keep active, maintain a sense of humor, find a support group, expect differences, allow yourself to make mistakes, stay flexible during your readjustment home.

Set Goals for Your Development.

Set some long-term goals, which may involve finding ways to return abroad. Both Education Abroad and [Career Services](#) on campus have reference libraries with information on working abroad. Check the [Going Abroad Again](#) page for more information.

Check Out [What's Up with Culture?](#)

This is an interactive program to support and enhance an education abroad student's ability to make successful cultural adjustments. Sections 3 and higher of Module 2 are for returning students. We strongly recommend it.

Comments from Returned Students

"The culture shock started a week or so after I returned. The depression and disorientation came when I realized I wasn't just traveling still. The feeling of having climbed a mountain and then scaled my way down and landed in a huge valley washed over me. I felt I could not relate to anybody – not even my parents."

"Going away for so long makes coming home difficult because you notice things about home that you never did before and you have the mission of telling people about your experiences that they don't understand or appreciate. WARNING: Study abroad may make you severely dislike some things about U.S. culture."

The Returnee Website

For those who want more tips and information on returning home, we have created a website just for returning students that is designed to help you re-adapt to life in the United States and CU Boulder. Check the [Returning to CU](#) page for information on:

- [When and how your courses from abroad will post to your record.](#)
- How to share your experience with others in the community and at CU Boulder
- [International activities in the Denver/Boulder area](#)
- What avenues you can pursue to [go abroad again](#)

If you have any questions or want to discuss your return to campus, please don't hesitate to stop by Education Abroad or email us at AlumniEA@colorado.edu. We would love to hear from you!

Disciplinary Issues & Program Policies

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Expectations

All students sign the 'Personal Conduct Agreement' in MyCUAbroad. The applicable CU Boulder policies include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Review the [Honor Code](#)
- Student Conduct [Policies and Procedures](#)

Education Abroad participants must also comply with all applicable laws and policies of the host institution and the host country. Participants should also remember that they are viewed as representatives of the U.S. as well as the University of Colorado. Students who violate the Student Code of Conduct abroad may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution and adjudicated once they return home.

Academic Conduct

Each participant must abide by the academic policies of the host university and/or education abroad program provider.

Social Conduct

Information regarding standards of acceptable behavior and conduct in the host country(ies) is discussed at pre-departure and on-site orientations and in written pre-departure materials. Participants are expected to be familiar with, and abide by, standards of acceptable conduct and to understand that social behaviors acceptable in a U.S. setting might be highly objectionable abroad. Behavior which violates those standards could harm the university's and/or program provider's relationship with host country(ies) and institution(s) as well as the participants' own health and personal safety.

Alcohol and Drugs

While abroad, participants are expected to adhere to alcohol and drug policies of the program, in addition to the laws of the host country. Please be aware that no alcohol can be served or consumed at any CU program event by any participant regardless of age. If any faculty, staff, or group leaders (including student leaders) are present during an activity, it is considered a CU program event.

Procedure for Handling Disciplinary Action While Abroad

Participants on University of Colorado Boulder education abroad programs are responsible for their personal behavior while in a new country, culture, and educational system. CU Boulder and the host institutions and third-party program providers with whom it affiliates are responsible for maintaining appropriate standards of conduct during the program.

Standards of conduct and social behavior are defined and explained in orientation materials made available to participants after acceptance to a CU Boulder program. These issues, along with the social norms of the country of study, will be further discussed during pre-departure and on-site orientation sessions. Students are expected to watch and read the materials, attend the orientations, and familiarize themselves with these standards of conduct. It is particularly important for students to understand that social behaviors tolerated in the U.S. may be highly offensive in the host culture or university setting.

When you are overseas, you are subject to the laws of that country. U.S. citizenship gives you no immunity from local laws. Make no assumptions about your "rights;" in many countries, legal processes are quite different. Examples:

- You may be in a country where the principle of "innocent until proven guilty" is not assumed by the legal system.
- Penalties for crimes can be much more stringent, bail might not be granted when drugs are involved, evidence obtained illegally may be admissible in court, or the prisoner might not be present at the trial.
- You may be exposed to interrogation, delays before trial and lengthy trials, as well as primitive conditions, mistreatment and solitary confinement.

The University of Colorado cannot assume responsibility for any student apprehended for drug offenses. If you are arrested on a drug charge, the U.S. Consular Officer cannot:

- Demand your immediate release or get you out of jail or the country
- Represent you at trial or give legal counsel
- Pay legal fees and/or fines with U.S. government funds

Emergency Procedures

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Emergencies While Abroad

CU Boulder Education Abroad staff is concerned about your health, safety and wellbeing. This section provides general suggestions of what steps to take in the case of an emergency abroad. *If your on-site program has an emergency protocol, be sure to follow those procedures first.*

Steps to Take in the Event of an Emergency Abroad

While your instinct may be to call your friends or family first, in an actual emergency, you should follow the general guidelines outlined below. This is because your loved ones may be thousands of miles away and not in an immediate position to do anything for you other than offer moral support. We suggest following steps 1 to 3 in the event of an emergency or urgent situation abroad in order to get help in the quickest manner. We also recommend that you discuss this emergency protocol with your emergency contact(s) before you leave.

1. If it is a true medical emergency, contact the local police or medical emergency services in your host country (know the equivalent of 911).
2. Get in touch with the on-site program contacts. Because they are on-site, they can often best assist in the case of emergencies. Information provided by your program will contain contact details for local staff of the program organization or host university's international office.
3. Contact CU Boulder Education Abroad at (303) 492-7741. If our office is closed, call the CU Boulder Education Abroad emergency phone at (303) 653-1671.
4. Contact your friends or family.

The on-site contacts for your program will be able to provide the best assistance in the case of one of the following **non-emergency difficulties**:

- Petty pick-pocketing or theft (as long as no physical injuries occurred)
- Lost or stolen passport
- Problems with your host family or housing abroad
- Problems with your courses abroad

While your on-site contacts may have an emergency plan, you are ultimately responsible for your own safety, so it is important to develop a personal security plan you will use in the event of an emergency. This plan can be simple, but should be thought through before an emergency occurs. For more information on preparing for emergencies abroad, see [the State Department's Students Abroad website](#).

Please note: The CU Boulder Education Abroad staff is required to report any incident of harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct, which includes partner abuse and stalking, to the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) on campus. Each incident might be handled differently, but in general, the OIEC cannot take action unless the allegation is against someone connected to the University of Colorado Boulder. However, the OIEC will provide support resources and can put in place safety measures or offer short-term remedies.

Additional Resources

While you are abroad, you can contact your [Program Manager](#) who can put you in touch with the appropriate resources. You may also contact these on- and off-campus offices directly:

[International SOS](#) 24/7 number: +1-215-942-8478

[Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#) (303) 492-2127

[Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#) (800) 656-4673

[Pathways to Safety International](#) (833) 723-3833

Policy on Cancellation/Suspension of CU Boulder International Programs

Review most updated policy on the cancellation or suspension of CU Boulder international programs involving students here: <http://abroad.colorado.edu/?go=CancellationPolicy>.

Appendix

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Suggested Resource List

Learning more about your host country before you leave is a great idea, both for your own understanding and to make a good impression on the locals.

General Resources

- Your CU Boulder and host organization education abroad orientation materials.
- The Education Abroad [Once Accepted](#) page.
- [CU Boulder Libraries - Chinook On-line Catalog](#). Norlin Library has resources to help you learn about your host country and city, including magazines and newspapers. Many resources are electronic and you can access them even after leaving Boulder.
- The [U.S. Department of State](#) web site provides information on passports, travel safety, and more.
- [U.S. Study Abroad Office](#) (the U.S. Department of State's study-abroad specific information and resources).
- [U.S. Department of State Students Abroad](#).
- [U.S. Department of State Electronic Information Publications](#) provides information on geography, economies, and political systems of foreign countries.
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) provides recommended vaccinations and health precautions for travelers.
- [Overseas Security Advisory Council "Crime & Safety Reports"](#) for each country.
- The New York Times is a great resource to learn more about your host country's geopolitics, business, sports, and culture.
- [The Lonely Planet](#), [Let's Go](#) and [Rough Guides](#) travel guides. These guides have practical information for traveling on a student budget.
- [The Back Door](#) travel guides by [Rick Steves](#). Books on budget travel that provide excellent advice about how you can learn about the places you visit.
- [The Base Trip](#) has a number of helpful travel tips no matter where you are headed.

- [Nomadic Matt](#) is a website with tips on economical travel.
- [Transitions Abroad](#) is a journal with excellent resources and articles on study, work, and educational travel abroad.
- [The University of Michigan Work Abroad](#) page is a good resource if you are preparing to intern abroad.
- [The Electronic Embassy](#) is a frequently updated site that provides direct links to home pages of consulates and embassies. It has information on visa requirements, study, work and travel.
- [Ethical Traveler](#) is a grass-roots alliance with information about being an environmentally conscious traveler, being a good Ambassador abroad, and more.

Health & Safety Resources

- Your state's Department of Health
- [Travel Health Online](#)
- [Passport Health](#)
- [CDC Travelers' Health](#)
- [Health & Safety Tips from CIEE](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)
- [University of Michigan's Guide to Managing Stress & Enhancing Your Experience Abroad](#)
- [Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#)
- [Pathways to Safety International](#)
- [It Happened to Alexa](#)
- [International SOS](#)

Sustainable Travel

- [Carbon Footprint Calculator](#)
- Carbon Offsets Programs:
 - [Climate Trust](#)
 - [Native Energy](#)
 - [TerraPass](#)
- Information on the Carbon Offsets Debate:
 - [Carbon Responsibility Magazine](#)
- [CU Environment Center](#)
- [Ethical Traveler](#)
- National Geographic's [Ultimate Guide to Sustainable Travel](#)
- [Responsible Travel Pledge](#)
- Daily email tips: [Friends of the Earth \(UK\)](#)
- [350 Project](#): an international campaign for worldwide solutions to the climate crisis – find out what the number 350 refers to on their website.

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