
Safety Handbook And Travel Tips

International Travel



GEORGE FOX
UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR STUDY ABROAD



INTRODUCTION

George Fox University is pleased to offer a number of international opportunities for our students. As you embark on one of these experiences we ask that you read and carefully consider the following pages which contain information about international travel and safety. Our goal is for each student to have a safe and rewarding experience in their travels. In particular we trust that you will take the safety suggestions seriously and follow all of the outlined procedures in this handbook and as instructed by your faculty.

Safety is a global, national, regional, and local phenomenon. As Americans have come to realize, the U.S. is no more immune to acts of crime or violence than other parts of the world. The events of September 11th, 2001 and more recently in Paris, Brussels, and El Paso, highlighted the importance of international safety issues. This has increased the need for a U.S. citizenry capable of understanding and working with people from all over the world. Even in this time of added caution and uncertainty, traveling abroad remains a beneficial and relatively safe way to enhance a student's academic program and promote self-growth. The following cautions and tips apply whether your travel is local, across the U.S., or international.

Please understand that it is your responsibility to read and understand what your experience will entail. This will definitely be an exciting time as you travel and engage a different culture. As many of you know, traveling often does not go as expected. We trust that you will be patient and understanding of others as you travel. Have a great trip.



GEORGE FOX
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CENTER FOR STUDY ABROAD

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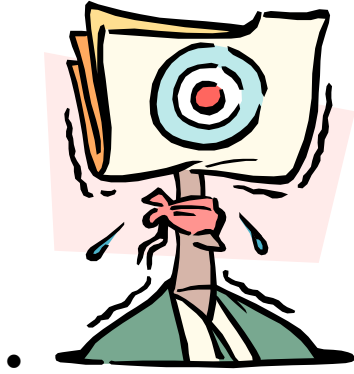


YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

In overseas programs, as in other settings, participants can have a major impact on their own health and safety through the decisions they make before and during the program and by their day-to-day choices and behaviors. Whether you have a successful experience is primarily up to you and your attitude. **Do not go with the expectation that things will be like home. They will not.** They will often times be more frustrating, complicated, difficult, and most certainly more exciting. With the proper attitude and expectations, you can have one of the greatest experiences of your life.

You should:

- Read and carefully consider all materials issued by the Center for Study Abroad and your faculty/staff leaders that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host countries.
- Consider your health and other personal circumstances.
- Be prepared for travel delays, changes in plans, etc. and don't make life difficult for your faculty leaders. Most are well experienced in international travel, but when the best-laid plans go awry, your cooperation is needed.
- Submit accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary to the proper authorities.
- Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for your personal preparation for the programs, and participate fully in class sessions.
- Inform spouses/families, and any others who may need to know, about travel plans. Provide them with your itinerary and emergency contact information.
- Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner. Accept responsibility for your decisions and actions.
- **You are required to read, understand, and sign the University's liability statement.**
- **You must complete and submit the GFU Health and Counseling Center's medical form.**



SECURITY

How not to be a target

Let's face it. There's no way to guarantee your safety. Not to be pessimistic, but you can drive to the nearest fast food place and have an accident on the way. You can lie in your bed and have it shake from an earthquake. There's simply no way to be sure you'll always be safe.

But there are some things you can do to make yourself less vulnerable while traveling. The excitement of travel and the newness of the environment make it easy to become distracted or even careless. You should be cautious and be aware of where you are and what is going on around you at all times. It is also very important to listen to your faculty leaders.

Getting Around

- Be attentive to how you are perceived by local people (do not be paranoid) and behave in a manner that is not provocative or draws unwanted attention.
- It is best not to make yourself a target by wearing clothes that obviously advertise that you are an American. For example, in many societies you may be the only people wearing shorts.
- Do not bring attention to you or your group by being loud. Americans tend to enjoy travel and themselves and sometimes are much louder than those around you.
- We recommend that you do not go out alone, even in the daytime. And always stay in populated, well-trafficked areas. Do NOT travel to areas of a city or country that the faculty leader has labeled as "unsafe." Always share your plans with someone in the group.
- Plan where you are going in advance and be aware of your surroundings. This is not paranoia – it is good common sense. If your instincts tell you a situation is uncomfortable, trust them and move along. If you become lost, ask directions from individuals in authority. If you still need help call or text your faculty leader.
- Use banks and authorized money exchanges. Do not exchange on the black market or on the streets. Learn currency for the country you are in. This will keep you from being a target as you use money.
- The best way to deal with money as you travel internationally is to use ATM's. You should have a debit card from your bank.
- Make sure that you **notify your credit card and debit card bank that you are traveling.** Otherwise they will shut your card down.

- Use ATM's that are well lighted and in an open or populated area.
- Watch for anyone following you or loitering and observing your comings and goings. Keep a mental note of safe places, such as hotels, hospitals, police stations, etc.
- Do not agree to meet a person whom you do not know unless you bring companions. Never meet someone in a secluded place. Be aware that sometimes people from other cultures tend to mistake the friendliness of Americans for romantic interest.
- **Avoid demonstrations, especially in politically volatile countries. What appears peaceful can suddenly become a dangerous situation, and you could be caught in the middle.**
- It is best to stay away from nightclubs and large sporting events. If attending a sporting event, it is best to take the absolute minimum (some cash), and be VERY attentive in tight, populated quarters.
- For your safety, students are NOT allowed to drive a motorized vehicle while on a GFU sponsored trip outside of authorized group activities.
- Some countries drive on the opposite side of the road than the U.S.; be aware of the habit to look to the left and then right. For your safety, you must reverse that reaction in the countries that drive on the "wrong side." Always look both ways!
- Use only official local taxis. If you do use a taxi be empowered to say NO to a taxi cab driver who puts you in peril. If you feel you are being placed in a dangerous situation, speak up and **vigorously** demand different arrangements. Lock taxi doors if possible, especially in strange cities.
- Well-organized, systematic robbery of passengers on trains along popular tourist routes is a serious problem. It is common at night and especially on overnight trains. If you are in a sleeper keep your door locked at all times. If you are not in a lockable compartment, and especially while you're sleeping, keep your valuables tucked under your body, straps twisted around your arm, backpack situated so your leg can be against it.
- Respect local sensitivities to photographing/videotaping especially at airports, custom entry points, and police and government facilities. It is often illegal to take photos in these locations.
- **Do not accept food or drink from strangers.** Criminals have been known to put drugs in food or drink offered to passengers.
- Do not swim at an unfamiliar beach, lake or river unless you are sure it is safe. There might be a dangerous undertow or contamination. If you do not see anyone else in the water, think twice before entering the water.
- It is required (if you have one) that you bring your mobile phone that contains your emergency contact numbers. This will allow your faculty leaders to contact you via text messages, or other phone apps, if there are any emergencies, OR for you to call or text your faculty leader in case of emergency.
- It is recommended that you download **City Maps to Go Pro** (\$3.99) from iTunes or Google Play. You can then download maps from anywhere in the world while you have Wi-Fi. The maps are then on your mobile phone and can be used without being connected to data as long as you have GPS, which is essentially anywhere in the world. Most cell phone carriers have international plans that you may want to purchase so that you can use data on your phone.
- Students are not allowed to travel outside of the local town or city without faculty permission.

How to keep your stuff safe

- Never carry a wallet in your back pocket. Carry purses and shoulder-strap bags very carefully, over your neck, not just over your shoulder. The safest way is to carry a money belt. You can purchase one that goes around your waist or your neck. Both are carried on the inside of clothing.
- Streamline your wallet or purse so as to avoid having to replace everything in case of loss or theft. Never carry more money in a wallet or purse than you will need for a day. That way if your wallet is stolen, you will only lose the day's money.
- Don't wear fine jewelry (don't even bring it).
- Keep an inventory list of items in your luggage, but keep the list in another place. Check your list periodically to verify that nothing's been stolen. Update the list as necessary when you purchase souvenirs. This will enable you to provide the airlines with a complete list, should your luggage be lost.
- The most common street crime is still bump-and-run: thieves work in pairs, one jostling you, then another grabbing your belongings while you're distracted. Prevention techniques: don't use your best luggage, keep your purse or fanny pack covered or in front of you, always keep one hand free, or stand with your back to a wall. Be especially watchful on escalators and in elevators, at subway/train stops and in subway/train cars. Look out especially for the little kids, who are cute as the dickens, but often masters at theft.
- Check the items you're carrying – when you leave the hotel or hostel, when you leave the train, when you leave the park bench.... You can't do this too often.

At your residence

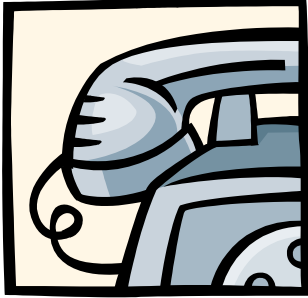
- Keep your hotel/residence doors locked when you are there and when you leave.
- Do not give your room number to persons you do not know. Meet visitors in the lobby.
- Know your exit options (stairway and exit doors).
- Keep valuables in a safe place. This may be different for each place that you stay. When in doubt, carry money and valuables with you. Leaving them in hotel, even behind a locked door, may not be that safe. Use a hotel safe if or when available.
- **Keep your passport in a safe place** and check for it EVERYTIME you leave a hotel or change transportation. It can be very difficult to replace a passport. Always have a copy of your passport as this will speed up the process of replacing it or getting an emergency passport. It is best to email a copy to yourself so that you can always access it.

At the airport

- Arrive early and check in with your faculty/staff leaders. Sometimes groups will be asked to check in together. After you are checked in proceed through security clearance.
- Be watchful at airport metal-detection checkpoints. Thieves may walk through ahead of you, then take your valuables as they clear electronic inspection.
- Put your name and address inside and outside each piece of luggage; bright or fluorescent string or tape around your luggage will make it easier to find. Make sure that you receive and keep a claim check for each piece of luggage that you check.
- Take all electronics, iPhones, cameras, etc., in your carry-on.



- Do not make jokes about terrorism or hijacking; you may find that you are the object of unwanted attention. Respond to all questions asked by security personnel seriously and honestly.
- Never carry packages or letters for strangers or agree to watch a stranger's luggage.
- Do not carry on your person, or in your carry-on luggage anything sharp, or that could be regarded as a weapon. Matches and lighters are forbidden in any baggage.
For a full list of what is allowed and not allowed go to: <https://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/whatcanibring/all>
- On the plane, check under your seat, in the pouch in front of your seat and in the overhead baggage compartment before you exit the plane.
- Be aware of custom restrictions. Some countries do not allow any food. You must throw it away before you go through customs.
- **Containers with LESS than 3.4 (100 mL) ounces of liquids, gels or aerosols may be in carry-on baggage. They should be put in a clear quart-sized plastic bag. Otherwise they must be put in your check-in baggage.**



COMMUNICATING WHILE ABROAD

How to Call Home

In this section, you will learn how to communicate better while abroad. The University has 24-hour access through the campus security office.

The university **highly recommends** (if you have one) that you bring your mobile phone when you travel with the university internationally.

- Students should carry the following information with them at ALL times.
 - • Phone numbers and addresses for all accommodations
 - • Phone number of George Fox University, including international calling code
 - • Phone number of faculty leaders

Emergency Contact Numbers

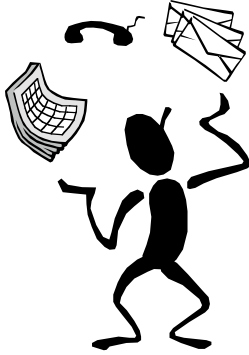
Lynn Scott, Assistant Director, Center for Study Abroad - +1 503-550-3299
lscott@georgefox.edu.

George Fox Security – +1 503-554-2090

+ 1 is the country code for the US. To use the + hold the 0 down or type 00.

- **Phone:** It is important to know the telephone numbers for the program leadership abroad and at George Fox, both during business hours and in case of an emergency. You can often call home for free if you have Wi-Fi. Texts are much cheaper than voice calls.
- **Calling for free.** There are several ways to call for free if you have Wi-Fi.
- **E-Mail:** Probably the least expensive and easiest method of communication for people in different time zones is e-mail. You should be able to access your George Fox email account from most places in the world.
- **Cellular Phone:** Check to make sure your phone works internationally. You might consider purchasing a data plan for your time abroad. CAUTION: If you use data without a plan it is VERY expensive.

- **Mail:** Regular or Express: Postcards and letters are still an important and inexpensive method of communication. Don't forget to bring addresses. The national mail system of other countries may not be as fast as the U.S. mail service, so allow for extra time when mailing from abroad.



TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Keeping It Together

Travel's a challenge, especially international travel. Some of us are more expert at organization and follow-through than others. Here are some tips for everyone.

Proper documentation is required for entry to foreign countries and for re-entry into the U.S. Each country has its own special requirements for entry. Find out what these requirements are and plan in advance; obtaining documents from embassies or consulates can take from one hour up to three months. Getting a new passport may take up to six weeks.

Passport

A passport is the document from your home country that confirms your citizenship. You need a current passport that is valid for at least six months after the time you return home. Allow up to six weeks to receive a U.S. passport. It may take longer for citizens of non-U.S. countries to obtain a passport. Take a photocopy of your passport information page. It will make replacing your passport easier in the event it is lost or stolen.

Visa

A visa is a document, provided by the country where you will be traveling, which confirms your legitimate status as a foreign student (tourist). Not all countries require a visa. A visa is generally attached to a passport, so having a passport is necessary **before** you can apply for a visa. Some visas are free and easy to acquire, while others may cost over \$100 and require a lot of documentation and planning ahead. Your trip leaders will help you with this process.

Money

In most countries it is best to obtain money from ATM's. However, it is a good idea to carry some U.S. cash in case the ATM's do not work. You can convert U.S. cash to foreign cash but this will almost ALWAYS be more expensive than using the ATM. It is not a good idea to carry a lot of cash. If stolen, there is no way to replace it. **Do NOT carry traveler's checks.** It is best to NOT obtain foreign currency in the U.S. It will always be more expensive than getting it in the country you are traveling to.

Debit Cards: Use your debit card if you need cash. You can use your debit card to make a withdrawal at a local bank ATM. It's a good idea to research what your bank charges for foreign ATM withdrawals, however. Some tack on ATM fees of \$1 to \$5, as well as a foreign transaction fee of up to 3 percent. If that's unpalatable, consider opening an account at a bank that doesn't charge these fees, such as a credit union or online bank. It is best not to use a debit card to purchase items. If someone obtains your number they can often hack your bank account and take all of your money.

Credit Cards: If possible charge purchases to a credit card that doesn't charge foreign-transaction fees. That can save you from paying fees that are as much as 3 percent of what you charge. There are many such credit cards available, like the Capital One Visa card, the Alaska Visa Card, or the Chase Sapphire Preferred card, so research which rewards program would make the most sense for your spending habits. If you need to apply for such a card, be sure to do so at least six to eight weeks before your trip to ensure it arrives on time.

Avoid currency kiosks such as those in an airport. They rarely provide favorable rates when you exchange money.

Don't let foreign merchants charge you in U.S. dollars. If a merchant offers to charge your card in U.S. dollars rather than the local currency—also called dynamic currency conversion—don't agree to the offer. The exchange rate is often poor, and the merchant may also add fees on top of that. It's best to leave your charge in the original local currency and let your credit card company provide you with its exchange rate.

Don't use your credit card for a cash advance. Credit card companies may offer competitive exchange rates, but many charge high fees and interest rates. On top of that, the interest on a cash advance begins immediately when you take the money instead of after the typical interest-free grace period for credit card charges.

ALWAYS notify your bank, for each of these cards, so that they will know where you are and will not cancel card usage in the middle of your trip.

Tickets

Most tickets are now electronic, but you should keep documentation just in case the airline loses them. Yes, they do lose your e-tickets at times. It can be very costly to replace an airline ticket.

Prescriptions

Take all of your necessary medications with you in your carry-on. If a medication is unusual or contains narcotics, carry a letter from your doctor attesting to your need to take the drug. It is also a good idea to carry the actual prescription with you.

Confirmation of Vaccination:

For travel in developing countries, you may also be asked to show proof of having received certain vaccinations to travel in regions with endemic diseases, like cholera, yellow fever, etc.

Copies of Travel Documents

Along with your originals, bring a copy of all travel documents and leave copies of your travel documents with a contact in the U.S. and abroad. Remember to keep copies in a safe place, separate from where you keep your original documents. **One of the best ways is to email yourself a scanned copy so that you can access the copy even if you lose your phone.**



HEALTH MATTERS

Managing Your Body's Challenges

There are always the unavoidable illnesses that can spoil a trip. We'll just pray you don't have to cope with any of these, but there are those situations that arise simply because you are traveling. You can help yourself in many ways to have an illness-free trip.

- If you have any special needs, check with the University's Health and Counseling Center and the faculty/staff leader. It is vital that you inform your leaders so that they can help in case of emergency.
- If you have a medical problem while traveling you should inform the faculty/staff leader(s) immediately.
- If you're prone to motion sickness, consider buying Dramamine or having your doctor prescribe motion sickness medication. Or buy wrist bands (these are very effective) designed to apply pressure to your pulse points and relieve motion sickness.
- Stay healthy by eating well and getting sufficient rest. Tell your group leader immediately if you become sick. They can help you if you need to visit a doctor or hospital. You can always ask the hotel personnel where the closest hospital is located. Always take someone with you.
- Consider carrying a simple first-aid kit (or share items with a friend) containing: antacid, anti-diarrheal, gentle laxative, antihistamine, antibiotic (if your doctor will prescribe in advance), motion-sickness remedy, sunscreen, pain reliever, band-aids, Neosporin Plus and gel blister patches.
- Make sure that the local water is safe to drink. Typically, it is fine in Europe and other westernized countries. However, it is often unsafe in many developing countries. Check with appropriate folk before you drink. Sealed soda pop and bottled water is usually quite safe.
- Tips for eating and drinking safely (if traveling outside North America, Europe, New Zealand, or Australia):
 - Eat cooked food while it's still hot. Try to be sure all meat, poultry, seafood and vegetables are fresh and thoroughly cooked.
 - Avoid peeled fruits (or those with broken skin) and raw vegetable salads because of the possibility of contamination.
 - Avoid custards, pastries, and other baked desserts unless hot from the oven. If you need a sweet, stick to wrapped candy or fresh fruit you peel yourself.

- Many travelers will order mineral water in restaurants. Be careful since this can cost a lot of money. Ice cubes may be contaminated. Be sure milk is pasteurized
- Avoid tattoo and body piercing parlors, as their instruments may not be sterile.
- Without access to a car, you will most likely do quite a bit more walking than at home. If you tend to have “fussy feet,” don’t skimp on getting good shoes and breaking them in before you leave. Be sure to take good band-aids or moleskin if you need extra padding.

Immunizations

- All travelers are required to have their childhood immunizations and to obtain any required country specific immunizations. George Fox University requires all travelers to be up to date on Covid-19 vaccines, including boosters as necessary. Check with the Center for Study Abroad for exemptions.

Medical Insurance

- The University does NOT provide separate major medical coverage for students. Typically, your current insurance will also cover you while you are traveling. You are encouraged to check with your insurance carrier about coverage while you are traveling in a foreign country.
- The University does provide **EMERGENCY travel insurance** through **Chubb** for each student. This does NOT replace your medical insurance, but is a supplement in case of emergency.

\$100,000 Emergency Medical Evacuation
100% Repatriation of Remains
\$100,000 Medical Expense
\$50,000 Accidental Death & Dismemberment

- Chubb offers 24-hour Emergency Travel Assistance (Your group leaders will help you with this). You should have your group leader contact Chubb if you become severely sick or injured and they can often locate a local doctor for you. They will give you a claim number which you need to keep so that you can get reimbursed when you get home or in some situations Chubb will pay the provider directly. There is no deductible and you will need receipts.

Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct

George Fox University is committed to providing a Christ-centered community that fosters a safe place to live, work and learn for students, faculty, staff and visitors. We respect and value all people as created in the image of God. Further, our sexual misconduct policy is intended to fully comply with all applicable legal requirements prohibiting harassment or sexual violence against any member of our community.

We are committed to providing support, as well as assisting you in all aspects of reporting and responding to the situation. Ultimately, you have a choice in how the process goes and the steps you choose to take. **However, if inappropriate contact does occur, we strongly encourage you to immediately contact one of your group leaders or if that is not an option contact Lynn Scott, Assistant Director, Center for Study Abroad - 503-550-3299, lscott@georgefox.edu.**

Link to GFU **Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct** (<https://www.georgefox.edu/offices/student-life/title-IX/index.html>) webpage.

Tips on how to PREVENT Sexual Harassment while Abroad.

Even though sexual harassment is not gender specific, women are the primary victims of sexual harassment. Below are ways that you can deal with and hopefully prevent sexual harassment.



- Understand that you are in a different culture and that men will view you in different ways. The definition of what are “appropriate” or “acceptable” ways to interact with women will probably be different than what you are used to at home. It is common, due to American movies, TV, or whatever, that there is an assumption in many countries that women, especially American women, are “easy” or generally more promiscuous.
- Always trust your instincts, and never let anyone try to make you feel guilty for leaving a situation you feel uncomfortable or unsafe in.
- Do not hesitate, if you are uncomfortable, to be rude and walk away, or if the situation warrants feel free to yell.
- Wear clothes that are culturally sensitive, i.e., clothes that are not too revealing.
- Never go out alone.
- If at all possible have a male accompany you. This is an absolute in some countries. Sadly, you will be treated very different whether you have a male as a companion or not.
- Keep your phone with you at all times and fully charged.
- Men, please be aware of what is happening around you and others. If you see that women are uncomfortable in a particular situation step forward in a non-confrontational manner to show your support for the women.

Fighting Jet Lag

It is a good idea to plan ahead and discipline yourself on a long flight so that you arrive at your destination with minimum jet lag. It's not that you won't be tired, but you don't need to be destroyed. Some tips on airline travel.

- Consider taking earplugs, an eye mask and an inflatable or buckwheat-hull neck pillow. On long flights eye masks, small pillows and blankets are typically provided.
- A Dramamine tablet, Tylenol PM, or an antihistamine such as Benadryl will help to make you drowsy if you want to sleep.
- Avoid caffeine. It is a diuretic and can leave you feeling dehydrated. Drink plenty of water to compensate for the fact that your eating and drinking patterns may be erratic in the hours before departure. Cabin air in the plane can be quite dry. It's best to carry your own water bottle so the water is easily accessible. Since ginger is a natural stomach-settler, you may want to drink ginger ale.
- On long flights make sure that you get up and move around. It is important not to sit still the entire time.
- Upon arrival at your destination, if you're supposed to be awake by local time, avoid napping. Drinking caffeinated beverages at this point can be helpful. Spend time outdoors at your destination; sunlight helps synchronize your internal clock. Don't use sleep medications; they delay the body's adjustment. Go to bed when the “natives” do. If you wake up early the next morning, stay in bed until the clock says it's time to get up.

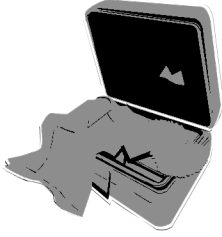


CLOTHING

Dressing the Part

There's not much of a way (or need) to be "fashionable" when you're traveling, since you probably don't really know the current fashion in the countries where you're going. So, it's best to be "middle-of-the-road," "don't-attract-attention" in what you select. You won't want to spend a lot of money on new purchases since your clothes will take a beating. Some helpful hints follow.

- Know what is appropriate for the culture. You do not want to stand out or insult folks. For example, you do not want to wear shorts in a Muslim country and you really do not want to wear short athletic shorts in any country.
- Select clothing that can be layered. If you hit some unseasonably cool summer days in Amsterdam or an unbearably hot day in Italy, you'll want to be able to make quick adjustments.
- Check into knits and microfiber garments available from the travel catalogs, REI, etc. They take up very little packing space, wash by hand and dry quickly, and look nice.
- Consider taking more than one pair of shoes (but no more than two pairs, both for the purpose of accommodating changing weather and to give your feet a rest). Prevent them from soiling your clothing by placing them in plastic bags.



PACKING

Without being a packrat

A lot of people will tell you about their initial travel adventure, when they packed “by the book” but still risked back injury and hated their luggage for the entire trip. Be wise. Listen to the experts. If you find you’ve packed too little, you can always buy a few additional items as you travel.

Over-packing rule of thumb: before you pack, lay out all the clothing you plan to take and then actually pack half of those items.

- When packing a backpack, always put lighter/bulky items in first, followed by heavier items toward the top. This will make your pack feel lighter and easier to carry. Give the weight a trial by packing several days early and carrying the pack on a long walk; if you don’t like carrying it then, you won’t like carrying it for a week or more.
- Pack plastic bags to store soiled socks and underwear and wet umbrellas. Use zip-lock bags to store any bottles or tubes that might leak. Consider packing a small folding umbrella for those rainy days.
- Pack like items in nylon or nylon mesh bags, which don’t add weight but keep things sorted for you. This will save time and frustration, and allow you to re-pack quickly. With tighter security measures, this also makes good sense, as it makes items easier to see, handle and re-pack than if you have things tucked into interior pockets or just floating free.
- Don’t bring anything you would hate to lose: valuable or expensive-looking jewelry, irreplaceable family objects, unnecessary credit cards, library cards, etc.
- Consider rolling your clothes. This will help prevent wrinkles and save space.
- If you wear glasses or contacts it is a good idea to take an extra pair.



DUTIES AND CUSTOMS

Returning Home

In this section, you will find information on how to check for new updates and stricter requirements now enforced by airports and airlines. There are some basic restrictions regarding what you can and cannot bring back into the U.S. You will also learn how to keep a better watch on your luggage so that no one else can tamper with it.

- **Clearing Customs:** Follow the directions given to you by flight attendants and your trip/faculty leader for the process of clearing customs.
- **Entering the U.S.:** The first time that you enter the U.S., you must go through customs. This means that you may have to fill out a Custom Declaration form. Once you land you must proceed to the passport control line for U.S. citizens. There may be a human or an electronic kiosk that will ask you questions and either ask you to scan your passport or to look at it and stamp it. After clearing this checkpoint, you **MUST** pick up your bag and then proceed through customs where you may be asked to turn in your Declaration form. If this is not your destination, you must then put your bag back on a conveyer belt so that it can be loaded on to your next flight.
- **Declaration Forms:** You may be given a card to fill out that will require your passport information, items you have purchased overseas and are bringing back into the country, and the cost of these items.
- **Receipt of Purchase:** Retain all receipts, or make an itemized list of purchases, prior to customs inspection.
- **Taxes:** If the total cost of your purchases exceeds a certain amount you will be asked to pay a tax on all items over the allotted amount. It is very unusual too reach the amount for this to be applicable.
- **Items You Cannot Bring into the U.S.:** Be aware that some items, such as FOOD, plants, animals, certain drugs, firearms etc. cannot be brought back into the U.S.
- **Smuggling:** What may be legal in other countries may not be legal in the U.S., and vice versa. Smuggling can be a federal offense leading to fines or imprisonment.
- **Accepting Things from Others:** Under no circumstances, should you ever take anything from, or hold anything for, anyone who asks you to do so. If anyone does ask you, simply say "no" and walk away. Don't be afraid to say "no" to family and friends. You need to think about the potential consequences before you hold anything for anyone.

- **Watching Your Bags:** Once you have picked up your bags from baggage claim, and are on your way to customs, be sure to keep a close eye on all of your luggage so that no one but you have access to it.
- **Random Baggage Searches:** If you are stopped and asked to open your luggage, cooperate with the customs officials. Customs officials often conduct random baggage searches; just because your luggage gets searched, it doesn't mean you have done something wrong.
- **Carry-on Luggage:** Check with your airline to find out its regulations for what you can and cannot pack in your carry-on bags.

**A MESSAGE FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Going Abroad?**

Thinking about making some quick money?

Think again!

If someone offers you a free vacation and a big chunk of cash just for bringing back a suitcase or package no questions asked – Remember:

- Drug laws abroad are very strict.
- When you leave the U.S., you leave our laws behind.
- The police are waiting for you.
- The police are watching for American tourists carrying drugs.
- You will not be released on bail.
- You will be thrown in a crowded jail cell.
- You will not have access to a modern shower or toilet.
- You will be given food that is not fit to eat.
- When sick or injured, you may not get adequate medical care.
- You will not see your loved ones—your parents, your children, your friends—for a long, long time.
- You will stay in jail for years and years.

You will be blamed for anything in your suitcase, no matter who puts it there.

Ignorance is no excuse. If it's in your suitcase, it's your crime, and you will do the time.