

SAFETY TIPS

Faculty-Led Group Study Abroad Kansas State University

TRANSIT

- Travel in a group, or at least in pairs.
- Each time a student plans to travel independently of the group during the program dates, he/she should give a copy of the itinerary to the Faculty Leader. The itinerary should include where the student plans to stay overnight and how to contact him/her.
- Students who travel before or after the faculty-led group study abroad program should complete the Independent Travel Release Form and submit it either to the Coordinator of Faculty Services or to the Faculty Leader. The form is available at: <http://www.k-state.edu/studyabroad/facultyled/students/application.html>
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times.
- Keep track of your belongings at all times.
- Walk in well-lit, populated areas.
- Study a map before going out; once on the street, use a pocket-size guidebook to avoid looking like a tourist. If you need to look at a map or directions, stop into a café or store. Avoid looking at a map or directions while on the street or while on public transportation if possible.
- Travel light. You can move more quickly and will be more likely to have a free hand. You will also be less tired and less likely to set your luggage down, leaving it unattended.
- Avoid handbags, fanny packs, and outside pockets that are easy targets for thieves. Inside pockets and a sturdy shoulder bag with the strap worn across your chest are somewhat safer. One of the safest places to carry valuables is in a pouch or money belt worn under your clothing.
- Put your name, address, and telephone numbers inside and outside each piece of luggage. Use covered luggage tags to avoid casual observation of your identity or nationality.
- Don't travel alone at night.
- Don't use short cuts, narrow alleys, or poorly lit streets.
- Beware of pickpockets. They often have an accomplice who will:
 - Jostle you
 - Ask you for directions or the time
 - Point to something you spilled on your clothing
 - Distract you by creating a disturbance
- Beware of groups of vagrant children who create a distraction while picking your pocket.

- Try to seem purposeful when you move about. Even if you are lost, act as if you know where you are going. Try to ask for directions only from individuals in authority.
- If you are out late at night, let someone in your group know when you will return.
- Only take taxis clearly identified with official markings.
- Be especially alert on public transportation (trains, subways, buses, etc.)
- If traveling on public transportation overnight, take turns sleeping in shifts with your traveling companions.

MONEY

- Do not carry excessive amounts of money
- Bring 1-2 major credit cards.
- Try to avoid bringing traveler's checks as they are hard to cash.
- Carry your cash and credit cards in various places, rather than all in one wallet or pouch.
- Before you go abroad, be sure to call your credit card company and bank to let them know exactly which countries you will be visiting and what dates you will be traveling there. This is very important because if your credit card company and/or bank see charges or other financial transactions in other country, they may immediately shut down your account because it looks like fraud.
- Before you go abroad, make sure you know what your credit card limit is and avoid charging over that limit. Americans have been arrested for innocently exceeding their limit while traveling.
- Before you go abroad, ask your credit card company how to report the loss of your card from abroad. Generally U.S. 1-800 numbers do not work from abroad, but your credit card company should have a number that you can call while you are overseas.
- Know your credit card expiration date to ensure that it does not expire while you are overseas.
- Keep plenty of small bills handy.
- Use crisp, clean bills.
- Do not flash large amounts of money when paying a bill.
- Make sure your credit card is returned after each transaction.
- Deal only with authorized agents when you exchange money.

GENERAL

- Use the same common sense traveling overseas that you would at home. Be especially cautious in areas where you may be more easily victimized. These include crowded subways, train stations, elevators, tourist sties, market places, festivals, and rough neighborhoods.
- In addition to checking weather at your destination; also take note of when the sun rises and sets.
- Don't bring anything you would hate to lose.

- Don't wear clothing with the American flag or other items that scream "American Tourist."
- Avoid places where large groups of Americans are known to congregate.
- Leave copies of the first page of your passport, visas (if applicable), travel itinerary, and contact information with family and/or friends, so they can contact you in case of an emergency.
- Make two photocopies of the first page of your passport (in color if possible), airline tickets, driver's license, and credit cards that you plan to bring with you. Leave one photocopy of this data with family and/or friends at home; pack the other in a place separate from where you carry the originals.
- Avoid public demonstrations and other civil disturbances.
- Keep a low profile and avoid loud conversations and arguments.
- Be cautious of what you discuss with strangers or what others may overhear. Do not discuss travel plans or other personal matters with strangers.
- Avoid scam artists by being wary of strangers who approach you and offer to be your guide or sell you something at bargain prices.
- Learn how to use the pay telephone and have the proper change or token on hand.
- Keep your hotel door locked at all times. Meet visitors in the lobby.
- Read the fire safety and emergency instructions in your hotel room. Be sure you know where the nearest exits are located.
- If your possessions are lost or stolen, report the loss immediately to the local police. Keep a copy of the police report for insurance claims and as an explanation of your plight.
- After reporting missing items to local police, report the loss or theft of:
 - Credit cards to the issuing company
 - Airline tickets to the airline or travel agent
 - Passport to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate
- In many countries you can be detained for photographing security-related institutions, such as police and military installations, government buildings, border areas and transportation facilities. If you are in doubt, ask permission before taking photographs.

EMERGENCY

- Participants should notify the Faculty Leader immediately in the event of any serious emergency, accident, health problem, serious mishap, or health condition.
- Carry a cell phone if possible (make sure it is compatible for the countries you are traveling in). For information on cell phones abroad, visit the following web pages:
 - <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/15>
 - <http://www.technology/15basics.html>
 - <http://www.independenttraveler.com/resources>

CONTACT INFORMATION

Faculty Leader and Group Members

- Keep the Faculty Leader's contact information with you at all times
- Keep group members' contact information with you at all times

Study Abroad Program

- Keep the Study Abroad Program's contact information, including the 24-hour emergency line, with you at all times.

If an emergency occurs during regular business hours, please call the Study Abroad Program front desk. If the emergency occurs after regular business hours, please contact the Study Abroad Program 24-Hour Emergency Line - Please keep in mind that this number is - **ONLY** - for emergencies that need immediate assistance from Study Abroad Staff when the office is closed.

- Study Abroad Program Front Desk
785-532-5990
Available 8:00am-5:00pm CST, Monday-Friday
- Rose Redington, Coordinator of Faculty Services
rosered@ksu.edu
785-532-1698
Available 8:00am-5:00pm CST, Monday-Friday
- Study Abroad Program 24-Hour Emergency Line
785-532-5494
Available 24 hours

Local Contacts

- Keep the address and phone number of your accommodations (hotel/residence hall/home stay/hostel, etc.) with you at all times. Also keep a map with directions to that location with you.
- Keep the phone number of the country's "911" equivalent with you at all times. For more information, visit: <http://www.sccfd.org/travel.html>

ESPECIALLY FOR WOMEN

- Ask the hotel's concierge and/or local women if there are any areas they would consider unsafe and ask what they do to keep themselves safe.
- Observe local women and dress/act in congruence with them as is appropriate.
- Consider your attire – wearing flashing clothes/jewelry or wearing clothes considered inappropriate to the host culture, may cause unwanted attention.

- Try to sit next to other women or families on public transportation.
- Don't multi-task – stay alert when on the phone, searching through your purse, and any other activities to avoid being caught off guard.
- Wear the shoulder strap of your purse/bag across your chest and walk with the purse/bag away from the curb.
- Largely due to Hollywood portrayals of women, many people overseas think American women are “loose.” This assumption almost inevitably leads to harassment and misunderstanding. You may need to act more conservatively overseas than you do at home – giving up certain freedoms in exchange for an enhanced sense of safety. In many cultures smoking, barhopping, or simply drinking beer could put you in the “sexually available” category. Leave skimpy clothes at home. In rural areas, tank tops or shorts may be considered inappropriate, as are clothes that show cleavage or belly buttons.

RESEARCH THE HOST COUNTRY

Topics to Research Include:

- Interpersonal Communication (including body language)
- Gender Roles and Relationships
- Culture Information
- View of the United States and American Citizens
- Geography of country and surrounding area
- Safety and Health Information
 - U.S. Department of State: <http://www.travel.state.gov>
 - U.S. Center for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>
 - U.S. Embassies & Consulates: <http://www.usembassy.state.gov>
 - World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int>

REGISTER WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Register your travel plans with the U.S. Department of State through a free online service at <https://travelregistration.state.gov> This will enable the U.S. Department of State to contact you if there is a crisis where you are traveling.

If your family needs to reach you because of an emergency, they can pass a message to you through the U.S. Office of Overseas Citizen Services, which can be contacted from within the United States at 1-888-407-4747 (toll free) and from overseas at 202-501-4444. The U.S. Office of Overseas Citizen Services will contact the U.S. embassy or consulate in the country in which you are traveling in order to pass the message to you.