

Indiana University Education Abroad

Summary List of Health/Safety/Security Items

PRE-DEPARTURE

- Get a medical exam and a dental exam before departure.
- Check with the IU Health Center (or your own doctor) about immunizations for where you're traveling (<https://healthcenter.indiana.edu/medical/immunizations/travel-immunizations.html>).
- Check with your insurance company and your doctor to see if you can fill your current prescriptions so that you can take a supply for the entire period you'll be abroad. If not, make arrangements for how to acquire your medication.
- Get a letter from your doctor, describing your condition(s) and generic names of prescription drugs.
- Leave medications in their original containers.
- Disclose fully on your medical history form about allergies, health conditions, treatment, etc.
- Be prepared to pay for medical services on-site; reimbursement through insurance may take some time.
- Make a color photocopy of your passport, visa (if stamped in your passport) and all your credit cards and IDs; leave a copy with someone at home and take a copy with you abroad. Store a copy in your e-mail to allow easy access. Be sure to write down all the contact numbers in case you have to cancel the cards.
- Register with the U.S. Embassy in the country where you'll be studying so the U.S. government is aware of your presence; use the online form: <https://step.state.gov/step/>.
- Read the Country Information Sheet and Public Announcements (if relevant) for your country (and Travel Advisories so you know which areas to avoid): <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages.html>.
- Check the Department of State's Emergency Resources so you're aware of their services and how to contact them abroad: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/emergencies.html>
- Discuss with family members the advisability of them obtaining passports should travel abroad become necessary in the event of an emergency.
- Insure any valuable items (camera, laptop, jewelry) that you'll be taking abroad.
- Read up on the culture of your host country so you know typical behavior from unusual behavior.

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ON-SITE

- Try to minimize your appearance as a tourist since thieves think of visitors as easy targets (don't wear t-shirts with American phrases, don't wear a baseball cap, don't speak loudly in English, etc.).
- Try to learn culturally appropriate behavior for each circumstance.
- If you have a wallet, carry it in your front pocket, perhaps wrapped in a rubber band to make it harder to slip out of your pocket; clutch purses and hold backpacks so that the zipper is against you.
- Keep key emergency contact information handy at all times. Store important numbers in your cell phone and carry contact card in your wallet.
- Be vigilant of your surroundings and those around you.
- If you're a victim of a theft, don't fight your assailant. Report thefts and attacks to the local police and your program support staff.
- Never leave backpacks, purses, carrying bags, etc. exposed in restaurants, cyber cafés, clubs, libraries, etc. Keep an eye on them at all times!
- When entering a club or a hotel, take note of the fire exits in case you have to flee in a hurry.
- Only drive with experienced drivers who know the terrain. Wear a seat belt at all times. Never hitchhike.
- Be aware that you are more vulnerable when under the influence of alcohol. Make arrangements to return home in the company of other individuals.
- Minimize participation in extreme sports unless you are very experienced at them and only then with safe providers.
- If there is a natural disaster or terrorist event, contact the program, your family and your friends so they know you're alright. Follow instructions from the local authorities regarding appropriate activities in the aftermath of an event.