



Study Abroad Pre-Departure Guide

**BE SEEN.
BE HEARD.
BE YOU.**



▼ *Austin Feist, study abroad alumnus
Spring 2018 – Kristianstad, Sweden*

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Minot State student Aylin Ergin exploring Hamburg, Germany

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Your adventure starts now!



Preparing to **STUDY ABROAD**

Studying abroad is one of the most exciting highlights of many student's college experiences. However, a successful experience does not just happen. A lot of preparation, organization, and planning is required in order to have the time you hope for. The Minot State Study Abroad Coordinator will help you with this process, and is here to provide answers to any questions you may come across. However, your own initiative and interest in this pre-departure process will help create an experience of a lifetime.

This guide book is intended to be an aid for your own pre-departure process. It provides general information for studying abroad. We recommend you take this guide with you on your time abroad as it includes important health and safety information that could come in handy in a pinch. This guide covers many topics, some of which include:

▼ **Cultural Immersion**

- What stereotypes do I hold of my host culture?
- Am I prepared to experience culture shock?
What are my coping strategies?

▼ **Health and Safety Abroad**

- What are common safety issues or hazards while traveling?
- What resources are available to learn more about health and safety?
- Do I need shots? Where can I get them?
- Do I have health insurance overseas?
- How can I shift my daily routines to be a safe traveler?

▼ **Travel Logistics**

- Will I be required to get a travel visa?
- How do I obtain a travel visa?
- Will my ATM card work in other countries? How about credit cards?
- Will my cell phone work?
- What on Earth do I pack?

▼ **Academics and Communication**

- How do I get a transcript sent back to Minot State?
- How can I communicate with advisors at home?
- Can I set up a blog to share my experiences with the Minot State community?

▼ **Returning to the United States**

- What is re-entry shock?
- How can I share my experiences at home?
- How can I stay in touch with new friends?

We recommend that all Minot State students studying abroad carefully read this guide. Do some research on your host country. You could even contact other students who have participated in the same program as you. Preparation is the key to a successful time abroad. The more you know, the better!



▼ *Marina Carillo, study abroad alumna
Summer 2018 - Santiago, Chile*



Photo taken in Ghana by Minot State student Lorida Yeboah

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

“A journey of a thousand miles
must begin with a single step.”
– Lao Tzu

THE BIG TEN

Things To Do Before Flight

1 Read this pre-departure guide

This guide was designed to provide clear and informative answers to most of the questions you may have about studying abroad.

2 Meet with financial aid

Confirm that your award package is finalized and secured for your time abroad. Ask for the date your aid will be disbursed.

3 Go to the doctor

Have a routine checkup before you fly. Make sure you have all immunizations required for host country. Order any medications, including contact lenses, you may need while abroad.

4 Confirm course equivalencies

Double and triple check to make sure you'll be getting the credit you deserve for your time abroad. Finish your course equivalency forms.

5 Photocopy everything!

Make copies of your passport, course equivalency forms, medical insurance information, front and back of credit cards, and flight itinerary. One copy for your checked bag, and leave one copy with a trusted individual at home.

6 Contact your bank and credit card companies

Let them know you are studying abroad. Ask about international fees, and make sure your cards will work in your host country.

7 Review medical insurance

Find out the details of your medical plan coverage and how to access it.

8 Obtain a travel visa

Ensure that you have a travel visa to your host country, if you are required to have one.

9 Make a communication plan

Set up routine communication plans for your family and friends at home. Establish an emergency plan.

10 Learn about your host culture

The more you know about the place you are going, the more prepared you'll feel. Dive into the history, culture, language and traditions of the country where you'll be studying.

Things to Know



▼ Kayla Lewis, study abroad alumna
Fall 2017 – London, England

Credit for Your Courses Abroad

- Minot State graduation/degree requirements may fulfill classes you took while abroad as long as course substitution forms have been completed and signed by the appropriate academic department and submitted to the Office of International Programs.
- You must submit course equivalency forms before you leave for your study abroad program (available at MinotStateU.edu/records/forms.shtml).

Minot State Course Enrollment Matters

- During your the semesters you are abroad you will be enrolled full time at Minot State in a study abroad course. Depending upon your specific study abroad program, this course will be either INT 496 or INT 497.
- The credits associated with the INT classes are considered “ghost credits”. The purpose of these credits is to maintain your full time status at Minot State while you are abroad, and thus are only used as a placeholder during your semester(s) abroad.
- After your study abroad program is completed, but before Minot State receives your official transcript, an “X” (in-progress) grade will be recorded for your INT class.
- When Minot State receives your official host institution transcript, the “X” will be converted to an “s”, unless you failed the majority of your classes or withdrew from the program.
- After the above process is completed the courses that you took while abroad and their respective credit hours will be listed on the top of your Minot State transcript as “transfer credit”. You will see that at this point, the number of credits attached to the INT placeholder course disappears.

All Study Abroad students **MUST** attend a mandatory pre-departure meeting, which will be scheduled about a month before departure.



▶ *Else-Marie Nelson,
study abroad alumna
Telemark, Norway*

HEALTHY TRAVELS

Your health and safety abroad are top priority. Although the Minot State Office of International Programs will provide an excellent resource and support system for you, remember that you are ultimately responsible for informing yourself and making the best decisions for you in your situations abroad.

TAKE CHARGE!

Your Role in Ensuring Your Own Health and Safety Abroad

The following is a list of things you should do before and during your time abroad:

- Assume responsibility for all the elements of preparation for your program, provided through Minot State, your program providers and your own research.
- Read and carefully consider all materials issued from your program about the health, legal, environmental, political, cultural and religious conditions in your host country.
- Conduct your own research on the countries you plan to visit, and enlist a level of respect in the customs and characteristics of each culture.
- Consider your physical and mental health, and other personal circumstances when accepting a place in a program and make your physical and mental health information available to the program sponsor.
- Review your health insurance information.
- Inform your families and loved ones of your participation in a study abroad program, and provide them with emergency contact information and knowledge of your whereabouts and activities while abroad.
- Accept responsibility for your own decisions.
- Obey host-country laws.
- Avoid illegal drugs and excessive or irresponsible consumptions of alcohol.
- Follow your program's policies for keeping staff informed of your whereabouts and well-being.
- Become familiar with procedures for obtaining emergency health and legal system services in your host country.

Adapted from the "Responsible Study Abroad: Good Practices for Health and Safety" developed by the Interorganizational Task Force on Safety and Responsibility in Study Abroad.

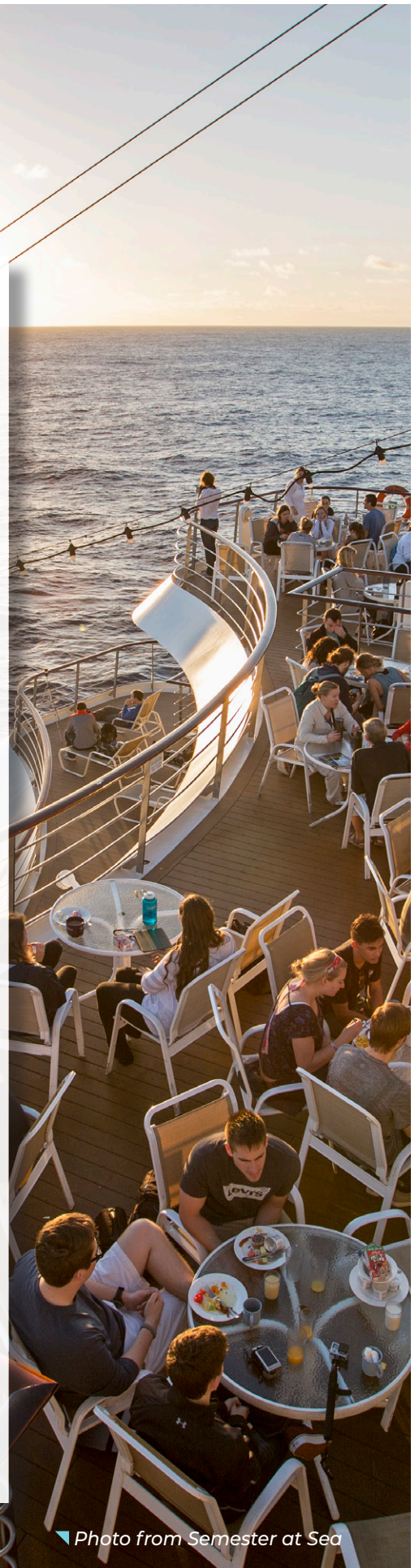


Photo from Semester at Sea

Resources

Minot State University's Office of International Programs endorses the guidelines published by NAFSA (Association of International Educators) on Safety and Responsibility in Study Abroad, and employs guidelines set by SAFETI Clearinghouse (Safety Abroad First Educational Travel Information). We recommend that you review the below websites for detailed information on how to prepare for and avoid any unsafe situations while abroad.

▼ **U.S. Department of State** studentsabroad.state.gov

The U.S. Department of State website offers a one-stop reference for international travel. It's made for students, their parents, education abroad professionals and universities. It has country specific information, tips on safe travel and information about living overseas. Look for the link for *Consular Information Sheet*. It will provide information containing background and requirements for Americans traveling abroad, including visa, passports and immunization requirements.

You can also download a printable card that will fit in your wallet: travel.state.gov/content/dam/students-abroad/pdfs/TipsToGoWalletCard.pdf

▼ **Centers for Disease Control** cdc.gov/travel

Information on current health concerns and tips for disease prevention. Detailed information on any immunizations you should get before you depart.

▼ **Global Education Safety Abroad First Educational Travel Information** gloaled.us/safeti

Health Insurance

All Minot State study abroad participants must be covered by an international insurance plan designated by the office of International Programs. Insurance coverage is critical in obtaining medical assistance abroad. The policy will include the following benefits: major medical, emergency evacuation, legal assistance, accidental death and dismemberment, repatriation of remains and bedside visits for family members.

Most Minot State affiliated programs will offer health insurance as part of the program fee. You need to research what is included in your plan. For example: high risk sport injuries, dental and optical care, may not be included in your plan.

Consider what the financial limits of your coverage are, whether your insurance applies during independent travel or vacation, what countries it includes and if you need to pay for treatment and be reimbursed later.



▼ *ISA students in Christchurch, New Zealand*

Prescriptions

If you take prescription medication, bring enough to last through your entire stay abroad. The medication you need may not be available in the same form in your host country and brand names are usually different. Keep all the names of any prescriptions you may have with you. Keep your prescriptions in their original bottles or packaging that are clearly labeled. Ensure that you put your medications in your carry on luggage. If you wear them, bring an extra pair of eyeglasses, contact lenses, and contact solution, as well as a copy of your vision prescription.

If you are diabetic or have another medical condition in which a syringe is needed to administer medication, bring a supply of disposable syringes. These are not available in all countries, and are essential to protect yourself against HIV, hepatitis, and other communicable illnesses. Some countries, however, restrict the import of syringes, as well as certain medications and contraceptives. Before departure, find out if this applies to your host country.

For certain conditions such as diabetes, asthma, mild epilepsy, or allergy to penicillin, it may be wise to wear a tag or bracelet and carry a card to identify the condition so that you can be treated properly in case of an emergency.

If you have any special needs, check with the Office of International Programs to determine how we can best help you. Regulations for accessibility may not be as updated in other countries as they are in the U.S. Check to determine if accommodations like wheelchair ramps are provided in all modes of transportation and to determine if housing facilities are equipped to serve people with special needs.

The urge to merge

The Centers for Disease Control website, cdc.gov/travel, provides country by country information on prevalence to STDs and outbreaks, and how to protect yourself. No matter what the circumstances, please consider practicing abstinence. Abstinence is the only fail proof

method of preventing STDs and accidental pregnancy. However, if you do choose to remain or become sexually active while abroad, use condoms. Birth control pills will not protect you from STDs. Take condoms with you, as what is available overseas may be of questionable quality or difficult to find due to local customs.

Peel it, boil it, cook it, or forget it!

Contaminated food and water are the major sources of intestinal illness while traveling abroad. Food and beverages should be selected with care. In general, hot beverages, such as coffee or tea, and canned or bottled beverages may be considered safe to drink. Any raw or undercooked food could be contaminated. Salads, uncooked vegetables and fruit, unpasteurized milk and milk products, raw meat and shellfish often pose the greatest concern. Food that has been cooked and is still hot is generally safe. For more information on traveler's health and safety, we recommend that you consult the Center for Disease Control website to see if these issues are present in your host country. You can also consult your doctor about getting some traveler's diarrhea medication before your departure.

Water Tips

- Flying can dehydrate your body, causing you to feel tired, so it is important to drink a LOT of water before flying.
- Check if your host city has drinkable tap water; if it does not be sure to only drink bottled water.
- Avoid ice in countries where water is not safe to drink out of taps.
- Drinking contaminated beverages is the major source of intestinal illness while abroad.





▼ Alexis Moir, study abroad alumna
Costa Rica

SAFE TRAVELS

“No matter where you are going, make sure you are with a friend. Plan out how you’ll get there, and how you’ll get home, before you leave.”

– Emma, Semester at Sea, 2013

Clothing

Safety begins when you pack. To help avoid becoming a target, do not dress so as to mark yourself as an affluent tourist. Expensive-looking jewelry, for instance, can draw the wrong attention. Some cultures frown upon wearing clothes that show too much skin. Research your host country and see if there are any cultural or traditional limitations on clothing. It is important to respect the rules of your host culture. When visiting temples or churches be sure to wear clothes that cover your shoulders and your knees.

Always try to 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. Carry the minimum number of valuables and plan places to conceal them.

Personal Safety

The U.S. Department of State offers the following advice to travelers abroad regarding personal safety:

- Use the same common sense as you would at home. Be cautious in areas where you may be more easily victimized. These include crowded subways, train stations, elevators, tourist sites, marketplaces, and festivals.
- Don't use short cuts, narrow alleys, or poorly lit streets.
- Try not to travel alone at night.
- Avoid public demonstrations and other civil disturbances.
- Do not discuss travel plans or other personal matters with strangers.
- Wear the shoulder strap of your bag across your chest and walk with the bag away from the curb to avoid drive-by purse-snatchers.
- Beware of pickpockets.
- Try to seem purposeful when you move about. Even if you are lost, act as if you know where you are going. Ask for directions only from people in authority.

- Know how to use a pay telephone and have the proper change or token on hand.
- If you are confronted, don't fight back – give up your valuables.
- Only take taxis clearly identified with official markings.
- Do not accept food or drink from strangers.
- If you rent a car, choose a type that is commonly available. Wear seat belts and do not drive at night.

Orientation materials from your program provider and country guides can help you better understand the countries and cities where you will be traveling. Read and refer often to the websites, handbooks, and other information provided by Minot State.

When you go out, use the buddy system. Be careful of stereotypes of U.S. men and women, and understand local verbal and non-verbal communication.

Although alcohol may be legally consumed during your program, its use and abuse is many times tied to being a victim of crime, violence, accident, and injury. Drug use abroad can result in severe consequences, and you can expect to being treated as guilty until proven innocent outside the U.S.

Lastly, make sure you carry emergency contact numbers with you at all times. Include an international phone card so that you can make long distance calls if necessary.



The Department of State provides an iPhone App called *Smart Traveler*, a tool designed to provide easy access to frequently updated country information, travel alerts, maps and U.S. embassy locations.



Photo taken in Miyagi, Japan by
Minot State student Sydney Pahel

RESPECTING LAWS & CONDUCT

“The law is the public conscience.”

– Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

Laws and Codes of Conduct

Make yourself aware of both the rules and the regulations of your study abroad program as well as the local laws and customs of the countries that you will be visiting. Understand that you will not only have to conform to the legal system of the country you will be visiting, but also obey the codes of conduct required of program participants.

When you are in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws and are under its jurisdiction, NOT the protection of the U.S. Constitution. You can be arrested overseas for actions that may be either legal or considered minor infractions in the United States. Be aware of what is considered criminal in the country where you are. Consular Information sheets available at state.gov/travel include information on unusual patterns of arrests in various countries when appropriate.

Some offenses for which U.S. citizens have been arrested abroad are:

- **Photography**

In many countries you can be harassed or detained for photographing such things as military or police installations, government buildings, border areas or transportation facilities.

- **Antiques**

Americans have been arrested for purchasing souvenirs that were, or looked like antiques and which local customs believed to be national treasures.

- **Drug Violations**

More than 1/3 of U.S. citizens incarcerated abroad are held on drug charges. Many countries have mandatory sentences for even the smallest amount of marijuana. Other U.S. citizens have been arrested for purchasing prescription drugs abroad in quantities that local authorities suspected were for commercial use.

DID YOU KNOW?

It is forbidden to:

- Chew gum in Singapore
- Feed the birds in St. Mark's Square in Venice
- Sleep on a feather bed in Buenos Aires
- Smoke cigarettes in Bhutan
- Wear heels in Greek monument sites
- Go "commando" in Thailand

▼ Photo taken in Willemsted, Curacao by Minot State student Cody Rogness



▶ Molly Jurenka, study abroad alumna
Spring 2013 – Harstad, Norway

PERCEPTIONS OF AMERICANS

“Humans see what they want to see.”
– Rick Riordan, *The Lightning Thief*

How Should You Respond?

Be analytical, rather than emotional.

Students participating in study abroad programs worldwide have expressed concern in recent years about how they will be viewed and received in other societies. The range of their concerns encompasses ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation and physical disabilities as well as reactions abroad to U.S. government policies and widely held stereotypes about Americans.

While many people in foreign countries make the distinction between U.S. government policy and U.S. citizens, you may find that you are targets of criticism or hostility as you could be perceived as a representative of the United States or U.S. policy. Sometimes American students abroad are surprised and dismayed to discover that other societies do not necessarily share prevailing American approaches to these issues or U.S. values about such matters.

Encounters with prejudice can be painful for students who feel very strongly that their views are correct and the prevailing views in the host society are wrong. Because study abroad students are guests in the universities and residence halls of other countries, their internal conflicts can sometimes become intensely difficult for them. Therefore, it is crucial that you give serious thought before departure to the question of how to respond to attitudes and behaviors abroad that may be considered unacceptable in the U.S.

One strategy for dealing with behaviors that would be labeled in the U.S. as sexist, racist or discriminatory is to be analytical rather than emotional. Try not to take things personally or feel hurt and angry. Seek intellectual understanding of the behavior, and merely observe it, even though you may strongly disagree.



Amber Cooke, study abroad alumna, Semester at Sea

Try to understand the historical and social forces of your host country.

Another strategy is to physically move away from the source of the offensive behavior and to discuss it later with other members of the host society whom you trust and with other Americans, such as your local study abroad coordinator or staff, or fellow students. If an explanation is offered, you should try not to dismiss it by making judgments based on personal home country standards, but rather try to understand the historical and social forces that maintain the values of the host society in the face of pressures to change. Many actions or words that Americans might immediately interpret in a negative light may be more understandable in a different host country context. Societies are, after all, highly complex, interactive, and continuously evolving systems that elude simplistic explanations. Indeed, it is precisely when simplistic, stereotypic explanations hold sway in a society (for example, “all of our problems are the fault of ____”) that the greatest intolerance occurs.

Like violent crime in the U.S., extremist views and resulting actions are disturbing developments that the world community is watching very closely. Nevertheless, students should not be deterred from going about their lives and their business in a normal fashion. Facing such matters thoughtfully, with personal resolve and with compassion for any victim of prejudice is a far more constructive response than fear, anger and withdraw.

You are strongly encouraged to read about social and political issues abroad, to think about and discuss these issues before departure, to practice personal tolerance, and to be mature and realistic in your expectations. However, you should report serious or repeated instances of verbal or physical aggression to your local study abroad coordinator as soon as they occur. All relevant details should be provided at that time.

The most common stereotypes of Americans... are they true or exaggerated?

Thanks to mass media, what is “known” abroad about the U.S. comes via movies, pop music and television shows. The lives depicted on U.S. soap operas and in most Hollywood movies probably bear little resemblance to your own and it may seem laughable that those depictions would be accepted as reality anywhere. With the imbalance of superstars, pop singers, and multimillionaire athletes represented in the media, it is not surprising that there is the stereotype of Americans as rich and materialistic, and by extension greedy, shallow, and wasteful. Depending on your host country, you may find a strange mix of curiosity and antipathy directed toward you because of these stereotypes.

Some cultural traits and tendencies that ARE common among many Americans include:

- **Individualism**

Most Americans consider themselves responsible for shaping their own destiny. They feel one should live in one’s own life and interfere with others’ lives as little as possible. They also believe that individuals are born with inalienable rights and freedom that no government, social institution, or person should take away. Consequently, it is not wrong for one to take care of oneself and one’s property before that of a community.

- **Equality**

Americans are taught that all people are created equal. This means individuals have the right to express their opinions, have the potential to succeed, and should have equal opportunity without regard to age, sex, race, disability, religion, national origin, or status.

- **Privacy**

Most Americans have a highly developed sense of privacy. It is assumed people need time to be alone and have private space for themselves and their possessions. In addition, they believe no one should force them to disclose their private thoughts.

- **Assertiveness and Honesty**

Americans value frankness, openness and directness in dealing with other people. People who plainly and directly express their feelings and requests are considered assertive. Parents encourage their children at an early age to be assertive by involving them in activities that develop this skill. They believe that openness and honesty will be better for future relationships.

- **Self-help and Achievement**

Americans tend to believe individuals should help themselves and strive for a better life through achievement of their goals. Individuals are assumed capable of improving themselves physically, intellectually and emotionally by using available resource and opportunities if they have strong motivations to succeed. Thus, Americans take pride in the accomplishments. Competition is considered good because it brings out the best in people and rewards them for their achievements.

- **Informality**

Americans tend to be informal in their relationships with others. Their speech, dress and posture reflect so unless they are in special or formal settings.

For example, they tend to use first names in conversations even with people of higher or senior status. People of higher or senior status usually consider themselves average persons.

- **Work and Materialism**

Americans admire people who work hard and successfully complete tasks. A good worker is one who begins the task immediately, works quickly and efficiently and completes the task in a way that meets the standard of high quality. Americans view accumulation of quality possessions as a sign of success. People are often defined by their job types or by how much wealth they have. Private possessions are respected and used or disposed of if the owner gives approval. Greater accumulation of material goods ensures a better future for individuals and their family members.

- **Hygiene**

Americans regard clean work and living spaces and a clean look as positive qualities. Personal hygiene is important to most Americans. “Looking good” and “feeling good” are terms that one can hear in daily conversations.



▼ Amber Cooke, study abroad alumna, Semester at Sea



CULTURE SHOCK

Photo taken in West Bank Palestinian Authority by study abroad alumna Else Marie Nelson

“Only those who risk going too far, can possibly find out how far one can go.”

– T.S. Eliot

What is Culture Shock?

“Culture Shock” is the term used to describe the process of adjustment for a person moving to a new culture and facing a sudden change of environment, language, academic/social setting, food and climate.

What causes Culture Shock?

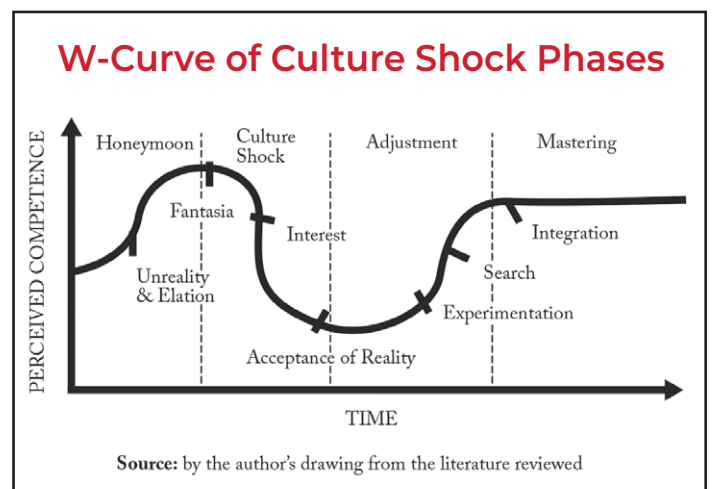
Culture Shock comes as a result of experiencing a different way of doing, organizing, perceiving or valuing things which are different from your values and which threaten your basic, unconscious belief that your customs, assumptions, values and behaviors are “right.”

Symptoms of Culture Shock

- Homesickness
- Boredom
- Fatigue
- Frustration
- Unexplainable crying
- Stereotyping of your host culture
- Compulsive eating
- Excessive sleeping

Overcoming Culture Shock

- Understand that it is different for each person.
- Avoid using drugs and alcohol.
- Take care of yourself by exercising, sleeping, eating well, and doing things you enjoy.
- Keep a journal.
- Concentrate on your goals.
- Think about the positive aspects of your host country.
- Be patient.
- Give yourself permission to fail.
- Experiment with new customs.
- Keep your sense of humor.





Phases of Culture Shock

1. Honeymoon

During this phase, you will frequently do and observe things that are new to you, giving you a sense of adventure. You will feel emotions of: happiness, excitement, interest and stimulation.

2. Cultural Fatigue

Before too long, this sense of adventure and excitement often starts to wear off. You may grow tired easily and develop headaches at the end of each day. Rather than enjoying all of your new experiences, you may find yourself disgruntled or disappointed with your host country and its people. You will feel confusion, sadness, inability to sleep, frustration, and anger.

3. Learning Adjustment

Little by little you will begin to feel more comfortable in the new environment. You are more familiar with the new way of life and are more accepting of cultural differences.

4. Integration: Adaptation and Biculturalism

Eventually you will develop the ability to function in the new culture. Your sense of “foreignness” diminishes significantly. And not only will you be more comfortable with the host culture, but you may also feel a part of it.

5. Re-Entry Shock

Re-entry phase occurs when you return to your homeland. For some this can be the most painful phase of all. You’ve grown and changed, but home hasn’t. Or things have changed at home and you feel left out. Simply being prepared for this shock is the best way to avoid it.

Photo taken in Italy by Andy Heitkamp,
Minot State Director of Veteran Services



Photo taken in London, UK
by Minot State student
Ayotunde Itayemi

FINANCES ABROAD

There are many financial options available to you when traveling, and you should start looking into your preferred means about a month before your departure.



Plan on using a combination of:

- ATM/Debit cards with a Visa or Mastercard logo
- Foreign currency cash
- U.S. dollars
- Prepaid credit cards

ATM

In many cities, the simplest way to obtain cash is through an ATM. Withdrawing money from your bank account in the U.S. through an ATM will also give you the best exchange rate for the day. You should check with your bank before leaving the U.S. to find out where their ATM cards are accepted. Be sure to ask specifically about the country you will be visiting.

Most banks now offer a check-debit card rather than a regular ATM card. A check debit card can be used from almost anywhere Visa or Mastercard are accepted. Payment with the check-debit card is processed as if it were a debit card. The only difference is that the debit comes directly out of your checking account. This is a very convenient method to pay for things abroad. As with any ATM transaction, the best exchange rate for the day is given.

It is also possible to make cash advances on a credit card through an ATM. This may come in handy in the event of an emergency and if you have someone back in the U.S. who can make sure payments on the bill are current. Just remember that when you make a cash advance, the interest starts to accrue immediately. Also, you must know your PIN to make cash advances. If you do not know your PIN, call the phone number on your credit card and have it sent to you. It is also a good idea to **speak with your credit card company prior to your departure to inform them of your destination.**

Only use ATMs that display the Visa and Mastercard symbols. An English menu will appear when you insert your card. Limits for withdrawals on each transaction will differ, but U.S. \$250 is common.



Foreign Currency

Upon arrival in the host country, you may not have a chance to immediately exchange or withdraw money. Therefore you may choose to take some of the foreign currency along with you when you leave the U.S. You can buy foreign currency from any bank in the U.S. However, some banks do not keep a supply of foreign currency on hand and must order it, so plan ahead! Most banks will also charge a small delivery fee for this service.

Be sure to look up the value of the foreign currency in comparison to U.S. dollars. It's a good idea to have a conversion tool handy (a phone app would work well for this). When you are purchasing items in your host country, try to convert it to American dollars to ensure that you are not spending more than you think.

Some smaller vendors and tourist driven industries will try to take advantage of tourists who do not know the value of money in the host country. This is why knowing your currency conversions is very important.

Storing and Transporting Your Money

It is extremely important that you keep track of your money and identity documents at all times.

While flying to your host country put all of your documents, extra credit or debit cards and extra cash in passport holder that is worn under your clothes. Keep your passport in a concealed pocket in your carry on bag-along with your wallet with a small amount of cash and one credit card in it. Your carry on bags, and checked bags should each have a scanned copy of your passport inside of them.

Once you've arrived and are getting ready to explore your host city place all of your documents, extra credit cards and extra cash into a safe or a secure location. Carry with you only a small amount of cash, one piece of identification (your state ID) and one credit card. If you plan on taking a lot of cash with you, carry it in several locations. For example, put some in your purse,

In addition to your primary plan, you should have a back-up plan in case you need some extra money for an unforeseen reason.





COMMUNICATION WHILE ABROAD

While it is important to stay in contact with your family and friends at home, we do not encourage frequent telephone calls during your program. This can become very expensive and will ultimately hinder your adjustment process in your host country. We suggest creating a plan with your loved ones over the phone, at the same time once every two weeks.

International Calling Cards

Before your departure, buy an international calling card that can be used in another country. Note that you will need the access code, similar to the (800) number here in the U.S., that will connect you to the calling card system. Even if you don't use this method to call home, it is important to have a calling card in case of an emergency.

If the access code for your host country is not found automatically on the back of your calling card, use the customer service number to get it before departure! After your initial calling card is spent, you can buy local calling cards in your host country.

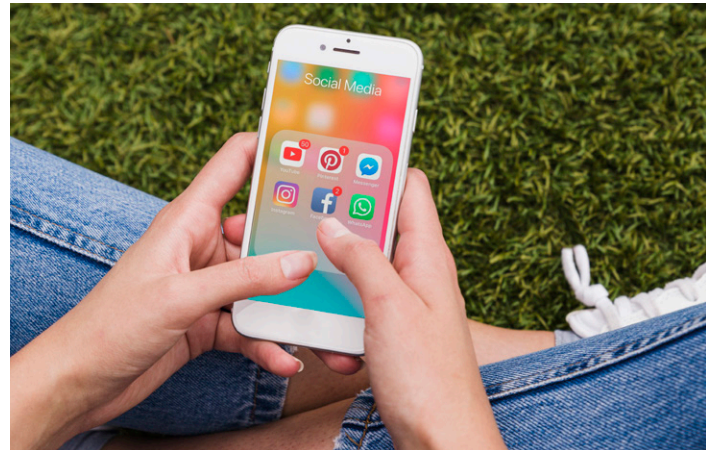
Email and Internet

With today's technology it is very easy to stay in contact via email and social media. While this makes distance seem shorter, spending too much time on the Internet may prevent you from integrating into the new community. Internet will likely be included with your accommodations.

Using Your U.S. Cell Phone

Using your personal phone from the U.S. will likely be extremely expensive as your phone is locked to a U.S. satellite network. If you do take your phone with you, **TURN THE DATA OFF and/or put your phone on airplane mode the whole time.** This will ensure you are not charged for roaming fees. Roaming fees are charged for just having your phone receiving any kind of data signals, not just calls or texts. If you want to use the Wi-Fi option on your phone, this is the best way to do so without getting charged outrageous roaming fees.

While it is not necessary to have a cell phone during your study abroad program, you may want to consider purchasing a cell phone and international calling plan for the duration of your program. Depending upon your destination country, there may be several affordable options available to you.



Free Communication and Travel Apps*



Skype provides free video calls to other Skype users and very cheap plans to call phones around the world.
iPhone, Android, Nokia, Windows Phone, Blackberry



Viber offers free messages and calls to other Viber users on any device and network.
iPhone, Android, Windows Phone, Blackberry, Samsung, Bada



Whatsapp offers free messages and photo messages to other Whatsapp users on any device and network.
iPhone, Blackberry, Nokia, Symbian, Windows Phone



Google Translate will translate 80 languages.
iPhone, Blackberry, Nokia, Samsung, Windows Phone



Trip Advisor provides reliable info through user reviews of hotels, hostels, restaurants and tourist destinations.



Ulmon has offline city maps and tons of local tip info. *iPhone only*



Oanda that has daily updated rates for over 190 currencies.
iPhone, Android, Blackberry

*These apps were good options at the time of printing.



PACKING GUIDE

Suggested Packing List

Everyone packs differently. The following is meant only as a general guide. Please modify it for your own personal needs and habits, as well as program length. If you can't carry all of your luggage around the block and up several flights of stairs by yourself, then you have packed **TOO MUCH!**

▼ Clothing

- 1 dressy outfit, including shoes
- 2 pairs of jeans
- 1 pair of slacks
- 5 pairs of cotton socks
- 2 pairs of wool socks
- 7 pairs of underwear
- 2-3 bras (ladies)
- 2 sweatshirts
- 1 sweater
- 2 outfits for sleeping
- 3 nice shirts
- 3 cotton t-shirts
- 2 shorts/skirts
- 2 casual dresses (ladies)
- 1 water repellent jacket
- 1 warm coat
- gloves, hat, scarf
- 1 pair of worn-in, good quality walking shoes
- 1 pair of sandals
- 1 pair of flats (ladies)
- 1 pair of dressy sneakers (men)
- 1 bathing suit



▼ Accessories

- umbrella
- journal
- notebook
- black & blue pens
- highlighter
- hat
- watch
- electrical converter
- electrical adapter
- wallet
- money
- ID
- credit cards
- camera
- memory cards
- MP3 player
- headphones
- headphones splitter
- laptop
- thumb drive
- paperback books
- sunglasses
- alarm clock
- money belt
- passport carrier
- guide books & maps
- luggage locks & tags
- padlock
- backpack
- shoulder sling purse (ladies)



▼ Toiletries

- soap & container
- brush
- deodorant
- razors
- shaving cream
- wash cloth
- shampoo
- conditioner
- toothbrush
- toothpaste
- floss
- makeup
- lotion
- sunscreen
- feminine hygiene products
- tweezers
- contacts case
- contact solution

▼ Prescription Medication

- Medic Alert card or identifying jewelry
- Epi-Pen
- extra pair of glasses
- extra contacts
- eye prescription
- antibiotics for traveler's diarrhea
- antibiotics for traveler's food poisoning
- birth control

▼ Over the Counter Medication

- vitamins
- Emergen-C packets
- antihistamines for allergies
- decongestant
- anti-motion sickness medication, i.e. Scopolamine patch, Meclizine, Dramamine, Pepto-Bismol
- antacid
- throat lozenges
- antibacterial ointment
- aloe vera for sunburns
- Tylenol
- nutrient bars
- Band-Aids; moleskin for blisters
- DEET insect repellent
- lip balm
- ear plugs
- condoms

▼ Travel Documents

- passport and visa
- insurance card
- personal ID
- student ID
- Medical ID Pocket Pal
- plane tickets
- international phone card
- emergency contact info
- business cards
- Travel Wise picture card

▼ Photocopies

Make 2 copies of each, give one to a friend/relative at home, and put the other in your checked bag.

- passport
- visa
- flight itinerary
- credit card (front and back)
- insurance info
- medical documents (if necessary)

TIPS

- Pack things that are light.
- Plan things you can wear for multiple occasions.
- Don't take valuables.
- You will need electrical converters and adapters for using electronics in your host country. Be sure to research the outlet type and voltage.
- We do not recommend bringing heated hair styling tools.
- Put liquids in Ziploc bags.
- Minimize toiletry items that you can buy later.

REMEMBER: don't put any large liquids containers in your carry-on bag!



FLYING DOS & DON'Ts

"If you were born without wings, do nothing to prevent them from growing."

– Coco Chanel



DOs

- ✓ Check in online 24 hrs before your flight, online. This will eliminate wait time at the airport. You will go straight to your baggage drop off at the airport.
- ✓ Print off your boarding passes (if you check in 24 hours early).
- ✓ Print an extra copy of your itinerary for your records.
- ✓ Keep your passport and boarding passes in a secure, but easy to access location
- ✓ Choose a window seat. For long flights it is easier to sleep against the windows.
- ✓ Check your layover information. How much time between each flight?
- ✓ Check your luggage restrictions before arriving at the airport.
- ✓ Arrive 2 hours before departure.
- ✓ Plan your seating next to a friend if you are traveling with one. If you check in at airport, go to the attendant together.
- ✓ Check your meal options before you fly. If your flight does not provide a meal, bring packaged, non-perishable food for yourself.
- ✓ Bring headphones. Most airplanes have in-flight entertainment. They will charge you to use their headphones, but you can use your own for free.
- ✓ Be responsible.
- ✓ Bring activities to entertain yourself.
- ✓ Drink a lot of water. Altitude changes dehydrate our bodies, making us feel more tired and less alert.
- ✓ Pay for checked bags online if you can – it will be cheaper.
- ✓ Visit us at the office of international programs if you are concerned about your flight, or transferring at different airports.



DON'Ts

- ✗ Don't arrive at the airport less than two hours before your first flight.
- ✗ Never make silly jokes about terrorism or bombs, and don't make any racist or insensitive jokes.
- ✗ If it looks like you may not make your connecting flight, don't get nervous — just calmly approach the flight attendants and ask them for assistance.
- ✗ If your bags get lost, don't worry! The airline will work with you to get your bags to you.
- ✗ Don't get out of your seat on the airplane while the safety light is on.
- ✗ Your cell phone should not be receiving signals while flying. Put it on airplane mode or turn it off for the flight.
- ✗ Never leave your luggage unattended.
- ✗ Never leave your passport or travel documents out in the open!



Luggage Limitations

Each flight company has its own guidelines for luggage limitations. We suggest you limit yourself to two bags: one carry-on and one checked (plus a purse if you use one). If you can handle just one carry-on and no checked bag, this is the best option.

Carry-on bags

Most airlines have airline carry-on bag check, which the bag must fit into. It is usually 22" x 14" x 9".

Checked bags

Most airlines require you to pay for your checked bag. However some will allow you to bring one for free. The weight limit typically is 50 pounds. If your bag weighs more than this, you will have to pay extra for it. Airlines will not hesitate to ask you to lighten your bag at the airport if you are over the weight limit.

You may carry liquids, gels, or aerosols if they are each three ounces or smaller. You will be asked to put these items in a one quart-sized zip top bag through security.

TIPS

- If you plan on sleeping, bringing a travel "U" shaped neck pillow is a good idea. If you don't want to have to carry one, bring a sweater or jacket that can double as a pillow.
- Bring a toothbrush. Having yucky teeth after a long flight is the worst!
- If your airline is giving you a free meal, you can pre-order a special meal for free. They usually offer vegetarian, Kosher, and Halal meals. You will be served first if you select one of these meals. To do this, call your airline a couple days before flight.
- Stretch and move around during your flight to avoid cramping, stiffness and boredom.
- Dry air on planes can make your eyes dry, so bring eye drops.
- Chewing gum will help equalize your ears.

Steps at the Airport

1. Arrive two hours before your flight.
2. Find your airline desk.
3. Check in if you haven't already done so online. Ask if you will need to pick up your bags along the way or if they will go straight to your destination.
4. Check your bags.
5. Go through security. They will need to see your passport and boarding passes. They will ask you to remove your laptop from your carry-on bag, and any liquids, gels or aerosols. They may ask you to remove your shoes.
6. Sometimes body scans are performed. Don't be nervous; most times people are selected for these at random.
7. Look for your gate number and follow the arrows to reach it.
8. Wait at the gate until your flight boarding is announced.
9. When it's time for you to board, they will need to see your passport and boarding pass again. Go through and find your seat.



Minot State alumna
Whitney Loftesnes
at Machu Picchu



COMING HOME

Photo taken in Busan, South Korea
by Fall 2018 study abroad alumna
Yasmine Mojica

“There are no foreign lands. It is the traveler only who is foreign.”
– Robert Louis Stevenson

Seeing the World through Refreshed Eyes

To assist in your transition back into the U.S., it is important you take time to say goodbye to your host country and the people you have met during your study abroad experience. Here are a few things to do before leaving your host country.

- ▶ **Make a to-do wish list.**

List all the things you want to do and accomplish before you leave.

- ▶ **Gather contact information from all the people you want to stay in contact with.**

Make a plan to stay in touch with them, as you have shared a lasting experience!

- ▶ **Take time to say goodbye.**

Don't leave without saying goodbye to your friends and support on site, your school, and your city. These encounters may help you put into words what your experience has meant to you.

- ▶ **Request an official transcript.**

An official transcript should be sent to the Minot State Office of International Programs. Don't forget to register for your returning semester to Minot State.

- ▶ **Confirm your return flight.**

Check with the airline regarding luggage restrictions and check in early if you can.

- ▶ **Communicate with family and friends at home.**

Talk with them about what you expect as you go through cultural adjustments again upon return. Be conscious of making judgments and being overly critical at home.



▶ *Bréanne Sherlock in
Harstad, Norway*

Re-entry Shock

Re-entry may be the most challenging phase of culture shock that you will face. Students often report that returning home was more difficult than leaving. Prior to returning it is easy to assume that life at home will be the same as it was before you left, and that getting back into your old lifestyle will be complicated only by having lost a little time with old friends. It is not always as simple as that.

Re-entry culture shock is a state of disequilibrium. You have had a wonderful experience that has taught you many things, but the new things that you have learned may not fit into your everyday world. You want to tell people about what you experienced but many friends would rather tell you what happened while you were away. People may see you as being more critical of things in your own culture and country and feel betrayed when you say you may want to go back there someday. You prefer the company of those who shared your experience and, in some cases, your international experience takes on ideal qualities that cannot be matched at home.

Coping with re-entry culture shock requires that you and those who care about you recognize its symptoms and origins. You are a different person after being abroad and instead of undoing all of the changes that have occurred in you, take time to evaluate the two cultures and how to incorporate parts of both into your lifestyle.

Seek out others who have similar experiences to you. Be open about your experiences with family members and friends. Listen to stories of what happened when you were away and try to keep an open mind.

Remember to visit the Office of International Programs to share your experiences in our newsletter. You can also submit photos to our photo contest and help to promote study abroad at the annual Study Abroad fair held in the fall. You can also look into becoming a Global Ambassador for your program provider, which is a great opportunity for building your resumé, sharing your experience, and in some cases, earning compensation for your time.



Photo taken in Venice, Italy by
Minot State alumna Roxanne Meinert

