

Safety

Nothing is more important than your safety! Use care and caution while you are abroad. Be safe, but do not be too scared to have fun while abroad. Many people come back without having encountered a single problem, but it's just better to be safe than sorry. The following suggestions are offered to help you have a safe trip.

Safety Tips:

- Protect your valuables from pickpockets and purse-snatchers by remaining alert and cautious.
- Conceal your valuables in a money belt or satchel under your clothing. Do not carry your wallet in back or coat pockets.
- Avoid offers of “bargain” accommodations, rides, or baggage handling. Official taxi stands are generally located outside airports and bus stations.
- Learn as much about the country you’ll be staying in as possible. This will make you better prepared for your stay, more comfortable with your plans, and safer.
- Be aware of current events while you are abroad and heed special instructions provided by your program staff.
- Be careful about divulging information about yourself, your fellow students, and your study program to strangers.
- It is important to realize that most cultures are very different from ours.
- Memorize the emergency numbers in the countries you visit and keep change for the phone and cab money with you at all times.
- Be careful in helping to maintain security at your residence and other program buildings by keeping your residence area locked.
- Speak the local language whenever possible.
- Keep a low profile in demeanor and dress. College or fraternity shirts or sweaters, baseball caps and U.S. athletic shoes identify you as a U.S. citizen. Dressing in a revealing or unusual manner may draw unwanted attention to you. Do not dress expensively, wear expensive looking jewelry, or carry expensive cameras or other electronic equipment.
- Do not attract attention to yourself through careless behavior.
- Be discreet and polite, heeding signs and regulations in public places.
- Do not impair your judgment by consuming excessive amounts of alcohol. Alcohol misuse may result in dismissal from the program, academic withdrawal from the University for the semester, disciplinary action upon return to campus, or even sickness from alcohol poisoning.
- Do not impair your judgment by doing illegal drugs. SUU study abroad has a zero tolerance policy when it comes to drugs. Drug use, sale, exchange etc. may result in dismissal from the program, academic withdrawal from the University, or disciplinary action upon return to campus. Should you be caught, neither SUU nor the U.S. will be able to secure your release.
- Do not agree to meet a person whom you do not know in a non-public place.
- Do not leave a public place with anyone you do not know.
- When traveling, do not leave your luggage unattended.
- Do not agree to carry on or check any luggage or other items for anyone. If you see unattended luggage or packages, report it to airport, train or bus station authorities immediately.
- Know local laws. Laws and justice systems are not the same in each country, and you are subject to the laws of the country you visit.

- As is wise anywhere, do not walk alone at night or in remote and unfamiliar areas. Stay near busy and well-lit areas. Do not try to cross through parks, parking lots or other deserted areas, especially after dark.
- Always be aware of the location of your closest exit.
- Be especially careful when crossing streets or waiting to cross. Pedestrians do not have the right of way in most parts of the world. There may also be several streets intersecting at one spot, look all around you before crossing. In some countries, cars drive on the opposite side of the road; be aware of this.
- Do not hitchhike.
- Do not travel alone. Before leaving, tell someone at home of your travel plans, detailing your companions, itinerary, mode of travel, and dates of departure and return.
- Be cautious when entering public restrooms or any isolated area.
- Don't get involved in controversial discussions/situations in public places. If a crowd is gathering somewhere and you feel uncomfortable, leave the area.
- Be wary of beggars. Many times the beggars, even the children, are expert pickpockets or thieves. Giving money is a personal decision. Use common sense and leave immediately if you feel uncomfortable.
- Never count your money in public. Do not carry anything in a purse that you cannot afford to lose. Leave your passport in a safe place and carry a copy in your purse/bag.
- Use discretion and common sense when using ATM machines. Use ATM machines during daylight hours and when there are other people around. Guard your pin number and do not let anyone distract you while you are using an ATM machine.
- Consider traveling with an extra credit card to use for emergencies only. Keep this separate from your other credit cards and money
- Leave your travel itinerary with a friend and someone back home.
- Have a rendezvous point. If someone gets separated from the group, decide in advance where to go to meet up.
- Inspect any gifts received in a foreign country before packing.
- Take off all luggage tags upon arrival
- Don't leave any valuables (camera, jewelry, etc.) out in your hostels, hotels, or place that you are staying.
- Understand that fights or other commotion can be a way to distract tourists and make the job of pickpockets easier.
- Make sure you know the location and phone number of the nearest American embassy or consulate. You should register yourself with them before leaving. That way, if something does happen, they know you are there and where you will be staying. They may also be able to help replace lost or stolen passports or help to arrange for emergency funds to be transferred from home.

The Office of Learning Abroad strives to keep students, faculty, and parents informed of conditions and decisions related to student safety and well-being. However, in these changing times, it is necessary that each student take responsibility for his/her own safety by staying informed and conducting themselves accordingly.

Advice to Women travelers:

The overwhelming majority of students who study abroad are women and they report back that they have had incredible experiences. However, in certain locations and programs, women may have a

difficult time adjusting to attitudes they encounter abroad, both in public and private interactions between men and women. Some men openly demonstrate their appraisal of women in ways that many women find offensive. It is not uncommon to be honked at, stared at, verbally and loudly approved of, and, in general, to be actively noticed simply for being a woman, and in particular, an American woman. Sometimes the attention can be flattering. Soon, it may become very annoying and potentially even angering. Local women, who often get the same sort of treatment, have learned through their culture how to respond to the attention.

Eye contact between strangers or a smile at someone passing in the street, which is not uncommon in the U.S., may result in totally unexpected invitations, and some women feel forced to avoid eye contact. You will have to learn the unwritten rules about what you can and cannot do. Women can provide support for each other; you may wish to get together several times early in your stay abroad to talk about what does and doesn't work for dealing with unwanted attention. U.S. women are seen as liberated in many ways and sometimes the cultural misunderstanding that comes out of that image can lead to difficulties. Some uncomfortable situations may be avoided by taking the following precautions:

- Dress conservatively; while short skirts and tank tops may be comfortable, they may encourage unwanted attention.
- Avoid walking alone late at night or in questionable neighborhoods.
- Do not agree to meet a person who you do not know in a non-public place.
- Be aware that some men from other cultures tend to mistake the friendliness of U.S. American women for romantic interest.

Tourism Scams:

Slow count- When receiving money at a bank, cashiers may count your money with awkward pauses hoping you will think they are done, take the money they have counted, and leave without the rest. Also be careful with waiters, cab drivers, etc., especially when paying with a large bill.

“Oops”- Be aware that if someone spills on you, drops something, or falls down, they could be targeting you. When you go to help or while they are cleaning ketchup off your shirt, you could be pickpocketed.

The “helpful” local- Be careful of locals who “warn you”. They might tell you to store your wallet carefully in order to see where you put it. They may also ask to help you use an ATM, help you navigate the subway, or help you to buy a ticket. They may also actually help you and then demand a tip. The last one is very common.

Fake police- Be aware of thieves dressed up in uniform who demand to check your wallet for drug money or fake bills.

Room inspectors- If people come to your hotel room wanting to “inspect it”, be careful. They will be looking for left out valuables to take. Do not let them in.

Cab drivers- The most common scam is being overcharged by cab drivers. When it's a holiday, drivers can increase the rate they charge per a specific amount of time. When driving a tourist, drivers are known to increase the rate on regular days. You can tell by a number on the meter. Usually, simply

asking about the number scares them out of scamming you. You may also want to double check the amount on the meter before paying as they might ask for a higher amount than what you actually owe.

ATM's- Check ATM's for a small device that can trap your card in for thieves to retrieve later before using the machine.

Different scams may be especially specific to the country you are going to be staying in. Be sure to research these scams so you know what to expect and can be better prepared to protect yourself from them.

Read about more scams on Rick Steve's website: <http://www.ricksteves.com/plan/tips/298scam.htm>

Instructions for Families (Parents or Legal Guardians):

SUU is aware of your need to keep in contact with your family members, especially in emergency situations. If you need to contact your family member while they are abroad due to a family emergency you may contact the SUU Office of Learning Abroad for help. Our office number is (435) 586-1995 and our hours are 8:00 AM-5:00 PM weekdays. After hours, if this is an emergency, you can contact the either Tayah Nelson (435-233-5217) or Kurt Harris (435-669-1738). If the situation does not require immediate attention, please leave a voice mail message at (435) 586-1995. We will return your call the next work day.

The Family Rights and Privacy Act prevents staff members from providing certain information to persons other than the student participant. It is necessary for us to balance your needs as a family with the needs of the students to be treated as adults and to follow the laws of the U.S. Our goal is to provide open lines of communication between you and your family members. Please be assured that we will do as much as possible to help you in any emergency situation.