

Student Travel Safety Tips

Playing it Safe

So you plan to travel abroad?

Accidents and crime happen everywhere and no one is immune to them.

Following these Safety Tips as suggested by International SOS Medical and Security Specialists will help you reduce the risk of encountering any difficulties and increase your chances of having a trouble-free trip!

Protect yourself by becoming an International SOS Member and you'll get:

- 24-hour worldwide assistance
- Emergency evacuation and repatriation
- Medical teams and air ambulances on standby
- Many more services

Have fun, be safe, and enjoy!

Before you leave — Preparing for your trip:

Make a List. Make a two-column list of items you will need for your trip. Place items you will pack in your suitcase in the first column and in your carry-on in the second. Check each item off as you pack it and check your list twice. It is always better to be safe rather than sorry. Ask a parent or friend to look over the list and see if you have forgotten something. Do you have your tickets, money, passport, visa, emergency information and any necessary medicine in your carry-on bag?

Pack Wisely.

Pack clothing that you will be comfortable wearing and which will not draw unwanted attention to you. Remember, styles that are viewed as acceptable in the United States may be seen as inappropriate in other countries. For example, if you are traveling to Indonesia, do not pack a suitcase full of midribs or muscle shirts.

Tip: Leave valuables like expensive jewelry and designer handbags at home — these will call unwanted attention to you and may increase your risk of being robbed.

Pack comfortable shoes. You will likely be doing a lot of walking. Closed toed shoes are recommended, as they will protect you from fleas, ticks, and other parasites.

Pack an extra pair of eyeglasses, contacts and sunglasses. Also bring any prescription drugs you may need. It's best to get prescriptions refilled just before leaving. If you will be out of country for a long time, I you may want your doctor to write a spare prescription under a generic name. Remember to carry all prescriptions in their original packaging.

Pack a medical kit, a small, high-powered flashlight, your cell phone, and a phone card just in case. The medical kit should include: aspirin, bandages, insect repellent, sunscreen, antacids, and anti-diarrhea medication.

Other Ways to Prepare for Your Trip:

Do Your Research.

Many students are so excited at the prospect of traveling that they forget to

research the locale they are visiting. But visiting another country without researching it first is like walking into traffic blindfolded. So do yourself a favor — go online and get acquainted with your destination before you leave. Familiarizing yourself with the local customs, laws, and climate of the country you are visiting will help you prepare both physically and mentally for your experience. It is also a good idea to know what is going on there in terms of current events.

Understanding the currency and rate of exchange in the country you intend to visit is also important. This way, you will not over-pay or fall victim to a scam. Tip: International SOS Country Guides can help you get acquainted with the country and people you are visiting.

Make a record of your passport, credit card, the serial numbers of your travelers' checks and your insurance policies, as well as your itinerary — flight information and the telephone numbers of hotels, hostels, or a host family where you will be staying. Leave a copy of the list with your parent(s) for safekeeping and take a copy with you. Make a copy of the first pages of your passport and keep it in your carry-on bag. Keep emergency medical and key contact information with you at all times — including full names and telephone numbers (beginning with the country code) of parents and close friends.

Confirm your reservation with the airline before you leave home and follow their recommendation for when to arrive at the airport prior to scheduled departure. While on the plane, eat lightly, drink water (avoid alco-hol as it will dehydrate you and get you off to a rough start) and sleep if you are able to. Be sure to stretch on long flights and move about when possible.

Check the information for travelers available from the U.S. State Departments Bureau of Consular Affairs at www.travel.state.gov

Pair Up.

Use the "buddy system" — try to travel in groups with other classmates. Never hitchhike.

Driving Know-How.

If you plan to drive, be sure you have adequate insurance and familiarize yourself with the rules of the road for the location in which you will be driving. Be certain that you always have at least a half tank of fuel. Make sure your lights, signals, and horn work before you roll out. Avoid driving after dark (especially in rural areas). Roll up your windows to within a few inches of the top, always lock the doors, and wear your seatbelt — even for short trips. When parking, seek a well-lit area and always lock your doors. Never pick up hitchhikers.

Here's to Your Health.

A pre-trip health check, complete with any necessary vaccinations and a dental check-up are a must for any traveler. Travelers who have diabetes or other chronic conditions should consult with their physician before leaving on a trip. Pay special attention to local regulations concerning syringes and insulin transportation. Learn the Lingo.

It is a good idea to learn key phrases in the language of the country you are visiting so that you can communicate on a basic level. Making an effort to speak the language instantly ingratiates you with people in your host country. You should be able to say, "Hello", "Goodbye", "Thank you", and "I need help". Pocket-size phrase books and easy-to-follow audiotapes are helpful and easy to stow in your backpack. Tip: Try practicing a few key phrases with your traveling companion(s) on the plane. Purchase a Medical Assistance Plan.

Consider purchasing a medical assistance plan like one offered by International SOS. This "security blanket" will provide you with emergency medical services, emergency evacuation, medical referrals and other travel assistance such as emergency message transmission to home and cash for emergencies.

Hotel Safety Savvy.

If you have a choice, select a room between the third and sixth floors of your hotel. This ensures your room cannot be easily accessed from the ground and you are not so high up that fire equipment will not reach you. Familiarize yourself with the nearest exits and other surroundings immediately after checking in. Always check the window and door locks of your room — if these do not work properly request another room.

Do not let anyone into your room unless you know them or are satisfied with their identity and purpose. Put a do not disturb sign on your door and leave the TV or radio on when you are out at night. Check your belongings regularly. Use authorized transportation to and from the airport and rail station.

While Abroad...

A Little Respect Goes a Long Way.

It is important to respect the culture of the country you are visiting in the way you dress, speak and act. Try to fit in with your new surroundings without drawing attention to yourself. To travel globally, you must think locally!

Be aware of and obey local laws and customs. Your civil rights will vary greatly

once outside the United States. Refrain from discussing politics or criticizing lifestyles.

Currency Confidence.

Never carry all of your money with you. Leave some cash and a credit card in the hotel safe. Keep only the currency you need on your person. Carry your wallet on the inside of your coat or front pocket of your pants.

Do not flash your money on the street — be smooth and swift in your transactions and put your money away again quickly.

Be aware of credit card limits. Do not charge more than your limit. In some countries you can be arrested for this.

Be "Street Smart".

Stay away from drugs entirely. Most foreign countries have extremely strict laws regarding even small quantities of drugs. In certain countries there is an automatic death sentence for possession of drugs — no matter what the amount!

Women from more liberated countries such as the United States may be perceived as "sexually promiscuous" in certain parts of the world, especially Islamic countries. Respect local dress codes by covering up and dressing modestly, and modify your social behavior.

Never carry bags or packages for anyone else.

The information included in this brochure contains guidelines that International SOS suggests you follow when traveling. International SOS will not be held responsible should they fail to protect you or your personal property. The information contained herein may not be printed or reproduced in any way without the express written permission of International SOS.

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See www.internationalsos.com for more details.