

Study Abroad Safety Steps

*In choosing to study abroad you have demonstrated that you are ready to see the world! We hope that you'll continue to challenge yourself and take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves to you while abroad. Remember that **you** have an important role in your own health and safety.*

- 1 Make Copies:** Make sure your family has **copies** of your passport, license, credit card numbers, etc. Keep copies for yourself also just in case these items are lost so you can replace them. Never carry your passport with you unless you absolutely must. If a hotel asks for it, they will usually accept any photo ID (such as an International Student ID Card) or a photocopy of your passport. If you do not have a copy, you can always ask the hotel to make a copy instead of giving them the original.
- 2 Keep a low “American Profile”:** Think of how people prey on **tourists** in New York and other large cities. Watch out for pickpockets, panhandlers, and con artists. Know where to go and from what places to stay away. Though many of these issues will be addressed at your site's **orientation**, you should always feel free to ask questions privately to **staff on site**; what you say to them will be kept confidential.
- 3 Street Smarts:** When faced with the question of “**is it too late to take the subway home alone?**” – use the same logic you would in New York or any other big city. When in doubt, play it safe – take a cab. Trust your instincts and move away from uncomfortable situations. Positively identify individuals before you allow them into your room or apartment. Learn how to **use local phones** and report emergencies. Always **lock** your doors and windows when you go out. And always let someone know where you are going when you travel! Be sure to fill out the **travel form** for your site online before you go.
- 4 Nightlife:** Learn the nightlife of your country; never assume how people act and conduct themselves. Do people hail cabs or do they call first? What are the **subway hours**? How are women, **LGBT** individuals, and people of color regarded in your new culture? Do people go out alone, or in groups? Do people walk around late at night? **If you don't know the answers to these questions, ASK!** Once you've answered these types of questions, you'll be equipped to judge what's safe and what's not in your new culture.
- 5 Dating:** Find out how **dating** is regarded in your new culture. Always pick a public spot to meet someone. Watch how much you drink when you go out. Are there gender stereotypes or norms in your host country? **Do you know how to discuss what you are comfortable with sexually in your host country's language?** Always tell a friend where you are going and how they can reach you.
- 6 Money:** Never carry large amounts of **cash** on you, or all of your travelers' checks at once; **ATM cards** are great for getting cash abroad.
- 7 Learn the Laws of the Land:** As a visitor of your host country, you are subject to the **laws** and regulations of their legal system. If you refuse to obey local laws because you feel they don't apply to you as an American college student, especially those concerning **alcohol** and the use of **illicit drugs**, you risk not only being kicked out of the program, but being arrested in a foreign country. If you are **arrested**, there is very little NYU or the U.S. Embassy can do for you because American laws won't apply.

⑧ **Get Support:** Treat the people you live with like **family**; take care of them and let them take care of you. Don't be a loner in a foreign land. Let people know where you are and how you are doing, be it friends, fellow students, or local staff. Being abroad is a great way to make new friends, so build a support network of people you trust. Always carry enough money to make a phone call, and know how to reach people when you need them.

⑨ **Take advantage of the on-site staff:** They are there to help you have the best possible semester. Ask them questions! Report any situations or concerns directly to them; they are there to help you.

Safety Tips:

- When traveling, carry your valuable documents on your person and pack photocopies of all of them in a separate piece of luggage.
- If you're not in transit, leave your valuables safely locked away at home, and not on the windowsill of your apartment or lying on your bed.
- Try not to take things with you that you really can't bear to lose.
- Never leave your baggage unattended, not even for a moment.
- When it comes to your passport and wallet, it's ok to be paranoid!
- Get to know the people you travel with, and **don't** rely on the kindness of strangers.
- Always look out for your own safety – take responsibility for yourself.
- Walk in groups at night as much as possible.
- Be respectful of your neighbors. If you conduct yourself accordingly, people will be more willing to offer you help.
- Register with the U.S. State Department to get updates while you are abroad about relevant national and international security issues: www.travelregistration.state.gov

For even more safety information, visit the U.S. State Department, Bureau of Consular Affairs at <http://travel.state.gov>! Your guide book also gives good advice!