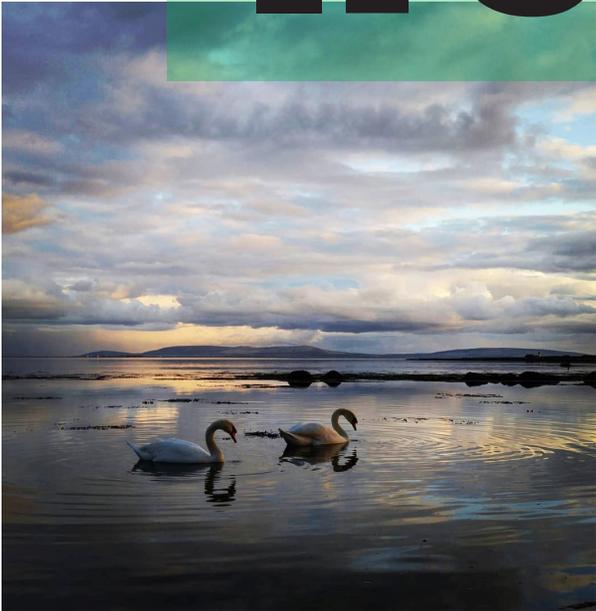


Ireland



Ireland

<https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3180.htm>

Fact Sheet
June 2, 2022

U.S.-IRELAND RELATIONS

U.S. relations with Ireland have long been based on common ancestral ties and shared values. In addition to regular dialogue on political and economic issues, the U.S. and Irish governments benefit from a robust slate of exchanges in areas such as commerce, culture, education, and scientific research. With Ireland's membership in the European Union (EU), discussions of EU trade and economic policies, as well as other aspects of broader EU policy, constitute key elements in the U.S.-Ireland relationship.

The Irish and American people enjoy a special bond. More than 30 million Americans, almost ten percent of the population, claim Irish heritage. Many Irish citizens take temporary residence overseas for work or study, mainly in the United States, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere in Europe. The Summer Work Travel



category of the U.S. Department of State's BridgeUSA Program allows Irish youth to participate in a cultural and educational enrichment program that includes temporary and seasonal work and the opportunity to travel in the United States. Before the pandemic, more than 1,200 Irish students were studying at U.S. higher education institutions, and Ireland hosted the largest number of American study abroad students per capita through programs like the Ireland Intern Work and Travel program. Nearly 12,000 Americans study abroad

there each year. In addition, close to 8,000 Irish citizens come to the United States each year on private and government-funded exchange opportunities. The Fulbright program in Ireland, which celebrated its 65th anniversary in 2022, annually awards grants for Irish citizens to study, research, or teach in the United States and for Americans to do the same in Ireland.

In Northern Ireland, "Nationalist" and "Republican" groups seek a united Ireland that includes Northern Ireland, while "Unionists" and "Loyalists" want Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom. The United States seeks to support the peace process and devolved political institutions in Northern Ireland by encouraging the implementation of the U.S.-brokered 1998 Belfast Agreement (also known as the Good Friday Agreement).

U.S. Assistance to Ireland

The International Fund for Ireland (IFI), established by the British and Irish governments in 1986, provides funding for projects to sustain the peace process and to generate cross-community engagement and economic opportunity in Northern Ireland (the United Kingdom) and the border counties of Ireland. The U.S. government has contributed more than \$549 million to the IFI since its establishment.

Bilateral Economic Relations

Economic and trade ties are an important facet of overall U.S.- Irish relations. The United States is a major goods exporter to Ireland, ranking second only to the United

Kingdom. U.S. goods exports to Ireland include pharmaceutical products, electrical components and equipment, computers and peripherals, aircraft, and optical/medical instruments. The United States is Ireland's top export destination; about 30 percent of all Irish goods exports go to the United States. Irish goods exports to the United States include pharmaceutical products, organic chemicals, optical/medical instruments, and beverages. U.S.-Irish trade in services is growing as well. U.S. services exports to Ireland include intellectual property licenses, research and development, and management consulting services. Major Irish services exports to the United States include insurance and information services.

Two-way investment between the United States and Ireland remains strong. Ireland's membership in the EU, English-speaking workforce, and business-friendly environment has attracted U.S. companies to establish themselves in Ireland as a base to sell into Europe and other markets. Many high-tech firms, such as Google, Facebook, and Twitter, base their European operations in Ireland. Since 2015, Ireland also has become an important research and development center for U.S. firms in Europe. Irish firms are significant investors in the United States across a wide range of sectors. Ireland is the ninth largest source of FDI to the United States (\$240 billion (2020) FDI stock), with 700 Irish companies directly responsible for employing 110,000 people across the country in all 50 states. Today, more than 900 U.S.-owned firms have their European headquarters in Ireland, supporting jobs that directly employ over 180,000 people and an equivalent number indirectly. U.S. FDI in Ireland is concentrated in intellectual property-intensive industries, including pharmaceuticals and medical devices. In 2017, the Embassy opened a SelectUSA office to encourage and assist Irish companies seeking to invest and create jobs in the United States.

Ireland's Membership in International Organizations

Ireland and the United States belong to several of the same international organizations, including the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and

Development (OECD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and World Trade Organization (WTO). Ireland also is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. In 2021, Ireland took a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, strengthening our joint efforts on peacekeeping, conflict resolution, accountability mechanisms, and women's rights.

Bilateral Representation

Principal embassy officials are listed in the [Department's Key Officers List](#).

Ireland maintains an **embassy** in the United States at 2234 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC, 20008 (tel. 202-462-3939). Ireland also maintains consulates general in Atlanta, Austin, Boston, Chicago, New York, and San Francisco.

More information about Ireland is available from the Department of State and other sources, some of which are listed here:

[CIA World Factbook Ireland Page](#)

[U.S. Embassy](#)

[History of U.S. Relations With Ireland](#)

[U.S. Census Bureau Foreign Trade Statistics](#)

[Export.gov International Offices Page](#)

[Library of Congress Country Studies](#)

[Travel Information](#)



The Overseas Security Advisory Council's Travel Safety Reference Guide

November 2011

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Introduction

Globalization has made overseas travel – be it for business, academia, charity, personal, or mission work – quite common. International travelers are exposed to many new experiences and phenomena and among these, certain risks. This guide offers international travelers information, tactics, techniques, and procedures to mitigate risks inherent to international travel.

OSAC acknowledges that every destination is unique and that no one resource can address all eventualities. Therefore, we have developed this reference in coordination with our constituents to inform the private sector of best practices for personnel safety abroad. The risks of international travel are no longer just tied to local or transnational crime. It is our hope that the enclosed recommendations will both encourage individuals to seek overseas opportunities and provide greater comfort and confidence for those traveling internationally.

Pre-Departure

Know Before You Go

- Register with the U.S. State Department's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#).
- Review the U.S. State Department's [country specific information](#) and OSAC's [country crime and safety reports](#).
- Do your homework. Visit country-specific websites for important information on your destination country.
- Understand the laws and currency exchange rates in your destination country.
- Be culturally aware; learn a few common phrases in the local language and the basics of the cultural values and norms.
- Get a map and study it. Identify potential hazards and safe havens; learn several routes to key places you will be staying/living/visiting.

Packing

- Pack your luggage wisely. Make sure to place any prohibited materials (scissors, files, other sharp objects) in your check-in luggage.
- Be sure to pack 2-3 day "survival items" in your carry-on bag. This includes: medicines and toiletries, an extra change of clothes (including undergarments), important documents, drinking water, snacks (e.g., Powerbars), and anything else you may want.
- Do not display company or other identifying logos on luggage. Place your pertinent contact information in a visible place inside each piece of luggage.
- Do not openly display your name tags on your luggage. Include only your name and contact number on your tags, and keep them covered or turn the paper over and write "see other side."
- Get a plain cover for your passport.

- Make out a will.
- Consider a privacy act waiver.
- Leave travel itinerary and contact information with family or friends; do not otherwise disclose.
- Consider getting a telephone calling card and a GSM (tri-band or “world”) cellular phone that allows access to most local cellular systems (and provides a single contact number). Depending on your situation, you may want to purchase a local phone or SIM card in country.
- Take out property insurance on necessary equipment (cameras, binoculars, laptops, etc.).
- Consider securing a new credit card with a low credit limit separate from existing credit cards; in the event of theft, your personal accounts will not be compromised.
- Notify your credit card company of your intent to travel; confirm credit limit and availability.

Health

- Make sure health insurance covers foreign medical providers and medical evacuation expenses.
- Take an extra pair of glasses; depending on the destination, contact lenses can be problematic.
- Visit a travel clinic, inform them of destination(s), and get any needed inoculations and medications.
- Get a dental cleaning and checkup if you had not recently had one.
- Prep and pack a travel med kit; some items you may want to include:
 - Anti-diarrheal medication
 - Antibiotics
 - Anti-malaria (if applicable)
 - Antihistamine and decongestant
 - Antacid and laxative
 - Anti-fungal/anti-bacterial and hydrocortisone cream
 - Anti-bacterial hand wipes/ hand sanitizer
 - Pain reliever/fever reducer, sleep aid
 - Gauze, bandages, and medical tape
 - Insect repellent with DEET 35%
 - Shaving razor, tweezers, manicure kits
 - Sunscreen and aloe
 - Thermometer

During Your Trip

Awareness

Situational Awareness is very important domestically but becomes critically important overseas in unfamiliar environments. Keep your head up, eyes and ears open, and listen to your intuition! Situational awareness can and should be practiced and will improve the more you do so. Focus on seeing and remembering everything around you. It will seem extremely arduous and time-consuming at first but will become increasingly easier as time passes and proficiency is gained. Your goal should be for these efforts to become habitual and completed sub-consciously. Some important practices are:

- Trust your instinct; if a place does not feel right, move to a safer location – immediately.
- Assess your emotional and physical strengths and limitations.
- Be attentive to how others perceive you; behave in an unprovocative manner that discourages unwanted attention.
- Familiarize yourself with your neighborhood and work environment.
- Use common sense. Beware of EVERYONE, including pickpockets, scam artists, etc.
- Remove name tags or convention badges when outside the venue.
- Pay attention to local media for any activities or events that might affect you.
- Be aware of surroundings, including the people, cars, and alleys nearby.

- Keep alert to potential trouble, and choose to avoid when possible. Trust your instincts.
- Educate yourself of any pending events (elections, demonstrations, anniversaries) that may cause civil disturbance, and avoid unnecessary risks.
- Establish a support network among your colleagues and when possible, embassy personnel.
- Inform yourself of the availability and reliability of local support services (police, security, medical, emergency, fire).
- Confirm (with your embassy) the procedures for you and your family in the event of a crisis or evacuation.
- Politely decline offers of food or drink from strangers.
- Accept beverages only in sealed containers; make sure there has been no tampering.

Personal Conduct

You can dress, behave, and move about in a manner that is respectful of local custom, but rest assured, YOU WILL NOT BLEND IN. Remember that whenever you travel anywhere, whether you realize it or not, you are representing yourself, your family, your organization, and your country. Your behavior and actions will be applied as a positive or negative impression of all that you represent. In many cultures, this will essentially make or break your ability to successfully function and interact in another culture. Always keep in mind the following:

- Behave maturely and in a manner befitting your status in the local society; insist on being treated with respect.
- Dress in a manner that is inoffensive to local cultural norms.
- Avoid clothing that shows your nationality or political views.
- Establish personal boundaries and act to protect them.
- Exercise additional caution when carrying and displaying valuable possessions (jewelry, phone, sunglasses, camera, etc.); what may be a simple, even disposable item to you, may be a sign of extreme affluence to another.
- Vary your patterns of life/behavior to be less predictable.
- Divide money among several pockets; if you carry a wallet, carry it in a front pocket.
- If you carry a purse, carry it close to your body. Do not set it down or leave it unattended.
- Take a patient and calm approach to ambiguity and conflict.
- Radiate confidence while walking in public places.
- Do not expect privacy, anywhere.
- Do not discuss personal, professional, or financial issues of your group or yourself; these can be used to exploit you and your group.
- Be cool when facing confrontation; focus on de-escalation and escape.
- Respect local sensitivities to photographing/videotaping, especially at airports, police, and government facilities.
- Carry required official identification with you at all times.
- Report any security incidents to your embassy or consulate (who will advise you of options including reporting to local authorities, prosecution, corrective measures, etc.).
- Maintain a low profile, especially in places where there may be hostility toward foreigners and/or citizens of your country; do not seek publicity.
- Avoid public expressions about local politics, religion, and other sensitive topics.
- Avoid being out alone late at night or after curfew.
- Stay alert.
- Be unpredictable.
- Carry yourself with confidence.
- Be aware of distractions.
- Watch for surveillance. If you see the same person/vehicle twice, it could be surveillance; if you see it three times, it probably is surveillance.

Electronics Security

- First and foremost: if you don't NEED it, don't bring it!
- If you need to bring a laptop and/or phone and have "clean" ones available, use them.
- Back up and then wipe (sanitize) your laptop, phone, and any other electronics to ensure that no sensitive or personal data is on them while [traveling](#) .
- Carry laptop in a protective sleeve in a backpack/purse/bag that does not shout "there's a computer in here."
- DO NOT EXPECT PRIVACY, ANYWHERE.
- Do not leave your electronic devices unattended.
- Do not use local computers to connect to your organization's secure network.
- Clear your temporary files, to include your temporary internet files, browser history, caches, and cookies after each use.
- Consider opening a new e-mail account (Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail, AOL, etc.) for use during your trip.
- Ensure you update your computer's security software (antivirus, firewall, etc.) and download any outstanding security patches for your operating system and key programs.
- Upon return, change all of your passwords for devices and accounts (including voicemail) used while traveling.

Logistics

Air Travel

Air travel can be incredibly convenient and frustrating at the same time. While traveling you are extremely vulnerable and must bear this in mind that a distracted individual is a prime target for all kinds of nefarious actions. You must control what you can and readily adapt to, as well as what you cannot (i.e., flight schedules/delays and time to clear security). Here are some key considerations:

- Wear comfortable, loose fitting clothing.
- Arrive at the airport in plenty of time (1.5 – 2 hours before departure).
- Move through passenger security immediately after ticketing and locate your departure gate.
- Stay with your bags at all times.
- Set your watch to local time at destination upon take off.
- Be careful about how much of your personal/business information you share with fellow passengers; they are still strangers.
- Limit intake of alcohol in flight, and drink plenty of water to counteract "jet lag". This will help limit stress and increase alertness.
- If possible, pre-arrange transport from the airport to your hotel. Consider paying the additional room rate for a hotel that provides shuttle service to and from the airport.
- Have your immigration and customs documents in order and available. A durable folder secured by a buckle or elastic band may be useful.

Ground Travel

Ground travel poses several risks to the traveler. Not only are you more vulnerable, but many places do not have the traffic laws, enforcement, infrastructure, or assistance that you are accustomed to. Be prepared. You will be in an unfamiliar environment and may have to contend with, among other things, dangerous road conditions; untrained or unlicensed drivers; drivers operating under the influence of alcohol and/or narcotics; vehicles that are poorly maintained and therefore hazardous, police and/or criminal checkpoints or roadblocks, and others with malicious intentions. Some recommendations for ground travel are:

- Use a common vehicle model (local taxis may be a good indicator). If you rent, remove any markings that identify vehicle as a rental.
- If you have to drive, always leave a path for escape when you stop (at a light, stop sign, cross-walk, etc.).
- Park in a manner that expedites your departure.
- Carry a cell phone, first aid kit, maps, flashlight, and official documents in your vehicle.
- Keep the vehicle windows rolled up and the doors locked.
- Use the seat belts.
- Be alert to scam artists and carjackers while stopped in traffic.
- Understand the proper local procedures should you be involved in or witness a traffic accident. In some locales, stopping for an accident can put your life at risk.
- Only take official, licensed taxis; note the license plate number of taxi and write it down.
- Avoid getting into a taxi already occupied by others. If necessary, pay extra for a single fare. Negotiate a price before getting in taxi. Have money ready to pay in appropriate denominations.
- Take a seat on a bus or train that allows you to observe fellow passengers but does not preclude options to change seats if necessary.

Lodging

At the Hotel

For most destinations you travel to (in addition to being an obvious foreigner), you will be considered wealthy and a prime target. You should not consider a hotel a complete safe haven, there are still many threats and you are potentially very vulnerable at them. Some important considerations:

- Use reputable hotels, hostels, or boarding houses; your safety is worth any added cost.
- Remind hotel staff to not give out your room number.
- Meet visitors in the lobby; avoid entertaining strangers in your room.
- Take a walk around the hotel facilities to familiarize yourself with your environment. Are hotel personnel located on each floor? Are they in uniform? Do they display any identification? Who else has access to your floor?
- Ensure the phone in your room works. Call the front desk.
- Inspect the room carefully; look under the bed, in the showers and closets.
- Ensure door and window locks are working. Do not forget the sliding glass door, if the room has one.
- Ensure the door has a peephole and chain lock.
- Avoid ground floor rooms at the hotel. Third through fifth floors are normally desirable (harder to break into, but still accessible to firefighting equipment – where available).
- Read the safety instructions in your hotel room. Familiarize yourself with hotel emergency exits and fire extinguishers.
- Count the doors between your room and nearest emergency exit (in case of fire or blackout). Rehearse your escape plan.
- Keep all hotel doors locked with a dead bolt or chain at all times (do not forget the sliding glass door and windows).
- Consider traveling with a rubber door stop, smoke detector, and motion detector.
- Identify your visitor before you open the door.
- If you doubt room delivery, check with the front desk before opening the door.
- If you are out of your room, leave television/radio on at high volume. Place a “do not disturb” sign outside door.
- Do not leave sensitive documents or valuables visible and unattended in the room.
- Keep your laptop out of sight, in a safe, or in a locked suitcase. You may wish to use a laptop cable lock to secure your laptop to a window frame or bathroom plumbing.

- Keep your room number to yourself. If your room key is numbered or has your room number on a key holder, keep it out of sight. If a hotel clerk announces your room number loud enough for others to hear, ask for a new room.
- If you leave the hotel, carry the hotel business card with you; it may come in handy with a taxi driver who does not speak your language.

Residential

When residing overseas, it is critically important to understand the threat environment in which you will be living. Take the time to reach out to the resources available, including security professionals in your organization, the local embassy or consulate, and the appropriate crime and safety reports. Here are some security measures you might want to consider:

- Avoid housing on single-entry streets with a dead end or cul-de-sac.
- Housing near multiple intersections can be beneficial.
- Ensure the sound, secure structure of your residence.
- Strictly control access to and distribution of keys.
- Install adequate lighting, window grilles, alarm systems, and perimeter walls as necessary.
- Establish access procedures for strangers and visitors.
- Hire trained guards and night patrols; periodically check-up on guards.
- Set-up a safe room in your house; consider adding additional locks
- Establish rapport with neighbors. Is there a “neighborhood watch” program?
- Seek guidance from local colleagues or expatriates who have insight into local housing arrangements.
- Ensure adequate communications (telephone, radio, cell phone) with local colleagues, authorities, and your Embassy.
- Install a back-up generator and/or solar panels.
- Set aside emergency supplies (food, water, medicine, fuel, etc.).
- Install smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and carbon monoxide monitors, as appropriate.
- Avoid sleeping with the windows open or unlocked.
- Speak on the phone inside, somewhere that is and away from windows (through which you can be seen and heard).
- Ensure all windows have treatments that can prevent external observation.
- Lock up items, such as ladders and hand-tools, which could be used to facilitate forced entry.
- Store emergency funds in multiple places around the house.
- Keep a “go-bag” with clothes, water, and food (Powerbars, etc.) for three days packed and ready at all times. Keep copies of important documents and some emergency funds with the bag. Keep other necessary items (medications, etc.) in a centralized place for easy placement into bag. Key items include:
 - Documentation
 - Copies of all key documentation
 - Passport and/or national ID
 - Driver’s License
 - Health Insurance Card
 - Communication
 - Mobile phone – including a charger and extra battery
 - Work and emergency contact lists
 - Satellite Phone (if available)
 - GPS devise (if available)
 - Food and water
 - Water bottle
 - Purification tablets
 - Energy bars / dried fruit / nuts

- Other essentials
 - Cash (USD and local currency)
 - Full change of clothing
 - Rain jacket
 - Sweater
 - Walking shoes or boots (with heel and closed toe)
 - Insect repellent
 - Matches (ideally windproof and waterproof)
 - Flashlight (with extra batteries)
 - Medical/first aid kit
 - Sun screen
 - Sunglasses
 - Toiletries
 - Toilet paper
- Extended items
 - Sleeping bag or blanket
 - Mosquito net

Preparation for the “what if” scenarios

If You Become a Victim

Despite all of your efforts to reduce exposure to risks and to avoid threats, you may still become the victim of a crime or critical event. Following are some general response strategies:

- Remain calm and alert.
- Carefully note details of the environment around you (license plate number, distinguishing features, accents, clothing, etc.).
- First, try to defuse the situation. Culturally appropriate greetings or humor may reduce tensions.
- If an assailant demands property, give it up.
- You can create a timely diversion by tossing your wallet, watch, etc. to the ground in the opposite direction you choose to flee.
- Against overwhelming odds (weapons, multiple assailants) try reasoning, cajoling, begging, or any psychological ploy.
- If someone tries to grab you, make a scene and fight; kick, punch, claw, scratch, and grab as if your life depends on it, it very well could.
- If you feel your life is endangered and you decide to physically resist, commit to the decision with every fiber of your being; turn fear into fury.
- Report any incident your embassy.
- Seek support for post-traumatic stress (even if you exhibit no symptoms).

Hijacking/Kidnapping

- You may be targeted for kidnapping. As discussed previously, when traveling, you represent yourself, your family, your organization, and your homeland (or perceived homeland). You may be targeted due to any of these affiliations, or you may simply just end up in the wrong place at the wrong time. Because abduction situations vary greatly, the following considerations should be applied based on one’s best judgment at the time:
 - Know the “ransom” policy of your government. The United States of America will not pay a ransom.
 - The greatest risk of physical harm exists at the point of capture and during a rescue attempt or upon release.

- If you are going to resist at the point of capture, do so as if your life depends on it; it most probably does.
- Remain calm and alert; exert control on your emotions and behavior.
- Humanize yourself, quickly and continually.
- Be passively cooperative, but maintain your dignity.
- Assume an inconspicuous posture and avoid direct eye contact with captors.
- Avoid resistance, belligerence, or threatening movements.
- Make reasonable, low-key requests for personal comforts (bathroom breaks, a blanket, exercise, books to read, etc.)
- If questioned, keep answers short; volunteer nothing.
- As a captive situation draws out, try to establish some rapport with your captors.
- Avoid discussing contentious issues (politics, religion, ethnicity, etc.)
- Establish a daily regimen to maintain your body physically and mentally.
- Eat what your captors provide. Avoid alcohol.
- Keep a positive, hopeful attitude.
- Attempt to escape only after weighing the risks and when you are certain to succeed.

Resources

U.S. Department of State and OSAC

- Overseas Security Advisory Council: www.osac.gov
 - Country Crime and Safety Reports: www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReports.aspx?cid=2
- Visit www.travel.state.gov for security advisories and other travel guidance
 - Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP): www.travel.state.gov/step
 - Country Specific Information: www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4965.html
 - U.S. State Department's role in a crisis: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1212.html

World Factbook

- CIA World Factbook: www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html

Study Abroad

- To get the latest in education abroad security information and training, go to www.globalscholar.us
- U.S. State Department Students Abroad website: www.studentsabroad.state.gov
- NAFSA (Association of International Educators) and The Forum on Education Abroad: <http://nafsa.org/> <http://www.forumea.org/>

Weather

- Review the climate and weather at your point of destination and/or any layover cities: www.weather.com

Travel Medicine/Health

- Centers for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov/travel
- World Health Organization: www.who.int/ith

About OSAC

OSAC's Commitment

The Overseas Security Advisory Council is committed to providing the American private sector with customer service of the highest standard. As OSAC is a joint venture with the private sector, we strive to maintain standards equal to or surpassing those provided by private industry. OSAC activities directly correspond to requests from the private sector.

OSAC has received exceptional support for its initiatives from the chief executive officers and corporate security directors of many of the largest international corporations in the United States. The U.S. State Department and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security recognize the need in OSAC's goal to support the U.S. private sector by continuing to develop an effective and cost-efficient security information and communication network that will provide the private sector with the tools needed to cope with security-related issues in the foreign environment. OSAC's unique charter and continued success serve as an example of the benefits of mutual cooperation.

Mission

The U.S. State Department's Overseas Security Advisory Council (Council) is established to promote security cooperation between American private sector interests worldwide (Private Sector) and the U.S. Department of State.

The objectives of the Council, as outlined in its Charter, are:

- To establish continuing liaison and to provide for operational security cooperation between State Department security functions and the Private Sector.
- To provide for regular and timely interchange of information between the Private Sector and the State Department concerning developments in the overseas security environment.
- To recommend methods and provide material for coordinating security planning and implementation of security programs.
- To recommend methods to protect the competitiveness of American businesses operating worldwide.

For more information and to join the Overseas Security Advisory Council, please visit www.osac.gov.

This document is a compilation of constituent and OSAC efforts and is meant to serve as a reference guide for private sector best practices. OSAC wishes to thank all of our constituents who generously provided their input and assistance. A special thank you to Michael O'Neil, Director of Global Safety and Security, Save the Children International, whose contributions were vital and provided the foundation for this reference guide.



www.osac.gov

TRAVEL SAFETY GUIDE FOR STUDY ABROAD

If you become the victim of a crime, seek medical help if necessary, then immediately contact:

- the local police,
- your home nation's diplomacy or consular office
- your International Programs Office Director

If you have a medical emergency, seek immediate care, then contact:

- your host family/program director/international office at host institution
- IPO
- your family

PERSONAL SAFETY

- 🌐 Do - A thorough medical and dental check-up before departure.
- 🌐 Do - Travel with limited cash and one credit card keeping cash in more than one place.
- 🌐 Do - Use official currency outlets and use caution at ATM machines so as not to be a target for thieves. Make sure your card works abroad and notify your bank and credit card companies that you will be out of the country.
- 🌐 Do - Lock personal possessions and valuables in the hotel or room safe or use hotel security.
- 🌐 Do- Use a money belt rather than a purse. If you use a handbag, keep it close to the body. Wear backpacks in front.
- 🌐 Do - Maintain a security awareness of items on your person - i.e.: purse, wallet, keys, money and cell phones
- 🌐 Do - If you are sexually harassed, ignore the proposition and continue on your way.
- 🌐 Do not - Open your hotel room door for anyone not expected or known or does not have an official identification.
- 🌐 Do not - Wear expensive looking jewelry. Remember that thieves may not know the difference between pieces of real and costume jewelry.
- 🌐 Do not - Use ATM machines at night unless the area is open and well lit.
- 🌐 Do not - Walk in low-lighted areas without being surrounded by people and trust your instincts if something seems amiss, return to a safer surrounding, such as a hotel.
- 🌐 Do not - Walk, drive or travel alone and be aware of your surroundings when using public transportation, elevators or restrooms.

Travel Safety Pocket Guide

“Remember that no list can contemplate every possible “do” and “don’t” on safety issues. Every situation is unique. Be careful, don’t rush, think before you act, stay in a group whenever possible, and always use your own best judgment in any given circumstance.”

TRAVEL SAFETY

- 🌐 Do – Leave copy of travel itinerary with two or more known trusted people.
- 🌐 Do – Promise to call or email relatives or friends periodically.
- 🌐 Do – Dress according to the social and cultural norms in each country.
- 🌐 Do – Exclude titles, organization names or unnecessary data on luggage tags.
- 🌐 Do – Keep luggage near by and in view at all times and pack a small flashlight.
- 🌐 Do – Have alternative plans for unexpected events during traveling, keeping necessary items in your carry-on.
- 🌐 Do – Create and have handy detailed maps.
- 🌐 Do – Ask about surrounding and problem areas you may have to travel through. Check these sites:
 - **U.S. State Department: <http://www.state.gov/travel/>**
 - **<https://step.state.gov/>**
 - **<http://www.traveldocs.com/>**
- 🌐 Do – Be aware of your surroundings – not to be lulled with a false sense of security.
- 🌐 Do – Keep advised, via local media, of the current security situations in the area.
- 🌐 Do – Use main entrance of hotels and other buildings.
- 🌐 Do – Use all security locking devices when in your room and keep your room key in your pocket.
- 🌐 Do – Know the emergency number to call where you will be.
- 🌐 Do – Figure out how you will communicate: SIM card? App? Current phone number? What will work in an emergency?
- 🌐 Do – Have a backup plan if relying on your phone for directions or information. Be prepared in case you lose it.
- 🌐 Do – Research and know the laws of your host country. Ignorance is not an excuse.
Be aware of what transportation is official and if using ride shares (Uber/Lyft), verify your ride and driver before entering car.
- 🌐 Do – Consider buying RFID blockers to protect cards from identity theft.

FIRE SAFETY

- **www.firesafetyfoundation.org**
- 🌐 Do – Acquaint yourself with all hotel/residence hall/ etc. emergency procedures and locate all emergency exits nearest you.
- 🌐 Do – Ask about safety measures such as, fire alarms, evacuation procedures and if windows will open.
- 🌐 Do – Call fire department direct if fire occurs then call hotel/residence hall management.
- 🌐 Do – Feel door with palm of hand, if hot don’t open if not try to escape to nearest stairway exit-not elevator.
- 🌐 Do – Stay in room and wait for help when in doubt on what to do and DO NOT PANIC or DO NOT JUMP.
- 🌐 Do – Keep everything wet if you stay in room stuffing door cracks with wet sheets and towels.
- 🌐 Do – Fill the tub with water and douse the door and walls if you stay in room.

LINFIELD UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS IDST 031 SYLLABUS; 2023-24 Academic Year

IDST 031: Intercultural Communication: Pre-Departure, Experiences Abroad, and Re-entry (S/U; 1 credit)

Note: *Students do not register for this course. It will appear on your transcript after you return from your program and attend the re-entry session. IPO then submits the grades to the Registrar to post. Please read the information below which explains the details.*

Course Objective:

This three-part course, required of all semester abroad participants, is designed to prepare you for your semester abroad program, reflect on your experiences while you are abroad and challenge you to think about your encounter with your own culture/country upon returning home. Studies have shown that students who undergo a well-designed orientation program tend to have a higher probability of success when they encounter a cross-cultural conflict or difficulty or experience culture shock. This applies both to international students who study in the United States and American students preparing to study abroad. Some may think that the term “culture shock” is overplayed in some circles, but rest assured that just about everyone will face some level of stress and anxiety when placed in a cultural environment different than their own. The objective is to be able to identify and recognize the symptoms and be ready to cope with the stress so that the experience abroad will turn out to be a rewarding one.

The International Programs Office (IPO) will provide you with cross-cultural material, specific assignments and readings in order to satisfactorily fulfill this one-credit course.

This companion course to the actual on-site study will allow you to identify, examine and explore your personal objectives for undertaking the study. Linfield College has also identified some of the objectives and learning outcomes expected of all students who study abroad.

LEARNING OUTCOMES EXPECTED OF SEMESTER/YEAR ABROAD PARTICIPANTS:

At the end of the semester or year of participation in a Linfield-administered program, participants must be able to demonstrate the following:

- Language acquisition: participants must meet a desired level of proficiency in their language of study. This will be determined through a pre and post test instrument specifically designed and administered by the Global Languages & Cultural Studies. In some cases, the GLCS faculty will also conduct mid-year evaluations of language proficiency for their majors.
- Ability to adapt and be successful in a culturally (and systemically) different educational environment.
- Ability to see and articulate similarities and differences between your own country/culture and the culture of your host country
- Ability to recognize, synthesize and articulate the cultural differences, norms, mores, habits and lifestyles of families in your host country compared with your own.

- Ability to utilize experiences abroad for (international) career building: participants should be able to write a succinct paragraph to this effect to be included in their revised resume.
- Have the skills to be more self-confident, more tolerant and flexible and less reliant on others.

Assessment tools:

- Pre and post language tests, as well as mid-year evaluations **for year-long language majors.**
- Coursework and final grades
- Mid-Semester assignment
- Returnee questionnaire and evaluation
- Re-entry discussion and assignment

1. Pre-Departure Preparation:

A pre and a post orientation assignment will accompany a day and a half of cross-cultural orientation session (normally held in mid-March of each year), required of all participants. The pre-orientation assignment will be emailed to you after you have been accepted into the program and 1-2 weeks before orientation. It will be due the first day of orientation. The mandatory day and a half orientation session will include general discussion and presentation of various cross-cultural topics as well as information about the specific country of your destination. A post orientation assignment will allow you to summarize your thoughts about what you have gained from the sessions.

2. Your Experiences Abroad:

While you are abroad, we will send you a mid-semester assignment that is designed to reflect on your experience and to make comparisons across cultures, your own as well as the one you are experiencing in the host country. You are required to submit your reactions via *Blackboard* or email to ipo@linfield.edu. In completing this on-site mid-semester assessment, you should be aware that IPO will post select entries on the Linfield website so that others in the community would also benefit from your experience abroad.

Mid-Semester Assessment

Please respond to the question/assignment below, with 2-3 thoughtful paragraphs.

- Identify someone from your host country (such as a roommate, a classmate, a member of your host family, a clerk at a local store, a program assistant at the study center, someone you met at the study center) and conduct an interview. Write 2-3 paragraphs to report your findings on these salient points (*make up your own questions to address these points*):
 - What surprised you the most about the lifestyles, mores, norms and habits of the person you interviewed compared to yours or people you encounter with back home?
 - What are (cultural) similarities and differences you observed or learned (their preferences, tastes, outlook, values) between the person you interviewed and you?
 - How did the interview experience and what you learned changed your initial perceptions of the host country?

- At the end of your report, include the name(first name only) of the person you interviewed, who they are and the date of the interview.

At the conclusion of your study abroad program, you will be asked to complete a “study abroad returnee” assessment of your learning experiences.

3. *Returning home:*

Studies have shown (and the Linfield experience has confirmed) that study abroad returnees often experience some level of anxiety about returning home and getting back to their normal routine after spending some time (semester or year) living in another culture. Most feel the value of sharing these feelings with fellow students who have had similar experiences. Hence, we have developed a re-entry workshop to provide for this discussion. For the final part of this course, you will be required to attend one re-entry session held each term. The estimated dates for this session are provided below, along with information about the class meeting.

Grading:

You will receive a passing grade for this course once you have satisfactorily completed all assignments associated with the three segments to this course: pre-departure, experience abroad, returning home.

Mandatory Semester Abroad Orientation

- ↗ Attend the **mandatory** study abroad orientation sessions listed below. **Absences for any reason are not allowed. For all students:**
 - Friday, March 17, 2023 (from 3:30 pm – 6:00 pm); Jonasson Hall
 - Saturday, March 18, 2023 (from 8:30 am – 12:00 pm); Jonasson Hall
 - Saturday, March 18, 2023 (1-5pm) Country-specific sessions; various locations

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Due Dates</u> <u>Fall 2023 Programs</u>	<u>Due Dates</u> <u>Spring 2024 Programs</u>
Pre-orientation Assignments	March 17, 2023	March 17, 2023
Post-orientation Review	March 24, 2023	March 24, 2023
Mid-semester assignment: Experiences Abroad	Questions sent by our office for responses. Select entries will be posted on the IPO website and Linfield’s Digital Commons website.	
Returnee Assessment/Questionnaire	Within 2 weeks of the end of your program.	
Reentry Class	Feb./March, 2024	Sept./Oct, 2024

Relevant texts:

These reference materials are available in Nicholson Library. Use these materials as a background to complete your assignments for this course.

Culture Shock publication for all destinations, published by Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company, Portland Oregon. Similar publications are also available through Lonely Planet Publications.

Students with documented disabilities who may need accommodation, who have any emergency medical information of which IPO should be informed, or require special arrangements in order to **fully** participate in the abroad program or in the event of a necessary evacuation from the study abroad site, should meet with a staff member in IPO as early in the process as possible, no later than a week after receiving the acceptance letter.

Students who have been accepted to participate in a semester/year study abroad program are expected to adhere to the college policy on academic honesty, as published in the Linfield College catalogue, in fulfilling the requirements of this course and in all the courses they would be taking while abroad.

10/22

Tentative Schedule for 2023/2024 - Ireland

Orientation: Beginning of January

Start of Teaching Beginning of January

End of Teaching End of March (12 weeks of teaching)

Easter Good Friday March 29 to Easter Monday March 31

Field Trips Beginning of April

Study Week Tuesday Middle of April

Semester 2 Exams Start End of April

Semester 2 Exams End Beginning of March (13 days of exams)

STUDENT BUDGET – Ireland 23-24

The following figures are estimates based on students' budgets from last year. They are only estimates and vary widely according to the individual. It is important to remember that not all expenses are included! Be prepared for some additional small expenses (i.e. photographs, photocopies) that will be necessary for various reasons.

Be aware of the exchange rate while you are there. Currently, it is not in our favor at the rate of 1 US DOLLAR = 0.93 Euro (as of June 2023).

Food	\$500-1,750
Local transportation	\$100-500
Independent travel	\$1,000-3,000
Books	\$100
Postage	\$30-100
Phone	
\$200	
Gifts	\$300
Entertainment	\$500
Other	\$500

Total estimated cost: \$3,230-\$7000

Irish Immigration Registration: Please note that NUIG will take all students to the immigration office within 30 days after your arrival, to register as a student in Ireland. The cost as of this writing is 300Euro, so be sure to include this in your budgeting.

BANKING:

Plan to exchange \$200 USD into your country's currency, preferably at the airport of departure or you can exchange currency at most airports of arrival, but often arrival is a hectic time plus you might be experiencing jet-lag.

The easiest method for obtaining funds is to use an internationally recognized ATM (Automatic Teller Machine) card – such as PLUS or CIRRUS –for cash withdrawals. You will need to get a pin number from your bank, and you will probably be able to withdraw money only from checking accounts, not savings accounts. **Be sure to check with your bank here at home. Have a back-up plan in case your card does not work. ATM's are not always available outside of cities.**

Another practical solution to international banking is a VISA credit card. You can use the card to charge expenses in most stores, restaurants, and hotels throughout Western

Europe. You can also get cash advances at exchange windows of many banks. Be aware, however, that there is often a fee for the advance plus interest charges that begin immediately after withdrawal.

It is also advisable to photocopy the backs of all your ATM/credit cards and keep that with a photocopy of your passport. If you lose any of your cards, you will have the phone numbers to call the companies.

LINFIELD UNIVERSITY STUDENT GUIDE

FOR

THE UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY,

Galway, Ireland

At the University of Galway, Linfield students will be attending classes along with 15,000 Irish students in both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels of study. The approach to college education in Ireland is quite different than it is in the United States. Irish students tend to do a lot of their studying independently as opposed to relying on the lecturer for most of the information. Courses at the university are not as nearly as structured as they are at Linfield. There are rarely more than two assignments due each semester. Often the only grade you receive in a class is from the final paper or a 2-hour examination. This may feel unnerving, but if you show up to as many lectures as possible and to do the reading assigned for your paper/exam you should fare well. **Do not wait until the last minute to do the reading and work because the majority of your assignments/essays will be due at the same time.**

The university's campus is quite beautiful, featuring a mix of modern and Victorian era buildings, like the Quadrangle, which was the first building constructed on the university's campus. Campus is only a 10–15 minute walk from city center, and the campus itself offers a cafeteria, a restaurant, several cafés, beautiful trails for a run or walk, a pharmacy, a bookstore, and the college bar.

Classes and Registration

Registration at the University of Galway is different than that at Linfield. At visiting student orientation, you receive information on how to register for classes, and all the courses (or modules) that you can take as a visiting student. After that, each department gives individual presentations on their courses. At orientation you will be told by the different department representatives how registration in their departments will work. Each department registers differently, which means that you will have to look at multiple different course catalogs if you're registering for classes in different departments. All visiting students register after regular students have registered. You arrive about a week before classes start, so it's not an immediate concern.

There's about a two week grace period where registration is not solidified, meaning that you can attend as many classes as you want before you commit to them. Try to attend at least one lecture from each of the classes that interest you to make a fully

informed decision about your classes while abroad. If you do not attend a session or two of a class you end up taking, the information covered in that class usually will not be repeated. **Moreover, the topics discussed in class will usually be the subjects that the professor chooses to use for essays and exams, so it is imperative that you attend.**

After the trial period, you must officially commit to your class schedule and confirm that these selections are properly registered. The formal registration will occur online, and you must register with the college for all the courses you wish to take, including the seminars that you have been placed in. Lecture courses will typically have placements available, as they accept large numbers of students. These classes are taught in a traditional lecture hall. The seminar courses are more difficult to get into, but are more similar to Linfield's classes in structure. During visiting student orientation day, each department will talk about their registration process for seminar classes.

You will be taking five to six courses in total. You may also take a online course through Linfield. Depending on what you take, classes will either meet once or twice a week for an hour or two each time. Go to your lectures, especially the seminars. Some lectures require an extra tutorial class that takes place once a week. These are mandatory sessions and can only help your grade. They are also beneficial because they offer smaller group discussions and more interactive learning.

Tips for Registering and Asking Questions

- Relax!!! It's not the end of the world if you don't get the exact classes you want. There are a lot of classes that are very interesting and useful
- Ask loads of questions if you are confused. Irish people are some of the nicest people in the world and they hardly ever pass up a chance to chat. But don't get frustrated if you don't get a straight answer right away! Be patient and you'll get it figured out in the end
- Attend all the department information sessions during orientation day that interest you
- Utilize the International Office as a resource! They are there to help you
- If you are not sure who to ask, go to the information office located in the main concourse hallway.
- If you are planning to take classes in the College of Science, there is a separate process to be able to take these courses. Make sure to talk to the International Office. You will need to get permission from the Head of the Department as well as the College of Science registration in order to take those classes.

Student ID and Student Organizations

You will receive your University of Galway ID during the registration period; these are usually handed out with your information packet during the Visiting Student Orientation a few days before classes begin.

As far as the clubs and societies go, if you think you have time, go for it. Keep in mind that you might want to do lots of traveling so don't get yourself into something that you'll have trouble getting out of. There are loads of student organizations that international students can sign up for, just keep an eye out if you're interested. Go to the societies and clubs fair at the beginning of the semester! They will have information and an email sign up sheet to get more information on meetings and trips. Joining a club or society is one of the best ways to get to know your fellow classmates and assimilate into Irish culture. Through clubs, you are better able to chat with Irish students and you can experience their perspectives and their hobbies, which vary so much from that of Americans. Many of these clubs have organized trips that are otherwise hard to organize on your own. For example, the Mountaineering club goes on hikes every Sunday and provides a big tour bus for transportation to and from at a small fee.

Some may be things to drop in on, even though you might not be in the society-TradSoc (Traditional Irish Music) at the Crane is the best for that! Classes are so big that meeting Irish students in them is quite difficult, but clubs are a great way to meet Irish students and other American students as well. A particularly great club for abroad students is ISS (International Student Society). This club is hosted by Irish students and does numerous trips around Ireland throughout the semester geared towards international students. This club is incredibly helpful in meeting other international students that likely have similar experiences abroad.

E-mail and Computers

You will receive an e-mail account a few weeks before Visiting Student Registration. Make sure to set up your account BEFORE you head to Ireland, so that you can begin receiving emails from the International Office for information on orientation and other important matters. It works exactly like it works at Linfield. You will get a UofG e-mail account and will receive Student Union updates, class emails and notices from the college at this address. You should check this email account just as regularly as you check your Linfield account! There are many computer suites around the college. These are in the main concourse, academic buildings and in the library. Go on a tour of the campus as they will point out most of the computer labs that are accessible to you. These are usually offered a few times in the few days prior

to the first day of classes. You can find more information on this during your Visiting Student Orientation.

Housing

Cuirt Na Coiribe is the name of the apartment complex where you'll be living. It's newer so everything is still very clean and they're picky about keeping it that way. They will occasionally come check the apartment. Everyone gets their own bedroom, and the apartments vary from four people to seven. You will either have your own bathroom or share a bathroom with the other Linfield or International students in your apartment. These apartments have a living/dining room connected to the kitchen. Your kitchen will be furnished with everything you need as far as utensils and pots and pans. You will need to bring or buy your own sheets, pillow, and towel.

Your address there will be:

Name, Apt. #
Cuirt Na Coiribe
Headford Road
Galway
Ireland H91E43A

If you are receiving a package, it will likely be left in the stairwell next to the mailboxes, so be diligent about checking on packages and mail to reduce the risk of something being stolen or damaged.

If you don't smoke, be prepared. Smoking is a big part of the culture and if you have European flat-mates, it is likely they will smoke. However, most places in Europe are fairly strict about smoking indoors. You will be rooming with either Irish students or other international students. If you end up living with other visiting students, it can be harder to meet those living in the neighboring apartments so don't be afraid to go and introduce yourself to the neighbors. If you don't, you might not ever meet them.

The security at Cuirt na Coiribe is there for your safety and to ensure that things don't get too rowdy in the apartments. If they come to your apartment just cooperate and they should be very nice and helpful. They are usually just there to give you a warning about noise or something similar. After a certain time at night, (around eleven) there are guards that stand at the entrance that check to make sure you live in the complex. There are no overnight guests allowed unless you fill out a

registration form. It is very important to remember to register any guests you have with the front office about 24 hours beforehand through a form that can be picked up from the front office so they can also get back into your apartment. If you get locked out of your apartment or your key stops working, go to the front office if it's open or the security booth if it's not and they'll be happy to let you in. Laundry for the complex is attached to the front office and costs 3 euro per load per machine. This can be paid through an app or by coin. The app will tell you which machines are open so you can find the optimal time to do laundry, but it isn't always accurate.

Getting Around Galway

Cuirt na Coiribe is not located in the city center, but it is only a short walk. You can get to Shop Street in about twenty minutes. Campus is only about a fifteen minute walk from the apartments. The college is very close to the city center, so there is no real reason to take a cab. If you do need a cab, say because it is "pissing rain" (an Irish colloquialism), you should download Free Now (it's the equivalent of Uber there). You can add your debit/credit card on the app and pay in advance, or you can pay cash in the cab. However, they do not offer an option to pay in card once you're in the cab. Once in Galway you can get everywhere you need to by foot. If you end up staying out late it might be a good idea to take a cab home for safety reasons. Make sure to always walk in groups at night. Galway is very safe, but just use your common sense about safety and going out at night.

You can also rent a bike (they say "hire" instead of "rent") for the semester through the university or other bike shops around town. Ireland also has an extensive public transport system. As a student, you can get a LEAP card, which gets you reduced bus fare throughout most of the country (certain routes will require you to pay full price).

Telephones

Being able to use your cell phone is incredibly helpful. Before leaving, talk to your network provider about their options for international coverage. For example, T-Mobile typically offers free international coverage for text and data. The next easiest options is to get a new Sim card in Ireland. Stores like Eir, Tesco, and Vodafone (all of which are near the apartment complex) offer different plans and sim cards, so shop around for what works best for you. Both of these allow you to text using WhatsApp, GroupMe or Imessage and call via Facebook Messenger or Facetime. Many Irish students use WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, or GroupMe as their main way of communication, so a data plan comes in handy for this. By getting a new Sim Card, you can "top off" your data credit each month- no cancellation of a

plan needed, it won't charge you automatically. However, many students have also survived with just having their phone and only just wi-fi to communicate. There are Wi-Fi hotspots along the main road, Shop Street and in every bar- just ask for the code!

The City of Galway

Shop Street: Once you've found Shop Street, you're in the clear. Shop Street is where it all begins: pubs, shops, clubs and restaurants. They can all be found on or around Shop Street. Shop Street forks into High Street and Quay Street (this is pronounced *key*) these are all areas with shops and pubs and they are all pedestrian-only streets.

Eyre Square: It's not only the name of a small park in downtown but the name of a shopping center as well. Pubs and shops of all sorts surround the Eyre Square Park and the Eyre Square mall is full of souvenir and clothing shops. Eyre Square is also where most buses leave from and where the train station is located. Both will benefit you in your travels around Galway.

Grocery Shopping: Dunnes, Tesco, Lidl and Aldi are all very close to Cuirt Na Coiribe (about a 10-15min walk). Dunnes contains homewares and clothes in addition to groceries, but Tesco is just like a regular grocery store. The prices of both are pretty much the same. Tesco is much cheaper than Dunnes on groceries, and is worth the extra 5 minute walk. Tesco also offers a rewards card similar to Safeway, which can get you cheaper prices on groceries. Aldi and Lidl are even cheaper, but is similar to a "grocery outlet" in the states by having a limited variety. For any electronic needs, Curry's is a great store in the same shopping center as Aldi.

Buses and Trains: Bus Eireann and the train station is located just near Eyre Square. There is also the CityLink bus station and the tour bus station which are just down the street from Eyre Square. CityLink provides late night buses that Bus Eireann doesn't provide. Bus Eireann does have very early morning buses that you can catch to travel on. CityLink and GoBus are the easiest method of travel if you are traveling to Dublin or Dublin Airport. They provide nonstop bus service to Dublin City Center and Dublin Airport. Bus travel is a great and affordable way to go, so grab a bus schedule as soon as you get there. Traveling around Ireland is a must.

Cinema and Theatre: IMC Cinema is a short walk from your apartment and offers most major blockbusters, similar to AMC or Regal in the states. There's also Pálás in city center, which shows a lot of Irish cinema and more indie films. Town Hall

Theater has a whole bunch of wonderful opportunities to see live theatre, including hosting touring productions from the Abbey Theatre in Dublin (or other touring productions)

Historical Landmarks: Galway is a medieval city, so the amount of history is absolutely amazing. There are tours of the city offered, but it might be more fun to hear the tales of old timers sitting in pubs. All you have to do is ask. Day trips to nearby areas are also available and are worth it. Galway Tour Company and Lally Tours offer trips to Connemara, and the Cliffs of Moher. There are also day tours to the Aran Islands. Many companies offer student discounts. A really great resource is the visitor information center in the Galway City Museum. They have pamphlets and maps about things to do in and around Galway and are incredibly helpful.

Pubs and Clubs

Pubs are the social centers of Ireland. Pubs are a great place to meet friends for a drink or even do a bit of studying in the afternoon. Most of them are similar to our coffee shops during the day. If you don't drink, no problem! Pubs offer non-alcoholic options and very few people will judge you for taking them.

Here's a list of popular ones that will give you a real Irish experience:

- Taaffes
- The Quays (the *keys*)
- Tig Coili
- The Kings Head
- Monroe's
- Busker Brownes
- The Front Door
- Roisin Dubh (has silent disco on Tuesdays, a Galway MUST)

Galway is known as the cultural capital of Ireland, so naturally its nightlife is great. Galway has hundreds of pubs, many of which are very old and have a lot of history. Galway is also catching up on the Euro club scene so there are five or six clubs to choose from as well.

Some venues like the Roisin Dubh and Monroe's have different events on different nights. For example, The Roisin has comedy nights every Tuesday and Monroes's has concerts all the time.

Some pubs are late bars and are open until 2am while others close around eleven or midnight. Many have certain days of the week where they are open late.

Some clubs to check out in Galway are Electric, the Seven and Carbon. There are a few others but these are the most popular among people in college and are great scenes with great music. Clubs are nice but many charge a cover. There are always people on Shop Street offering stamps. With a stamp you can either get in free to clubs or with a discount. If you choose to “like” and follow clubs on Facebook they also post deals and guest lists in which you can get into the clubs for free or a reduced price! Clubs are also a great way to meet Irish students and to see how typical Irish people your age like to have fun and relax in their own environment (also, most clubs in Galway are 18 and over).

While you’re not going abroad to just go out and drink, pubs are a great way to meet people. You will be surprised at how easy it is to turn and talk to someone at the bar. Galway is also known for its music scene and many pubs offer live music 7 nights a week.

Traveling

Bus and Rail: As mentioned before, traveling is fairly easy in Galway. You’ll want to cross check GoBus, Bus Eireann and CityLink for the cheapest bus to any given city in Ireland.

Accommodations: Hostels are the way to go. They are cheap and usually the staff can help you find the good things in town. They are also a great place to meet other travelers. Many hostels operate differently than one another. Some include breakfast in the price, and some don’t. Some charge extra for sheets, and some don’t. It doesn’t hurt to shop around before you settle in on one hostel. Hostel world is a great app/website to look for accommodation because it shows ratings of every aspect, such as safety, cleanliness, entertainment, etc. Booking.com is another alternative. In hostels, you can rent a single bed in a variety of different room styles. There are dorm style rooms, where you can have 4 – 10 or more roommates. Many hostels will offer female-only dorms if that makes you more comfortable.

If you have more money to spend, you can rent a private room in a hostel with some pals. This is cheaper than a hotel room and you still get the community of the hostel while having a room to yourself. B&B’s are also popular in Ireland, which offer private rooms and hot breakfast, but they are more expensive. They are everywhere so you won’t have trouble finding one. Airbnb is another option.

Travel Guides: Travel guides are a must while you are abroad. A recommended one is *Let's Go!* It has everything you need to know was written by college students. You may also want to look at Lonely Planet and Rick Steves. This guide has loads of information and not as much commentary.

Flights: If you want to travel outside of Ireland (which is highly recommended!) and are looking for cheap flights, check out Ryan Air. Their service is fairly poor, but flights are extremely cheap. Some people travel every opportunity they can, but it's important to keep in mind that every weekend you book for traveling elsewhere takes away from time you could be spending in Ireland and really immersing yourself! It's not hard to plan last minute trips.

Safety

You should not be scared to go off on your own, but there are traveling practices that you should be aware of to avoid any possible incidents.

- Be aware of how you act while you are abroad. Don't act like you're absolutely helpless if you get lost. Things like always looking at your phone for maps can be a big indicator that you're a traveler.
- Keep your cool and ask a shopkeeper if you're worried.
- Don't pull out large sums of money in public, people that steal like to see that. There are also pick-pockets around so just be cautious and smart.
- Travel with others whenever possible, especially when on the continent. However, traveling alone can be an amazing experience. If you do travel alone, don't act like it. Say you are meeting people in another town if they ask.
- Just be polite and use your head and you'll be fine. I would suggest not drawing attention to yourself and being labeled as the "loud, obnoxious American."

This is not to scare you. Ireland is one of the safest places you could ever imagine. Just be careful and think.

Miscellaneous

Money:

Generally, you can survive with only your debit card. However, it is useful to have cash on hand for paying for market goods or the occasional taxi. **Keep in mind that some banks will charge transactions fees each time you use your debit card internationally, so talk to your bank about options like opening a credit card with no transaction fees.** With your bank at home, you can pre-order cash Euros and

have cash before you go abroad. This is a good way to avoid expensive exchange rates. Most Irish students go to the Bank of Ireland ATM and take cash. If you do take out cash, make sure to only use your debit card for this and try to take out larger sums so that you minimize the exchange rate fee.

If you choose to, it is easy to open up an account with the Bank of Ireland, which is located right on the University of Galway's campus in the main concourse. They offer specials for visiting students and open visiting student accounts all the time- it just takes a bit of paper work and you're good. If you are planning to keep your home account, ask your bank if the pin number will work overseas. As long as your bank is aware of you living abroad for a couple of months, everything should work fine. However, if you plan to go to other countries in Europe, make sure your bank is aware of that. Many banks have an option online to submit a travel alert, which notifies the bank that you will be in another country so they don't freeze your card for suspicious activity.

Remember, just because your card is working in Ireland doesn't mean it will all over Europe. Credit and Debit cards can be used abroad and are very handy to have in an emergency and just for general use. However, obtaining a credit card before you leave may be better, as this can help better protect against fraud overseas with your bank. Make sure that your cards have chips in them though, otherwise it will be difficult sometimes to use the machines and registers.

If you don't plan on opening an account with the Bank of Ireland, that is fine but you will have to have an official bank statement to prove you are financially stable to present to the Immigration office. You will also need 300 Euros in order to get the necessary immigration card that allows you to stay in the country for more than 3 months. The college and the Immigration office have worked to make this process easy. You will be assigned a time to go to the immigration bureau at the garda office, register, and get your card.

It may be helpful to try and make yourself a budget if you are worried about money. You can eat cheaply if you go grocery shopping and try to save up for times at the pubs and other travel. Although I know that everyone has different expectations about money, you will probably spend a little more than you are planning to. Don't get too stressed out though - this is a once in a lifetime opportunity and you are not going to remember how much money you spent, but rather all the amazing experiences you had. Try and cut necessary corners, but don't deprive yourself of any cultural experiences.

Food: Eat up. Anything that is new, give it a go. Irish cuisine is not that much different from American save for one thing - black pudding. This stuff is interesting. It comes as part of the Irish Breakfast; I won't tell you what is in it but at least try it. Definitely splurge on the seafood! Being an island gives Ireland complete access to some of the freshest fish and seafood in the world. However, the Irish cuisine is nothing fancy. You can save money by cooking at home. There are also no bags in Galway, so you will either need to bring your own tote or buy one there. Just remember to bring it with you when you go shopping, otherwise you'll end up with 10 different totes.

Clothing: Pack light! Most people find that once they are there, they do not use a lot of what they bring. Remember to think while you pack and only take things you need. You'll find that as a tourist/student hybrid you might end up needing quite a variety. For travel, you want good, waterproof shoes and sturdy clothes. **I strongly recommend buying a new pair of walking tennis shoes before leaving, because you will be walking far more than you normally would.** You may also want to do a little shopping so the more room you have in your suitcase the better. Once you arrive, you will have a better idea of what you will want to wear on a daily basis. Layers are perfect for packing! If you find that you didn't pack something you need, Penny's is the place to go. It's like Forever 21 and is very affordable. There is one in the shopping center by Tesco and another in the mall downtown.

Some of your clothes may experience major wear-and-tear from the weather, so don't bring items that you highly value. If you end up needing or wanting to get rid of clothes at the end, there is a clothing recycling bin close to Cuirt just behind the cinema.

Weather: It is going to piss rain. It is also going to be windy (Oregon coast like, but colder in the winter months). Dress accordingly. You must have a rain jacket and coats for layering. Winter coats can take up a lot of room, but it might be useful to pack if you're susceptible to the cold. It is definitely a bit chilly in the January and February months, but calms down a bit in early spring. Be prepared for snow, rain, or sun- you never know what you're going to get. Just a little note: you will most likely break at least one umbrella walking to campus, the wind on the bridge is quite strong so just be prepared to go through one or two (or just wear a hood when walking to campus). You will also most likely be traveling to other countries, so be sure to pack for the weather in these countries as well.

Postage: To post letters it will cost you 1.05 euro, or you can get a book of 10 for 10 euro. The post offices in Galway are within walking distance. There is one right across the street from campus and the main one is located near Shop Street. If you

need to mail things such as books there is cheaper postage available – just ask! Look for the green mailboxes to send your post.

Some things to take:

- Travel guides
- Backpack suitable for school and traveling and a small duffle
- Adapter (only for laptops and other things. It's nice to have two or a power strip Buy a cheap hair dryer there or straightener there! US ones will fry the adapter)
- Portable charger
- Camera
- Towel and Sheets (By bringing these with you and leaving them in Ireland, it leaves room for clothes or souvenirs you may buy there)
- Toiletries
- Journal

*Check the guidebook for other suggestions

Know Before You Go

Have some knowledge of the countries you are going to visit. Read magazines and newspapers to find out what is going down in Ireland and Europe. It will help you to form a basic understanding of where you'll be living. It also works in reverse, so have some understanding of American popular culture as well so you can answer questions.

Final Words

Make the most of this experience. Go out, have fun, and never look back with regrets. You are only a youngster once, and this is the time of your life to really live. Let yourself become a part of everything Irish. Meet loads of Irish kids; they really know what's going on. Another thing: when in Ireland, do as the Irish do! Don't be afraid or intimidated to enter the world of the Irish- go to pubs, clubs, matches, concerts, house parties and trips. Either way you will not regret trying new things and meeting new people. Don't be afraid to talk to people and remember that most of them won't come up to you, you might have to come up to them. If you hear about or see an event that sounds interesting, go for it! And if you get frustrated about not meeting the elusive Irish (it can be difficult for some in the first month) remember that you only need to meet one, and then they will introduce you to all of their friends. Most importantly, just go with the flow. Things might not work out the way you expected, but that doesn't mean they didn't work out.

Key Points

- Be outgoing – people will not seek you out, you must seek them
- Send mail to people – this is the best way to get people to return the favor
- Don't stay in your room – go to town even if you don't have a reason

- Smile, have fun and drink a couple pints for the lads who have gone before you.

4 Ways People Steal Your Passport

by [Katherine LaGrave](#)

Beware of these four occurrences when traveling with a passport.

Sometimes, a bump, nudge, or distraction is all it takes.

The stolen passport market is huge: There are more than 40 million passports listed as missing on a database created by Interpol in 2002, and according to the U.S. Department of State, more than 300,000 American passports are lost or stolen in the U.S. each year. And given that these are the most common ways thieves have been known to pilfer a passport, it pays to be aware.

The set-down

It's easy enough to make a mistake with your documents when traveling—after all, how natural is it to put your passport on the table at a restaurant as you pull out a chair, or rest it on top of your suitcase as you check the departure board at an airport? I've done it, and I'm guessing you have, too. But take your eye off the document for a moment, and you open yourself up to the possibility of someone bumping your table (or bag) as a distraction—and walking away with your passport. Another one of the most common places for thieves to grab a passport is in a place where we actually need to produce it: checking in at a hotel overseas. Be wary of putting it to the left or right of you as you shuffle for your confirmation number or booking details, as someone could come along and create a distraction—think returning a key, or asking a question—and slip away with your document. Instead, place your passport on the counter in front of you, and immediately return it to its secure location after it is passed back to you.

The spill

It sounds slightly out of a Charlie Chaplin movie: seemingly innocent passers-by "spilling" anything from ice cream to juice on people they

pass. Yet there are worldwide reports of such instances, wherein a distraction is created, and in the process of aiding and cleaning the hapless victim, the "spillers"—or their associates—lift a passport. If you have the misfortune of being spilled on, refuse attendance and instead, avoid contact with the offender by quickly walking away.

[5 Ways to Keep Your Passport Safe When Traveling](#)

The pocket

It's obvious, sure, but one of the easiest ways for people to snatch your passport is if it's carried in your pockets: All it takes is a crowded train and a nudge—or a coat that's been draped over the back of a chair, and a sleight of hand. If you need to carry your passport with you, look for a flat money belt, which can be worn around your waist and neck and concealed under your clothing. If you're in the market for something a bit more comfortable, try a travel wallet or passport cover. Both conceal your passport (and nationality), and the travel wallet also has room for other valuables, including credit cards and emergency cash. Avoid carrying your passport and spending money together if you can, as taking out cash will alert potential thieves.

The authorities

In countries around the world, you'll most often be asked to produce your original passport at hotels and airports, or when crossing borders. Travelers have also reported instances in which policemen, plain-clothed or uniformed, approach them and ask to see their passports. Sometimes, the officials are actually as they say they are—numerous countries have plain-clothed officers asking for passports in order to catch illegal immigrants—but it's better to be safe than sorry. Signs that it probably isn't a scam: everyone else in your surrounding area is also being checked, security badges and patches are visible on the officer's uniform, and officials are not asking for anything but photo ID. If you feel you are being singled out and are still uncomfortable, agree to show your passport in the nearest police station or hotel lobby, where you can confirm with a clerk who speaks the native language.

Taking Prescription Medications Abroad:

While you're abroad is not the time to suddenly realize you ran out of your prescription!

If you have a condition that requires regular medication, bring an extra quantity with you and pack it in your carry-on, just in case your checked luggage gets lost. Just remember to keep it in its **original** container and **clearly** labeled — you don't want to create the impression you're carrying drugs which haven't been prescribed to you. In fact, you should [check with the local embassy](#) to make sure that your medication is acceptable to carry into the country. Some countries may consider your prescription medication to be **illegal**. Bring a letter from your doctor listing your medications and explaining why you need them. Doing your research and having a letter can help prevent any misunderstandings along the way.

Bring extras of any medical necessities you need, like contact lenses or glasses. You might want to pack a pair in both your carry-on bag and your checked luggage, just to be safe.

If you have allergies to certain medications, foods, insect bites, or other unique medical problems, consider wearing one of those "medical alert" bracelets and carry a letter from your doctor explaining required treatment if you become ill. It might not be the coolest piece of jewelry you wear, but it could save your life.

- Do you have prescription medications that will require you take a supply that will last for the duration of your program abroad?
- Will your insurance company allow for a prescription to be filled at one time to last for the duration of your program abroad?
- Is the prescription that you take classified as a narcotic and/or stimulant, and do you know if you will be allowed to enter your host country with the drug?

There is no one master list or web search that will give you a list of what medications are or are not allowed in every country you may visit while abroad, but it is important for you to do some research regarding studying abroad and your prescriptions.

- Have a conversation with your healthcare provider at least 8 weeks before your program abroad, to help you determine what, if any, medications you will need while you are abroad.
- Contact your insurance company at least 8 weeks before you program to discuss how best to fill a prescription that will need to last for the duration of your program abroad.
- Your insurance company may be able to advise you if your prescription is legal in the country in which your program will take place.
- Go to the host country's embassy website to see if drug rules and regulations are posted. For example:
 - View the U.S. Department of State's Travel Information page:
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis_pa_tw_1168.html
<http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis_pa_tw_1168.html>
 - View the U.S. Department of State's Custom and Import Restrictions page:
http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html#customs
<http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html#customs>
 - View the U.S. Departments of State's Bringing Medications or Filling Prescriptions Abroad page: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html#medications
<http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html#medications>
 - View the U.S. Department of State's Country Specific Information; click on a country and then read Medical Facilities and Health Information:
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4965.html
<http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4965.html>
- Have a conversation with your local county health department.
- Contact Mobility International, located in Eugene, Oregon:



Surviving a Protest

Product of the Research & Information Support Center (RISC)

The following report is based on open source reporting.

August 7, 2014

Introduction

Travelers are regularly cautioned about protest activity when visiting a foreign country. The U.S. Department of State, for example, consistently encourages citizens to “avoid all demonstrations, since even peaceful gatherings can quickly turn violent” – a phrase common to many Consular messages. However, a deeper understanding of what motivates protest activity, and who or what the intended targets are, can be useful tools for educating travelers.

The Nature of a Protest

According to a 2013 [report](#) by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, a German non-profit organization that promotes democracy and political education, the global number of protests has increased every year from 2006 (59) through the first half of 2013 (112). [Note: these were protests covered in online news media. The countries analyzed represent 92 percent of the world’s population] While protests take place throughout the world, where

Protests by Region – 2006-2013

	Total	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013*
High-Income (Region)	304	17	25	25	35	44	57	60	41
Latin America/Caribbean	141	14	12	15	12	21	22	25	20
East Asia/ Pacific	83	3	9	10	9	12	20	11	9
Sub-Saharan Africa	78	7	6	8	8	5	18	15	11
Middle East/North Africa	77	3	11	6	7	11	18	15	6
Global	70	7	5	8	8	8	10	14	10
Europe/Central Asia	47	3	4	4	4	7	6	11	8
South Asia	43	5	5	4	4	8	2	9	6
World Total	843	59	77	80	87	116	153	160	111

Data provided by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
* As of July 2013

they occur is not always a good indicator of how they will proceed. A country with a peaceful tradition of rallying can experience violence, while another with a more acrimonious style can experience no incidents at all. For example, in Cambodia, generally known for a peaceful tradition, demonstrators and police have recently come to blows over anti-government sentiment as well as a demand for a higher minimum wage among garment workers. In South Africa, known as the “[protest capital of the world](#)” and where violence is not a rarity, most demonstrations end peacefully and without incident. Demonstrations can also take place in countries not known for having any protest tradition at all, such as in Iran during the 2009 Green Movement, or in Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, and Libya during the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings.

By their nature, protests also attract attention. They can be exciting events, and for a foreigner, provide an up-close look at a country’s political landscape. But the advice to avoid them is not dispensed arbitrarily. An overzealous demonstrator can incite a crowd; individuals with ulterior motives can infiltrate an otherwise peaceful rally; a heavy-handed police response can provoke an aggressive reaction from gatherers. When this happens, onlookers can pay the price. This past May, a bystander was killed by a stray bullet during an anti-government protest in Istanbul, Turkey. Authorities in southern China acknowledged that police “may have accidentally injured...bystanders” during an April protest against a chemical plant in Guangdong province. During Egyptian riots in June 2013, an American college student was stabbed to death as he took photographs of the unfolding violence. What starts as simple curiosity can easily turn into a fight to stay out of harm’s way.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.

Indicators Can Help

There are indicators, however, that can be helpful to any traveler when assessing the probability for protests, and how they will play out. Anti-government protests, for instance, may not be as likely to target foreigners as they would police officers or nearby property (although the death of the American student referenced above shows this is not always true). Destroying property can be a way of not only displaying intense dissatisfaction with conditions in the country, but also attempting to undermine the government. This was the case in Thailand in 2010, when anti-government protesters targeted not only government buildings, but also commercial facilities. The same was true for 2010 anti-government/-austerity protests in Greece. In both cases, foreigners were not directly targeted, and in Thailand, they were actually greeted warmly if they happened to pass by the event.

A protest against another country, on the other hand, might not result in widespread violence, but particular people and properties could be vulnerable. This past May, [anti-Chinese protests in Vietnam](#) targeted what were perceived to be Chinese-affiliated companies and factories following a maritime dispute between the two countries. In July, [anti-Israeli protests in Germany and France](#) led to the attack of synagogues and Jewish businesses in those countries.

There are also a number of issues that seem to bring protesters to the street regardless of location. For example, citizens accustomed to government subsidies (fuel, transportation, etc.) can quickly mobilize if their entitlements are threatened in any way; violent clashes in the streets of Jakarta in 2013 following a reduction of fuel subsidies are a prime example. The suspicion of electoral fraud is another key catalyst, as was evident during protests in Russia following disputed 2011 legislative elections. Another major indicator pertains to infringements-- real or perceived-- on basic democratic rights. Residents of Hong Kong, for example, regularly take to the streets to demand greater democratic freedom.

The Likeliest Scenario

More than likely, the biggest impact to travelers during a demonstration will be transportation difficulties, including blocked roads, crowded public transportation, and congested traffic. A lot of protests advertise in advance where and when they will take place, which makes a traveler's job of planning to get around them easier. Even for the ones that do not, it should become pretty clear what area(s) to avoid as numbers amass. Social media can be a great tool for collecting information; organizers and participants are likely to tweet about the event or post pictures to Facebook, Instagram, or a popular local social network (such as VKontakte in Russia). During past protests, OSAC constituents have allowed employees to work remotely or even take the day off when demonstration activity encroaches on work sites or precludes safe commuting. Over periods of sustained protest activity, employers have deferred travel, and in some cases, removed personnel from the city or country entirely. Each organization is responsible for its own plan, but understanding the fundamentals is a good start to making one.

Additional Information

For recent OSAC analysis on other regional protests, please see the below reports:

[Middle East Conflict Fuels Europe Protests](#)
[Haiti Opposition Protests](#)
[Northern Ireland Orangemen Parade Volatility](#)
[Royal Thai Army Invokes Martial Law](#)
[May Day](#)

For Further Information

Please direct any questions regarding this report to OSAC's [Cross Regional Analyst](#).

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Don't Go Soft on Study Abroad: a Call for Academic Rigor

*The following is a guest post by **William G. Moseley**, chair and professor of geography at Macalester College. He has worked and conducted research in Africa for 25 years.*

Study abroad can be a powerful experience for many students. A student's trip overseas can be one of those transformative educational periods after which a young person will never look at the world the same way again. Yet many students, faculty members, and college administrators don't take this education as seriously as they should.



Study-abroad students bird watching in Botswana's Okavango Delta.

Let's be frank, some students view study abroad as a vacation or at least a time when normal academic standards ought to be relaxed. But as an instructor and director on two different study-abroad programs for undergraduates in South Africa and Botswana, I have sought to expose participants to new cultures and provide academically rigorous courses.

Many students initially chafed at the large amount of reading and writing, in addition to original fieldwork, that I assigned during these programs. Not only did some start

the program with an educational holiday in mind, but they saw students in other study-abroad programs not working as hard. Knowing my interest in having them have cross-cultural experiences, my students would couch their concerns about the workload in terms of not having sufficient time to travel and interact with the local population. How could I deny them exploring southern Africa?, they asked.

Occasionally, a class of students confronts me directly about the workload. This happened a little over halfway through the term in my most recent study-abroad teaching experience in Botswana. Students asked me point-blank how my courses compared in difficulty to those I teach at my home institution. I indicated that the classes I offered in Africa were actually a little less challenging as I was trying to account for the added stress of unfamiliar surroundings and less reliable infrastructure. Their collective gasp was audible; they shook their heads in disbelief. However, in explaining why the academic requirements of the program could not be relaxed, we had one of the more interesting discussions of the term.

I shared my view that a successful study-abroad experience often means at least two things: 1) getting outside of your own cultural head space (that is, coming to understand that other cultures may have very different, yet equally valid, approaches to life); and 2) knowing enough background information about a place, its history, and connections to other parts of the world to really understand what you are seeing. Of course the two criteria are often linked; you can't set aside your own cultural prejudices until you understand why other people do things the way they do. Furthermore, learning enough to get a handle on what you are seeing requires hard work. That is, it means critically reading the academic publications about a place, discussing those insights with your peers, and synthesizing your understanding by writing.

Over time, my students began to value the rigor with which we explored this new area of the world, and the nuanced insights and deeper personal growth that it eventually yielded. For example, these students lived in a rural home for a time in the second half of the semester. This experience produced some beautiful reflections on what it meant to be with a local family. Gone were the shallow complaints about inefficient bureaucracy, the slow pace of life, or bad food from earlier in the term. Instead, the students showed a better ability to contextualize poverty, a greater appreciation for taking the time to get to know someone, or understanding Botswana on its own terms and in relation to the region, rather than just comparing it with American norms and practices.

Could we have done better? Yes, certainly. But I am also aware of the fact that we could have done a lot worse. It is expensive to have someone like me, a scholar of western and southern Africa, to relocate for a term (with his family no less) to teach a

course or two. It is far cheaper to subcontract study abroad to third-party providers. While many such organizations are excellent, some may be tempted to hire less-than-qualified teachers who were never (or are no longer) active scholars, and succumb to student pressure for less academic rigor because their business model demands it.

The reality is that the study-abroad experiences can be orchestrated quite poorly, potentially leaving students with a highly superficial, if not deeply flawed, understanding of another area of the world, not to mention a false sense of regional expertise.

So my hard advice is this: If you are a student looking for a study-abroad “vacation,” then either think about this opportunity anew and look for a rigorous program, or don’t go at all. If you are a faculty member looking to take a group of students overseas, get the necessary training and make sure you have the place-relevant research background to be a competent study-abroad instructor.

Finally, if you are an administrator that oversees study-abroad programs, then please treat this semester the same as you would the rest of an undergraduate’s career. If you are unwilling to compromise quality and provide education on the cheap at home, then a semester abroad should be no different.

[Photo courtesy of William G. Moseley]