



# Hong Kong

**More information about Hong Kong is available on the [China Country Page](#) and from other Department of State publications and other sources listed at the end of this fact sheet.**

## **U.S.-HONG KONG RELATIONS**

In 1997, China resumed the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong, ending more than 150 years of British colonial rule. Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (PRC) entitled to a high degree of autonomy pursuant to the Sino-British Joint Declaration. Hong Kong's foreign relations and defense are the responsibility of the PRC.

U.S. legislation on Hong Kong is included in the U.S.-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992, the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019, and the Hong Kong Autonomy Act of 2020. U.S. policy toward Hong Kong is grounded in the determination to promote Hong Kong's prosperity, autonomy, and way of life. The United States has significant economic interests in Hong Kong and the region is home to a large community of U.S. citizens. The United States continues to advocate for protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong following the 2020 imposition of the National Security Law, which has resulted in the arrest and prosecution of numerous activists and ordinary citizens, including some for their activities outside of Hong Kong, for peaceful political expression critical of the central and local governments.

Since 2019, the PRC has repeatedly taken actions that are inconsistent with the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and the PRC's obligation pursuant to the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984 to allow Hong Kong to enjoy a high degree of autonomy. After the PRC's decision to unilaterally impose national security legislation on Hong Kong, the President determined pursuant to the U.S.-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992 that Hong Kong was no longer sufficiently autonomous to justify differential treatment in relation to the PRC for the purposes of the specific provisions of law set out in the President's

Executive Order on Hong Kong Normalization (E.O. 13936), issued on July 14, 2020. E.O. 13936 suspended or eliminated certain aspects of differential treatment for Hong Kong. The U.S. government has imposed financial sanctions on 42 PRC and Hong Kong officials under E.O. 13936 in connection with actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, stability, or autonomy of Hong Kong. The U.S. government has submitted reports under the Hong Kong Autonomy Act to identify PRC and Hong Kong officials who have materially contributed to the failure of the PRC to meet its obligations under the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Hong Kong Basic Law.

### **Economic Relations**

Under the Sino-British Joint Declaration, which the PRC has taken actions to undermine by eroding protected rights and freedoms, Hong Kong is a separate customs territory and economic entity from mainland China and can maintain and develop economic and cultural relations and conclude relevant agreements with States, regions, and relevant international organizations. In terms of investment, Hong Kong generally welcomes foreign investment, neither offering special incentives nor creating barriers for foreign investors. Despite the erosion of Hong Kong's ability to exercise the degree of autonomy it enjoyed in the past, Hong Kong remains a popular destination for U.S. investment and trade. Hong Kong is the United States' twelfth-largest export market, thirteenth largest for total agricultural products, and sixth-largest for high-value consumer food and beverage products.

Hong Kong's economy, with a professional civil service and regulatory system, is bolstered by its competitive financial and professional services, trading, logistics, and tourism sectors. Approximately 1,258 U.S. companies are based in Hong Kong, according to Hong Kong's 2022 census data, with about half regional in scope. The United States remains one of the largest sources of foreign direct investment stock in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong is a separate customs territory from mainland China and is a full member of the World Trade Organization. Hong Kong maintains a comprehensive strategic trade controls

system that follows multilateral export control regimes, and our governments have historically worked together to maintain and strengthen measures to prevent illegal diversion of controlled items. Hong Kong generally provides strong intellectual property (IP) protection and enforcement, and for the most part, has strong IP laws in place. Hong Kong's failure to modernize its copyright system has allowed it to become vulnerable to digital copyright piracy. Hong Kong adopted the Copyright (Amendment) Ordinance 2022 through publication in the gazette in December 2022, to come into operation on May 1, 2023. However, right holders are concerned that the new legislation does not introduce specific provisions to combat illicit streaming devices.

### **Hong Kong's Membership in International Organizations**

Hong Kong participates as a full member of several international economic organizations. The United States and Hong Kong both belong to the World Trade Organization, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and the Financial Action Task Force.

### **Bilateral Representation**

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

Hong Kong maintains three Economic and Trade Offices in the United States in Washington, DC; New York; and San Francisco.

China's embassy in the United States is at 3505 International Place, NW, Washington, DC 20008; Tel.: (202) 495-2266

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

[CIA World Factbook Hong Kong Page](#)

[Office of the U.S. Trade Representative Countries Page](#)

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

[Export.gov International Offices Page](#)

[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](http://www.osac.gov)
  - Country Crime and Safety Reports: [www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReports.aspx?cid=2](http://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReports.aspx?cid=2)
- Visit [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for security advisories and other travel guidance
  - Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP): [www.travel.state.gov/step](http://www.travel.state.gov/step)
  - Country Specific Information: [www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_4965.html](http://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](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](http://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](http://www.globalscholar.us)
- U.S. State Department Students Abroad website: [www.studentsabroad.state.gov](http://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](http://www.weather.com)

### **Travel Medicine/Health**

- Centers for Disease Control: [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)
- World Health Organization: [www.who.int/ith](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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; 2024-25 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 University 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 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 15, 2024 (from 3:30 pm – 6:00 pm); Jonasson Hall
  - Saturday, March 16, 2024 (from 8:30 am – 2:00 pm); Jonasson Hall
  - Country specific sessions, various locations, will be arranged separately

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Due Dates</u> <u>Fall 2024 Programs</u>	<u>Due Dates</u> <u>Spring 2025 Programs</u>
Pre-orientation Assignments	March 15, 2024	March 15, 2024
Post-orientation Review	March 22, 2024	March 22, 2024
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, 2025	Sept./Oct, 2025

**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.

2/24

2025	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
<b>January</b>				1	2	3	4	10 Exchange Student Orientation
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	11 First Semester Ends
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	13 Second Semester Begins
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	13 Second Semester Classes Begin
	26	27	28	29	30	31		13 First Day to Add/Drop Courses (Second Semester)
								13-20 First Semester Make-up Examinations
								15 Continuing Education School Board Meeting
								20 Senate Meeting
								20 Transdisciplinary Undergraduate Programme Board Meeting
								25 Last Day to Add/Drop Courses (Second Semester)
<p>1 The first day of January 29-31 Lunar New Year holidays</p>								
<b>February</b>							1	5 Creative Arts School Board Meeting
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6 Arts and Social Sciences Faculty Board Meeting
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14 Communication School Board Meeting
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	24-28 Christian Emphasis Week
	23	24	25	26	27	28		25 Business School Board Meeting
								25 Science Faculty Board Meeting
<b>March</b>							1	5 Founders' Day Service
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	5 Trimester III Tuition Payment Due Date
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	10-22 Trimester II Examinations
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	17 Senate Meeting
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	18 Council Meeting
	30	31						24 Trimester III Classes Begin
								24 First Day to Add/Drop Courses (Trimester III)
<b>April</b>			1	2	3	4	5	2 Creative Arts School Board Meeting
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	7 Last Day to Add/Drop Courses (Trimester III)
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	16 Baccalaureate Service
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	16 Continuing Education School Board Meeting
	27	28	29	30				24 Arts and Social Sciences Faculty Board Meeting
								25 Chinese Medicine School Board Meeting
								25 Communication School Board Meeting
								26 Last Day of Classes (Second Semester)
								29 Business School Board Meeting
<p>4 Ching Ming Festival 18-21 Easter holidays</p>								
<b>May</b>					1	2	3	2 Awards Presentation for Outstanding Performance
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2-17 Second Semester Examinations
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	12 Senate Meeting
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	13 Court Meeting
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	19 Summer Term Begins (Taught Postgraduate Programmes)
								19 First Day to Add/Drop Courses (Summer Term)
								19 Transdisciplinary Undergraduate Programme Board Meeting
								20 Science Faculty Board Meeting
								30 Last Day to Add/Drop Courses (Summer Term)
<p>1 Labour Day 5 The Birthday of the Buddha 31 Tuen Ng Festival</p>								
<b>June</b>								4-13 Second Semester Make-up Examinations
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	5-18 66th Commencement (Except RPg Programmes) ( <i>Tentative</i> )
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	14 Second Semester Ends
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	16-30 Trimester III Examinations
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	17 Council Meeting
	29	30						23 Milestone in Service Ceremony
								25 Continuing Education School Board Meeting
								27 Senate Meeting
<b>July</b>			1	2	3	4	5	1 Financial Year Begins
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4-29 Summer Programme ( <i>Tentative</i> )
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11 Summer Term Ends (Taught Postgraduate Programmes)
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
	27	28	29	30	31			
<p>1 HKSAR Establishment Day</p>								

NOTE: □ Classes suspended; designated holidays for academic staff

## STUDENT BUDGET – HONG KONG 24-25

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, 1 US DOLLAR = 7.82 HONG KONG DOLLARS (as of March 2024).

Food	\$1,250 - \$1,500
Local transportation	\$300
Independent travel	\$800
Postage	\$50
Books	\$50
Phone	\$100
Gifts	\$200
Entertainment	\$300
Other	\$200
Rent/Housing(if applicable)	\$1400
<b>Total estimated cost:</b>	<b>\$3,250-\$4,900</b>

If you are on a tight budget, these items can be reduced considerably by concentrating on local travel and taking care with discretionary expenditures.

### **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. 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.

# **The Hong Kong Experience: A Guide for Linfield Exchange Students**

**By: Linfield Students Last  
Updated: Spring, 2023**

## **INTRODUCTION!**

Congrats on your decision to study in HK! It is truly a life-changing experience. As a former exchange student to HKBU, I can promise you that you will encounter so many great people, places, and experiences. Please be aware that the teaching styles and grading are different and be sure to devote time to studying. Many students, myself included, do not study as much as necessary and it shows on transcripts. So PLEASE be careful. Be mindful of the courses you are signed up for. I took difficult courses; you may want to take slightly less involved courses. HKBU offers a variety of courses, many of which are very different than those offered at Linfield; I encourage you to take this as an opportunity to take those courses because this will be your only opportunity to do so. Below you will find a compilation of recommendations and stories from previous Linfield students about their HKBU/HK/Asia experience. Please read it in its entirety and contact a former participant for coffee or lunch to discuss the trip, the info we can provide is truly valuable.

## **PACKING FOR YOUR SEMESTER ABROAD IN HONG KONG**

The number one rule when you are packing is to remember that at some point during your trip, you will have to carry whatever you take to Hong Kong back home with you. The number two rule is that you will come home with more than you left with. It is a good idea to bring an expandable suitcase (or buy a new one at the Ladies Market). Expandable suitcases will come in handy if you choose to do additional traveling while in Hong Kong and they will also help to accommodate the extra items you will be bringing home with you. Consequently, the expandable section should be used only on your return trip, not your trip to Hong Kong. Using it on the way to Hong Kong would defeat the purpose entirely. However, you can in fact ship stuff home. The costs are high about: For a 30 lb box it is about 125 USD by boat (1.5 months) or 175 USD by air (1 week). It is generally less expensive to pay an airline's extra bag fee rather than shipping things home. Another helpful tip for packing is to invest in space bags. They are very useful for compacting the clothes that you pack (especially on your return trip) and are also great when you travel and want to fit your things in a small backpack or carry-on.

Remind yourself throughout the packing process that people always bring more than they need. Although Hong Kong is on the other side of the globe, the people that live



there are from all over the world and they have the same basic needs that you do. There is no reason to bring half of your life's possessions with you and do not panic if you don't feel like you are bringing everything you think you need. Hong Kong is a resourceful city and you will be able to buy a similar version of whatever it is that you left at home. REALLY this is very true.

Hong Kong has everything, everywhere! In addition, you can find items at all price points (from designer items at a nearby high-end shopping mall, to knock-off/Asian brands at a wet market).

Pack so that you have room on your return trip for all the things that you will buy while abroad. This is how: I would advise packing a supply of lotion, shampoo, face wash and other various toiletries that you commonly use. A supply of deodorant is also recommended as it is less commonly used in other parts of the world, or is of different strengths or forms than what we are typically accustomed to. This will be beneficial for two reasons: first, you will definitely use all of the products that you brought, which means you can use the extra space in your luggage on your return trip for souvenirs and clothes that you buy abroad. Second, bringing these items will lessen what you will need to buy initially when you arrive in Hong Kong. I enjoyed having my basic necessities; it was convenient, practical and a bit comforting. Additionally, be sure that you are aware of what time your plane arrives in Hong Kong. On your first night, you may not be given the opportunity to purchase bedding and a towel (most likely from Ikea). If you have room to bring some small version of these things, do so. I did not and, consequently, I was cold on my first night and I had to use a pair of sweatpants as a towel on my first morning. There are shops nearby that have the daily necessities, both in Lok Fu Place and Festival Walk, the closest shopping centers, within a 15-minute walk from HKBU's campus.

You are allowed to take two regular suitcases and one carry-on on the plane (contact your airline for weight restrictions). I brought one big suitcase to check, and a small one for carry-on, with my backpack as my personal item for under the seat. On my return trip, I bought an additional suitcase and checked both big ones.

It is a good idea to use a backpack or any other multipurpose bag as your carry-on. I know that is an obvious statement, but the point is, don't bring anything that you don't think that you will use multiple times. Additionally, recognize that Hong Kong is a place where walking from one location to another is essential, and you may not get back to your room for hours during the day. Backpacks are a good idea because they distribute weight more evenly on your shoulders. I bought one when I got to Hong Kong because my shoulders would hurt after carrying a bag on one or the other for a long period of time.

There is always the possibility that your luggage will be lost or won't arrive in Hong Kong right away. We advise you to tag your luggage with addresses of the Hong Kong Baptist University and your home address in the US.

\* To easily recognize your luggage, mark your bags with colored ribbon or luggage tag.

### **Clothes:**

Once you arrive in the early fall it is going to be very hot and humid, so plan on bringing shorts. Since your clothes take up the most space, you will need to be careful not to overload. Bring some of your favorite cold and warm weather items that you know you will not mind wearing repeatedly. It gets really cold starting late fall (December), especially if you are there during January. However, there is no need to bring too many heavy coats for the winter here. I brought t-shirts, shorts, loose flowy pants, two pairs of sweats, and one zip-up jacket, and one flannel. In November, I bought one sweater and one pair of jeans, a hoodie and a light long sleeve. Those got me through the rest of December, and layering was essential when it got below 60 degrees. I still wear everything I bought while I was in HK.

Hong Kong is a very fashionable place. There are several retail stores in Hong Kong that we do not have in the USA, it is there you can buy clothes at good prices. They also have an overwhelming amount of high-end fashion stores. If you have the cash, go nuts!

- “My biggest mistake was expecting the weather to be tropical when I arrived there in January last year... OOPS! So better take along warm clothes, that are suitable for +40-50 degree weather. This is not a joke, bring warm clothes none of the students were prepared for this and it is not fun to be cold! Also the dorms do not have heating and unless you are willing to spend on a heater, better have warm clothes along for sleeping and just lounging in.”

– Exchange student

Towards the end of the stay in April and May it also gets very hot and humid. Bring clothing with light fabric. Light material dries quickly after washing which is good because you pay for the dryer per minute (about \$.50US/7min). Consequently, a neutral colored cotton/linen skirt is better than denim! [washer=5 HKD; dryer 1min=1HKD]

There are many places to go shopping in Hong Kong and everyone buys clothes while they are there. Bring staple clothing items and allow room for clothing you will want

to buy. You can find everything from extremely high-end stores to excellent deals in many street markets.

\* One thing to keep in mind is that Asian sizing is different (ie, smaller!) In order to find women's pants larger than a size eight, you will need to do some extra searching – perhaps in a department store or mall. Finding tops in larger sizes is much easier. Just try on the clothes. Also, as you buy be aware that some items you purchase are in fact fakes! The store I was able to find clothes at was M&S in Festival Walk! They are from the UK and have accessible sizes and styles.

- “Depending upon how big and tall you are, **pack light**. You can buy all your clothes at the lady's market and various stores in that area. I got a whole new wardrobe for \$50US. Remember they have to take into account "Chinese" sizes.” – Exchange student (male)

### **Your Feet:**

Take shoes that are comfortable for walking. For example, many of the exchange students wore Converse because they are comfortable to walk in and stylish – and, you can find them anywhere. (Or at least they were when this was written). You can buy these in HK. For girls I recommend bringing a good, basic, pair of flats with you that you can wear both during the day or for going out.

If you want to participate in a sports activity in one of the workout facilities on or near campus, bring the right shoes, or buy them there.

Also bring a pair of shoes for going out in the evening. These are the shoes I brought: 1 pair for work out, 2 pairs for everyday walking/going to class, 1 pair of flip flops, and 1 pair for the evening/going out. Hong Kong is very elegant a lot of nice restaurants and night clubs require you to wear leather shoes if you are a male or female, however females can get away with stylish sandals/flip flops. Hong Kong is surprisingly hilly and you walk everywhere, which makes heels rather impractical. Bring what is most comfortable and durable, the weather will take a toll on your shoes!

\*If you are a women's shoe size 8 or smaller, then you will also have no problem buying shoes at street markets and local stores.

### **Electronics:**

Do not bring a hair dryer, straightener, or desk fan because they will not work, even with an adaptor and a converter. Buy a hair dryer, flat iron, or curling iron at Lok Fu (near campus). You can buy the adaptors/converters in HK but I recommend saving yourself the trouble and bringing it with you. You don't want to have to wait to be able

to use your computer if you are bringing one. Bring your laptop if you have one! I got adapters and converters from Best Buy, they have travel multipacks that will prepare you for a life of travels!

## IMPORTANT THINGS TO TAKE WITH YOU

- A **thin** towel – thick towels take up too much room in the small washing machines and also take forever to dry. Bring one and buy the other when you get there. Definitely buy a cheap towel or two from the alley market by Lok Fu, they are so important for being prepared and comfy for beach days!
- A travel bottle of your favorite shampoo, conditioner, face wash, feminine products... You will be glad to have them when you get there and it leaves more space for souvenirs on the return trip! However, you can find the same name brands here in the USA in HK. If you're feeling adventurous, you can try the local brands. Tampons were hard to find, but the Mannings and other shops usually had one brand.
- Swimsuit – hard to find western sizes and attractive patterns in HK. Mark&Spencers in Festival Walk is a great resource for this.
- Sunglasses – bring your favorite pair or buy at a local market.
- Nail Clippers/toiletry kit
- Umbrella-Rainy in the beginning of fall.  
    “You really don't need one.” –Male Exchange Student
- Small alarm clock (wind-up or battery powered), you can buy in HK
- A small sewing kit
- Medicine kit: cough drops, Band-Aids, Aleve, Pepto Bismol, Anti-Diarrheal, decongestant etc. (basic medicine is provided by your floor in the dorm for free, talk to your hall tutor; or you can go to a doctor on campus for only \$70 HKD (10USD))
- Plenty of underwear –they can be expensive& it can be difficult to find in the styles you prefer.
- Makeup: Stock up on any and all make up, especially foundation, that you think you will need during your stay in HK. It is hard to find the right shade that you need and not all the brands found in the U.S. are sold in HK (in particular, Cover Girl is not sold in Hong Kong). If you wear mascara, you will probably sweat it off, so waterproof is helpful. Makeup is not a must-have, it is usually too hot to be comfortable wearing it.

## **THINGS YOU CAN BUY AT LOK FU/IKEA or the Shopping Center in Kowloon City**

- Dishes (you can find most cooking supplies in the kitchen on your floor)
  - \*Team up w/ your hall tutor to combine money from everyone on the floor to buy pots, pans, a rice cooker, or general kitchen supplies
- Hair Dryer
- Groceries/cooked food
- Laundry soap
- Lotion
- Mug
- Q-tips
- School Supplies/books
- Silverware
- Some snacks and food
- Stationary
- Towels
- Tupperware
- Pretty much all basic necessities
- Tiger balm for bug bites

\* Lok Fu is the local shopping mall within walking distance (about 8 minutes). There is also an Ikea about 15min away on the MTR (subway stop Kowloon Bay). Also, Festival Walk is the nearest MTR station, about a 7 min walk. And there is a supermarket TASTE on the lower level, you can find almost all the grocery items you need in the US ones. But Festival Walk is home to a REALLY nice mall (towels are US\$30 – don't buy here)! Malls in HK are very similar to USA; however, they seem to be more stylish. For cheaper goods, Lok Fu has a cheap store on the opposite side of Lok Fu called Park N Shop which offers a variety of food, drinks, and daily toiletries (Park N Shop changed locations in May 2018, still near Lok Fu).

### **Your room:**

You will have a roommate and share the bathroom with two other “toilet mates.” The bathrooms have two sinks, a shower and toilet. The bathrooms are cleaned weekly by HKBU staff. You also have a desk with many shelves, tall cabinet for hanging items and a single bed with drawers underneath. I was able to store everything without a problem. There is also a rail along the ceiling for hanging clothes to dry. The beds are quite firm. If you have room, you will thank yourself for bringing some kind of foam padding (you can always leave it there and use the extra space in your suitcase for souvenirs on the way home), or save time



and buy it in HK at Ikea. I didn't bring foam, but I bought an extra comforter for about \$15 at Lok Fu and slept on that.

### **The area around SRH:**

- "I would tell other students to go buy a basketball or soccer ball and go to that park by HKBU and just start playing with the locals. It's a great way to meet people in HK. Also tell them to go on the hikes around Hong Kong because they all have great views. You can buy a hiking book in HK book at Page One." (Page One is a bookstore in Festival Walk, the mall located directly above the MTR, which is the subway system). – Exchange Student

### **Phone calls:**

There is a phone in each hall (1<sup>st</sup> floor, common rooms on each floor). You can make international calls there using a phone card, which can be bought at the HKBU bookstore. You cannot receive phone calls on the phone in the hall. My parents and friends used a calling card and occasionally called me on my cell phone. This uses minutes on your cell phone but it is worth it every once in a while. Calls may not be too clear, but it is really cheap! I would recommend using Zoom or calling and texting over WhatsApp, which is free as long as you are connected to WiFi. You can buy SIM card for local calls at 7-11 near the old campus; I would recommend buy the ones from PEOPLES instead of 3 (two biggest phone carriers in Hong Kong), the former is much cheaper. {I DID NOT SEE A PUBLIC PHONE IN THE DORMS}

\* You can use your cell phone in Hong Kong if it is not locked. If your phone is locked, call your provider and they may be able to unlock it for you.

"I bought a phone at a Broadway electronics store for HK\$140 and a sim card for \$50. SIM cards can be recharged at a 7-11. I recommend buying a phone so that you can communicate with your friends in Hong Kong. They are relatively inexpensive and when you leave HK, you can use them for travel in other countries as long as you buy a SIM card in that country (excluding the U.S.). -Exchange Student (female)

\* To call a Hong Kong number, people in the US need to dial 011 (country code) 852 (city code) and then your number.

The internet is also a great way to communicate. You can talk with people using MSN, Google Talk or Skype, Zoom. You can find out more about how to use these options on the internet. Use/download Whatsapp! It is very helpful.

- “They can bring their own cell phone. They might need to obtain a code from their provider to use it in Hong Kong. Otherwise, they can buy a used cell phone for \$200-\$300 HK. As far as calling home, the best option is to use "Skype" It is cheap and convenient. Just need to either bring a headset from home or buy one in Mongkok” – Exchange Student
- “I used Skype & text messaging to communicate with my parents.” - Exchange Student
  
- “Before leaving home I purchased USD \$20 in Skype credit. It came in really handy when I had issues with my bank and phone carrier back home and needed to call them” –Exchange Student
  - I had two phones while I was in HK. I brought my old iphone 6s as my “American” phone, and I brought my current iphone 11 as my “HK” phone. I got an international plan from Verizon, so each day I accessed my international calling/texting, it was \$10/day for unlimited service. I used my American SIM card and phone until I got a CSL sim card, then I put my American SIM into the iphone 6s and put the CSL into the iphone 11. I kept my American phone in my desk most of the time, calling home about 1x/week. I used my HK phone to get a local phone number, make calls/texts, get WIFI/data, and I used Whatsapp more than anything else for messaging.

## **HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY**

The length of your classes will vary from 1hr to 3 hours (mostly 3 hrs, meeting once a week per class) and you will most likely have classes on both campuses. HKBU has an old campus which is across the street from the new campus, your dorm is located on the side with the new campus. Hong Kong students tend to be more hesitant to answer questions and engage in group conversations than students at Linfield. Do not be surprised when students show up late for class or leave to answer telephones. Try to avoid propping your feet on the back of the chair in front of you in lecture halls. The European exchange students would also kid the American students about doing this; it’s a bit rude and should be avoided. Wearing flip flops and open toe shoes to class is also seen as disrespectful, the class structure at HKBU is more formal than Linfield. ☺

It is normal to have your entire grade rely on 2 papers, and maybe one project. There is limited homework, so be sure to keep up on reading and studying, and find a group and work on projects early and often.

“I thought HKBU was okay as a school. I like how Linfield runs its programs. I didn't like how HKBU graded nor the styles of the classes” –Exchange Student

**E-mail:**

There are many opportunities to meet people. The HKBU International programs office is wonderful and there are some events that they plan which will help you get to know your fellow exchange students. You can also participate in dorm events. The HKBU dorms have individuals on each floor that is like an RA at Linfield, they call theirs the “Hall Tutor.” This person will often plan dinners or outings to a local restaurant for the hall – take advantage of it!

“Also, take on a leadership role in the hall. I was elected to be the English tutor. It was a lot of fun!” –Exchange Student Fall 2007

“You can take part in being a bit of a student ambassador for Linfield. I gave a powerpoint presentation about life on campus and what McMinnville is like” –Exchange Student 2010

Your toilet mates might also be local students and so you can get to know them and their friends. Almost all of your classes will require that you participate in a group presentation and this is yet another way to interact with local students.

The cafeteria is also a pretty social area for exchange students. Many people ate lunch at the outside tables and just hung out and chatted in between classes. The exchange students at HKBU are from all over the world and you will have a wonderful time not only learning about Hong Kong culture but also the culture of your fellow exchange students!

Facebook Exchange Student group is a great place to talk and exchange information with other exchange students. Students will post information about local events, class recommendations, off-campus activities, and their independent travel plans. It is a great way to meet new people and share your life in HK.

One of the ways I was able to connect with others was by cooking. I was able to cook chicken fajitas and they were a big hit! People love trying new foods and usually Mexican food is brand new for Europeans and Chinese students. Another big hit was doing pancake nights, just go get the ingredients and have people chip in for the cost, it is truly some of the best bonding time. Gathering around a meal is the best, and being able to share a cultural meal, like putting on Thanksgiving, is really fun and special.

\* As a fun side note, I am now married to one of my fellow exchange students that is from Germany and we are now living permanently in Hong Kong – you never know who you might meet! 😊

## **General Information**

### **Money:**

Be sure to take a credit card. You will use it to book things online and purchase items. It is safe to use in Hong Kong and most of Asia. Trust me I used it like 4 times a day and never lost my “identity.” Or, you can easily apply for a debit card for no-charge from local bank-HangSeng Bank, there is one located on the old campus. Besides, Octopus card is more commonly used in HK for transportation (MTR, bus and mini-bus) and supermarkets and most restaurants. Loading the Octopus card with at least 500HKD a week is important, to always have enough for outings. You can buy the Octopus card at a metro station, and I suggest getting it as soon as you can after arriving – it is what you use to pay for air conditioning and laundry. I would recommend having at least two types of cards and have a debit card as a backup.

### **Spending Cash:**

Big Mac is about 1.5USD, for the meal about 3USD cheaper in the USA. Apart from food HK is more expensive than most places in the USA. So be sure to have some money. “I did a lot of traveling and a lot of going out and spent about 9,000 USD while I

was there.” –Exchange Student Fall 2007

Don’t be shocked, you can go there and spend 1/3 of that and still have a great experience!

Bring an ATM card or acquire a credit card that doesn’t have fees! Hong Kong is a very cash-based society! Being charged for taking money out each time can add up.

### **Working Out:**

There are two work-out facilities on campus. The gym on the old campus has weights and cardio machines and the work out room on the new campus has cardio machines. If you have a gym card from a work out facility in the US, bring it. This will allow you to bypass an otherwise mandatory one hour tutorial about how to use all the machines. Additionally, you can take your Linfield ID and explain that at your school this is the same as a “workout card.” On campus and in the surrounding area, you can also find: tennis courts, running tracks, soccer fields and basketball courts.

**Food:**

Marketplace by Jasons-On Oxford road (5 min walk)

UNI, Park N Shop – Grocery store in Lok Fu.

Welcome – Grocery Store - 10min walk from campus (Closest)

Taste – Huge grocery facility located in Festival Walk

Seven-eleven 24hrs, near old campus

McDonalds -walking distance, and deliver to campus

FoodPanda, Uber Eats are both good options if you want something quick or farther away!

- “To get my "Western" fix, I used to go to "Cul de Sac" in Lang Kwai Fong or Wanchai. Also in Wanchai is the "Flying Pan", which has western breakfast options. My favorite food is Thai and my favorite restaurant was called "Mini Bangkok" in Kowloon.”  
– Exchange Student
- “To save money I recommend stocking up on fruit (man I miss HK apples), peanut butter and jelly, milk and cereal, bread for toast, and those noodle bowls. Also, if they want something specific, they should ask the international office to write it in Chinese because it is very difficult to find someone that speaks English at the stores.”  
– Exchange student
- “Kowloon City undoubtedly is a good location with a huge choice, festival walk bit pricy for daily eating, but Jusco food court was great! Buying food in Jusco is A LOT cheaper! Never cooked at the dorms...” – Exchange student
- “You can get plenty of frozen meals at the local grocery stores as well. It is a good idea to get a few frozen items for quick or inexpensive meals.”  
- Exchange student
- FOLLOW @CONVENEWITHCUISINE FOR RESTAURANT SUGGESTIONS IN HONG KONG. Offers locations and recommendations!
- There are several canteens on campus with meals ranging from around 3 to 8 USD. Just note that they do not change the menus very frequently.

## Going Out:

- “You know there are two main options, LKF and Wanchai and although HK is rather safe people should always go out with at least two people to avoid any unexpected circumstances.” – Exchange student
- “The nightlife in HK was incredible. Much different than any city I’ve been to. I enjoyed meeting all the people in the exchange program. LKF was my favorite spot. There was a wide range of cultures hanging out at the same spot” –Exchange Student
- “Luckily for you the best club in the world is in HK - it's Dragon-i! Saturday nights are house music nights, almost every weekend they have a world famous DJ playing there... if you go there before 11 or 10 pm the entrance is free, after that cover charge 150 hkd (that's my personal observation, but it might change, all depends on the amount of people entered he club before you.” – Exchange student
- “Understand that nightclubs in HK are truly elegant. They do not hold back in this department. The top clubs for me were: Volar (Manager Mario), Avenue (Manager Chris), Beijing Club, Drop, and Sugar (Manager Fe). You must be dressed nice. Guys: leather dress shoes, nice jeans, and a button down shirt. Girls: Nice shoes, skirts/jeans, nice shirt. The door guys at the above clubs are very rude, until you get to know them. I recommend you introduce yourself with them and the manager. Heck, buy them all a round and they will remember you. Otherwise you are just another person to them trying to get into their club. I paid only once to get into a club, but I also told several mistruths as to whom I was, I was either a model or an actor. Try it, it works.” –Exchange Student Fall 2007
- The clubs do not typically charge women, especially Westerners. There is also the chance that promoters will give you free drink cards for the clubs, the promotions usually end by midnight. They usually charge men about 100-200HKD per club entry. This runs men 15-30USD a night, per club. Most of the bouncers and doormen will remember you if you’re friendly, and it is best to introduce yourself. They usually speak great English and will help you if you need anything, as long as they recognize/respect you. Be courteous and kind, make conversation in line and it will reward you.

## Traveling:

[www.zuji.com](http://www.zuji.com) and [www.ratestogo.com](http://www.ratestogo.com) are pretty good sites for traveling in Asia. There are also many travel agents in Hong Kong and although we don't use travel agents much in the US, they are used quite frequently here.

**Advice:**

- “In retrospect, I wish I would have went more places and hung out more. The time went so fast and I did not have enough time to travel around HK and absorb more of the culture. So, tell them to go out as much as possible and really get to see HK life. From traveling to the various islands and trying random restaurants. Get to know ALL of the exchange students so they can get a taste of everyone's culture. I feel so lucky because we had such an awesome crew from all over the world.” – Exchange Student
- “If you don't like crowds do not do anything on public holidays, STAY IN! It was quite interesting to see the Bun Festival though. If you are there during the Chinese New Year make sure to see the parade and fireworks!” - Exchange Student
- “Sweets and other types of little things are cool to give to your new friends and teachers as souvenirs from your country in the beginning or in the end. I think it's a sweet gesture.” – Exchange Student
- “I traveled to the Philippines for a week with a bunch of friends from the exchange program. I loved the trip. We stayed on Borocay Island. It was by far the most beautiful place I've ever been to.” –Exchange Student
- “TRAVEL, TRAVEL, TRAVEL! I went during the fall and my schedule was class two days a week, meaning five-day weekends! Take random trips with people.  
You will create such a great bond with the other foreign exchange student, they all want to travel so do it! Also, I spent my Jan term traveling with friends, we went to almost every country in Southeast Asia. Thailand is amazing! If you can go to Bali! Also, Boracay, Philippines=Cheap and the best beach in ASIA! Check the weather before traveling however. If you go to Boracay stay at the Nigi Nigi resort. It is the best place to stay on the White Beach. Wow you are going to have such an amazing time! I want to live in HK!” –Exchange Student Fall 2007
- “One more thing, if you want to save on hotel accommodations call the hotel directly, or at least try if you can find their number. Most internet sites, like CheapAsianHotels.com or Hotels.com, require about 48 hours to confirm and they charge a little more. Calling them you secure a place

right away. TAKE A CREDIT CARD to HK!! Also, be prepared to spend money! People say that Asia is cheap, but if you want to have the time of your life: travel, eat, shop, take out a loan because it adds up fast. Excluding program fees and Linfield tuition I spent at least 9,000 USD, but also remember there are numerous ways to save money. ALSO! Time flies when you are there, be sure to not only travel Southeast Asia, but to explore Hong Kong. I barely went and saw the famous HK lightshow on my last day there. To see the islands, I never did. Go see everything, it has so much to offer. On that note, the HKBU IPO office offers a FREE HK tour when you arrive.... GO! Finally, the local students are interesting and somewhat friendly, but remember English is not their first language so be ready to speak slowly. The other 200 international students at HKBU represent several countries. PLEASE be sure to make connections with them, they are going to be a true asset while you are there! They are all great people. One more thing, FACEBOOK! Join the Hong Kong network before you go, even Join the HKBU network if you can figure it out, Start communicating with the locals. The HKBU IPO office will most likely start a Facebook Group for your international student class, it is amazing!" –Exchange Student Fall 2007

- "Take a digital camera! You can buy them in HK too. Also, be sure to buy a larger memory card for it because trust me you will take a LOT of pictures. Be careful not to lose it! Also, when exiting a taxi be sure to look over your seat before getting out because losing stuff in taxis is really easy and because there are thousands of them you won't find your stuff.... UNLESS you remember the taxi number, in which case have a Cantonese speaker call the taxi company ASAP and request your stuff back. Locals are usually really honest." –Exchange Student Fall 2007
- "My best times in Hong Kong were spent traveling. My friends and I planned an outing every weekend. Sometimes we just traveled to a new place in HK, and sometimes we'd go to a new country. Meet new people, be open-minded and you will encounter some of the best life experiences. I highly recommend the Philippines. In my opinion, this is the home to the nicest people in the world. It changed my whole outlook on life and my outlook on my trip to HK. – Exchange Student

**Most Importantly – Get your work done early or on time and use your free time to absorb as much culture as you can. Don't be afraid to meet new**



**people every day – some of those people will  
change your life forever!**

# 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.

## TRAVEL TIPS

# How to Make Sure You Travel with Medication Legally

Traveling with medication — even prescription drugs — isn't as simple as packing it. Here's how to stay on the right side of the law, anywhere you go.



**By Tanya Mohn**

Jan. 19, 2018

Travelers often pack medications when they go abroad, but some popular prescription and over-the-counter ones Americans use for things like pain relief, better sleep, allergies and even the common cold are illegal in some countries.

The United Arab Emirates and Japan, for example, are among the most restrictive nations, but many ban or restrict importing narcotics, sedatives, amphetamines and other common over-the-counter medications.

Most travelers won't run into problems for carrying small amounts for personal use, said Katherine L. Harmon, who oversees health analysis for [iJET International](#), a travel risk management company. But noncompliance can result in confiscation, (which could, in turn, have severe medical consequences), deportation, jail time, and even the death penalty. "Does it happen a lot? No. Could it? Yes," Ms. Harmon said. "Consumers need to understand this and how it might adversely impact them *before* they book that awesome trip to an exotic location."

She shared a few tips to keep you on the right side of the law, whatever you take and wherever you roam.

## Plan Ahead

Laws vary by country and there is no central, up-to date repository, so Ms. Harmon suggests consulting your physician, travel medical insurance company, or local pharmacist four to six weeks before traveling. "When you inquire about your shots, ask about medications. Odds are they may not know off the top of their head, but they have the resources to find out."

She also suggests checking with the embassy of your destination country. The [State Department](#) website lists foreign [embassies](#) in the United States, and their contact information. It also lists [insurance providers](#) that offer overseas health coverage. Comparison websites [Insure My Trip](#) and [SquareMouth](#) can help assess those insurance plans, if they're necessary.

## Label and Pack Your Medication Properly

Carry all of your medication — even vitamins and supplements — in their original, clearly marked containers or packaging in a clear plastic bag in carry on luggage. Make sure the name on the prescription, the medicine container and your passport (or one for the recipient of the medication) all match. If you lost the product information insert, ask the pharmacist to print a new one for you.

**Times travel coverage.** When our writers review a destination, they do not accept free or discounted services or, in most cases, reveal that they work for The Times. We want their experience to be what you can expect.

[Here's more on our standards and practices.](#)

Also, check [the Transportation Security Administration's website](#) for up-to-date rules and regulations on packing and carrying your medication when you depart. The standard rules

for liquid carry-ons don't apply to medications in liquid or gel form, but you need to inform the T.S.A. when you pass through security so they don't confiscate it.

## Obtain and Carry Necessary Documentation

Keep copies of your original prescriptions, if you can. Better yet, obtain a letter on official letterhead from your physician that lists the medicines you need and why they were prescribed. Ideally, you would get this translated to the language of your destination country, so it's easy to read.

For some medication and specialized equipment used to administer them, some countries require documents to be submitted to government officials well in advance of your arrival. Ms. Harmon, for example, was questioned at the Singapore airport once for entering with an EpiPen, but she had prior authorization allowing its transport.

## Know the Names and Amounts of Active Ingredients

The documentation you carry should also indicate the generic and chemical names of the active ingredients, which determines permissibility, not brand names.

For example, the active ingredient in Benadryl, diphenhydramine, is banned in Zambia in over-the-counter products. In Japan, it is allowed only if the amount in a tablet or injection is limited. However, a typical 25 milligram tablet of Tylenol PM in the United States exceeds the 10 milligram maximum amount in a tablet you can bring into Japan. Some countries restrict the overall total amount of an active ingredient an individual traveler can legally import, which may impact longer stays.

## Reduce or Substitute Medication

In countries where a medication is allowed, but its amount is capped, reducing your dosage or switching to another available medication is the best way to stay compliant. Allow enough time beforehand to ensure the smaller dose or new medicine works effectively, and consider making the switch before your trip to give yourself time to adjust.

Some medications can be used for several diagnoses. Hormones used for birth control may also be used to treat excessive menstrual bleeding, Ms. Harmon said. "Doctors need to get creative sometimes. Substitutions can allow authorities to accept the drug as a medical need rather than going against the country's religious or moral code."

## Reassess Your Travel Plans

Parents with a child doing well on Adderall for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder who prefer not to make adjustments on the fly, or a student with bipolar disorder may want to

consider vacation or study abroad locations where the medications they rely on for mental health are not banned or restricted.

“Viewpoints on treatment and diagnoses can vary widely,” Ms. Harmon said. “Western Europe and North America understand that brain chemistry is often at the root of these problems. But some countries, like Russia, do not consider mental health challenges as medical problems and often treat them criminally.”



# 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.

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## 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

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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.*

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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]