

Welcome to Ann Arbor ... Where to next?

Tips for Traveling in North America

Friday, August 19th, 2011

Presenters:

Bill Nolting (bnolting@umich.edu); International Center, Assistant Director, Education Abroad

Kelly Nelson (kellynel@umich.edu); International Center, Education Abroad Advisor

Matt Carl (umi_agents@statravel.com), STA Travel Representative

Li Chen (lche@umich.edu), Graduate Student, International Center Orientation Peer Advisor

Introduction/Before you leave

- **Visa Information** – Remember, even though Windsor is only an hour away, it's still in another country!
 - **Canada:** <http://www.internationalcenter.umich.edu/life/travelcanada.html>
 - **Mexico:** <http://www.sre.gob.mx/detroit/> (click on **Visas** section on the left hand side)
- **Guidebooks:** Lonely Planet, Frommer's, Let's Go (Available for purchase at any local bookstore, or come into our office and look at a copy!)
- **Finances:** avoid carrying large amounts of cash!

How do you decide where to go?

- Determine what type of vacation appeals to you (relaxed beach vacation, outdoor adventure, city/museum, etc)
- Read travel reviews for each destination: www.tripadvisor.com
- Consider the weather/season (For example, Florida is extremely hot and humid during the summer!)
- Consider avoiding peak travel times/seasons to save money on transportation and lodging.
- Make your vacation reservation as early as possible!
- Contact the tourism bureau/convention center and/or chamber of commerce in your vacation destination for informational brochures – sometimes they'll even send a booklet full of coupons for discounts at local businesses! (website that includes links to state tourism sites: <http://www.sirlinksalot.net/travel.html>)
- Coupon Websites: <http://www.groupon.com/>; <http://www.livingsocial.com/>; <http://therealdeal.annarbor.com>
- Travel possibilities for educational purposes: study, internship, volunteering, research – International Center Education Abroad Office

Health and Safety

- Health Insurance (U-M Travel Abroad Health Insurance: <http://www.uhs.umich.edu/tai/>)
- U-M Travel Registry (<http://globalportal.umich.edu/register-travel.php>)
- Ask hotel/hostel staff about areas to avoid; guidebooks are also good for this!
- Avoid places that look abandoned
- Do not hitchhike or pick up hitchhikers!
- Do not stay overnight in bus or train stations or parks.
- Avoid walking around late at night, especially alone (write down the number for a local cab company before you go out or ask someone to call a cab for you!)
- If you'll be going to Mexico, learn about the immunizations that are required/recommended for your destination: <http://www.uhs.umich.edu/travelhealth>

Getting Around North America: Transportation

Because the distance between Point A and Point B tends to be so great when traveling in the US, it's crucial to carefully consider not only how you will get to a certain area, but also how you will get around once you've arrived; depending on where you're going, public transportation is not always available and cities are not always walkable (Guidebooks are a good way to find out more about transportation to and within a specific destination).

- **Planes**
 - STA Travel for flexible student airfare (see *Travel Tips* from STA Travel section below)
 - Other travel websites such as www.expedia.com, www.priceline.com, www.kayak.com
 - Low cost airlines flying out of Detroit: Southwest, Spirit, AirTran, and USA3000

- **Trains**
 - Amtrak: www.amtrak.com; check out “Deals” for discounted rates; save 15% with an International Student ID card (ISIC) – card available at STA Travel for \$22
 - Via Rail (Canada only): <http://www.viarail.ca/en>
- **Buses – fares deeply discounted when you book far in advance!**
 - Megabus (to and from Chicago): <http://www.megabus.com/us/>
 - Greyhound (throughout North America; also services smaller cities and towns that aren’t accessible with the train): <http://www.greyhound.com>
- **Automobiles**
 - Renting a Car: http://www.umich.edu/~info/transportation.html#anchor_carRental
 - Car-sharing Services:
 - Zipcar: www.zipcar.com/umich
 - Zimride: <http://zimride.pts.umich.edu/>
 - Thinking about buying a car? Attend “Buying a Used Car” (8/26 @ 9am; E1540)

Accommodations

- **Hotels/Motels:** www.hotels.com; www.hotwire.com (just two of many examples!)
 - Hotel chains (Days Inn, Best Western, Hilton, Marriott) tend to be mid-priced and have consistent quality throughout the US; Motel 8’s are a cheaper alternative & tend to be located right off major highways
 - Hotel Ratings: www.tripadvisor.com
- **Hostels** – mainly in the major cities: www.hostels.com; www.hostelworld.com or visit STA Travel in the Union!
- **Hospitality organizations:** www.couchsurfing.com
- **Camping** – Rent from UM Rec Sports <http://www.recsports.umich.edu/outdooradv/oarc/>

Travel Tips from STA Travel

- STA Travel is a student-oriented travel agency conveniently located in the Michigan Union (across from the Computer Showcase!) - (umi_agents@statravel.com; (734) 769-2555
- Store hours: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, except for Wednesday, when the store is open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday, when the store is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Organized trips through the International Center & other campus departments:

- Trips around Michigan and the surrounding areas organized by the International Center; stay tuned to your email for announcements and check out the International Center Events website: <http://www.internationalcenter.umich.edu/events/social-events.html>
- Outdoor adventure trips (hiking, sailing, white water rafting, etc) organized by the U-M Dept of Rec Sports Outdoor Adventure Program <http://www.recsports.umich.edu/outdooradv/trips/>

Other helpful websites

- International Center Travel in North America: <http://www.internationalcenter.umich.edu/life/travel.html>
- Let’s Go North America: http://www.letsgo.com/5-north_america-travel-guides-usa-d
- Lonely Planet USA: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/usa>
- Frommer’s North America: <http://www.frommers.com/destinations/northamerica/>
- Tips for travel in the US, including cultural tips on interacting with Americans: <http://www.drvooyageur.com/>
- GoogleMaps (“Street View” for checking out hotels and hostels & “Search Nearby” for locating nearby attractions): <http://maps.google.com/>
- Wikitravel: free online travel guides <http://wikitravel.org>

Interested in **Study, Working, or traveling abroad** during your time here at the University of Michigan? Stop by our office for more information! U-M International Center Education Abroad Office, Room 10
Tel: (734) 647-2299; Email: ic-abroad@umich.edu

