Travel Basics ASIA

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University of Michigan
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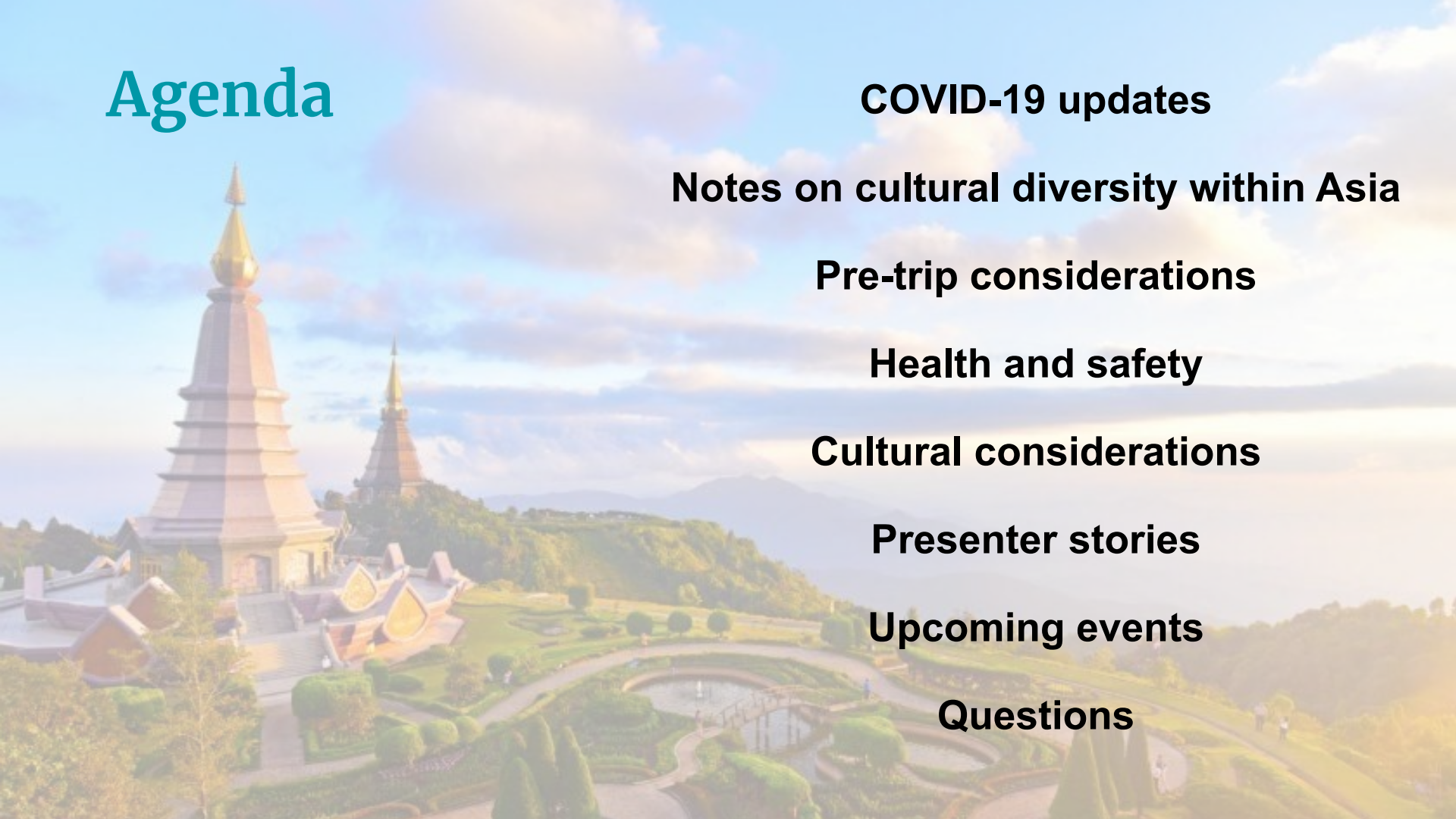
Agenda



COVID-19 updates

Notes on cultural diversity within Asia

Pre-trip considerations

Health and safety

Cultural considerations

Presenter stories

Upcoming events

Questions

COVID-19 Updates

- On March 11, President Schlissel announced that **all U-M international** nonessential **travel is suspended until at least April 21**
- In addition, all Winter and Spring term U-M education abroad programs have been altered or suspended (Summer term study abroad programs are TBD)
- Many non-UM affiliated programs are also being altered/suspended and are pulling students out on an individual basis
- President Schlissel's announcement does not apply to independent/personal travel, but **we strongly discourage international travel until the travel suspension is lifted**
- On March 19, the U.S. State Department issued a Global Level 4 Health Advisory -- Do Not Travel

COVID-19 Resources

- Here are several University and federal resources that will be useful if you are still planning to travel:
  - Visit here for COVID-19 updates from U-M
  - UM Travel Registry (Register your travel with the University)
  - Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (Register your travel with the US)
  - UM Travel Abroad Health Insurance
  - UHS COVID-19 Information (Includes Travel Information)
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 Travel Information
  - Johns Hopkins COVID-19 Dashboard
- If you need to cancel a flight, check with your airline to see if it is possible to get a refund. Many airlines are offering refunds and flexible rebooking options that could help minimize your financial loss.
  - If you purchase a flight, consider Cancel for Any Reason Travel Insurance

Diversity in Asia

Disclaimer:

- The variety and diversity of people within Asia is so vast, it is impossible to describe the continent as a whole.
- Watch for over-generalizing or stereotyping (“Single story”)
- Each country and each person has their own story and your cultural experience will vary greatly depending on where you go, as well as your identities.

- 48 Countries
- 5 Regions
- 4.46 Billion People
- 2,300 Languages

Trip Preparation – Before You Go Abroad

1. Passport & visa
   a. Expedited documents: Travisa and Passport and Visas
   b. U.S. Dept of State
2. Money
   a. Currency conversion apps!
   b. Be sure to have cash at all times
   c. Have some US dollars and an additional debit/credit card as a back-up
   d. Store money in various places
   e. Alert your bank of travels to different countries!
3. Cell phone - you can change out the sim card for a local one to use data
   a. Usually simple, helpful if going to more rural locations
   b. Cities will likely have internet cafes or hotels/restaurants with Wifi options
4. Check in with your doctor
   a. meds & vaccinations vary by country
5. Booking Flights
   a. Skyscanner.com
   b. Hopper.com
   c. Scott's Cheap Flights

Trip Preparation – Before You Go Abroad

6. Packing - packing lists, take time to compile supplies, think about gifts for people you meet
    a. Clothing - culturally appropriate/respectful/weather appropriate clothing
    b. Outlet converter!

7. Grab a journal to document your travels & reflect
8. Spend time with friends & family before you go
9. Pick up a mini dictionary, or download a language app (Duolingo, Google Translate)
10. Research particulars for your country and regions of travel (particularly in regards to culture, transportation, currency, language)

Health and Safety Before You Go

Did you register your travel with U-M?

Do you need UM Travel Abroad Health Insurance?

How are your specific health needs met in your country of travel?

... can you get it there?

- Medication
- Personal body products
- Vaccinations (UHS Travel Clinic)
- Advil, Tums, rehydration salts
- Mosquito spray
- Sunscreen

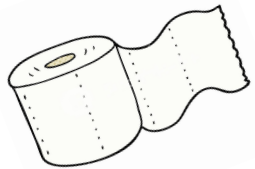
Health and Safety In Country

- Food preparation
  - Wash it, peel it, boil it, cook it
- Safety in busy areas
  - Be alert to your surroundings
  - Especially in crowded places, while using public transport
- Appropriate clothing
  - E.g. Long pants & long sleeves at temples
- Where to get water
  - Buy water bottles or use properly filtered water
- Carrying IDs
  - Prepare multiple copies of passports and visas
- Utilize Grab if in your area
  - Just like Uber

Bathrooms and Feminine Hygiene

Sanitation might look different

- Squatting instead of sitting
- Pads more readily available instead of tampons/diva cups
- Limited disposal bins
- Bring toilet paper with you
- Use proper toilet paper etiquette



Things to consider

- Buying products ahead of time
- Carry hand sanitizer
- Plastic bags for disposal of personal products

Phones and Communication

Unlock your phone

Before you go! (Call Apple/Phone carrier and they can help)

Buy a SIM card

Availability, prepaying for minutes/data

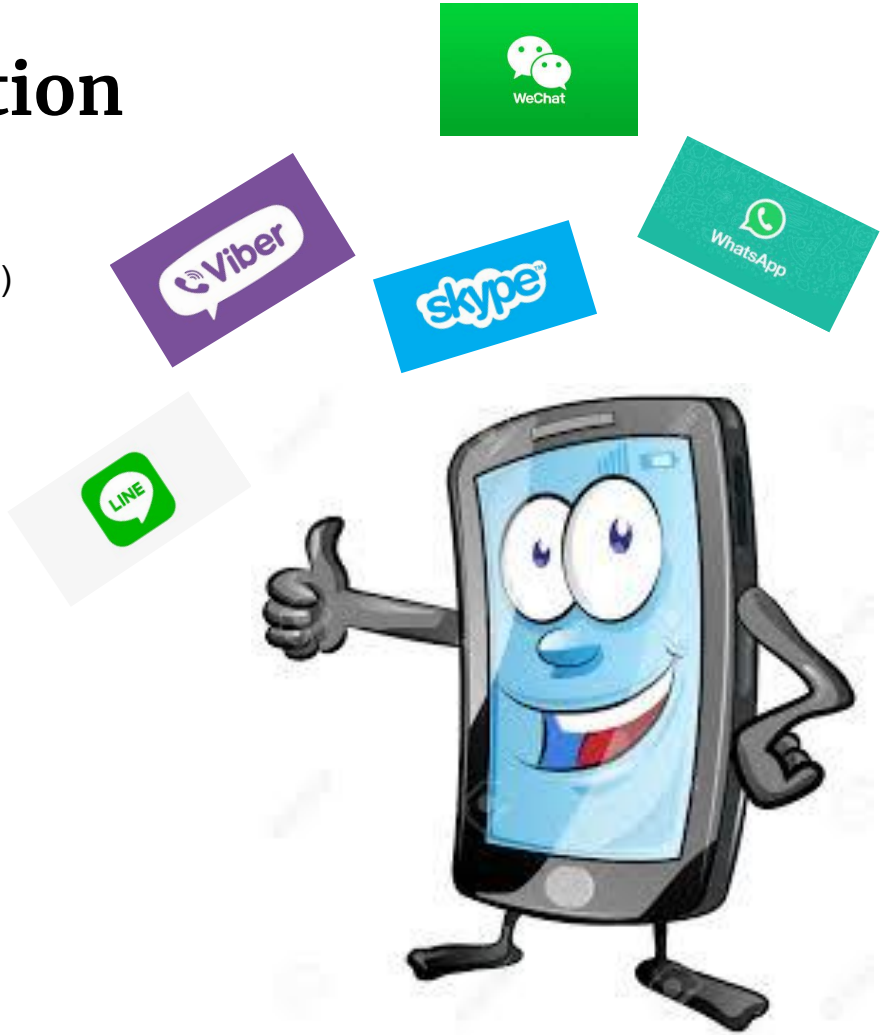
Download communication apps

Free communication service, not just for tourists

WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger are good to communicate globally

Know if there are web restrictions and plan for alternatives

Regulations, censorship, VPNs



Money

- Notify your bank of your travel dates and locations
- Exchange your money, but have emergency US dollars stored somewhere
- Cash more widely used but ATMs should be accessible
- Street markets vs supermarkets
- Bargaining vs fixed price
    - Bargain when appropriate, but be respectful

Food

Street markets

Cultural experience
Varied selection
Potential health factors

Vegetarianism

Know what and how meat is cooked

Etiquette

How eating shows respect, i.e. slurping, using your right hand, etc.

Looking different, feeling different

Try new things while taking care of yourself

Language

- Learn and practice some phrases ahead of time, be confident!
- Resources
  - Pleco, Duolingo, Papago, Google Translate, **Language Resource Center (at NQ)**
- Cultural norms
  - Greetings, addresses, male vs. female, etc
- Urban vs. rural
  - Regional dialects & accents
- Direct vs. indirect
  - E.g., Japanese tends to be more indirect than English
- Workplace vs. personal settings
  - respectful languages
- Know useful phrases
  - Where is …? How much is …?

Transportation

- Know how to say where you want to go in the local language
- Schedule airport transfer ahead of time
- Traffic jam
  - Weather, road condition, rash hours
- Apps & Services
  - Google Maps, Uber, Grab, Go-jek, WeChat, local apps
  - Maps.me is an app that has downloadable maps you can use without Wifi
- Taxi norms
  - Pricing, availability, booking, quality of service
- Bargaining norms
  - You might have to bargain the fare
- Traffic lights
  - Be aware of surroundings!
  - Cars & bikes might not stop for you

Clothing

Comfort for yourself

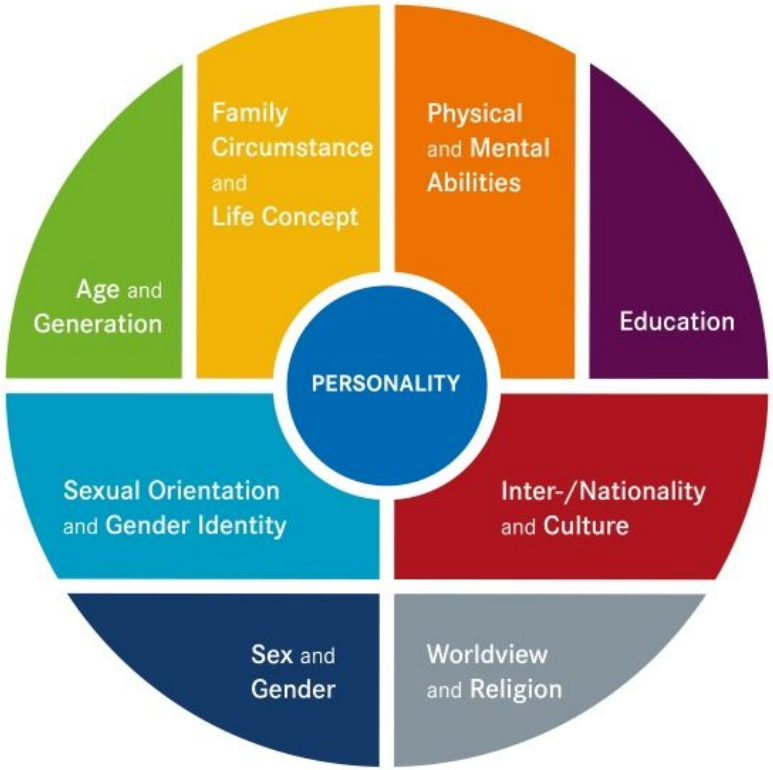
- **Heat and sweat**
  Many places will be hot and humid. Loose, quick dry material can increase comfort. Research the weather conditions for where you'll be at the time of year.
- **Laundry**
  Laundry services may be available, or try handwashing and air drying clothes!
- **Colors**
  Dark clothes, airy fabrics, showing dirt and sweat, attracting sun and mosquitos

Comfort for others

While it may be very hot, please consider certain places where it is important to show respect by covering up (temples, mosques, etc.)

Identities Abroad

- Research and do self reflection on your personal identities and points of privilege
- Find blogs, talk to people, etc. from people who have traveled there who share similar identities
- Be patient and self reflective in the process
- There may be stereotypes & differences in what's acceptable to say and what's not
- Research safety and expectations related to your identities



Drinking Culture

- Understand the local drinking culture
  - In some places drinking is commonplace, in others it's illegal
  - There can be gendered differences in drinking cultural expectations
- Consider strategies for respectful and safe substance use

Emergency Situations

- Global Michigan website
- Group Safety Plan Worksheet
- Emergency Wallet Card
- Pre-departure Checklist for Individuals Traveling Abroad

Do you have the local emergency number on your phone?

Have you enrolled in the Smart Traveller Enrollment Program (STEP)?

- Updates for your destination country from the U.S. embassy
- If you are an international student, see if there is an equivalent program in your country

Alli Cope

Travel experience in:
India, Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, and the Philippines

Not an expert by any means, but have traveled many places in the world

General advice: Be respectful, be open and be kind!

Mary Heinemann

Travel experience in:

China - Beijing, Chengdu

Nepal, and Hong Kong

Also, not an expert.

General advice: You are a guest, observe, practice awareness, and do as the locals do. Have fun!

Questions?

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