Travel Basics

Europe
**Overview**

- Visas
- Health and Safety
- Packing
- Transportation
- Lodging
- Phones and Banking
- Tips/Advice
- Personal Experiences
Obtaining a Visa

U.S. citizens traveling less than 90 days do not need a visa for most EU countries. For more than 90 days or if traveling for other reasons (study or work-related), you’ll want to check with individual countries’ visa requirements.

- Apply at least 6 weeks in advance
- Make copies of your passport and visa
- U.S. Students: country specific visa information
- Non-U.S. Students: travisa.com
  - Schengen Visa
Health and Safety

- Register your travel with the university
- Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)
- GeoBlue International Health Insurance
- No immunizations needed for Europe
- Bring enough prescription medication to last the duration of the trip
- U-M Travel Warnings and Restrictions
- Travel.state.gov for additional safety information
Packing

● Luggage
  ○ Depends on length and purpose of trip
  ○ Be aware of airline dimensions
  ○ Pack less than you think you need
  ○ Consider packing in a backpacking pack

● Don’t forget
  ○ Adapter/ converter
  ○ Quick-dry towel
  ○ Food/snacks from your home country
  ○ Water bottle/coffee mug
  ○ Products that aren’t sold in the country you’re visiting
  ○ Umbrella/rain jacket
  ○ Day pack
  ○ Paper copy of your passport and/or visa
Packing

- Clothing
  - Comfortable shoes are a must
  - A scarf, sweater, jacket, etc. for visiting churches
  - Neutral colors are best for mixing and matching
  - Pack for layering

- General Tips
  - If you want to be treated like a local, it helps to dress like one
  - Dress more conservatively to avoid drawing attention to yourself
TRANSPORTATION

- Flights (from the U.S. to Europe)
  - Search Engines
    - Skyscanner
    - Google Flights
    - Momondo
  - Discounted Student Tickets
    - StudentUniverse
    - STA Travel
  - Very cheap flight deals
    - Scott’s Cheap Flights
    - WOW air
  - Stopovers
    - Icelandair
    - TAP Air Portugal

*Flying from Canada and Chicago is often cheaper than Detroit*
TRANSPORTATION

● Flights (within Europe)
  ○ Sometimes flying within Europe can be cheaper (even within one country)
  ○ Low-cost airlines
    ■ Ryanair
    ■ EasyJet
    ■ WizzAir
    ■ Be aware that carry-on dimensions are smaller!
  ○ Search Engines
    ■ Skyscanner
    ■ Google Flights
Transportation

- Trains (multi-country)
  - Eurail
    - Explore up to 28 countries
    - 3 types of passes:
      - Global Pass: 5+ countries
      - Select Pass: 2-4 bordering countries
      - One Country Pass: 1 country
    - Flexi Pass: can be applied to any of the 3 passes
      - Allows you to travel during a fixed number of days
    - All passes have different validity time frames
    - Expensive but flexible
Transportation

- Trains (single country)
  - Each country’s railway system works differently
  - Examples:
    - Trenitalia: Italy
    - Renfe: Spain
    - Deutsche Bahn: Germany

- Buses
  - Most time but cheapest option
  - Megabus/Flixbus

- Metro/Tram/City Bus
  - Options for buying multi-day, weekly, or monthly passes
  - Some countries require validating ticket
Transportation

**Trains/Buses**
- More comfortable
- Arrive in city centers
- No long check-ins or lines
- Typically no luggage limits
- Often better for spontaneous travel
- Options for overnight travel
- Flexible

**Planes**
- Faster
- Can be cheaper depending on country and when ticket is bought
- Additional cost for transportation from city to airport
- Souvenir restrictions
Transportation: things to consider

- End destination
  - Will you need to catch a taxi?
  - Where is your accommodation in relation to drop-off spot?
- Travel warnings or strikes
  - Check in advance and the day of
- Luggage
  - Know restrictions
- Time of departure and arrival
  - Is the area safe?
Lodging

- Hostels
  - Hostelworld
    - Inexpensive
    - Central locations
    - Full of young travelers
    - Community kitchens
    - Privacy and security issues
    - Room options: private or dorm-style
  - All hostels are unique and offer a variety of amenities
    - The Hat Madrid, Madrid
    - Czech Inn, Prague
    - Orsa Maggiore for Women Only, Rome
LODGING

• Hotels
  ○ [Skyscanner Hotels](https://www.skyscanner.com) or [Booking.com](https://www.booking.com)
    ■ From budget hotels (and hostels) to luxurious ones
    ■ Safer and more private
    ■ Breakfast sometimes included

• Staying with Locals
  ○ [Airbnb](https://www.airbnb.com): Rent shared rooms, your own room, or an entire apartment
    ■ Prices vary greatly
    ■ Safer and more private
    ■ Great for large groups
    ■ Tips/recommendations from locals
  ○ [Couchsurfing](https://www.couchsurfing.com): Stay on locals’ couches
    ■ Free
    ■ Great for meeting locals/other travelers
Phones and Banking

- **Cell phone:**
  - Purchase a cheap cell phone and add minutes to it
  - Change your U.S. phone to an international plan
  - Offline Maps
  - You can find wifi in most accommodations and cafes
    - WhatsApp, Viber, Skype

- **Banking:**
  - **Always have some cash on you!**
  - Notify your bank and credit card companies where you are traveling
  - Short trips
    - Exchange money before you go or when you get there
    - ATMs are usually the cheapest option
    - Debit cards vs. Credit cards
  - Long trips
    - Bank account
Tips and Advice
Cultural Expectations

- Be aware of cultural norms
  - Cultures in Northern, Southern, Eastern, and Western Europe can vary
  - Different concepts of time, space, noise, etc.
- Beverages – Ordering water, tap water safety, refills
- Drinking embedded in European culture
- Bathrooms – go when you have the opportunity
- Most big cities will have English speakers, but it’s always a good idea to learn basic words and phrases
- Solo travel vs. group dynamics (compromising)
- Be aware of afternoon and Saturday/Sunday closures
Social Identities Abroad

- Equaldex
- Global Identities
- Diversity Abroad
- Perceptions of Americans abroad
Avoiding Pickpockets

- Keep your belongings close and closed
- Don’t put anything in your back pockets. Wear backpacks in the front
- Avoid large crowds
- Only carry bags that zip or at least have a clasp
- Don’t carry around your passport or a lot of money
- Be wary of scams — trust your instincts
Budget Traveling

● Think about getting a guide book or following a blog
  ○ Rick Steves
  ○ Lonely Planet
  ○ Young Adventuress
  ○ Nomadic Matt

● Research places to eat cheap and authentic food
  ○ TripAdvisor
  ○ Happycow ($2.99) or Vegman (free) for vegetarians/vegan restaurants
  ○ Yelp (not available in some East. European countries)
  ○ Ask locals!

● Save money by grocery shopping and cooking at home

● Bring your Student ID card with you
  ○ International Student Identity Card (ISIC)
WORKING ABROAD: Celia’s Experience

Greece
Working Abroad: Katie’s Experience France
TRAVEL BASICS WORKSHOPS

Join the International Center and get tips from experienced travelers that will prepare you for your upcoming trip!

EUROPE | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13 | 3:00 - 4:30 PM
ASIA | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27 | 5:30 - 7:00 PM
AFRICA | WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3 | 4:30 - 6:00 PM

1500 North Quad, Language Resource Center
Staying Safe & Healthy While Abroad

Wednesday, March 20, 2019
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM | LSA 2001

Be prepared! Come to this interactive workshop to learn about U-M health and safety resources and how they apply to you - even if you're participating in an independent program!
Making the Most of Your International Experience

Tuesday, March 26, 2019
5:30 PM to 7 PM
University Career Center
(3rd Floor, Student Activities Building)

We'll be covering:

✓ What to do when the work you are asked to do seems very different than what you expected

✓ Tips for approaching your supervisor to discuss topics such as projects you'd like to work on and concerns

✓ What specific skills do you hope to gain this summer and how do these fit in with the top skills employers look for
Managing Money and Budgeting While Abroad

Thursday, April 12
3:00 - 4:00 PM
International Center
Conference Room
Questions?

- cweberg@umich.edu
- cooneyka@umich.edu
- jkoelzer@umich.edu
- ic-abroad@umich.edu

Education Abroad Advising

- Monday: 1pm – 4pm
- Tuesday: 9am – 11am
- Wednesday: 10am – 12pm; 1pm – 4pm
- Thursday: 2pm – 4pm

INTERNATIONAL CENTER
GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION ABROAD