COVID-19 UPDATES

- On March 11, President Schlissel announced that all U-M international nonessential travel is suspended until at least April 21.
  - This led to a U-M Global Travel Suspension
- 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
- This information can change at any moment
COVID-19 RESOURCES

- Here are several University and federal resources that will be useful if your students are still planning to travel:
  - COVID-19 updates from U-M
  - UM Travel Registry (Register your travel with the University)
  - Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (Register your travel with the State Department)
  - UM Travel Abroad Health Insurance
  - UHS COVID-19 Information (Includes Travel Information)
  - 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 you minimize your financial loss.
  - If you haven’t purchased a flight yet, consider Cancel for Any Reason Travel Insurance
AGENDA

1. Visas
2. Health and Safety
3. Packing
4. Transportation
5. Lodging
6. Phones and Banking
7. Tips/Advice
8. Personal Experiences
Who should apply for a visa?
If you are a U.S. citizen and traveling for less than 90 days, a visa is NOT required for many Central and South American countries. Exceptions: Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay and Venezuela.

What if my travel involves work or studying?
If your travel is study, research or work-related, you’ll want to check with individual countries’ visa requirements.
When should I apply for a visa?
6-8 weeks in advance

I am not a U.S. Citizen, do I need a visa?
To learn if you need a visa, you should check with the individual countries’ embassy or consulate. You can also check Travisa!

Important: You should make multiple copies of your visa and your passport!
HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Register your travel with the university
- U-M Travel Abroad Health Insurance
- Various vaccines and medicines may be necessary. Use the CDC Travel Website for specific areas
  - Use the University Health Service’s Travel Health Division to schedule a travel appointment and get necessary immunizations
- Make sure you bring enough prescription medication to last the duration of your trip
Before travelling, you should check the U-M Travel Warnings and Restrictions website.

Additional health and safety information can be found at Travel.state.gov.
What luggage should I bring?
The type of luggage you bring will depend on length and purpose of your trip. It is important to check airline dimensions!

** Pack less than you think you need
Important Items to Remember

- Adapter/Converter
- Quick-dry towel
- Food/snacks from your home country
- Umbrella/rain jacket
- Day pack
- Paper copy of your passport
- Enough medication for the duration of your trip
What clothes should I bring?

Make sure to bring comfortable shoes. If you plan to visit churches, bring a scarf, sweater, jacket, etc.

Pack for layering:

- Multiple climates
- Rainy season vs dry season
- Remember in the Southern Hemisphere, seasons are opposite!
What is the best way to purchase my flight?

- **Search Engines:**
  - Google Flights
  - Skyscanner
  - Kayak

- **Scott’s Cheap Flights** sends you emails with very cheap deals!
What is the best way to purchase my flight?

- **Discounted Student Tickets**
  - StudentUniverse
  - STA Travel

- Sometimes, it is cheaper to fly out of Canada or Chicago rather than Detroit!
LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Taxis
- Uber & Lyft might be available in larger cities
- Know what an official taxi looks like in your destination
  - Sometimes they will be metered
  - Sometimes prices are negotiable

Subway
- Only available in larger cities
- Rechargeable daily, weekly, or monthly passes
LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Buses

● Can reach most locations via bus
● Most time-consuming option but cheapest
● Inquire regarding when/how to purchase tickets

Planes

● Limited options, but very efficient if in a time constraint
● Look into local airlines!
LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Boats
- If you are headed to an outer island or a destination upriver

Trains
- Extremely limited
Buses
LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Things to consider:

- Know where you are going
  - Terminal can be overwhelming
  - Plan for traffic
- End destination
  - Will you need to catch a taxi?
  - Where is your accommodation/destination in relation to the drop-off point?
- Luggage
  - Know size restrictions
LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Prioritize your safety!

- Travel warnings
  - Important to check in advance!
  - Weather, protests, etc.
- Time of departure and arrival
  - Is the area safe?
- Safety
  - Taxis alone, night buses, lifejackets, mountain roads etc.
LODGING: HOSTELS

- Inexpensive/ central locations
- Full of young travelers
- Community kitchens
- Some offer tours/excursions
- Privacy and security issues
- Room options: Single or dorm-style, women-only

All hostels are unique and offer a variety of amenities

- Decide what is important to you (Location? Quiet vs. social? )
  - It is a good idea to read reviews & book early
HOSTELS
LODGING: HOTELS

- **Skyscanner Hotels**
  - From budget hotels (and hostels) to luxurious ones
  - Safer and more private
  - Breakfast sometimes included
LODGING: STAYING WITH LOCALS

- Staying with Locals
  - **Airbnb**: 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**: Stay on locals’ couches
    - Free
    - Great for meeting locals/other travelers
PHONES

- Purchase a cheap cell phone and add minutes to it
- Unlock U.S. smartphone and get local SIM card
- Change your U.S. phone to an international plan
- You can find wifi in most accommodations and some cafés

Smartphone Apps
- WhatsApp
- Viber
- Skype
BANKING

- It’s a good idea to always have some cash on you!
- Notify your bank and credit card companies about your travels
- Exchange money before you go if short trip
- ATMs= cheapest option
  - Visa & MasterCard
  - Foreign transaction fees
  - Be careful!
- Be aware of credit card international fees
TIPS and ADVICE: CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS

- Be aware of cultural norms/customs
  - Cultures across Central and South America vary!
  - Strong Catholic influence in parties and festivals (e.g. Semana Santa)
- Machismo is prevalent
- Vibrant indigenous communities
- Support locally owned businesses
- Prepare for “the hustle” when making transactions
  - Taxi drivers, people at markets, etc.
- Relaxed Time (la hora panameña, peruana)
TIPS and ADVICE: PICKPOCKETS

Be aware of your surroundings!

● Keep your belongings close and closed
● Don’t put anything in your back pockets
● Avoid large crowds
  ○ Or wear your backpack in the front
  ○ Fanny pack!
● 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
TIPS and ADVICE: BUDGET TRAVELING

- Think about getting a guide book/following a blog
  - Rick Steves
  - Lonely Planet
  - Young Adventuress
  - Nomadic Matt

- Research places to eat cheap and authentic food
  - TripAdvisor
  - Ask locals

- Save money by grocery shopping and cooking at home
QUESTIONS?

Please contact us with your questions and concerns!

- Study Abroad
  - ic-abroad@umich.edu
- Peace Corps
  - peace.corps@umich.edu