

# TRAVEL BASICS: LATIN AMERICA



# 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](#)

# Central America & The Caribbean



# South America



# AGENDA

1. Visas
2. Health and Safety
3. Packing
4. Transportation
5. Lodging
6. Phones and Banking
7. Tips/Advice
8. Personal Experiences



# VISAS

## 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.](#)

# VISAS

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





# HEALTH AND SAFETY



- 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](#)

# PACKING

## 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



# PACKING

## 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



# PACKING

## 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!

# TRANSPORTATION

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!

# TRANSPORTATION

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!



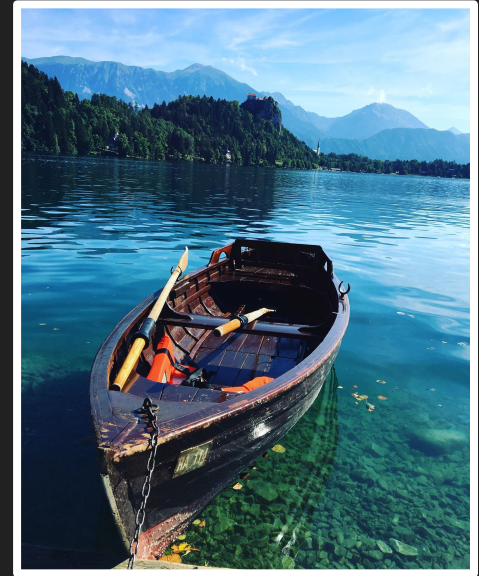
# LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

## 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



**HOSTELWORLD**

*MEET THE WORLD*

- 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

**Booking.com**

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



# H O S T E L S



# 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

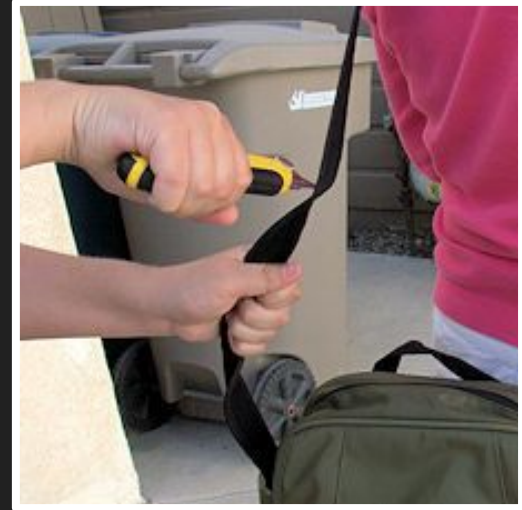
- Be aware of cultural norms/customs
  - Cultures across Central and South America vary!
  - Strong Catholic influence in parties and festivals (e.g. Semana Santa)
- Machismo is prevalent
- Vibrant indigenous communities
- Support locally owned businesses
- Prepare for “the hustle” when making transactions
  - 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](mailto:ic-abroad@umich.edu)
- Peace Corps
  - [peace.corps@umich.edu](mailto:peace.corps@umich.edu)



INTERNATIONAL CENTER  
GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION ABROAD