Travel Basics
SE & East Asia
Agenda

● The Basics
  ○ About the region, passport and visa requirements, finances, registering your trip

● Before You Go
  ○ Mental/physical health, safety considerations, communication options

● Trip Planning
  ○ Airfare, packing, Accommodations, Transportation

● While You're Abroad
  ○ Solo or group travel, tours, finances, food, health, drinking, hygiene, shopping

● Resources
  ○ Blogs, guide books, etc.

● Q&A
● Cultural heritage in Asia
  ○ Many nationalities, societies, and ethnic groups.
● The continent is more commonly divided into more natural geographic sub-regions
- China
  - Hong Kong
  - Macau
- Japan
- North Korea (US Travel Warning)
- South Korea
- Mongolia
- Taiwan
- Thailand
- Vietnam
- Cambodia
- Laos
- Myanmar (Burma)
- Brunei
- East Timor
- Malaysia
- Singapore
- Indonesia
- Philippines
Passport/Visas:
  ○ Apply at least 6-8 weeks in advance
  ○ Visa Services
    • Travisa, A Briggs
    • Some countries require a visa before leaving the US or entering the country, while others offer visa-on-arrival
    • Check requirements with US State Department: [https://travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov)
  ○ Make multiple copies of your passport to take with you and leave a copy with family
Before You Go: Recommended

- **International Student Identity Card**
  - “Required” if a special student airfare is purchased (per STA, $25)
  - Very few discounts in Asia
- **UM Travel Registry**
  - Register your travel with the U-M Travel Registry ([http://global.umich.edu/going-abroad/planning/registry/](http://global.umich.edu/going-abroad/planning/registry/)) so the University knows where you are in the case of an emergency (required for University-related travel)
- **Smart Traveler Enrollment Program**
  - Register with the U.S. Department of State for important updates ([https://step.state.gov/step/](https://step.state.gov/step/))
Before You Go - Finances

- Make sure your bank card can be used overseas
- Call your bank to notify them of your trip
- Visa and Mastercard are accepted at most ATMs
  - Look for HSBC or ANZ ATMs
- Be aware of ATM and foreign exchange fees
- Asia is still very much cash-based

Managing Money While Abroad

Featuring PNC BANK

Thursday, April 12
3:00 - 4:00 PM
International Center
Conference Room
Phones & Communication

- **Cell phones**
  - Make sure your phone is unlocked and can be used internationally
  - SIM cards are cheap (be sure to buy a card with some call time for emergencies)

- **International Calling / Messaging Applications**
  - WhatsApp, Line, Groupme, Viber, Skype, Wechat, KakaoTalk

- **Accessing WiFi**
  - Internet cafes, coffee shops, hostels, hotels etc.

- **Web Restrictions**
  - Consider a VPN

- **Translation apps or dictionaries**
Travel Health

- **Get immunizations necessary for travel**
  - Get immunizations necessary for travel
    - UHS Travel Health Clinic
    - Immunizations on arrival

- **Health Insurance**
  - UM Travel Abroad Health Insurance: http://uhs.umich.edu/tai
  - $1.15/day available for any person affiliated with U of M even if you are just traveling

- **Prescription Meds**
  - Do you have enough to last?
  - If you have a **medical condition**, be sure to talk to your doctor about handling situations abroad.
Travel Health Cont.

- **Country-specific health & safety advice**
  - [https://travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov)
  - [UHS Videos](https://travel.state.gov) (China and Southeast Asia)

- **Pack a simple first-aid kit**
  - Band-aids, gauze pads, medical/cloth tape
  - Neosporin, antiseptic wipes
  - Burn ointment - especially if travelling in SE Asia
  - Medication - Imodium, Pepto-Bismol tablets, Tylenol/Advil, etc.

- **Condoms**
- **Birth control**
- **Contact solution**
Personal Safety

- Petty theft (pickpocketing, bag-snatching, etc.)
- Money belts - pros and cons
- Illegal/private cabs
- Motorbike transportation
- Drugs and alcohol
- Scams
Feminine Hygiene

- Pads are widely available
- Tampons can be difficult to find, especially those with applicators
- Menstrual cup
- Birth control and Plan B availability depends on each country
Identities Abroad

- LGBTQ+: Check with the U-M Spectrum Center
- Views and practices differ in each country
  - Be culturally aware
  - Be mindful of all public displays of affection regardless of sexual orientation

 Identities Abroad

Learn about navigating your identities when traveling abroad

Save the dates

March 9, 12-1:30 PM
First-Gen Student Panel
2435 North Quad

March 16, 3-4:30 PM
Queer Student Panel
SSWB, Room 1636

March 29, 5:30-7 PM
Students of Color Panel
2435 North Quad
Trip Planning
STA Travel and Student Universe
- Offer student and youth (<26 years old) discounts

Flight aggregators
- Skyscanner, Momondo, and Kayak

Cheaper to fly out of Chicago or Toronto

Official airline websites sometimes have deals that aren’t available on other websites

Buy flights from in country airlines
- Ex: Thailand: NokAir, AirAsia, Thai Lion Air
Packing

- Depending on your trip length...
  - Suitcase vs. Hiking backpack
- **Pack light**
  - Quick-dry towel
  - Most toiletries can be purchased when you’re there
- Plug adaptors
- Be careful about shavers, hair straighteners, and hair dryers since the voltage is different
- Deodorant - it can be hard to find in Asia (especially stick)
- Sunscreen - it can be very expensive in Asia
- First-aid kit, medication, prescriptions
Packing

● Clothing
  ○ Pack for the climate/weather
    • Sometimes easier and cheaper to buy clothes at the country you will be staying in for weather appropriate fabrics and culturally polite clothing
  ○ Adhere to customs of countries you’re visiting
  ○ Comfortable shoes
  ○ Rubber flip flops/sandals for hostels
  ○ 1-2 dressy outfits
  ○ Limited shoe and clothing sizes in Asia (usually smaller)

● Electronics
● Extra memory cards
● Copies of important documents
When You’re There
Solo Travel vs. Group Travel

- Solo Travel
  - Pros
    - More independence
    - Easier to meet others
  - Cons
    - Can get lonely
    - Safety concerns

- Group Travel
  - Pros
    - Group activities
    - Safety in numbers
  - Cons
    - Group dynamic can become strained
    - Choosing activities
Cultural Norms to Be Aware of

Note: These apply to some countries in East and SE Asia but NOT all

- Line-cutting/jumping
- Spitting
- Being asked about relationship status
- Being asked about your salary
- No personal space
- Crowding, pushing, elbowing
- Ethnicity and nationality may not be differentiated
- Gift-giving and receiving
- Group meals and activities
- Bowing
Tour Packages

- Research group tours/experiences
  - Ethical concerns
  - Prices vary greatly
  - In SE Asia, many places offer the same tours, you do not need to commit immediately
    - Can book through your hostel or hotel
Finances Abroad

- Cash; credit/debit cards
- Currency exchange
- Call your bank and credit card company to advise them of your travel plans!
- Make sure the ATM can take your card
- Budgeting
Accommodation

- Accommodations
  - Hostels: [Hostelworld](https://www.hostelworld.com), [Hostels.com](https://www.hostels.com)
    - Great place to meet others if you’re traveling solo
  - [Booking.com](https://www.booking.com) and [AirBNB](https://www.airbnb.com) for longer stays
    - AirBNB is good if traveling in groups
- Booking hostels when you arrive in a new city
  - It is often cheaper to go in person than book online
    - If you prefer being prepared or are arriving late, book for one night and then considering cheaper options
- **Plan ahead** for holidays and festivals
Transportation

- Many modes of transport available, flying is the easiest but most expensive
  - Budget airlines
- Buses are popular for overland and cross-border travel in SE Asia
  - Some border crossings can be stressful
- Renting Motorbikes in SE Asia
  - Pros and Cons
- High-speed trains are available in China, Japan, and South Korea
  - Japan Rail Pass
- Uber and Grab
Health Abroad

- Health-care quality differs in countries and locations
  - Clinics in large cities are usually better than those in rural areas
- Be mindful of food, since sanitation differs (especially street food)
- Don’t drink the tap water (this applies to ice and fountain drinks as well)
- Protect yourself from mosquitoes (DDT or picardin for skin, can treat clothes with permethrin)
Food

- Local restaurants - check guidebooks for recommendations, ask hostel staff, or just wander around
- Avoid anything that is not piping hot, avoid produce unless you peel it yourself, DO NOT eat food from a place where live animals are nearby
- Night markets and street food are an important aspect of Asian culture
For vegetarians: Even if a dish doesn’t have meat, it may be cooked with stock made from other animal parts.

Many different parts of the animal are eaten (don’t eat nervous tissue e.g. brain).

Cheese and other dairy products may be difficult to find or expensive.

Sanitation differs.
Drinking Culture

- Alcohol in SE Asia is inexpensive if you are purchasing domestic
  - Imported beer and liquor will be very expensive
  - Fake alcohol can be prevalent (especially wine)
- No age requirement or ID check to buy alcohol in most countries
- Drinking is a social activity in a lot of Asia
  - Be aware of culture norms that surround this
The Bathroom Situation

- **ALWAYS** bring toilet paper/tissues
  - Widely available in convenience stores, supermarkets, kiosks, etc.
- Most public bathrooms are squat-style
Shopping

- Night markets are very popular
- Bargaining is a big part of the culture (except at brick-and-mortar stores)
- Western brand clothing tends to be more expensive
- Western chains are available: i.e. H&M, Forever 21, Zara, Nike, Adidas
- Be careful of counterfeits
- Not all sizes may be available
- European shoe sizing
- Bras
Colleen and Ali's Experiences
Travel Blogs

- Nomadic Matt
- Indie Traveller
- The Blonde Abroad
- Goats on the Road
- Adventurous Kate
In Case of Emergency…

- U-M Health & Safety Resources
- Safety Plan for Individual Travel
- Emergency Wallet Card
- Checklist for Students Going Abroad
- Make sure you put the local emergency (911) number into your phone. Some countries have “tourist police”.

If you’re traveling to a country on the UM Travel Warning list, you will need to provide a Safety Plan for Individual Travel to the university.
Join Us!

Travel Basics Workshop Series
Come learn tips on travelling though various world regions

**Latin America**
February 20
12-1 pm
The Connector
Room 1520

**Africa**
March 9
3-4 pm
Ford School of Public Policy
Room 1230

**Southeast/East Asia**
March 20
6-7 pm
The Connector
Room 1520

**Europe**
March 28
4-5 pm
The Connector
Room 1520