

LUTHER CENTER FOR GLOBAL LEARNING

Preparing for Departure

J-Term Ground Transportation Logistics

1. If your J-Term program is scheduled to depart from the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, you are responsible for making your own arrangements (at your expense) for transportation to/from the airport.
2. For a few programs, you may be based on campus for several days in January prior to departure or after return. In these cases, your program leaders will provide departure information for you.
3. If your J-Term program is scheduled to depart from the Chicago O'Hare International Airport, the Center for Global Learning has scheduled bus transport to/from Luther and the Chicago airport. If you choose to use the bus arranged by Luther, you will receive sign-up information via email in late November, and your student account will be billed in February.

Airline/Airport Logistics

1. You should anticipate arriving at the airport 2 ½ to 3 hours prior to the trip to go through group check in and security.
2. Make sure you have your passport with you—and easily available—when you arrive at the airport!
3. Because of airline luggage restrictions, you should plan on checking only one suitcase. Flights that are not part of a “continuous itinerary going to or from the US” have a 20 kilo suitcase limit (44 pounds). Many local flights also have a 20 kilo limit. You may carry on one additional small bag. Most airlines restrict items in carry-on luggage; the following items are not permitted: sharp items, such as razors, scissors, and nail files; containers of more than 3 ounces containing liquids, gels, and creams. **Note: You should make sure valuable items are placed in your carry-on bag—passport, tickets, prescription medicines, glasses, money, camera, electronics—and any items that will make the trip more enjoyable, such as books, a deck of cards, toothbrush and toothpaste, and a change of clothes in case you experience a delay, cancellation, or lost luggage.**
4. If you are interested in receiving frequent flyer miles for your journey, please make sure you are registered for the specific airline frequent flyer program in advance of the trip and provide the frequent flyer number at the check-in counter or at the gate.
5. For airline security purposes, you should not carry goods for others.
6. Once you arrive in a new country, you will need to clear immigration and customs. Be honest, serious, and direct in your responses.
7. Upon return to the U.S., you will need to go through immigration and customs. You are allowed to bring into the U.S. up to \$800 in duty-free items (you can bring back an amount over \$800, but it will most likely be taxed). You are only allowed to bring one liter of alcohol back to the U.S (if it is for your use or a gift) and you must be 21 years or older. If you intend to bring any food back into the U.S., you should review the list of acceptable products found online at www.cbp.gov.

Money Matters

1. Before you leave the U.S. on a trip, call your credit/debit card providers. Give them information on the location(s) of your trip and dates of travel. This will help prevent you from being “locked out” while using your cards abroad.
2. The most convenient method to make payment abroad is by cash or credit card. Check with your credit card provider to find out about any foreign transaction fees.
3. To obtain cash abroad, we encourage you to use ATM/cash/debit cards whenever possible. Reliable ATM machines are found virtually everywhere. Cash withdrawals, regardless of size, are exchanged based on the wholesale exchange rate, which is usually a few percentage points better than the rate at a local exchange counter. You should be aware, however, that your card may not work in every machine. It's a good idea to have various payment options with you (cash, credit/debit card, traveler's check), although each has its limitations:
 - a. **Cash:** It's not wise to carry around too much cash. Bring clean, crisp, new bills with you since many vendors may refuse older currency.
 - b. **Credit/debit cards:** Not accepted at every machine. Try going to a bank if you have problems. Check, in advance, about any differences in foreign transaction fees between your debit/credit cards and any differences in liability between the various cards if used for fraudulent purposes. Make sure you have your bank's contact phone number with you (not a 1-800 number since you may not be able to use this number abroad).
 - c. **Traveler's checks:** A good back up. However, traveler's checks are not accepted in many locations and they sometimes have large fees for cashing them.

4. Prior to departure, it is a good idea for you to check the currency exchange rate for your location. A reliable currency calculator is found online at: <http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>.
5. Because of growing concerns with identity theft, protect your debit card and pin number each time you use it. Only use ATMs that are reputable, well-maintained, and in well-lit locations. Use your free hand to cover the pin pad each time you enter your pin number.
6. If you are exchanging dollars for local currency, it is almost always cheaper to buy local currency in the host nation. You will also usually get the best rate if you convert local currency back to dollars before you leave the host nation.
7. We recommend that you always use a money belt for carrying your passport, money, credit and ATM cards, airline tickets, etc.

Preparing to Access Your Norse Mail While Abroad

1. Prior to departure, you should review your Google 2-Step Verification settings to make sure you will have access while abroad. If things are not working properly or if you have questions, contact the Technology Help Desk prior to departure.
2. The challenge of traveling abroad is that you may or may not have access to a cell phone provider, access to WiFi, or even access to a computer terminal. With this in mind, we suggest you review the Luther Information Technology Services discussion about 2-step verification: <https://www.luther.edu/helpdesk/guides/2-step-verification/>.

Sensible Travel Tips

1. Make sure you pack your prescription medications in your carry-on bag; bring along an extra supply in case you get delayed on your return. It's a good idea to bring a letter from a doctor describing any special medications, including the generic drug names. Finally, bring your own supply of cold and flu medications, headache remedies, etc.
2. In most countries around the world, the electrical voltage is 220 volts, not 120 volts as in the U.S. Most of you will need an adapter plug appropriate for the specific country. For those of you traveling to several countries, you may need multiple adapter plugs. Some of you may also have electronic equipment that requires a transformer. Look on the charging device; many already are dual voltage. For a list of adapter plug types and voltage specifications for various countries, visit: <http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets/>.
3. Your U.S. cell phone may or may not work abroad, depending on the type of phone and your phone plan. Cell phones abroad can be complicated and can result in unexpected charges.
4. Have the program leaders' emergency cell phone number with you, in case you need to contact the leaders.
5. Keep a list of hotel addresses and phone numbers with you at all times in case you get separated from the group.
6. Only use official taxis for travel. Make sure you have the destination address written in the language of the host country. Set the price before you enter the taxi.

Additional Useful Links

1. Register with the U.S. State Department before departure so updates from the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in the host nation will be sent directly to your e-mail address: <https://step.state.gov/step/>
2. Students and parents are encouraged to review the U.S. State Department's website, "Students Abroad," for a very helpful overview of health and safety considerations, along with general travel advice: <https://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en.html>.
3. Find information about traveler's health issues at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov> or call 1-800-232-4636 for public inquiries.
4. Additional resources are available on the Center for Global Learning website. The CGL website has a section of useful links: <http://www.luther.edu/global-learning/resources/>. The links are organized under the following categories: General Information; Opportunities Abroad; Health, Safety, & Insurance; Embassies & Consulates; Passports & Visas; Money Matters/Scholarships; Planning, Packing, & Travel; Publications, Reviews, & Social Networking; Sustainable Travel; American Students Abroad; Information for Specific Groups/Populations; Working Abroad; and Miscellaneous.
5. To gain insights into the culture of the countries you are visiting, visit CultureGrams, <http://online.culturegrams.com/world/index.php>. Simply select your region, country, and then download a concise 5-10 page report highlighting the history, culture, peoples, customs, and traditions of nearly 200 countries. (Free online access from on-campus computers.)