

Ecuador



Ecuador

<https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35761.htm>

Fact Sheet
August 10, 2022

U.S.-Ecuador Relations

The United States and Ecuador signed a Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Navigation and Commerce in 1839 and established full diplomatic relations in 1848. A U.S. Consul had served Guayaquil since 1825. In 1942, the Department of State elevated the U.S. Legation in Quito to the status of an embassy. The United States and Ecuador share a history of partnership and cooperation, with mutual interests in economic prosperity, democratic governance, regional security, and environmental sustainability and protection, among other areas. With a large American citizen resident population, the welfare, safety, and protection of U.S. citizens in Ecuador remain the highest priorities and mission of the Department of State.



U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield led the U.S. delegation to the May 2021 inauguration of President Guillermo Lasso. Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Quito in October 2021 in his first trip to South America. He met with President Lasso and officials of the Government of Ecuador, the National Assembly, business leaders, and civil society organizations. Secretary Blinken delivered remarks on Making Democracy Deliver for the Americas and discussed trade, economic, and migration issues, as well as narcotrafficking and security challenges,

demonstrating the commitment of the United States to enhancing the bilateral relationship. In May 2022, First Lady Dr. Jill Biden met with President Lasso, Ecuadorian First Lady Maria de Lourdes Alcivar de Lasso, and civil society organizations in Quito. She discussed environmental, humanitarian, and migration issues, as well as efforts to strengthen regional democracy.

The United States and Ecuador collaborate to address narco trafficking and the activities of illegal armed groups, particularly along Ecuador's northern border with Colombia. Our countries have signed several instruments and established programs to enhance counternarcotics and law enforcement cooperation. U.S.-Ecuadorian military relations remain strong, with U.S. offers of training, assistance, and the reestablishment of an Office of Security Cooperation at the U.S. Embassy in Quito. Additionally, the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs provides counternarcotics and counter-transnational organized crime capacity building assistance, totaling more than \$31 million in bilateral assistance since 2018.

A signatory of the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration at the 2022 Summit of the Americas, Ecuador was an original proponent and signatory to the Quito Process. Ecuador remains committed to assisting the social and economic integration of Venezuelan refugees in response to the political and humanitarian crises in Venezuela. Since the start of the Venezuelan migration crisis in 2017, the U.S. government has provided more than \$221 million in humanitarian and development assistance for the more than 500,000 Venezuelan refugees and migrants and their host communities in Ecuador.

Pandemic Response

After initially experiencing some of the worst COVID-19 infection and death rates anywhere in the world, Ecuador worked diligently to stabilize the health system and the effects of the virus on its population. Since coming into office, President Lasso's

government has implemented a successful national vaccination campaign. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States has stood in solidarity with the people of Ecuador by providing more than \$51.8 million in COVID assistance, in addition to donating two million doses of the Pfizer vaccine in July 2021. The United States provided medical and personal protective equipment; technical advice and funding to improve Ecuador's medical and public health systems; funds to purchase rapid test kits; help for refugees, migrants, and host communities; and assistance for economic reactivation. At the height of the pandemic, the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID) donated 250 life-saving ventilators and supported the Government of Ecuador's national vaccination campaign by helping to administer over 1.5 million vaccine doses, mostly to underserved populations in rural areas.

U.S. Assistance to Ecuador

U.S. assistance serves to strengthen the rule of law and civil society; increase government transparency; modernize government participation in capital markets and infrastructure development; promote broader access to economic opportunity for entrepreneurs (especially women); improve citizen security; counter illicit trafficking and transnational organized crime; fight corruption; combat gender-based violence; defend fundamental freedoms and human rights; promote academic exchanges and the teaching of English; conserve biodiversity; and mitigate the risk and impact of natural disasters. The United States also provides humanitarian assistance through international and local organizations to help Ecuador protect and provide services to refugees, migrants, and other vulnerable populations. Through USAID, the U.S. government provides food assistance, health services; personal protective equipment; water, sanitation, and hygiene services; as well as support for disaster risk reduction, humanitarian coordination, and information management during the pandemic.

The U.S. government also provides assistance to related to seascape conservation, illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUUF), ocean plastic pollution, sustainable

forests management, forest carbon sequestration, economic reactivation for marginalized populations, and renewable energy.

Coordination on enforcement efforts to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and plans for capacity building for Ecuadorian maritime inspectors continues between the United States and Ecuador. Through the State Department's Global Defense Reform Program, a U.S. advisor supports the Ministry of Defense's Joint Cyber Defense Command to provide cyber defense and policy advisory support. After signing a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Ecuador in 2019 to renew cooperation, USAID reestablished an in-country presence in 2020 for the first time since 2014. The two countries signed the bilateral Development Objective Grant Agreement (DOAG) that will invest \$62.5 million over five years in environmental, democracy, and governance programming.

Bilateral Economic Relations

The United States remains Ecuador's principal trading partner. Bilateral goods trade between the countries totaled more than \$13.1 billion in 2021. Major U.S. exports to Ecuador include petroleum products, machinery, computers and electronic equipment, chemicals and fertilizers, transportation equipment, and cereals and grains. U.S. imports from Ecuador include crude oil, shrimp and prawns, bananas and plantains, cocoa, and cut flowers (particularly roses). In August 2021, Ecuador re-signed the Convention on the Settlement of Investment Disputes between States and Nationals of Other States, also known as the ICSID Convention Ecuador and the United States signed a new Protocol on Trade Rules and Transparency in December 2020 – a limited-scope, four-chapter update to their 1990 Trade and Investment Council (TIC) Agreement.

The manufacturing, wholesale, and retail sectors lead direct investment by the United States in Ecuador.

In 2019, total U.S. foreign direct investment (stock) in Ecuador stood at \$619 million.

Ecuador has been fully dollarized since 2000. Ecuador negotiated a \$6.5 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) with the International Monetary Fund in 2020. President Lasso's government is implementing a comprehensive reform program aimed at modernizing the economy, expanding employment, and paving the way for strong, sustained, and equitable growth in the wake of the pandemic. These pro-prosperity reforms and collaborative relationships with the International Monetary Fund and World Bank strengthen the country's fiscal position and improve competitiveness.

Ecuador's Membership in International Organizations

Ecuador and the United States belong to several of the same international organizations, including the United Nations, Organization of American States, International Monetary Fund, Inter-American Development Bank, and World Trade Organization. Ecuador ended its participation in the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA) in 2018 and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) in 2019. Ecuador announced its withdrawal from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries in 2019. Ecuador joined the Alliance for Development in Democracy in June 2022. Ecuador was elected to serve on the United Nations Security Council beginning in 2023 for a one-year term.

Bilateral Representation

Principal U.S. embassy officials are listed in the Department's [Key Officers List](#). The United States maintains an embassy in Quito and a consulate general in Guayaquil, Ecuador. More information on the U.S. diplomatic presence in Ecuador can be found on [the website for the embassy and consulate](#). Principal U.S. Embassy officials are listed in the Department's Key Officers list.

Ecuador's embassy in the United States at 2535 15th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009 suffered substantial damage due to a fire in late 2017. Embassy operations continue presently out of 2101 L Street, N.W., Suite 440, Washington, DC 20037 (tel. 202-234-7200).

More information about Ecuador is available from the Department of State and other sources, some of which are listed here:

[CIA World Factbook Ecuador Page](#)

[U.S. Embassy](#)

[USAID Ecuador Page](#)

[History of U.S. Relations With Ecuador](#)

[Office of the U.S. Trade Representative Country Page](#)

[U.S. Census Bureau Foreign Trade Statistics](#)

[Export.gov International Offices Page](#)

[Library of Congress Country Studies](#)

[Travel Information](#)



The Overseas Security Advisory Council's Travel Safety Reference Guide

November 2011

In This Guide:

Introduction	P. 1
Pre-Departure	P. 1
Know Before You Go	P. 1
Packing	P. 1
Health	P. 2
During Your Trip	P. 2
Awareness	P. 2
Personal Conduct	P. 3
Electronics Security	P. 4
Logistics	P. 4
Lodging	P. 5
Preparing for the "what if" scenarios	P. 7
Resources	P. 8
About OSAC	P. 9

Introduction

Globalization has made overseas travel – be it for business, academia, charity, personal, or mission work – quite common. International travelers are exposed to many new experiences and phenomena and among these, certain risks. This guide offers international travelers information, tactics, techniques, and procedures to mitigate risks inherent to international travel.

OSAC acknowledges that every destination is unique and that no one resource can address all eventualities. Therefore, we have developed this reference in coordination with our constituents to inform the private sector of best practices for personnel safety abroad. The risks of international travel are no longer just tied to local or transnational crime. It is our hope that the enclosed recommendations will both encourage individuals to seek overseas opportunities and provide greater comfort and confidence for those traveling internationally.

Pre-Departure

Know Before You Go

- Register with the U.S. State Department's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#).
- Review the U.S. State Department's [country specific information](#) and OSAC's [country crime and safety reports](#).
- Do your homework. Visit country-specific websites for important information on your destination country.
- Understand the laws and currency exchange rates in your destination country.
- Be culturally aware; learn a few common phrases in the local language and the basics of the cultural values and norms.
- Get a map and study it. Identify potential hazards and safe havens; learn several routes to key places you will be staying/living/visiting.

Packing

- Pack your luggage wisely. Make sure to place any prohibited materials (scissors, files, other sharp objects) in your check-in luggage.
- Be sure to pack 2-3 day "survival items" in your carry-on bag. This includes: medicines and toiletries, an extra change of clothes (including undergarments), important documents, drinking water, snacks (e.g., Powerbars), and anything else you may want.
- Do not display company or other identifying logos on luggage. Place your pertinent contact information in a visible place inside each piece of luggage.
- Do not openly display your name tags on your luggage. Include only your name and contact number on your tags, and keep them covered or turn the paper over and write "see other side."
- Get a plain cover for your passport.

- Make out a will.
- Consider a privacy act waiver.
- Leave travel itinerary and contact information with family or friends; do not otherwise disclose.
- Consider getting a telephone calling card and a GSM (tri-band or “world”) cellular phone that allows access to most local cellular systems (and provides a single contact number). Depending on your situation, you may want to purchase a local phone or SIM card in country.
- Take out property insurance on necessary equipment (cameras, binoculars, laptops, etc.).
- Consider securing a new credit card with a low credit limit separate from existing credit cards; in the event of theft, your personal accounts will not be compromised.
- Notify your credit card company of your intent to travel; confirm credit limit and availability.

Health

- Make sure health insurance covers foreign medical providers and medical evacuation expenses.
- Take an extra pair of glasses; depending on the destination, contact lenses can be problematic.
- Visit a travel clinic, inform them of destination(s), and get any needed inoculations and medications.
- Get a dental cleaning and checkup if you had not recently had one.
- Prep and pack a travel med kit; some items you may want to include:
 - Anti-diarrheal medication
 - Antibiotics
 - Anti-malaria (if applicable)
 - Antihistamine and decongestant
 - Antacid and laxative
 - Anti-fungal/anti-bacterial and hydrocortisone cream
 - Anti-bacterial hand wipes/ hand sanitizer
 - Pain reliever/fever reducer, sleep aid
 - Gauze, bandages, and medical tape
 - Insect repellent with DEET 35%
 - Shaving razor, tweezers, manicure kits
 - Sunscreen and aloe
 - Thermometer

During Your Trip

Awareness

Situational Awareness is very important domestically but becomes critically important overseas in unfamiliar environments. Keep your head up, eyes and ears open, and listen to your intuition! Situational awareness can and should be practiced and will improve the more you do so. Focus on seeing and remembering everything around you. It will seem extremely arduous and time-consuming at first but will become increasingly easier as time passes and proficiency is gained. Your goal should be for these efforts to become habitual and completed sub-consciously. Some important practices are:

- Trust your instinct; if a place does not feel right, move to a safer location – immediately.
- Assess your emotional and physical strengths and limitations.
- Be attentive to how others perceive you; behave in an unprovocative manner that discourages unwanted attention.
- Familiarize yourself with your neighborhood and work environment.
- Use common sense. Beware of EVERYONE, including pickpockets, scam artists, etc.
- Remove name tags or convention badges when outside the venue.
- Pay attention to local media for any activities or events that might affect you.
- Be aware of surroundings, including the people, cars, and alleys nearby.

- Keep alert to potential trouble, and choose to avoid when possible. Trust your instincts.
- Educate yourself of any pending events (elections, demonstrations, anniversaries) that may cause civil disturbance, and avoid unnecessary risks.
- Establish a support network among your colleagues and when possible, embassy personnel.
- Inform yourself of the availability and reliability of local support services (police, security, medical, emergency, fire).
- Confirm (with your embassy) the procedures for you and your family in the event of a crisis or evacuation.
- Politely decline offers of food or drink from strangers.
- Accept beverages only in sealed containers; make sure there has been no tampering.

Personal Conduct

You can dress, behave, and move about in a manner that is respectful of local custom, but rest assured, YOU WILL NOT BLEND IN. Remember that whenever you travel anywhere, whether you realize it or not, you are representing yourself, your family, your organization, and your country. Your behavior and actions will be applied as a positive or negative impression of all that you represent. In many cultures, this will essentially make or break your ability to successfully function and interact in another culture. Always keep in mind the following:

- Behave maturely and in a manner befitting your status in the local society; insist on being treated with respect.
- Dress in a manner that is inoffensive to local cultural norms.
- Avoid clothing that shows your nationality or political views.
- Establish personal boundaries and act to protect them.
- Exercise additional caution when carrying and displaying valuable possessions (jewelry, phone, sunglasses, camera, etc.); what may be a simple, even disposable item to you, may be a sign of extreme affluence to another.
- Vary your patterns of life/behavior to be less predictable.
- Divide money among several pockets; if you carry a wallet, carry it in a front pocket.
- If you carry a purse, carry it close to your body. Do not set it down or leave it unattended.
- Take a patient and calm approach to ambiguity and conflict.
- Radiate confidence while walking in public places.
- Do not expect privacy, anywhere.
- Do not discuss personal, professional, or financial issues of your group or yourself; these can be used to exploit you and your group.
- Be cool when facing confrontation; focus on de-escalation and escape.
- Respect local sensitivities to photographing/videotaping, especially at airports, police, and government facilities.
- Carry required official identification with you at all times.
- Report any security incidents to your embassy or consulate (who will advise you of options including reporting to local authorities, prosecution, corrective measures, etc.).
- Maintain a low profile, especially in places where there may be hostility toward foreigners and/or citizens of your country; do not seek publicity.
- Avoid public expressions about local politics, religion, and other sensitive topics.
- Avoid being out alone late at night or after curfew.
- Stay alert.
- Be unpredictable.
- Carry yourself with confidence.
- Be aware of distractions.
- Watch for surveillance. If you see the same person/vehicle twice, it could be surveillance; if you see it three times, it probably is surveillance.

Electronics Security

- First and foremost: if you don't NEED it, don't bring it!
- If you need to bring a laptop and/or phone and have "clean" ones available, use them.
- Back up and then wipe (sanitize) your laptop, phone, and any other electronics to ensure that no sensitive or personal data is on them while [traveling](#) .
- Carry laptop in a protective sleeve in a backpack/purse/bag that does not shout "there's a computer in here."
- DO NOT EXPECT PRIVACY, ANYWHERE.
- Do not leave your electronic devices unattended.
- Do not use local computers to connect to your organization's secure network.
- Clear your temporary files, to include your temporary internet files, browser history, caches, and cookies after each use.
- Consider opening a new e-mail account (Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail, AOL, etc.) for use during your trip.
- Ensure you update your computer's security software (antivirus, firewall, etc.) and download any outstanding security patches for your operating system and key programs.
- Upon return, change all of your passwords for devices and accounts (including voicemail) used while traveling.

Logistics

Air Travel

Air travel can be incredibly convenient and frustrating at the same time. While traveling you are extremely vulnerable and must bear this in mind that a distracted individual is a prime target for all kinds of nefarious actions. You must control what you can and readily adapt to, as well as what you cannot (i.e., flight schedules/delays and time to clear security). Here are some key considerations:

- Wear comfortable, loose fitting clothing.
- Arrive at the airport in plenty of time (1.5 – 2 hours before departure).
- Move through passenger security immediately after ticketing and locate your departure gate.
- Stay with your bags at all times.
- Set your watch to local time at destination upon take off.
- Be careful about how much of your personal/business information you share with fellow passengers; they are still strangers.
- Limit intake of alcohol in flight, and drink plenty of water to counteract "jet lag". This will help limit stress and increase alertness.
- If possible, pre-arrange transport from the airport to your hotel. Consider paying the additional room rate for a hotel that provides shuttle service to and from the airport.
- Have your immigration and customs documents in order and available. A durable folder secured by a buckle or elastic band may be useful.

Ground Travel

Ground travel poses several risks to the traveler. Not only are you more vulnerable, but many places do not have the traffic laws, enforcement, infrastructure, or assistance that you are accustomed to. Be prepared. You will be in an unfamiliar environment and may have to contend with, among other things, dangerous road conditions; untrained or unlicensed drivers; drivers operating under the influence of alcohol and/or narcotics; vehicles that are poorly maintained and therefore hazardous, police and/or criminal checkpoints or roadblocks, and others with malicious intentions. Some recommendations for ground travel are:

- Use a common vehicle model (local taxis may be a good indicator). If you rent, remove any markings that identify vehicle as a rental.
- If you have to drive, always leave a path for escape when you stop (at a light, stop sign, cross-walk, etc.).
- Park in a manner that expedites your departure.
- Carry a cell phone, first aid kit, maps, flashlight, and official documents in your vehicle.
- Keep the vehicle windows rolled up and the doors locked.
- Use the seat belts.
- Be alert to scam artists and carjackers while stopped in traffic.
- Understand the proper local procedures should you be involved in or witness a traffic accident. In some locales, stopping for an accident can put your life at risk.
- Only take official, licensed taxis; note the license plate number of taxi and write it down.
- Avoid getting into a taxi already occupied by others. If necessary, pay extra for a single fare. Negotiate a price before getting in taxi. Have money ready to pay in appropriate denominations.
- Take a seat on a bus or train that allows you to observe fellow passengers but does not preclude options to change seats if necessary.

Lodging

At the Hotel

For most destinations you travel to (in addition to being an obvious foreigner), you will be considered wealthy and a prime target. You should not consider a hotel a complete safe haven, there are still many threats and you are potentially very vulnerable at them. Some important considerations:

- Use reputable hotels, hostels, or boarding houses; your safety is worth any added cost.
- Remind hotel staff to not give out your room number.
- Meet visitors in the lobby; avoid entertaining strangers in your room.
- Take a walk around the hotel facilities to familiarize yourself with your environment. Are hotel personnel located on each floor? Are they in uniform? Do they display any identification? Who else has access to your floor?
- Ensure the phone in your room works. Call the front desk.
- Inspect the room carefully; look under the bed, in the showers and closets.
- Ensure door and window locks are working. Do not forget the sliding glass door, if the room has one.
- Ensure the door has a peephole and chain lock.
- Avoid ground floor rooms at the hotel. Third through fifth floors are normally desirable (harder to break into, but still accessible to firefighting equipment – where available).
- Read the safety instructions in your hotel room. Familiarize yourself with hotel emergency exits and fire extinguishers.
- Count the doors between your room and nearest emergency exit (in case of fire or blackout). Rehearse your escape plan.
- Keep all hotel doors locked with a dead bolt or chain at all times (do not forget the sliding glass door and windows).
- Consider traveling with a rubber door stop, smoke detector, and motion detector.
- Identify your visitor before you open the door.
- If you doubt room delivery, check with the front desk before opening the door.
- If you are out of your room, leave television/radio on at high volume. Place a “do not disturb” sign outside door.
- Do not leave sensitive documents or valuables visible and unattended in the room.
- Keep your laptop out of sight, in a safe, or in a locked suitcase. You may wish to use a laptop cable lock to secure your laptop to a window frame or bathroom plumbing.

- Keep your room number to yourself. If your room key is numbered or has your room number on a key holder, keep it out of sight. If a hotel clerk announces your room number loud enough for others to hear, ask for a new room.
- If you leave the hotel, carry the hotel business card with you; it may come in handy with a taxi driver who does not speak your language.

Residential

When residing overseas, it is critically important to understand the threat environment in which you will be living. Take the time to reach out to the resources available, including security professionals in your organization, the local embassy or consulate, and the appropriate crime and safety reports. Here are some security measures you might want to consider:

- Avoid housing on single-entry streets with a dead end or cul-de-sac.
- Housing near multiple intersections can be beneficial.
- Ensure the sound, secure structure of your residence.
- Strictly control access to and distribution of keys.
- Install adequate lighting, window grilles, alarm systems, and perimeter walls as necessary.
- Establish access procedures for strangers and visitors.
- Hire trained guards and night patrols; periodically check-up on guards.
- Set-up a safe room in your house; consider adding additional locks
- Establish rapport with neighbors. Is there a “neighborhood watch” program?
- Seek guidance from local colleagues or expatriates who have insight into local housing arrangements.
- Ensure adequate communications (telephone, radio, cell phone) with local colleagues, authorities, and your Embassy.
- Install a back-up generator and/or solar panels.
- Set aside emergency supplies (food, water, medicine, fuel, etc.).
- Install smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and carbon monoxide monitors, as appropriate.
- Avoid sleeping with the windows open or unlocked.
- Speak on the phone inside, somewhere that is and away from windows (through which you can be seen and heard).
- Ensure all windows have treatments that can prevent external observation.
- Lock up items, such as ladders and hand-tools, which could be used to facilitate forced entry.
- Store emergency funds in multiple places around the house.
- Keep a “go-bag” with clothes, water, and food (Powerbars, etc.) for three days packed and ready at all times. Keep copies of important documents and some emergency funds with the bag. Keep other necessary items (medications, etc.) in a centralized place for easy placement into bag. Key items include:
 - Documentation
 - Copies of all key documentation
 - Passport and/or national ID
 - Driver’s License
 - Health Insurance Card
 - Communication
 - Mobile phone – including a charger and extra battery
 - Work and emergency contact lists
 - Satellite Phone (if available)
 - GPS devise (if available)
 - Food and water
 - Water bottle
 - Purification tablets
 - Energy bars / dried fruit / nuts

- Other essentials
 - Cash (USD and local currency)
 - Full change of clothing
 - Rain jacket
 - Sweater
 - Walking shoes or boots (with heel and closed toe)
 - Insect repellent
 - Matches (ideally windproof and waterproof)
 - Flashlight (with extra batteries)
 - Medical/first aid kit
 - Sun screen
 - Sunglasses
 - Toiletries
 - Toilet paper
- Extended items
 - Sleeping bag or blanket
 - Mosquito net

Preparation for the “what if” scenarios

If You Become a Victim

Despite all of your efforts to reduce exposure to risks and to avoid threats, you may still become the victim of a crime or critical event. Following are some general response strategies:

- Remain calm and alert.
- Carefully note details of the environment around you (license plate number, distinguishing features, accents, clothing, etc.).
- First, try to defuse the situation. Culturally appropriate greetings or humor may reduce tensions.
- If an assailant demands property, give it up.
- You can create a timely diversion by tossing your wallet, watch, etc. to the ground in the opposite direction you choose to flee.
- Against overwhelming odds (weapons, multiple assailants) try reasoning, cajoling, begging, or any psychological ploy.
- If someone tries to grab you, make a scene and fight; kick, punch, claw, scratch, and grab as if your life depends on it, it very well could.
- If you feel your life is endangered and you decide to physically resist, commit to the decision with every fiber of your being; turn fear into fury.
- Report any incident your embassy.
- Seek support for post-traumatic stress (even if you exhibit no symptoms).

Hijacking/Kidnapping

- You may be targeted for kidnapping. As discussed previously, when traveling, you represent yourself, your family, your organization, and your homeland (or perceived homeland). You may be targeted due to any of these affiliations, or you may simply just end up in the wrong place at the wrong time. Because abduction situations vary greatly, the following considerations should be applied based on one’s best judgment at the time:
 - Know the “ransom” policy of your government. The United States of America will not pay a ransom.
 - The greatest risk of physical harm exists at the point of capture and during a rescue attempt or upon release.

- If you are going to resist at the point of capture, do so as if your life depends on it; it most probably does.
- Remain calm and alert; exert control on your emotions and behavior.
- Humanize yourself, quickly and continually.
- Be passively cooperative, but maintain your dignity.
- Assume an inconspicuous posture and avoid direct eye contact with captors.
- Avoid resistance, belligerence, or threatening movements.
- Make reasonable, low-key requests for personal comforts (bathroom breaks, a blanket, exercise, books to read, etc.)
- If questioned, keep answers short; volunteer nothing.
- As a captive situation draws out, try to establish some rapport with your captors.
- Avoid discussing contentious issues (politics, religion, ethnicity, etc.)
- Establish a daily regimen to maintain your body physically and mentally.
- Eat what your captors provide. Avoid alcohol.
- Keep a positive, hopeful attitude.
- Attempt to escape only after weighing the risks and when you are certain to succeed.

Resources

U.S. Department of State and OSAC

- Overseas Security Advisory Council: www.osac.gov
 - Country Crime and Safety Reports: www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReports.aspx?cid=2
- Visit www.travel.state.gov for security advisories and other travel guidance
 - Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP): www.travel.state.gov/step
 - Country Specific Information: www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4965.html
 - U.S. State Department's role in a crisis: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1212.html

World Factbook

- CIA World Factbook: www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html

Study Abroad

- To get the latest in education abroad security information and training, go to www.globalscholar.us
- U.S. State Department Students Abroad website: www.studentsabroad.state.gov
- NAFSA (Association of International Educators) and The Forum on Education Abroad: <http://nafsa.org/> <http://www.forumea.org/>

Weather

- Review the climate and weather at your point of destination and/or any layover cities: www.weather.com

Travel Medicine/Health

- Centers for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov/travel
- World Health Organization: www.who.int/ith

About OSAC

OSAC's Commitment

The Overseas Security Advisory Council is committed to providing the American private sector with customer service of the highest standard. As OSAC is a joint venture with the private sector, we strive to maintain standards equal to or surpassing those provided by private industry. OSAC activities directly correspond to requests from the private sector.

OSAC has received exceptional support for its initiatives from the chief executive officers and corporate security directors of many of the largest international corporations in the United States. The U.S. State Department and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security recognize the need in OSAC's goal to support the U.S. private sector by continuing to develop an effective and cost-efficient security information and communication network that will provide the private sector with the tools needed to cope with security-related issues in the foreign environment. OSAC's unique charter and continued success serve as an example of the benefits of mutual cooperation.

Mission

The U.S. State Department's Overseas Security Advisory Council (Council) is established to promote security cooperation between American private sector interests worldwide (Private Sector) and the U.S. Department of State.

The objectives of the Council, as outlined in its Charter, are:

- To establish continuing liaison and to provide for operational security cooperation between State Department security functions and the Private Sector.
- To provide for regular and timely interchange of information between the Private Sector and the State Department concerning developments in the overseas security environment.
- To recommend methods and provide material for coordinating security planning and implementation of security programs.
- To recommend methods to protect the competitiveness of American businesses operating worldwide.

For more information and to join the Overseas Security Advisory Council, please visit www.osac.gov.

This document is a compilation of constituent and OSAC efforts and is meant to serve as a reference guide for private sector best practices. OSAC wishes to thank all of our constituents who generously provided their input and assistance. A special thank you to Michael O'Neil, Director of Global Safety and Security, Save the Children International, whose contributions were vital and provided the foundation for this reference guide.



www.osac.gov

TRAVEL SAFETY GUIDE FOR STUDY ABROAD

If you become the victim of a crime, seek medical help if necessary, then immediately contact:

- the local police,
- your home nation's diplomacy or consular office
- your International Programs Office Director

If you have a medical emergency, seek immediate care, then contact:

- your host family/program director/international office at host institution
- IPO
- your family

PERSONAL SAFETY

- 🌐 Do - A thorough medical and dental check-up before departure.
- 🌐 Do - Travel with limited cash and one credit card keeping cash in more than one place.
- 🌐 Do - Use official currency outlets and use caution at ATM machines so as not to be a target for thieves. Make sure your card works abroad and notify your bank and credit card companies that you will be out of the country.
- 🌐 Do - Lock personal possessions and valuables in the hotel or room safe or use hotel security.
- 🌐 Do- Use a money belt rather than a purse. If you use a handbag, keep it close to the body. Wear backpacks in front.
- 🌐 Do - Maintain a security awareness of items on your person - i.e.: purse, wallet, keys, money and cell phones
- 🌐 Do - If you are sexually harassed, ignore the proposition and continue on your way.
- 🌐 Do not - Open your hotel room door for anyone not expected or known or does not have an official identification.
- 🌐 Do not - Wear expensive looking jewelry. Remember that thieves may not know the difference between pieces of real and costume jewelry.
- 🌐 Do not - Use ATM machines at night unless the area is open and well lit.
- 🌐 Do not - Walk in low-lighted areas without being surrounded by people and trust your instincts if something seems amiss, return to a safer surrounding, such as a hotel.
- 🌐 Do not - Walk, drive or travel alone and be aware of your surroundings when using public transportation, elevators or restrooms.

Travel Safety Pocket Guide

“Remember that no list can contemplate every possible “do” and “don’t” on safety issues. Every situation is unique. Be careful, don’t rush, think before you act, stay in a group whenever possible, and always use your own best judgment in any given circumstance.”

TRAVEL SAFETY

- 🌐 Do – Leave copy of travel itinerary with two or more known trusted people.
- 🌐 Do – Promise to call or email relatives or friends periodically.
- 🌐 Do – Dress according to the social and cultural norms in each country.
- 🌐 Do – Exclude titles, organization names or unnecessary data on luggage tags.
- 🌐 Do – Keep luggage near by and in view at all times and pack a small flashlight.
- 🌐 Do – Have alternative plans for unexpected events during traveling, keeping necessary items in your carry-on.
- 🌐 Do – Create and have handy detailed maps.
- 🌐 Do – Ask about surrounding and problem areas you may have to travel through. Check these sites:
 - **U.S. State Department: <http://www.state.gov/travel/>**
 - **<https://step.state.gov/>**
 - **<http://www.traveldocs.com/>**
- 🌐 Do – Be aware of your surroundings – not to be lulled with a false sense of security.
- 🌐 Do – Keep advised, via local media, of the current security situations in the area.
- 🌐 Do – Use main entrance of hotels and other buildings.
- 🌐 Do – Use all security locking devices when in your room and keep your room key in your pocket.
- 🌐 Do – Know the emergency number to call where you will be.
- 🌐 Do – Figure out how you will communicate: SIM card? App? Current phone number? What will work in an emergency?
- 🌐 Do – Have a backup plan if relying on your phone for directions or information. Be prepared in case you lose it.
- 🌐 Do – Research and know the laws of your host country. Ignorance is not an excuse.
Be aware of what transportation is official and if using ride shares (Uber/Lyft), verify your ride and driver before entering car.
- 🌐 Do – Consider buying RFID blockers to protect cards from identity theft.

FIRE SAFETY

- **www.firesafetyfoundation.org**
- 🌐 Do – Acquaint yourself with all hotel/residence hall/ etc. emergency procedures and locate all emergency exits nearest you.
- 🌐 Do – Ask about safety measures such as, fire alarms, evacuation procedures and if windows will open.
- 🌐 Do – Call fire department direct if fire occurs then call hotel/residence hall management.
- 🌐 Do – Feel door with palm of hand, if hot don’t open if not try to escape to nearest stairway exit-not elevator.
- 🌐 Do – Stay in room and wait for help when in doubt on what to do and DO NOT PANIC or DO NOT JUMP.
- 🌐 Do – Keep everything wet if you stay in room stuffing door cracks with wet sheets and towels.
- 🌐 Do – Fill the tub with water and douse the door and walls if you stay in room.

LINFIELD UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS IDST 031 SYLLABUS; 2024-25 Academic Year

IDST 031: Intercultural Communication: Pre-Departure, Experiences Abroad, and Re-entry (S/U; 1 credit)

Note: *Students do not register for this course. It will appear on your transcript after you return from your program and attend the re-entry session. IPO then submits the grades to the Registrar to post. Please read the information below which explains the details.*

Course Objective:

This three-part course, required of all semester abroad participants, is designed to prepare you for your semester abroad program, reflect on your experiences while you are abroad and challenge you to think about your encounter with your own culture/country upon returning home. Studies have shown that students who undergo a well-designed orientation program tend to have a higher probability of success when they encounter a cross-cultural conflict or difficulty or experience culture shock. This applies both to international students who study in the United States and American students preparing to study abroad. Some may think that the term “culture shock” is overplayed in some circles, but rest assured that just about everyone will face some level of stress and anxiety when placed in a cultural environment different than their own. The objective is to be able to identify and recognize the symptoms and be ready to cope with the stress so that the experience abroad will turn out to be a rewarding one.

The International Programs Office (IPO) will provide you with cross-cultural material, specific assignments and readings in order to satisfactorily fulfill this one-credit course.

This companion course to the actual on-site study will allow you to identify, examine and explore your personal objectives for undertaking the study. Linfield University has also identified some of the objectives and learning outcomes expected of all students who study abroad.

LEARNING OUTCOMES EXPECTED OF SEMESTER/YEAR ABROAD PARTICIPANTS:

At the end of the semester or year of participation in a Linfield-administered program, participants must be able to demonstrate the following:

- Language acquisition: participants must meet a desired level of proficiency in their language of study. This will be determined through a pre and post test instrument specifically designed and administered by the Global Languages & Cultural Studies. In some cases, the GLCS faculty will also conduct mid-year evaluations of language proficiency for their majors.
- Ability to adapt and be successful in a culturally (and systemically) different educational environment.
- Ability to see and articulate similarities and differences between your own country/culture and the culture of your host country
- Ability to recognize, synthesize and articulate the cultural differences, norms, mores, habits and lifestyles of families in your host country compared with your own.

- Ability to utilize experiences abroad for (international) career building: participants should be able to write a succinct paragraph to this effect to be included in their revised resume.
- Have the skills to be more self-confident, more tolerant and flexible and less reliant on others.

Assessment tools:

- Pre and post language tests, as well as mid-year evaluations **for year-long language majors.**
- Coursework and final grades
- Mid-Semester assignment
- Returnee questionnaire and evaluation
- Re-entry discussion and assignment

1. Pre-Departure Preparation:

A pre and a post orientation assignment will accompany a day and a half of cross-cultural orientation session (normally held in mid-March of each year), required of all participants. The pre-orientation assignment will be emailed to you after you have been accepted into the program and 1-2 weeks before orientation. It will be due the first day of orientation. The mandatory day and a half orientation session will include general discussion and presentation of various cross-cultural topics as well as information about the specific country of your destination. A post orientation assignment will allow you to summarize your thoughts about what you have gained from the sessions.

2. Your Experiences Abroad:

While you are abroad, we will send you a mid-semester assignment that is designed to reflect on your experience and to make comparisons across cultures, your own as well as the one you are experiencing in the host country. You are required to submit your reactions via email to ipo@linfield.edu. In completing this on-site mid-semester assessment, you should be aware that IPO will post select entries on the Linfield website so that others in the community would also benefit from your experience abroad.

Mid-Semester Assessment

Please respond to the question/assignment below, with 2-3 thoughtful paragraphs.

- Identify someone from your host country (such as a roommate, a classmate, a member of your host family, a clerk at a local store, a program assistant at the study center, someone you met at the study center) and conduct an interview. Write 2-3 paragraphs to report your findings on these salient points (*make up your own questions to address these points*):
 - What surprised you the most about the lifestyles, mores, norms and habits of the person you interviewed compared to yours or people you encounter with back home?
 - What are (cultural) similarities and differences you observed or learned (their preferences, tastes, outlook, values) between the person you interviewed and you?
 - How did the interview experience and what you learned changed your initial perceptions of the host country?

- At the end of your report, include the name(first name only) of the person you interviewed, who they are and the date of the interview.

At the conclusion of your study abroad program, you will be asked to complete a “study abroad returnee” assessment of your learning experiences.

3. *Returning home:*

Studies have shown (and the Linfield experience has confirmed) that study abroad returnees often experience some level of anxiety about returning home and getting back to their normal routine after spending some time (semester or year) living in another culture. Most feel the value of sharing these feelings with fellow students who have had similar experiences. Hence, we have developed a re-entry workshop to provide for this discussion. For the final part of this course, you will be required to attend one re-entry session held each term. The estimated dates for this session are provided below, along with information about the class meeting.

Grading:

You will receive a passing grade for this course once you have satisfactorily completed all assignments associated with the three segments to this course: pre-departure, experience abroad, returning home.

Mandatory Semester Abroad Orientation

- ↗ Attend the **mandatory** study abroad orientation sessions listed below. **Absences for any reason are not allowed. For all students:**
 - Friday, March 15, 2024 (from 3:30 pm – 6:00 pm); Jonasson Hall
 - Saturday, March 16, 2024 (from 8:30 am – 2:00 pm); Jonasson Hall
 - Country specific sessions, various locations, will be arranged separately

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Due Dates Fall 2024 Programs</u>	<u>Due Dates Spring 2025 Programs</u>
Pre-orientation Assignments	March 15, 2024	March 15, 2024
Post-orientation Review	March 22, 2024	March 22, 2024
Mid-semester assignment: Experiences Abroad	Questions sent by our office for responses. Select entries will be posted on the IPO website and Linfield’s Digital Commons website.	
Returnee Assessment/Questionnaire	Within 2 weeks of the end of your program.	
Reentry Class	Feb./March, 2025	Sept./Oct, 2025

Relevant texts:

These reference materials are available in Nicholson Library. Use these materials as a background to complete your assignments for this course.

Culture Shock publication for all destinations, published by Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company, Portland Oregon. Similar publications are also available through Lonely Planet Publications.

Students with documented disabilities who may need accommodation, who have any emergency medical information of which IPO should be informed, or require special arrangements in order to **fully** participate in the abroad program or in the event of a necessary evacuation from the study abroad site, should meet with a staff member in IPO as early in the process as possible, no later than a week after receiving the acceptance letter.

Students who have been accepted to participate in a semester/year study abroad program are expected to adhere to the college policy on academic honesty, as published in the Linfield College catalogue, in fulfilling the requirements of this course and in all the courses they would be taking while abroad.

2/24

Dates: August 14th- December 19th, 2024

QUITO CALENDAR FALL, 2024

Application deadline: June 1st, 2024

Wednesday, August 14th	Recommended arrival date
Friday, August 16th	Orientation for international students
Monday, August 19 th	Classes start
Tuesday, August 27 th	Last day to add/drop classes
Friday, November 15th	Last day to withdraw from a class. A "W" will show on transcript
Saturday, October 5 th to Sunday, October 13th	Mid-semester break
Friday, November 1 st to Monday, November 4th	National Holiday
Monday, November 18th	Registration begins for spring 2025 (AY students)
Friday, December 6th	National Holiday (Fundación de Quito)
Monday, December 9th	Last day of classes
Wednesday, Dec. 11th to Wednesday Dec. 18th	Final exams
Thursday, December 19th	Recommended departure date

These are the dates for Spring 2025:

Wednesday, January 8th	Recommended arrival date
Tuesday, May 13th	Recommended departure date

STUDENT BUDGET – ECUADOR (Quito) 24-25

Keep in mind if you are a year-long student, that you are responsible for paying for housing and meals during winter vacation, which is usually a few weeks between semesters. Students often use this time to travel.

The following figures are estimates based on students' budgets from last year. They are only estimates and vary widely according to the individual. It is important to remember that not all expenses are included! Ecuador uses the US dollar.

Food	\$2250
Transportation (local)	\$137.5-150
Independent travel	\$1825 (depends on vacation plans)
Books	\$0
Phone	\$0
Postage	\$0 (postage is extremely slow, not recommended)
Gifts	\$287.5
Entertainment	\$175
Other	\$125

Total estimated cost: \$2750-3250

BANKING:

Ecuador uses the US dollar so there is no need to exchange currency. Make sure to carry lots of change for the buses and small bills (1s and 5s) because most vendors will not have change for large bills.

The easiest method for obtaining funds is to use an internationally recognized ATM card – such as PLUS or CIRRUS – for cash withdrawals. You will need to get a pin number from your bank, and you will probably be able to withdraw money only from checking accounts, not savings accounts. You may be able to get a cash advance from your checking account at certain banks with only a minor fee. **Be sure to check with your bank here at home. Have a back-up plan in case your card does not work. ATM's are not usually available outside of cities.**

Another practical solution to international banking is a VISA credit or debit card. You can use the card to charge expenses in most stores and hotels in the cities. You can also get cash advances at exchange windows of some banks. Be aware, however, that there is often a fee for the advance plus interest charges that begin immediately after withdrawal.

It is also advisable to photocopy the backs of all your ATM/credit cards and keep that with a photocopy of your passport. If you lose any of your cards, you will have the phone numbers to call the companies.

QUITO, ECUADOR STUDENT GUIDE

Edited by Heather McNutt-Kaestner

Weather

Ecuador has two seasons: rainy and dry. The rainy season, characterized by afternoon precipitation, lasts from November until May. In Quito, you can expect a pattern of 60F early mornings, heating up to 80F afternoons, and cooling down to 50F in the evening. In the rainy season, mornings are often clear, followed by rain in the afternoon. It's best to carry a rain jacket or umbrella at all times. It's much the same for Cumbayá, the valley where USFQ is located, except that it's consistently hotter there. Ecuador is at the equator, and Quito is at high elevation, meaning the sun is *very strong*. UV Index levels can be more than double the official level of danger. Wear sunscreen.

Clothes to bring

The USFQ students know how expensive their school is, and they don't mind showing it. They are always dressed up; they would never wear pajamas or sweats to class. Don't bother trying to look like the Ecuadorian students – you are going to stand out as a foreigner no matter what you do. Accept it and wear whatever you feel comfortable in (within limits; something as informal as pajamas would be considered rude). Take note, though: *everyone* wears pants. You will see almost no shorts or skirts and only dresses on some occasions. I recommend jeans, t-shirts, and tennis shoes/lace up shoes, and bringing a rain jacket every day for the afternoon. The general public in Quito dresses somewhat conservatively (always pants and generally people look very put together) however that does not always apply for USFQ students. Don't be afraid to wear what you feel comfortable in/dress to your style though be careful to be more conservative for example when riding the buses in the city.

Bring close-toed shoes for your everyday wear. The streets are very dirty and uneven. You will almost never wear sandals. In addition, note that almost no one wears sandals in Quito (they are more common in Cumbayá due to the hotter temperature). You're not likely to experience weather colder than 50F so you don't need super warm clothing. Keep in mind that Ecuadorian houses don't generally have heating, though – bring warm pajamas! The coast is hot – about 90F every day – so that's one place where shorts are acceptable. You'll want flip flops there (you'll want flip flops for all the hostel showers you'll be using, too). It can also be considered rude if you don't wear shoes or slippers in the house, so bring something you are comfortable slipping on inside. Bring your swimsuit.

Don't plan on buying clothes when you get here. Clothes are imported and heavily taxed, making them expensive enough that people actually bring back suitcases of used clothes to sell when they visit the US. The cheaper ones are not cute enough to wear. Trust me. Try to bring everything you'll need, but don't over pack. (an extra checked bag is too much!) My method was to pack two weeks' worth of clothes and wash them a couple times a month.

Your laundry may very well be done by hand. This means scrubbing, which will wear down clothing. Pack accordingly.

Non-clothes to bring

You can buy most everything you need once you get to Ecuador. You *can*. However, I recommend bringing everything with you so you don't have to be worrying about finding shampoo when you're still figuring out your class schedule and how to get to the university. While it's relatively easy to find major brands here in Ecuador shampoo and these sorts of toiletries are significantly more expensive in Ecuador than in the states. I brought all my toiletries and school supplies and did not regret it one bit. Bring basic medications like Advil, cold medicine, and Imodium, but these are also cheap to buy in Ecuador. Don't forget to bring gifts for your host family – I recommend skipping the coffee table books and giving them things like local chocolates, tea, jam, and other things that can be enjoyed and not take up space later. Bring a backpack – ideally one you can use for school during the week and for trips on the weekends. Also consider bringing journals/folders or other simple school supplies as they can be more expensive here and of lesser quality.

Consider bringing a Lonely Planet or other type of guidebook. *Bring your laptop but keep it at your host family's house.* You absolutely need it for assignments, but whenever you go outside you have to be comfortable with potentially being robbed of whatever you're carrying. Don't risk the laptop. Definitely don't use a laptop bag, either. USFQ has computer labs if you need them.

I recommend putting aside about \$2,000 or \$3,000 for your time in Ecuador – most of that for travel. BRING SMALL CHANGE. Seriously, this cannot be stressed enough. No one takes 20s in Ecuador. I brought \$200 in ones with me and it was very helpful. I also would recommend bringing some 5s and 10s so that you don't have to worry about using the ATM (although there are plenty) and carrying larger sums of money on you until you are more comfortable. I also brought rolls of quarters, which I highly recommend – each bus ride is 25 cents and you'll be taking about 1-3 buses a day to get to school. I brought about 5 rolls of quarters and they lasted me the entire time and were a complete life-saver. By the way, congratulations! Ecuador uses US money. No exchanging needed!

Bring your debit card; make sure to tell the company where you're going ahead of time so the card doesn't get blocked. I recommend using the ATMs (called *cajeros*) at Banco Pichincha right across from the university. Always use the ATMs inside the bank, you are much more vulnerable when using the outside ATMs. The ones in Rio Coca bus station are sketchy and likely to attract thieves. If you do decide to bring a credit card, know that you will not be able to use it to remove money from the ATMs without your pin number, so you will only be able to use it at the local super markets and in medical emergencies.

Passport photocopies. Leave one with your parents in the United States and bring at least 4 for yourself. Bring a copy to leave at your host family's house, a copy to register your visa, a copy to get a school ID, and a copy to carry with you at all times. These should all be in color, by the way. Never take your actual passport out of your host family's house unless absolutely necessary. If you have any medical concerns, bring all the medication you will need during that time (i.e. inhalers, birth control-though that can typically be found, allergy medications). Antibiotics and other pain medications can be found fairly easily in a pharmacy, but in some cases you will need a prescription to purchase them. It's better to bring things like Ibuprofen with you just in case.

What NOT to bring

- Hiking boots, unless you're serious about doing lots of hiking while you're here.

- ❑ Towels. (although I would recommend one, thin light one if you have it. Nice for trips, but you likely won't have luggage space to bring it home.
- ❑ Electrical adapters; Ecuador has the same voltage.
- ❑ Too many clothes. Do you *really* need that much stuff? Remember you have to lug it all back, plus everything you buy, at the end of the semester. I suggest a diverse but small wardrobe that you are comfortable wearing for the duration of the semester.

Traveling

Arrange your schedule so that you don't have classes on Mondays. Trust me on this; you're going to want to travel over the weekend. Travel is extremely cheap in Ecuador – buses cost about a dollar or two per hour. Be very careful with your belongings and ALWAYS keep them on your lap or at your feet (lap is better). Always try to travel with a friend. Try hostelworld.com for advance hostel bookings. Some places to check out:

- ❑ Papallacta. It's only 1-2 hours away from Quito and has nice hot springs, much pricier, but worth it.
- ❑ Baños. It's 3.5 hours away from Quito and a charming center for extreme sports. The rafting rocks.
- ❑ Mindo. It's 2 hours away from Quito and a good place for seeing nature. Don't miss the chocolate shop and the butterflies.
- ❑ The coast: Canoa and Montañita are party beaches. Mompiche is quiet and tiny. **AVOID ESMERALDAS AND NEARBY BEACHES IN THE NORTH. IT IS DANGEROUS, YOU WILL BE HECKLED.**
- ❑ La Isla de Plata. It's the poor man's Galapagos; good if you have a tight budget but still want to see blue-footed boobies.
- ❑ Otavalo. It's 2 hours away from Quito and well-known for being the largest indigenous market in South America. You're expected to bargain or you'll be majorly ripped off!
- ❑ Cuenca. It's a beautiful, smaller colonial city in the south of the country that's much calmer than Quito.
- ❑ Quilotoa. It's basically Ecuador's Crater Lake. The hike down and back up again is tiring but fun.
- ❑ Tiputini. It's a biodiversity station in the Amazon. The price was included in the fee for my program year, but if it's not included for you, look into it. It costs about \$500 and you need a yellow fever shot to go (get the shot in Ecuador, it's much cheaper than in the US– about \$20).
- ❑ Cotopaxi Mountain. You can stay in a hostel and observe its beauty from far away or attempt to climb it. If you have asthma or other breathing problems, don't plan it for one of your first weekend trips.
- ❑ Galapagos. You can go during the semester break, but it's expensive. You can stay on an island more cheaply, or book a spot on a boat that travels around different islands, but the latter usually requires a reservation far in advance. I recommend the packages through Ocean Pacific Travel and other similar agencies in Quito who offer all-inclusive trips. In addition, try to book your flights as early as possible. Some students may find they don't have finals during the actual "finals week" and have time for this longer trip later in the semester.

- Trips out of country. I went to Machu Picchu during the semester break and highly recommend it. It costs about \$800 overall, including flights, transport, food, shelter, and tickets into Machu Picchu. OR, extend your trip, pay about \$800 and go by short plane and long busses to stay for 2 weeks.

Living Situation

You will be living with a host family, so take advantage of that! Ecuadorian culture is collectivistic with a huge emphasis on family, so don't be surprised if adult host brothers and sisters are still happily living at home. Try to speak Spanish with them as often as possible; they are your guide to help you adjust to a new city and a new culture. Always treat your host family with respect, and if you're unsure of what's acceptable, always ask first. *Always* tell them if you're going out, and when you'll be back (especially at night, or if you're travelling) – they care about you and want to keep you safe. You also need to let the program directors know if you are going to travel. If you have a bad experience with your host family and it simply can't be worked out, remember you can *always* switch. Also remember that you're paying them to live with them, so you have every right to change if you need to. You should never have to pay them for anything extra, and meals are included so they should always feed you.

Your host family may have a maid (empleada) under their employment. Be kind and courteous to any help, just as you should be to the family, and remember that the empleada's livelihood depends on having that job. The empleada or a member of your host family will accompany you to school on the first day (or orientation day) so you can get used to the bus route. After that you'll be on your own, but don't worry, you'll figure it out in no time.

Communication

You will need a cellphone while you're in Ecuador; it will be your one form of communication. THE BEST PLAN OF ACTION IS TO BRING AN OLD ONE FROM HOME. YOU DON'T WANT TO PAY 50 BUCKS HERE AND DON'T RISK BREAKING YOUR CURRENT PHONE. If you're lucky, your host family will have one from a previous student to let you use. Everyone uses prepaid phones there, and it's very easy to put a few dollars on your phone at a convenience store. During my semester at USFQ the university had a plan at no cost to the students, you just have to list that you want a SIM card when filling out the paperwork before your arrival. You'll receive the SIM card at orientation. Try not to use your host family's house phone, because calls can be very expensive. At the end of your stay, be nice and leave your phone with your host family so the student after you won't have to buy a new one. There is also the possibility of using your US phone (if it is unlocked) through a plan the university has with a cell phone provider. When you register for classes, there will be that option.

Download Google Maps on your phone! This is a lifesaver for when you get lost because the data plan is minimal at best.

If you want to talk to someone outside of Ecuador, your best options are through the internet. You can use Facebook, What's App or Skype for both textual and voice/video communication. If you absolutely must call, *don't* use your host family's phone, and instead find a

phone booth (cabina). You can probably find a cabina on 6 de Diciembre (the main street where the Ecovia bus runs) or in the Mariscal (the tourist district). You'll probably pay around 10 cents per minute. You can also call from your cell phone, but it is expensive. Remember, 001(area code-phone number).

Quito in general

Quito is a HUGE place! In fact, it's the second largest city in the country with approximately 1.5 million people. It's split into three rough sections: the north, the center, and the south. You will spend most of your time in the middle and the north of the city, which are generally considered a little safer than the south, which is the very poor area of the city. People will tell you never to go to the south, but really, you should be careful no matter where you are.

Transportation around Quito is really cheap. Most bus rides cost just 25 cents. The taxis are also comparatively cheap, and most rides should cost \$5 or less. Ask your host family to give you an idea of reasonable prices. Taxi drivers will automatically charge you more if you look foreign, so don't be afraid to barter. Always decide on the price *before* you get in the taxi so that you don't end up in an argument later. Remember that prices will be a little higher at night. If you don't decide beforehand, when you get in, ask for "taximetro" which is a metered way of charging you based on how long you are in the taxi and how far you travel. Typically, they will be around the same as what the driver would charge you.

Quito has all the activities you could want: bowling, movies, bars, clubs, etc. The Mariscal is known to be a party area, and most of the exchange students head there when they want to go out. If you want to hang out with Ecuadorians, try to get a local to take you to a salsa bar outside of the Mariscal.

Eating in Ecuador

Your host family is paid to provide you with three meals a day. However, if you want to go out for food occasionally, you have lots of options! The Mariscal is good place to go for international food, though it's a lot more expensive than the little local places you'll find everywhere you go. Crepes & Waffles is a popular place to go for Ecuadorians and foreigners alike; there's one in Quicentro if you'd like to try it.

While at the University, there are many options. If you want a filling but low priced lunch, I recommend a street located right outside the university. If you go out of the main doors, turn left and to the end of the block, turn left again, and left up a very small street. If you see busses on this street, you went too far. Lunches there cost about \$3. Other places near and in the university charge a minimum of \$5 for less food.

Things to avoid: ***don't drink the tap water***. It's fine to brush your teeth with and bathe in, but it's just inadvisable to put very much of it in your body. Even if your host family or friends drink the tap water, remember that your stomach has not grown up with it, so it is not advisable. Keep in mind that ice will probably be made of tap water, and fruit juices are often made with tap water as well. **DON'T DRINK THE JUICE. YOU'LL GET PARASITES.** Non-cooked fruits and vegetables are a

gamble; if you want to be really safe, only eat things that have been cooked or that you can peel yourself. Avoid street food unless you enjoy the idea of food poisoning Russian roulette – there are no safety standards to speak of. *That being said*, this is your unique opportunity to try a lot of new and interesting foods, so let yourself try new things! If you eat meat, definitely try cuy (roasted guinea pig) at least once.

When you're travelling, you will easily be able to find cheap meals for about \$3. Breakfasts will usually include an egg, toast, and coffee or juice. Lunches and dinners usually have some combination of rice, meat, soup, and plantains. My trick for eating out is to eat where you see a lot of locals, and if you are not sure, don't eat the salad (or anything else raw)! That is where a lot of parasites come from. Typically it is okay to drink the juice, but use your best judgement and trust your gut, you are usually right.

Altitude sickness

Most people feel pretty mild effects of the altitude. You will likely feel tired, out of breath, and have an increased appetite. Take it easy during your first few weeks, avoid alcohol, and drink lots of water. Altitude sickness is called "soroche" in Ecuador; if you let your host family know that you're feeling the soroche they will try to help (by giving you tea made of coca leaves, for example). If you get this while climbing a mountain, get to a lower elevation immediately. This can be deadly.

Safety

Always be aware. Any time you leave your host family's house, ask yourself if you're okay with losing whatever you're bringing with you. If the answer is emphatically no, then leave it behind. Keep your valuables out of sight and on your person – either in an inner pocket or in a bag that you keep in front of you. One time I slid my backpack around behind me for all of 5 seconds as I boarded a bus and when I sat down I realized the zipper was open. There was nothing missing, but if there had been something valuable it would have been gone.

Walking around alone is not necessarily advisable at any time of day, especially if you are female, but this is particularly true at night. If you go out always, always bring a friend with you and take a taxi (plus, you can split the cost). As always, don't accept drinks from strangers, or anyone you don't fully trust. Don't go to parks at night, especially Parque Carolina.

When you eventually need to use an ATM, try to take a taxi there and back and use an ATM inside a bank. (That means you should not use the ATMs in the bus station.) There's a Banco Pichincha just across from the university that is a good place to get money; the ATMs are inside and there are guards, and it's in a high-income area where there is less motive to rob you. If you are female, I recommend taking out large amounts and putting them in your bra on the way home. A money belt will also do the same thing, but can sometimes be a pain to remember. I also found that leggings or other pants with small inside pockets in the waistband were particularly useful and made it easy to conceal money or ATM cards with a longer shirt or sweater.

If you are robbed, stay calm and remember that you can bargain for anything in Ecuador. For example, if someone takes your backpack and it has class notes and homework in it, ask calmly to

have just your notebook back – what’s the robber going to want it for, anyway?

Useful vocab words

- Achachay = Quichua expression meaning “I’m cold.”
- A la orden = at your service. Shopkeepers say this all the time.
- Botar = throw away trash. Avoid “tirar,” which means “to fuck” in Ecuador.
- Buen provecho = bon appetit.
- Cajero = ATM.
- Cambio = change (money). As in, “¿tiene cambio?” when paying a taxi driver.
- Chao = bye. No one says “adios!”
- Chévere = cool.
- Coger = to take. I.e. “Voy a coger un bus para ir a la universidad.”
- Estadounidense = person from the USA. Avoid calling yourself an Americano, since South America is just as much a continent as North America.
- Guagua = baby (from Quichua).
- Mande = literally means “command me.” It’s used when someone calls your name or when you didn’t hear or understand something someone has said to you.
- Miércoles = euphemism for “mierda.” It’s the equivalent of saying “shoot!” Stronger expletives include “chucha” or “puta.”
- Sigue nomás = go ahead. This is confusing at first, but it does *not* mean “do not continue;” rather, “nomás” means “just,” as in “just continue.”
- Suelos = small change.
- Tomar una cerveza= direct translation: drink a beer. Typically this means to hang out, and alcohol is only sometimes involved. Similar to “tomar un café” which can mean tea, coffee, soda or a snack.

Classes

Keep in mind that USFQ classes transfer over as only 3 credits, so you’ll probably want to take about 4 or 5 of them. Try to plan your schedule to have four-day weekends; trust me, you’re going to want that time to travel. Don’t challenge yourself with tough classes. You will regret it.

- Take something with Claudia Gutierrez. She teaches the Spanish conversation classes and is hilarious; everyone loves her. She teaches you all the Ecuadorian swear words on your first day and loves shouting “chévere, darling” at people. She’s wonderful.
 - Cultura Ecuatoriana is a very easy class with hardly any homework; it can be a bit boring but you do learn a bit about the culture as well as vocabulary.
 - Español Avanzado covers some of the same things as Linfield’s MLSP 302, with some other useful topics added in. If nothing else it’s an excellent review; I recommend it.
 - Antropología Andina is taught by an American named Julie Williams. She’s kind to the exchange students, though her classes are a little dull.
- If you’re interested in art history, Jorge Tejedas’ class on the Aztec was awesome. He’s an interesting professor who’s a bit intimidating but obviously passionate about his subject. The class

is in English, unfortunately, but there's nothing like it at Linfield so it's a unique opportunity.

- The Spanish grammar class is not the same as Español Avanzado. The grammar class is much harder – it would not be recommended if you haven't taken MLSP 302 or if you struggled in MLSP 302.
- Arts and extracurricular classes are good for meeting Ecuadorians.
- Consider taking a music class; they're free at USFQ (unlike at Linfield).
- You can take a cooking class if you want to. Check out the options!
- USFQ offers the unique opportunity of taking the local indigenous language, Quichua.
- Consider taking another foreign language, like German or French. You'd be surprised by how much Spanish you can learn in that kind of class. Avoid French with Mikaela, though – she's a terrible professor who doesn't speak Spanish well so you end up not learning anything at all.
- Try to take at least one class that is not geared toward exchange students. You will have a hard time meeting Ecuadorians otherwise.
- I took Antropología de la Costa with Florencio Delgado, and do not recommend it. Most of the people (including Ecuadorians) struggled, and the course load made it difficult to enjoy traveling on the weekends.
- Another fun class is Sociedades Amazónicas, but does require a higher Spanish level. It is fun, but does require you to put in effort. EDIT: The new professor is apparently very difficult.
- Ecuadorian history is pretty dang hard.

There are two main parts to the campus: the actual school grounds and the mall that USFQ built across the street. The campus itself can be confusing. There are three separate “buildings” that are actually just one big building. This makes finding classrooms a bit difficult sometimes, so I highly recommend going early to find all of your rooms. These classrooms may also change during the first couple of weeks and you will need to check D2L on a semi-regular basis until everything settles down.

The style of teaching here is very informal, at least compared to most colleges in the U.S. Most, if not all, of the professors insist you call them by their first name instead of their title. It isn't uncommon for students to also use terms of endearment for their professors. Example: Carlito instead of just Carlos.

Another thing is that a lot of classes are just taught differently. Most of the “gringo” classes are taught like what we would normally be used to, but a lot of the actual Ecuadorian classes are focused much more on student participation. Granted, there are some days where the professor mainly lectures to the class, but there are also a number of days where class discussion/debate are the entirety of the class time. This of course depends a lot on what kind of class you are taking. I found participation to be a huge percentage of the grade in all of my classes (Español Avanzado, Cultura Ecuatoriana, Antropología Andina, Conversación Intermedia) so if you're an introvert like me know that you'll have to push yourself a bit harder in terms of in class participation in order to get the grade you want.

Outside of school, there are just a few things that I figure would be helpful to any exchange students in the future.

1. Road/lane lines are sometimes more of a suggestion. Cars and buses frequently weave in and out of lanes or sometimes completely straddle lines. This is normal. With that said, you will find that jay-walking is how everyone crosses a street. There are marked crosswalks at most main intersections and bus stops, but the crosswalk lights are so infrequent that it's mostly easier to just go when cars are all stopped. You will pick up on this easily if you go out with your host parents and by watching other

Ecuadorians. Be aware that although pedestrians (as of recent years) do have the legal right of way most cars do not respect this and it can be dangerous to cross the streets. Always be aware of your surroundings as most cars drive very fast and can seemingly appear out of nowhere while you're in the middle of the road.

2. For the students coming here in the spring, people will tell you it's the rainy season, but this is nothing like Oregon's "rainy season". It just sprinkles, more than anything, so a light rain jacket or umbrella will be perfect. They also say it gets cold, but all you will need are light clothes that can be layered. It's usually way too warm for any type of heavier sweater and it is always easier to adjust to temperature changes by taking off multiple, light layers instead of having just one heavy layer. Also keep in mind that the temperature difference between Quito and Cumbaya (where USFQ is) is sometimes very different, with Cumbaya usually feeling at least ten degrees warmer than Quito.

3. Cat-calling occurs frequently, though some students experience it more frequently than others and it often depends on the area of the city (for example, it is much more common in the Historic Center and Plaza Foch in the south of Quito). Some female students seem to get cat-called daily while commuting to school. Unfortunately, there is nothing you can do but ignore it. If you try and confront a man about it, this is seen as playing hard to get and will encourage further behavior. However, it is less likely you will get cat-called with a group.

4. Everyone gets sick here. Healthcare is cheap, so just go to the doctor as soon as you feel the first sign of symptoms. Your body won't be used to the germs here, so it's not worth it to wait.

Coming from someone who is updating this, I did get cat-called a number of times. Once, I was sitting outside of Rio Coca waiting for a group of friends and got very upset at a guy looking at me because of how long he was doing it. I made a jester and a harsh look with my face, something that would typically embarrass a US male, and he smiled as if he were turned on by it. The best thing you can do is keep your head down, and wear clothes that cover your legs—I found that I got cat-called less when I was in conservative clothing. Sometimes, however, it doesn't matter what you're wearing, especially if you're a gringa (though Ecuadorian women experience cat-calls as well). Typically cat-calls come from older men as the behavior is not as ingrained in the younger generations though there are still young men who are aggressive/cat-call. Remain calm, don't engage, and make sure to keep your safety in mind at all times. These are generally harmless interactions but you never know when a gesture or call can mean more so if you feel unsafe take precaution—get help from a friend or nearby person and/or quickly remove yourself from the situation/environment. Warning: If the dude is old enough to be your dad, don't be fooled. He will still think he has game with you.

The best advice I can give you is to be open to the new culture and to never be afraid to ask questions. Remember that you are not from this culture, so things will probably be confusing at first. People typically love when the "gringo" is curious about them, but be polite when asking. For example, instead of phrasing something "Why do you do that, it's so weird?" try "I have never seen that before, could you explain to me why you do that?"

Bonus tip: Get an under-clothing fanny pack! You may feel like a doofus, but I was one of the few people that weren't pick-pocketed

Last note: Inform yourself about the crisis in Venezuela right now. There is a huge flow of immigrants into Ecuador. To provide for their families many are vendors on buses, in the streets, and in Plaza Foch.

4 Ways People Steal Your Passport

by [Katherine LaGrave](#)

Beware of these four occurrences when traveling with a passport.

Sometimes, a bump, nudge, or distraction is all it takes.

The stolen passport market is huge: There are more than 40 million passports listed as missing on a database created by Interpol in 2002, and according to the U.S. Department of State, more than 300,000 American passports are lost or stolen in the U.S. each year. And given that these are the most common ways thieves have been known to pilfer a passport, it pays to be aware.

The set-down

It's easy enough to make a mistake with your documents when traveling—after all, how natural is it to put your passport on the table at a restaurant as you pull out a chair, or rest it on top of your suitcase as you check the departure board at an airport? I've done it, and I'm guessing you have, too. But take your eye off the document for a moment, and you open yourself up to the possibility of someone bumping your table (or bag) as a distraction—and walking away with your passport. Another one of the most common places for thieves to grab a passport is in a place where we actually need to produce it: checking in at a hotel overseas. Be wary of putting it to the left or right of you as you shuffle for your confirmation number or booking details, as someone could come along and create a distraction—think returning a key, or asking a question—and slip away with your document. Instead, place your passport on the counter in front of you, and immediately return it to its secure location after it is passed back to you.

The spill

It sounds slightly out of a Charlie Chaplin movie: seemingly innocent passers-by "spilling" anything from ice cream to juice on people they

pass. Yet there are worldwide reports of such instances, wherein a distraction is created, and in the process of aiding and cleaning the hapless victim, the "spillers"—or their associates—lift a passport. If you have the misfortune of being spilled on, refuse attendance and instead, avoid contact with the offender by quickly walking away.

[5 Ways to Keep Your Passport Safe When Traveling](#)

The pocket

It's obvious, sure, but one of the easiest ways for people to snatch your passport is if it's carried in your pockets: All it takes is a crowded train and a nudge—or a coat that's been draped over the back of a chair, and a sleight of hand. If you need to carry your passport with you, look for a flat money belt, which can be worn around your waist and neck and concealed under your clothing. If you're in the market for something a bit more comfortable, try a travel wallet or passport cover. Both conceal your passport (and nationality), and the travel wallet also has room for other valuables, including credit cards and emergency cash. Avoid carrying your passport and spending money together if you can, as taking out cash will alert potential thieves.

The authorities

In countries around the world, you'll most often be asked to produce your original passport at hotels and airports, or when crossing borders. Travelers have also reported instances in which policemen, plain-clothed or uniformed, approach them and ask to see their passports. Sometimes, the officials are actually as they say they are—numerous countries have plain-clothed officers asking for passports in order to catch illegal immigrants—but it's better to be safe than sorry. Signs that it probably isn't a scam: everyone else in your surrounding area is also being checked, security badges and patches are visible on the officer's uniform, and officials are not asking for anything but photo ID. If you feel you are being singled out and are still uncomfortable, agree to show your passport in the nearest police station or hotel lobby, where you can confirm with a clerk who speaks the native language.

TRAVEL TIPS

How to Make Sure You Travel with Medication Legally

Traveling with medication — even prescription drugs — isn't as simple as packing it. Here's how to stay on the right side of the law, anywhere you go.



By Tanya Mohn

Jan. 19, 2018

Travelers often pack medications when they go abroad, but some popular prescription and over-the-counter ones Americans use for things like pain relief, better sleep, allergies and even the common cold are illegal in some countries.

The United Arab Emirates and Japan, for example, are among the most restrictive nations, but many ban or restrict importing narcotics, sedatives, amphetamines and other common over-the-counter medications.

Most travelers won't run into problems for carrying small amounts for personal use, said Katherine L. Harmon, who oversees health analysis for [iJET International](#), a travel risk management company. But noncompliance can result in confiscation, (which could, in turn, have severe medical consequences), deportation, jail time, and even the death penalty. "Does it happen a lot? No. Could it? Yes," Ms. Harmon said. "Consumers need to understand this and how it might adversely impact them *before* they book that awesome trip to an exotic location."

She shared a few tips to keep you on the right side of the law, whatever you take and wherever you roam.

Plan Ahead

Laws vary by country and there is no central, up-to date repository, so Ms. Harmon suggests consulting your physician, travel medical insurance company, or local pharmacist four to six weeks before traveling. "When you inquire about your shots, ask about medications. Odds are they may not know off the top of their head, but they have the resources to find out."

She also suggests checking with the embassy of your destination country. The [State Department](#) website lists foreign [embassies](#) in the United States, and their contact information. It also lists [insurance providers](#) that offer overseas health coverage. Comparison websites [Insure My Trip](#) and [SquareMouth](#) can help assess those insurance plans, if they're necessary.

Label and Pack Your Medication Properly

Carry all of your medication — even vitamins and supplements — in their original, clearly marked containers or packaging in a clear plastic bag in carry on luggage. Make sure the name on the prescription, the medicine container and your passport (or one for the recipient of the medication) all match. If you lost the product information insert, ask the pharmacist to print a new one for you.

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[Here's more on our standards and practices.](#)

Also, check [the Transportation Security Administration's website](#) for up-to-date rules and regulations on packing and carrying your medication when you depart. The standard rules

for liquid carry-ons don't apply to medications in liquid or gel form, but you need to inform the T.S.A. when you pass through security so they don't confiscate it.

Obtain and Carry Necessary Documentation

Keep copies of your original prescriptions, if you can. Better yet, obtain a letter on official letterhead from your physician that lists the medicines you need and why they were prescribed. Ideally, you would get this translated to the language of your destination country, so it's easy to read.

For some medication and specialized equipment used to administer them, some countries require documents to be submitted to government officials well in advance of your arrival. Ms. Harmon, for example, was questioned at the Singapore airport once for entering with an EpiPen, but she had prior authorization allowing its transport.

Know the Names and Amounts of Active Ingredients

The documentation you carry should also indicate the generic and chemical names of the active ingredients, which determines permissibility, not brand names.

For example, the active ingredient in Benadryl, diphenhydramine, is banned in Zambia in over-the-counter products. In Japan, it is allowed only if the amount in a tablet or injection is limited. However, a typical 25 milligram tablet of Tylenol PM in the United States exceeds the 10 milligram maximum amount in a tablet you can bring into Japan. Some countries restrict the overall total amount of an active ingredient an individual traveler can legally import, which may impact longer stays.

Reduce or Substitute Medication

In countries where a medication is allowed, but its amount is capped, reducing your dosage or switching to another available medication is the best way to stay compliant. Allow enough time beforehand to ensure the smaller dose or new medicine works effectively, and consider making the switch before your trip to give yourself time to adjust.

Some medications can be used for several diagnoses. Hormones used for birth control may also be used to treat excessive menstrual bleeding, Ms. Harmon said. "Doctors need to get creative sometimes. Substitutions can allow authorities to accept the drug as a medical need rather than going against the country's religious or moral code."

Reassess Your Travel Plans

Parents with a child doing well on Adderall for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder who prefer not to make adjustments on the fly, or a student with bipolar disorder may want to

consider vacation or study abroad locations where the medications they rely on for mental health are not banned or restricted.

“Viewpoints on treatment and diagnoses can vary widely,” Ms. Harmon said. “Western Europe and North America understand that brain chemistry is often at the root of these problems. But some countries, like Russia, do not consider mental health challenges as medical problems and often treat them criminally.”



Surviving a Protest

Product of the Research & Information Support Center (RISC)

The following report is based on open source reporting.

August 7, 2014

Introduction

Travelers are regularly cautioned about protest activity when visiting a foreign country. The U.S. Department of State, for example, consistently encourages citizens to “avoid all demonstrations, since even peaceful gatherings can quickly turn violent” – a phrase common to many Consular messages. However, a deeper understanding of what motivates protest activity, and who or what the intended targets are, can be useful tools for educating travelers.

The Nature of a Protest

According to a 2013 [report](#) by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, a German non-profit organization that promotes democracy and political education, the global number of protests has increased every year from 2006 (59) through the first half of 2013 (112). [Note: these were protests covered in online news media. The countries analyzed represent 92 percent of the world’s population] While protests take place throughout the world, where

Protests by Region – 2006-2013

	Total	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013*
High-Income (Region)	304	17	25	25	35	44	57	60	41
Latin America/Caribbean	141	14	12	15	12	21	22	25	20
East Asia/ Pacific	83	3	9	10	9	12	20	11	9
Sub-Saharan Africa	78	7	6	8	8	5	18	15	11
Middle East/North Africa	77	3	11	6	7	11	18	15	6
Global	70	7	5	8	8	8	10	14	10
Europe/Central Asia	47	3	4	4	4	7	6	11	8
South Asia	43	5	5	4	4	8	2	9	6
World Total	843	59	77	80	87	116	153	160	111

Data provided by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
* As of July 2013

they occur is not always a good indicator of how they will proceed. A country with a peaceful tradition of rallying can experience violence, while another with a more acrimonious style can experience no incidents at all. For example, in Cambodia, generally known for a peaceful tradition, demonstrators and police have recently come to blows over anti-government sentiment as well as a demand for a higher minimum wage among garment workers. In South Africa, known as the “[protest capital of the world](#)” and where violence is not a rarity, most demonstrations end peacefully and without incident. Demonstrations can also take place in countries not known for having any protest tradition at all, such as in Iran during the 2009 Green Movement, or in Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, and Libya during the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings.

By their nature, protests also attract attention. They can be exciting events, and for a foreigner, provide an up-close look at a country’s political landscape. But the advice to avoid them is not dispensed arbitrarily. An overzealous demonstrator can incite a crowd; individuals with ulterior motives can infiltrate an otherwise peaceful rally; a heavy-handed police response can provoke an aggressive reaction from gatherers. When this happens, onlookers can pay the price. This past May, a bystander was killed by a stray bullet during an anti-government protest in Istanbul, Turkey. Authorities in southern China acknowledged that police “may have accidentally injured...bystanders” during an April protest against a chemical plant in Guangdong province. During Egyptian riots in June 2013, an American college student was stabbed to death as he took photographs of the unfolding violence. What starts as simple curiosity can easily turn into a fight to stay out of harm’s way.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.

Indicators Can Help

There are indicators, however, that can be helpful to any traveler when assessing the probability for protests, and how they will play out. Anti-government protests, for instance, may not be as likely to target foreigners as they would police officers or nearby property (although the death of the American student referenced above shows this is not always true). Destroying property can be a way of not only displaying intense dissatisfaction with conditions in the country, but also attempting to undermine the government. This was the case in Thailand in 2010, when anti-government protesters targeted not only government buildings, but also commercial facilities. The same was true for 2010 anti-government/-austerity protests in Greece. In both cases, foreigners were not directly targeted, and in Thailand, they were actually greeted warmly if they happened to pass by the event.

A protest against another country, on the other hand, might not result in widespread violence, but particular people and properties could be vulnerable. This past May, [anti-Chinese protests in Vietnam](#) targeted what were perceived to be Chinese-affiliated companies and factories following a maritime dispute between the two countries. In July, [anti-Israeli protests in Germany and France](#) led to the attack of synagogues and Jewish businesses in those countries.

There are also a number of issues that seem to bring protesters to the street regardless of location. For example, citizens accustomed to government subsidies (fuel, transportation, etc.) can quickly mobilize if their entitlements are threatened in any way; violent clashes in the streets of Jakarta in 2013 following a reduction of fuel subsidies are a prime example. The suspicion of electoral fraud is another key catalyst, as was evident during protests in Russia following disputed 2011 legislative elections. Another major indicator pertains to infringements-- real or perceived-- on basic democratic rights. Residents of Hong Kong, for example, regularly take to the streets to demand greater democratic freedom.

The Likeliest Scenario

More than likely, the biggest impact to travelers during a demonstration will be transportation difficulties, including blocked roads, crowded public transportation, and congested traffic. A lot of protests advertise in advance where and when they will take place, which makes a traveler's job of planning to get around them easier. Even for the ones that do not, it should become pretty clear what area(s) to avoid as numbers amass. Social media can be a great tool for collecting information; organizers and participants are likely to tweet about the event or post pictures to Facebook, Instagram, or a popular local social network (such as VKontakte in Russia). During past protests, OSAC constituents have allowed employees to work remotely or even take the day off when demonstration activity encroaches on work sites or precludes safe commuting. Over periods of sustained protest activity, employers have deferred travel, and in some cases, removed personnel from the city or country entirely. Each organization is responsible for its own plan, but understanding the fundamentals is a good start to making one.

Additional Information

For recent OSAC analysis on other regional protests, please see the below reports:

[Middle East Conflict Fuels Europe Protests](#)
[Haiti Opposition Protests](#)
[Northern Ireland Orangemen Parade Volatility](#)
[Royal Thai Army Invokes Martial Law](#)
[May Day](#)

For Further Information

Please direct any questions regarding this report to OSAC's [Cross Regional Analyst](#).

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Don't Go Soft on Study Abroad: a Call for Academic Rigor

*The following is a guest post by **William G. Moseley**, chair and professor of geography at Macalester College. He has worked and conducted research in Africa for 25 years.*

Study abroad can be a powerful experience for many students. A student's trip overseas can be one of those transformative educational periods after which a young person will never look at the world the same way again. Yet many students, faculty members, and college administrators don't take this education as seriously as they should.



Study-abroad students bird watching in Botswana's Okavango Delta.

Let's be frank, some students view study abroad as a vacation or at least a time when normal academic standards ought to be relaxed. But as an instructor and director on two different study-abroad programs for undergraduates in South Africa and Botswana, I have sought to expose participants to new cultures and provide academically rigorous courses.

Many students initially chafed at the large amount of reading and writing, in addition to original fieldwork, that I assigned during these programs. Not only did some start

the program with an educational holiday in mind, but they saw students in other study-abroad programs not working as hard. Knowing my interest in having them have cross-cultural experiences, my students would couch their concerns about the workload in terms of not having sufficient time to travel and interact with the local population. How could I deny them exploring southern Africa?, they asked.

Occasionally, a class of students confronts me directly about the workload. This happened a little over halfway through the term in my most recent study-abroad teaching experience in Botswana. Students asked me point-blank how my courses compared in difficulty to those I teach at my home institution. I indicated that the classes I offered in Africa were actually a little less challenging as I was trying to account for the added stress of unfamiliar surroundings and less reliable infrastructure. Their collective gasp was audible; they shook their heads in disbelief. However, in explaining why the academic requirements of the program could not be relaxed, we had one of the more interesting discussions of the term.

I shared my view that a successful study-abroad experience often means at least two things: 1) getting outside of your own cultural head space (that is, coming to understand that other cultures may have very different, yet equally valid, approaches to life); and 2) knowing enough background information about a place, its history, and connections to other parts of the world to really understand what you are seeing. Of course the two criteria are often linked; you can't set aside your own cultural prejudices until you understand why other people do things the way they do. Furthermore, learning enough to get a handle on what you are seeing requires hard work. That is, it means critically reading the academic publications about a place, discussing those insights with your peers, and synthesizing your understanding by writing.

Over time, my students began to value the rigor with which we explored this new area of the world, and the nuanced insights and deeper personal growth that it eventually yielded. For example, these students lived in a rural home for a time in the second half of the semester. This experience produced some beautiful reflections on what it meant to be with a local family. Gone were the shallow complaints about inefficient bureaucracy, the slow pace of life, or bad food from earlier in the term. Instead, the students showed a better ability to contextualize poverty, a greater appreciation for taking the time to get to know someone, or understanding Botswana on its own terms and in relation to the region, rather than just comparing it with American norms and practices.

Could we have done better? Yes, certainly. But I am also aware of the fact that we could have done a lot worse. It is expensive to have someone like me, a scholar of western and southern Africa, to relocate for a term (with his family no less) to teach a

course or two. It is far cheaper to subcontract study abroad to third-party providers. While many such organizations are excellent, some may be tempted to hire less-than-qualified teachers who were never (or are no longer) active scholars, and succumb to student pressure for less academic rigor because their business model demands it.

The reality is that the study-abroad experiences can be orchestrated quite poorly, potentially leaving students with a highly superficial, if not deeply flawed, understanding of another area of the world, not to mention a false sense of regional expertise.

So my hard advice is this: If you are a student looking for a study-abroad “vacation,” then either think about this opportunity anew and look for a rigorous program, or don’t go at all. If you are a faculty member looking to take a group of students overseas, get the necessary training and make sure you have the place-relevant research background to be a competent study-abroad instructor.

Finally, if you are an administrator that oversees study-abroad programs, then please treat this semester the same as you would the rest of an undergraduate’s career. If you are unwilling to compromise quality and provide education on the cheap at home, then a semester abroad should be no different.

[Photo courtesy of William G. Moseley]