

International Travel 101



Money	How do I exchange currency?	Your bank can order currency for you if you want money in hand when you land. When abroad, the best exchange rate will often be found just using ATMs once you arrive. Do not use currency exchange booths at airports!
	Do I need to notify my bank?	Some credit card companies and banks no longer require you to notify them about international travel, but it's always good to double check. The last thing you want is to show up in a foreign country and have your debit or credit card locked!
	What's Dynamic Currency Conversion?	On some ATMs in foreign countries or when making credit card purchases, you'll be asked if you want to draw the money in dollars or in euro/pounds/shekels/etc. This is called Dynamic Currency Conversion, and our motto is: Just say no to DCC! To make a long story short, always choose the currency of the country which you're currently in. You'll face fees and or bad exchange rates otherwise.
Electricity	What is an adapter?	Since electrical outlets aren't universally standard in shape, an adapter adapts the prongs of your device so you can plug it into the wall.
	What is a converter?	Since outlets in different countries deliver different amounts of electricity, a converter converts the volts coming out of an outlet down to the 110 volts your American appliance likely needs.
	Which do I need?	It depends! You definitely need an adapter. You need a converter if your appliance isn't dual voltage. If the appliance's power cord reads something like "Input: 100-220 V~ 50-60Hz", this means the device will convert! Check out the video on our site for more info.
Phones	Can I use my cell phone?	Check with your cell phone provider about their various international plans. Another option is to purchase a European SIM card - but know that this often requires your domestic carrier to "unlock" your phone to make this possible. If you don't have an international plan but want to use your phone to take pictures, for example, don't forget to turn off cellular data to avoid fees!
	Can I just use Wi-Fi instead?	Depending on where you are headed, Wi-Fi might be easily accessible in your hotel, cafes, and even the bus! Many messaging apps (iMessage, WhatsApp, FB Messenger) can be used on Wi-Fi. Just be aware of cybersecurity best practices when using public Wi-Fi.

Airport	What should I expect at the airport?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be at the airport for your international flight two hours early. • You'll need to show your passport at check-in. • Security will be similar to domestic flights, unless you are traveling to Israel, where there may be additional security measures in place.
	What are best practices for the flight over?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be served dinner about an hour after take-off and breakfast about an hour before you land. Hydrate! It helps with jet lag. • Don't forget to move around a bit. • Try as hard as you can to sleep! You want to get your body on your destination timezone as soon as possible.
	What can I expect when we land?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At your destination, you'll go through passport control before picking up your baggage. Have your passport ready and follow signs for non-European Union Passports. You may have your passport stamped - but you might not! • After picking up your checked bags, you'll go through customs. Since you are arriving with nothing to You'll probably just walk through a doorway and leave. • Stay awake! Don't go to sleep until night!
	What are best practices for the flight home?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be served a meal and a snack. Hydrate! It helps with jet lag. • Don't forget to move around a bit. • Try as hard as you can to stay awake. Now you want to work on getting your body on your home timezone. • When you arrive in the US, you'll go through customs before picking up your luggage. This consists of answering a series of questions about what you're bringing back home. Most likely, your answers will mostly be "no."
Safety	Will I be safe?	It's important to be aware of your surroundings when you're abroad. Avoid doing things that make you look like easy prey for pickpockets, like being distracted on your phone or looking lost. Don't keep anything valuable in your pockets. Keep your passport and money concealed underneath your clothing in a money belt or neck pouch.
	How can I get travel or security updates?	You might consider enrolling in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), which will help the Embassy and your family get in touch with you in an emergency. More information can be found at https://travel.state.gov , the State Department's website that is full of information to help you travel abroad safely.
	Other Tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When staying at a hotel, grab a business card at the front desk. That way if you get lost or need to take a cab, you know exactly where to head back home. • Leave a copy of your passport and other important documents with someone at home. In addition, take a picture of them to have on your phone with you, just in case. • Buy travel insurance. Need help? Ask us.