SPANISH IMMERSION EXPERIENCE
JUNE 28 – JULY 28, 2019
SANTA ANA, COSTA RICA
SJ01-6-19
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**U.S. EMBASSY (San José)**

Calle 98 Vía 104, Pavas  
San José, Costa Rica

**PHONE**

- In Country: (506) 2519-2000  

**EMAIL**

consularsanjose@state.gov

**WEBSITE**

https://cr.usembassy.gov/

**INTERNATIONAL CALLS**

Making international calls from the U.S. to Costa Rica: First dial “011” (for international call), followed by “506” (the country code), then the specific area code (dropping the first zero) and location number.

**Time Differences:** During the summer, Costa Rica is one hour ahead of Eastern Standard Time.
ACADEMIC MATTERS
This program is first and foremost an academic one, so you should be prepared to invest as much time, effort and thought into your coursework as you do on your home campus. Since classes are small, you will have more interaction with your fellow students and with faculty than you have on main campus. There will be a greater emphasis on participation in class discussions. This means you must be prepared to maintain a high level of performance by being an active and committed participant in your class.

FSU ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS RELATED TO STUDY ABROAD
FSU students are encouraged to get involved with the Garnet and Gold Scholar Society and the Global Citizenship Certificate program. These two resources provide special recognition as global-ready graduates.

The Garnet and Gold Scholar Society program facilitates involvement and recognizes the engaged, well-rounded student who excels within and beyond the classroom in the areas of Leadership, Internship, Service, International, and Research. A student who has met the criteria in three of the five areas is eligible for consideration. All study abroad programs organized through the International Programs Office qualify for the international experience portion of the International Area. Visit http://garnetandgoldscholar.fsu.edu/ or email GarnetandGoldProgram@fsu.edu to learn more.

The Global Citizenship Certificate program helps undergraduate students develop invaluable cross-cultural skills and global competencies needed to be a global-ready graduate. Students who enroll in the certificate take 2 required courses, Global Perspectives and Global Citizenship, and 2 electives. Both required courses count toward FSU Liberal Studies X, E-series, and writing requirements. In addition, students participate in 8 intercultural events on campus and a sustained international experience abroad, which you are about to complete! Enroll in the Global Citizenship Certificate before you study abroad to ensure your experience counts toward the certificate. Visit cge.fsu.edu/globalcitizen or contact an advisor at globalcitizen@fsu.edu to learn more.

TUTORING RESOURCES
There are a number of tutoring resources available at Florida State University to assist you academically, both in Tallahassee and abroad. Online tutors are available through the following programs:

- **Reading & Writing Center (RWC)**
  [http://wr.english.fsu.edu/Reading-Writing-Center/RWC-Online](http://wr.english.fsu.edu/Reading-Writing-Center/RWC-Online)

- **Academic Center for Excellence (ACE)**
  [http://ace.fsu.edu/](http://ace.fsu.edu/)
  ACE provides free tutoring in many subject areas, including accounting, biology, chemistry, economics, math, statistics, and physics.

- **University Libraries: Office of Distance Library Services**
  [https://www.lib.fsu.edu/department/distance-learning](https://www.lib.fsu.edu/department/distance-learning)

STUDENT DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER (SDRC)
SDRC provides reasonable and appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Documented disabilities and accommodations vary in nature, and though the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 do not apply extraterritorially, we do our best to accommodate our students. If you anticipate needing to request accommodations for a documented disability, please schedule an appointment with the SDRC by calling 850-644-9566 (Voice) or 850-644-8504 (TDD) and provide appropriate information on your Special Needs form. For more information, visit [http://dos.fsu.edu/sdrc](http://dos.fsu.edu/sdrc).
VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR U.S. CITIZENS

- **Passport**: You must hold a U.S passport that is valid for at least 6 months beyond your return.

- **Copy of Passport Pages**: After you receive your passport, make several photocopies of the pages that contain the issue date, your signature, and your photograph. Leave one copy at home with your family, securely send one copy to our Tallahassee office, and take another copy with you in case your passport is lost or stolen. Carry a copy separate from your passport when you are traveling.

VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR NON U.S. CITIZENS AND U.S. CITIZENS LIVING ABROAD:

If you are a non-U.S. citizen or U.S. citizen living abroad, contact an International Programs’ Immigration Specialist at IP-Visas@fsu.edu. You may be required to apply for a visa on your own or you may have additional visa requirements and expenses.

All visa information is correct at the time of publication, but terms, fees, and guidelines are subject to change without notice.
FLIGHT INFORMATION
There is no group flight for this program and your Program Fee does not include airfare. **Traveling on a one-way ticket may not be allowed due to airline restrictions. Please check with your airlines before purchasing a one-way ticket.**

You should make arrangements to arrive in San Jose, Costa Rica on the start date of your program, **June 28, 2019**, ideally around 12:00pm. You should make arrangements to depart San Jose no earlier than the end date of your program, **July 28, 2019**. All orientation/welcome activities that take place upon arrival are mandatory.

The group airport pick-up is currently scheduled for **1:30 p.m., local time, on June 28**. If you choose to arrive before or after the group pick-up time, you will need to arrange your own transportation to Conversa, located in Santa Ana, Costa Rica. Airport taxis or shuttle fares usually cost around $25 plus tip.

If you will not arrive in time for the group pick-up, contact your Program Leader, Dr. Gomariz, and/or Andy Kaufman at the Centro Conversa as soon as possible to coordinate arrival details. If your flight is delayed or cancelled, please notify International Programs, Dr. Gomariz and/or Andy Kaufman as soon as possible. You can instruct your parents/friends to contact FSU International Programs at 850-644-3272, and contact Conversa 1-888-669-1664 or 2203-2071. If calling from USA dial 011-506 and then the number (ask for Andy Kaufman and identify yourself as part of the Florida State University Group).

Your housing will not be available until the official check-in day of the program, **June 28, 2019**. If you arrive earlier, you will need to look for accommodations in town for the extra nights.

You must check out of program housing on the morning of the last day of your program, **July 28, 2019**. Group airport transports will be arranged by Conversa in groups based on flight departure times. After your official check out date of the program, you will need to book other accommodations if you are extending your stay.

Once you have completed your travel arrangements, you must email your flight arrangements to the IP Office (IP-Info@fsu.edu). Your flight arrangements will be provided to the program faculty/staff and it is very important that they receive this information in order to monitor student arrivals.

You may want to consider purchasing travel insurance when booking your flight. Travel insurance typically covers flight cancellation fees, lost luggage or other losses incurred while traveling, etc. Speak with your airline for more information.

IN TRANSIT
- **Domestic flights.** In general, arrive at the airport ticket counter **two hours** before your departure time. Check with your specific airline to find out the recommended pre-flight allowance.
- **International flights.** Arrive at the airport ticket counter **three hours** before your departure time.
- **Keep your boarding pass.** Some airlines require it for baggage claim. Also, it will help if your luggage gets lost.
- **Have your passport accessible.**
- **During your flight,** drink lots of water and get up and walk during your flight. Try to sleep; it will help you combat jet lag. Wear layers as the temperature on the plane and in airports may vary.

ARRIVING IN COSTA RICA
Upon arrival to SJO, you will go through immigration and present your passport to the immigration officer. Once you clear immigration, proceed to pick up your luggage to go through customs. Once you have cleared immigration and customs, you will be outside of the airport secure area. As you walk outside, look for a Conversa sign and Dr. José Gomariz, who will be wearing an IP t-shirt. It is highly encouraged that you also wear your IP t-shirt for faster identification. A shuttle will transfer the whole group to the Centro Lingüístico Conversa in Santa Ana where you will have a welcome lunch and on-site orientation.
**BEFORE DEPARTURE & PROGRAM SPECIFICS**

**HOUSING**
Students will stay with a Costa Rican family and will be placed one student per family (private room- shared bathroom). Arrangements are made by Conversa housing coordinators who select and monitor the families. Students will eat breakfast and dinner daily with the family. Lunch and a morning snack will be provided at Conversa. One load of laundry per week will be handled by the family.

Conversa has shuttle buses that run from Santa Ana housing neighborhood to the Conversa campus for your morning class. For your morning class, departure time will be provided at the onsite orientation.

International Programs will endeavor to provide accommodations that are appropriate and comfortable. Any issues with housing must be reported to the Program Leader, Dr. Gomariz, immediately.

Rooming assignments and locations will be made based on a combination of factors such as type of program, housing preference, and special needs as indicated in the information you provide International Programs.

During your on-site orientation, you will be advised of the Housing Rules & Regulations. Violation of any of the housing policies is grounds for dismissal. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the housing rules and regulations for your specific program. Refer to the FSU International Programs Contractual Agreement and the Housing Terms and Conditions for details. You are required to sign the FSU International Programs Contractual Agreement as it outlines your contractual obligations as a participant on our program.

We cannot guarantee that each residence will have the exact same amenities. Each student housing facility has safety and security measures. They may vary by location.

**HOST FAMILIES**
Your host family’s contact information will be emailed to you in late spring.

It is culturally appropriate to bring a gift for your host family. This does not have to be an expensive item, but it will show appreciation to the family for allowing you to stay in their home during your time in Costa Rica. Gift suggestions may include, but are not limited to:

- Cookbooks with American recipes
- U.S. paraphernalia (things from Disney World, NBA, NFL, Etc.)
- American candy and gum (i.e. M&M’s, Hershey, saltwater taffy, etc.) especially if there are children in the family
- American soap, lotion or scented candles (i.e. Bath & Body Works products, etc.)
- Tablecloth and/or placemats
- Clothing or items with FSU logos
- Scenic potholders, aprons, mugs and glasses
- Regional foods to make a special dinner
- Coffee mugs
- Chocolate
- Calendars with U.S. scenery

**CLASS SCHEDULE**
Classes will take place from Monday through Thursday, from 8:30 am to 1 pm, unless otherwise indicated. There is a break between classes for a snack, provided by Conversa.

**PROGRAM EXCURSIONS**
As part of the Spanish Immersion Experience program, you are required to participate in cultural excursions. Excursions will take place on Friday, and some of them would include an overnight stay. Destinations, calendar, and time of departure for excursions will be provided onsite in Costa Rica. There will be a 15-minute grace period added to the departure time. After the grace period, the bus will depart. If you miss the bus, you are to contact Dr. Gomariz immediately.

**PERSONAL TRAVEL**
Independent travel outside of Costa Rica is NOT allowed during the program. Students who wish to travel outside of Costa Rica are advised to do so before the program begins or after the program ends.

You are no doubt eager to explore Costa Rica. During the program, you will have a whole weekend for independent travel. Please wait until you have arrived in Costa Rica and have received your class schedule before you book any independent trips.

Waiting until classes have started will allow you to make your plans around the following factors:

- Academic deadlines for exams, papers and presentations. You do not want to book a once-in-a-lifetime trip only to discover that you have a major research paper due around that time.
- You will receive a cultural calendar of activities planned for all students upon your arrival. It would be a shame to book a trip that clashes with an activity that cannot be changed.
- The travel plans of your peers. One of the joys of studying abroad is the opportunity to build friendships through travel and shared experiences.

Do not plan travel that will cause you to miss classes; strict academic standards will be maintained on the programs. Your grade may be reduced by any unauthorized absence from class.
For safety purposes, you will be instructed by the International Programs staff to fill out a mandatory online independent travel form each time you plan on traveling outside of your study abroad location. More information will be provided to you in an email from IP-Info@fsu.edu prior to departure.

CLIMATE & PACKING
All airlines have different policies regarding the number, size, and weight of bags allowed on domestic and international flights. Fees for having too many bags or exceeding size and weight limits are steep, and also vary by airline. It is important that you determine the restriction on your particular airline before you pack. Please be aware that you will be responsible for carrying your own bags, packs, etc. Restrictions regarding carry-on baggage are different for each airline and sometimes vary depending on your originating, transferring and/or terminating airport. Also, requirements change based on current events. It is imperative that you check your specific requirements just prior to your departure and plan accordingly. Use the IP luggage tag you received to ensure your bag is marked in capital letters with your name, address, and final destination both on the inside and on the outside of the bag. It is recommended that you pack 1 or 2 outfits in your carry-on in case of flight delays/cancellations or lost luggage.

When packing, please remember that churches do not allow shorts, halter-tops, or miniskirts. You are advised to bring a cardigan or light jacket to cover your shoulders with for church visits. It is advisable to bring a raincoat and an umbrella. The weather in San José can be humid and stays approximately in the mid to upper 70s. Because you will be in Costa Rica during the beginning of the rainy season, you can expect frequent showers in the afternoon. The temperature can be fairly cool in the morning or evening, so bring a sweatshirt or sweater. You may also want to bring an overnight bag for weekend trips. The weather may change according to your destination. It is especially hot on the beaches, but in the mountains, the temperature is considerably cooler. Be prepared for a variety of weather conditions by bringing clothes that can be layered.

You may want to wear more jeans and long pants instead of shorts. This is a personal choice; however, in the past students have mentioned that they felt a little too casual and “tourist-like” wearing shorts in the city. However, when visiting the Pacific Coast, shorts maybe a better choice than long pants.

For updates on weather conditions, visit https://www.accuweather.com/en/world-weather.

Textbooks and other required course materials do not need to be packed and will be accessible at Centro Conversa.
**MAIL**
Please share the following information with those in the U.S. who are interested in sending you mail while you are abroad.

We recommend that your friends and family do NOT mail you any packages or important information of value while you are in Costa Rica – all packages have to clear customs, and taxes and high shipping costs may be applicable. If you must have something mailed, Fed-Ex, DHL or UPS are the best options. Please contact the Conversa staff directly upon arrival if you require mailing instructions.

**CELL PHONES & COMMUNICATION**
Staying connected to your family and friends while you are abroad is extremely important. Establish a communications plan prior to departure. Whether it’s setting up a Skype meeting every Sunday night, sending them messages over WhatsApp, or checking-in with them on social media, make sure you keep in touch!

Though it is not mandatory to use your cell phone abroad, consider one of the following options. **Do your research to see which option is the best fit for you:**

**Add an international plan through your current service provider.** This tends to be the most expensive option. Talk to your service provider for details. Each provider offers varying international plans.

**Purchase a sim card in-country for your current phone.** You will need to unlock your phone and make sure your phone is GSM-capable before departure. You can buy a prepaid SIM plan, either for phone calls only or for calls and data.

**Purchase an inexpensive phone with a local plan in-country and pay for more minutes/data as needed.** Past students have found that it is easiest to buy a phone and pay for calls and messages as you go. The phones can be used for both calls in your study abroad location and for calls to and from the U.S. Local stores will sign you up with the carrier who is offering the best rates available at the time of your purchase. Calls made or received while you are in other countries may be very expensive.

**We strongly suggest that you do not buy a pay-as-you-go cell phone in the U.S. to take to Costa Rica.** Students who have done this in the past have frequently found the phones do not work. It is far cheaper and more efficient to buy the pay-as-you-go phone in Costa Rica.

**Use Wi-Fi while the phone is in airplane mode.** Make sure to turn off roaming before you leave, just in case. Otherwise you might end up with a very large phone bill when you return to the U.S. Apps you can easily use while connected to Wi-Fi include Skype, FaceTime, Viber, and WhatsApp. If you have a smartphone, download these apps before you travel abroad so you will be able to activate the account.

**If you have access to a landline phone, you can purchase a calling card to make international calls.** We advise that you wait until you have arrived in Costa Rica to purchase a calling card because many of the ones in the States are costly. The calling cards are readily available at local corner shops.

Phone calls in Costa Rica are charged by the call and all local calls are charged. Therefore, if you use your host family’s home phone line, you must first ask their permission and it is polite to offer to pay for the time you spend on personal calls.

**COMPUTERS**
The Centro Lingüístico Conversa has wireless Internet available for student use. Internet cafés and the library are also available in Santa Ana. Last summer, Santa Ana was offering free Wi-Fi. Please note that it is not a guarantee that all host families will have Wi-Fi networks in their homes available for student use.

If you want to bring your laptop, we recommend doing the following:
- **Check if your computer has a built-in transformer that is capable of handling the different voltages.** You will need an adapter for the plug (i.e. from flat to round prongs).
- **Please note that if you take a laptop with you, it is at your own risk.** Check your homeowner’s insurance to make sure that it is covered when you are away from your primary residence. If not covered by your homeowner’s insurance, you may want to check into laptop insurance through [http://www.safeware.com/](http://www.safeware.com/), a worldwide insurance provider for all electronic devices (e.g. laptop, digital camera, iPod, etc.). They also have a provision for non-electronic personal property.
- **Do NOT pack your laptop or laptop charger in your checked luggage.**
**EXPENSES**
In estimating your financial needs while you are in Costa Rica, calculate the amount of money you will need for meals for the entire period of your stay; your transportation and lodging costs for any personal trips you will be taking on the weekends, and your personal entertainment and social activities costs.

- A good way to estimate what you might need in Costa Rica is to assume that whatever you spend here in the U.S. (in dollars), you will spend the same (numerical) amount in local currency. Take that dollar amount and convert to the local currency using the current exchange rate.
- Keep in mind when budgeting that the meals during the program are covered during class days (breakfast and dinner with the host families and lunch and a snack at Conversa). Any meals that are eaten out on free days, weekends or additionally during the week are at personal cost.
- For a 4-week summer program, it is recommended that you budget at least $500- $1000 (depending on your weekend plans and personal spending habits).

**CURRENCY**
Costa Rica uses the Colon as the national currency. Exchange some dollars for Costa Rican Colones before you leave the U.S. Don’t exchange more than $100, you just need enough to get you to your study abroad location and to a bank abroad. Visit [http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/) for the current exchange rate.

**BANKING**
We recommend you set up online banking for your bank accounts prior to departure from the U.S. so you can monitor your account while overseas. The easiest way to access money abroad is with an ATM card. You can use a Debit Card at any ATM to withdraw cash whenever you need it though there will often be a withdrawal fee.

For those who receive financial aid, ensure that any student loans you have requested will be available for disbursement during the term you are abroad. Disbursement usually occurs after students have left the U.S., so make arrangements for your check to be deposited, if that is your chosen method of disbursement.

Before using an ATM or debit card overseas, we recommend the following:
- Contact your financial institution(s) before you leave the U.S. to make sure your ATM or debit card is activated for international use. You will also need to inform them of your dates/location abroad. If you fail to contact your financial institution(s), it is not unusual for credit card companies to “freeze” an account if suspicious or fraudulent activity is suspected.
- **Make sure your debit/ATM card is linked to a checking account, rather than to a savings account, so you will have access to your funds.**
- If you have a pin longer than 4 digits or based on letters, you may have trouble using it abroad. You will need to change your pin before departure.
- You should also contact your financial institution for information regarding ATM transaction fees. You can limit the fees if your U.S. bank has a ‘sister’ bank in the host country and/or if you limit your withdrawals, though we do not advise keeping large sums of money on your person or stored in your residence, even if a safe is provided. If a safe is not provided, we encourage students to lock valuables in their suitcase when leaving the housing accommodation.
- Keep a record of all credit/debit/ATM card numbers and the phone numbers you would need to call, with area codes, if they are lost or stolen. Keep this record in a safe place separate from your cards, and you should provide a copy to family at home.

**MasterCard and Visa are the most widely accepted credit cards overseas.** A credit card with “chip and pin” technology is recommended, as this is the standard abroad.
IMMUNIZATIONS/MEDICAL CONCERNS
Florida State University requires certain immunizations prior to your registration for classes. All newly admitted degree-seeking students (freshman and transfer) and non-FSU students must complete the required Student Immunization Form. The form must be mailed or faxed directly to Florida State University Health Services, Health Compliance Office, 960 Learning Way, Tallahassee, FL 32306-4178, fax (850) 644-8958.

It is very important that you make yourself aware of specific requirements and health matters in your program location. The FSU Health and Wellness Center offers a travel clinic which provides immunizations. Additional information is available through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s site: www.cdc.gov/travel/. Please note that some countries have specific requirements for inoculations based on past location(s) the traveler has visited. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure previous travel has not triggered additional requirements.

- A tetanus booster shot is suggested if you have not had one within the past 10 years.
- We highly recommend that you bring sufficient quantities of your prescription medication with you to last for the duration of your stay. Keep these in their original containers with copies of the prescriptions and place them in your carry-on luggage. Be sure to bring a copy of a legible prescription from your doctor and be aware that not all U.S. drugs are available elsewhere. In particular, Adderall and Concerta are not available in all countries. Don’t postpone discussing your prescription needs with your doctor. After discussing medications with your doctor, students will need to work with their insurance company to cover the vacation prescription. Students who experience difficulty in obtaining a vacation prescription should seek assistance from our office.
- If you wear glasses or contact lenses, take an extra pair and/or the prescription.
- Complete routine medical and dental care before you leave.

The CISI insurance provided is included in your program fee and the policy is available on our website: http://international.fsu.edu/Documents/HealthSafety/CISIInsurancePolicy.pdf. You will want to familiarize yourself with the coverage details.

ALCOHOL AWARENESS & ILLEGAL DRUGS
The legal age for the drinking of alcohol in Costa Rica is 18. This means that you will likely have the opportunity to buy and drink alcohol legally. It is in your interest to recognize that this right carries a great deal of responsibility. The Florence Study Center has a strict code of conduct relating to the use of alcohol, violations of which will likely result in a judicial hearing with the possible sanction of being dismissed from the program. In short, know your limits and drink within moderation if you choose to do so, but not to excess.

Florida State University has a zero-tolerance policy regarding the possession, use, manufacture, production, sale, exchange or distribution of illegal drugs by students participating in FSU study abroad programs. Violation of this policy may result in immediate dismissal from the program and disciplinary action onsite or upon return to campus. International Programs’ policies follow either the U.S. law or local law, whichever is more stringent with regard to drug use. For complete information on student judicial processes, victim’s rights, and appeals see the Student Conduct Code at: http://dos.fsu.edu/srr/.
Policies & Safety

Rules, Policies & Procedures
Florida State degree-seeking, transient, and special students are bound by the rules, policies, and procedures set forth in the FSU General Bulletin and Student Handbook. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with these before you leave. You may locate the FSU General Bulletin online at http://registrar.fsu.edu/ and The Code of Student Conduct at https://dos.fsu.edu/srr/conduct-codes/student-conduct-codes. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities updates any changes to the Code of Student Conduct.

Safety & Security
Our highest priority is the welfare and security of our students, faculty, staff and facilities. We have emergency plans in place for each of our locations and work closely with our insurers and 24/7 emergency response providers to monitor and respond to all situations worldwide. It is our policy to follow guidance from the respective U.S. Embassies, U.S. State Department, as well as local officials and keep students apprised of any new information. For more information on IP’s security policies and procedures, please contact our Director of Risk and Emergency Management, Chris Carroll at 850.644.7823 or ccarroll@fsu.edu.

- Resources. Even though students are not on the main campus, they have access to many resources should they encounter issues while abroad. Program staff members are available to support students in a variety of ways, including connecting students with other professionals locally and/or on the main campus.
  - Victim Advocate Program. The University takes very seriously all types of victimization, including sexual violence, relationship violence, and domestic violence. Advocates are available and on-call 24 hours a day to provide confidential support services, even for students who are abroad. For more information on the Victim Advocate Program, visit: http://victimadvocate.fsu.edu.
  - University Counseling Center. The Counseling Center is a welcoming and confidential place to discuss questions and concerns such as homesickness, struggles with relationships, sexual identity, cultural issues, and more. Visit: https://counseling.fsu.edu/ for more information.
  - Center for Health Advocacy & Wellness. The Center for Health Advocacy & Wellness encourages students to make healthy lifestyle decisions that facilitate academic success and lead to life-long health and wellness. For more information, visit: http://chaw.fsu.edu/.

- The U.S. State Department maintains a web site of information for Americans studying abroad, including current travel advisory warnings, at: http://studentsabroad.state.gov/.

- The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency. We strongly recommend you register here: https://step.state.gov/step/.

- Waivers. All IP participants will be given a Waiver of Liability via email. It must be signed and submitted to IP.

- Be aware that you are subject to the laws of the country in which you are traveling.

- Valuables. Students should not take sentimental valuables on their program. Students should not leave cash, passports, or other items of value unattended in their rooms. If a locker or safe is provided, students are strongly encouraged to use it to store anything of value at all times. Students should plan regular visits to the cash machine rather than leaving large amounts of cash in their rooms. Students are responsible for ensuring their rooms are left secure at all times – do not prop open doors, do not leave doors and windows unlocked, do not give keys to anyone. If students notice others in the building leaving the main entrance door unsecured, they should notify the IP staff immediately, even if there are others living in the building who are not FSU program participants. Students are strongly encouraged to purchase insurance that will cover their belongings while abroad, whether a standard homeowners or renters policy. The International Programs insurance policy does not cover loss or theft of participants’ possessions.

- Pickpocketing. In most large cities throughout the world, pickpocketing is the most common crime and can happen anytime, anywhere! We caution you to always be aware of your surroundings. While traveling in some areas beware of beggars who try to distract you with papers, boxes, or excessive body movements. Coats and purses are often stolen in crowded areas. Keep them close to you and lock your pack zippers with a combo lock. Secure your valuables if you are traveling on an overnight (“sleeper”) train.

- Weapons. Students are strictly prohibited from keeping or using firearms, knives, weapons (including pellet, air guns, paintball guns or other dangerous articles or substances). Furthermore, mace and/or pepper spray may be illegal in the countries that you visit. It is your responsibility to know the laws regarding weapons in the host country if you intend to bring any item for self-defense.
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
The more information you find out about the country beforehand, the better off you will be once you get there. Here is a list of a few web sites that may be helpful as you begin your information search.

http://www.tripadvisor.com (online travel guide)
http://www.railpass.com/ (Eurail pass information)
http://www.letsgo.com/ (on-line travel guide, check out the “HotLinks” button)
http://cnn.com/WEATHER/ (daily weather forecasts)
https://www.roughguides.com/ (travel guide)
https://nolesabroad.international.fsu.edu/ (FSU International Programs blog with articles from former program participants)

USEFUL APPS
Google Translate (instantly translates words, phrases, and web pages between English and over 100 other languages)
Dark Sky (With down-to-the-minute forecasts, you’ll know exactly when the rain will start or stop, right where you’re standing)
Mobile Passport (authorized by U.S. Government to get through customs upon your return to the U.S. Allows you to use the dedicated mobile passport line in 21 participating airports).

(Note: Florida State University is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.)

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