

Dear CCID Troika Study Abroad Student,
Below are listed some tips and benefits that we hope you will find useful before you go on your study abroad trip.
If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call the CCID office at 319-398-7183.

Tips and benefits for your study abroad trip

Before Leaving

Studying abroad can be a fun and safe experience but it is important to realize that you are subject to the laws and customs of another country. Here are some tips to help keep you prepared and safe.

Copies of your personal or travel documents

Make copies of your air tickets (even if they are e-tickets), entire passport, insurance policy, trip itinerary and emergency contacts (in the US and in Ecuador – you will receive those before the trip). Take one copy of each with you and leave one copy at home with parents or with a spouse or a friend. Keep your copies separately from the originals while traveling. This will help expedite obtaining a replacement passport in the event that a passport is lost or stolen.

Laws and behavior

Although most trips abroad are trouble free, being prepared will go a long way in avoiding the possibility of a serious trouble.

Become familiar with the basic laws and customs of the country you plan to visit before you travel. It is important that you are aware of local laws abroad and obey them. Remember, while in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws!

In addition: Reckless behavior while in another country can do more than ruin your study abroad; it can land you in a foreign jail or worse! *To have a safe trip, avoid risky behavior and plan ahead.*

Country background

Learn about the country that you are going to visit. Before departing, take the time to *do some research about the people and their culture*, and any problems that the country is experiencing that may affect your travel plans. It is important to learn about the history, culture, politics and customs of the country you are going to visit, and to respect the country's customs, rules and laws. For instance, various countries and cultures observe certain manners and dress codes. *American students should also abide by these manners and dress codes as much as possible.*

The Department of State publishes Background Notes on about 170 countries. These brief, factual pamphlets contain information on each country's culture, history, geography, economy, government, and current political situation. Background Notes are available at www.state.gov. CCID also posted several web links about Ecuador on our website at www.ccidinc.org.

Additionally, your lead program instructor will require that you *fully participate in the pre-departure orientation sessions*. The work you do during these sessions will not only help you learn more about Ecuador, but it will be a part of your final grading so please take on this matter with a full responsibility.

Language

It is a good idea to *learn a few words and expression in Spanish, the official language of Ecuador*. Learning basic phrases of the language can be helpful because not in every part of the country you visit, people can speak English (this is particularly true for the rainforest).

Medical Insurance


You should take a look at your personal medical insurance (or through your college) so you know what coverage you currently have. As part of your program fee, *CCID is also enrolling you for some medical insurance coverage*. Within the next several weeks, expect to receive more information on the insurance benefits and what this coverage provides. Insurance ID cards will be mailed to you as well.


While You Are Abroad


Whether you are traveling alone or as a group, using your common sense and staying alert to possible dangerous situations will help you avoid problems when you are away from home. Help make your travels safer by following these useful tips:

Safety Tips


Always pack your own baggage. Remember not to leave luggage unattended and not to carry packages for anyone else (at any time during your travel). The packages could contain drugs or other illegal items, or these could be inserted in your own luggage without your consent.


 Do not become a target for thieves by wearing conspicuous clothing and expensive looking jewelry.

 *Obey the local laws* otherwise you can be imprisoned, fined or deported for offenses that incur only a caution back home.

 **Keep your passport, money and other important belongings in a secure place at all times.**

Don't keep all your money in one place and make sure you note the number of your credit or ATM card so it can be replaced if stolen. Have a tel # of your bank or credit card company handy. Be especially careful when you're out and about - the crowded city streets are favorite places for pickpockets.

 When it comes to drugs, be aware of the consequences. *Using drugs abroad can carry heavy penalties, including the death sentence.* If you are going to drink alcohol, know your limit. Accidents are more likely after using alcohol or drugs, and in such cases you're unlikely to be covered by your insurance.

 *Make sure any wildlife souvenirs* or products can be legally taken out of the country and *legally imported back home.* Some wildlife souvenirs are banned from international trade, many more require special permits from the country of export. Failure to do so may result in the confiscation of the product, and hefty penalties by the U.S. Agriculture Customs Control.

The Agriculture Customs Control at the port of entry (airport you are flying in to) in the United States also **DOES NOT allow bringing any live plants or organisms** including such simple ones as an apple or banana or single specimen of a plant you liked in the other country – items you took with you on the airplane but did not use or forgot about. You may face *high fines for carrying these plants into the US* if found in your luggage by the agriculture customs control officer.

Long Term Benefits

The best thing about study abroad memories is that they don't cost anything. Although you are the only person who will ever really know what it was like, your friends will notice that you've changed since the last time they saw you. You're suddenly more open, spontaneous, mature, confident, and cultured. After all, you've seen another part of the world.

Benefits from study abroad program

- Learn by doing and earn credits at the same time
- Understand yourself better
- Become more independent
- Increase your ability to budget money and time, make decisions and prioritize
- Make friends from other cultures
- Understanding your major in its international context
- Inspire a career
- Experience professional growth
- Live a dream and acquire cherished memories
- Become more open-minded and flexible
- Experience a new culture
- Expand cross-cultural communication
- Strengthen problem-solving skills
- Widen horizons
- Defy convention and learn to celebrate diversity and appreciate differences
- Look ahead - impress a recruiter & become competitive in today's job market
- Challenge yourself and summon your courage
- See the United States from a different perspective

Read a report on more benefits, called "The Benefits of Study Abroad, New Study Confirms Significant Gains" By Mary M. Dwyer, Ph.D. and Courtney K. Peters: www.iesabroad.com