

## FIRST TIME ABROAD VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Slide 1: Congratulations! Because you're here, you're thinking about studying abroad. 70% of undergraduates go abroad during their time at DU, and the OIE is here as a resource for you to help you through the whole process.

Slide 2: Traveling internationally for the first time can be intimidating and the logistics can feel overwhelming. When planning for your time abroad, you have to remember things like passports and visas, money matters, transportation, and more.

### Passports and Visas:

Slide 3: If you don't have one already, apply for a passport ASAP. A passport can take some time to get. Go to the US State Department website for more info. For passport photos, check the requirements of the country you're travelling to, as some countries have different requirements than we do in the US. Make sure it's valid for at least 6 months after your planned return date.

Slide 4: You'll also need a visa. For some tourist travel, you may not need a visa, but many countries require a student visa for study abroad. Once you have been nominated to a program, apply for any visas you may need ASAP. Visas can take time to process, and you may need to either mail your passport to the consulate or go there in person to get the visa. For specific information on how to apply for a visa, consult with an OIE advisor for that country, your program, or the host country's embassy website. Your program may also send you instructions and help guide you through the visa process once you've committed to the program.

Slide 5: If you plan to travel outside of your host country or have layovers in other countries, check the visa policies in these countries too. Some countries, like Italy, don't require US citizens to have a tourist visa for stays up to 90 days, and some countries, like China, require a transit visa in order to change terminals in the airport. Finally, don't forget to make copies of all your important documents like visas and passports. Keep the copies with you while traveling outside your residence abroad and leave the real ones someplace safe.

### Money Matters:

Slide 6: Before you go, look at the exchange rate between the USD and your host country's currency. This will give you an idea of how far your dollar can go in your host country, although exchange rates do fluctuate a lot. Some countries will only accept certain card carriers (like Visa and MasterCard), while others are more cash-focused (like the Netherlands and Japan). ATMs, currency exchanges, and banks can all be good places to exchange currency while abroad. Banks are generally the cheapest places to exchange money, while currency exchanges in airports are very convenient. Be careful using ATMs. They

can be very helpful, but sometimes they are outfitted with devices meant to steal your information. Keep a close eye on your bank accounts during your time abroad and after you get back home.

Slide 7: Remember to contact your credit card companies and bank to notify them of your upcoming travel, otherwise they may lock your accounts! Be mindful of foreign transaction fees on credit and debit cards. Minimize trips to the ATM to avoid excessive fees. For example, you may want to take out 400 Euro's all at once for one month's time, rather than making four weekly trips for 100 Euros. Our advice is to go right to your residence after withdrawing large sums of money. Store your money in a secure place in your room, along with your passport. Try to never carry more money on you than you are willing to lose.

#### Transportation and Arrival:

Slide 8: Arrival in a foreign country is always intimidating, especially if it's your first time abroad on your own. Remember you will need to clear immigration and customs. The immigration services will first ask to see your passport and ensure you have the correct visa for your stay.

Slide 9: This will be followed by a trip through customs. Customs is the legal authority in the country you enter that controls the flow of goods, including foods, personal effects, and hazardous items. Some countries have restrictions on what you can bring, like medication, so a little research can be helpful. For more in-depth information on Customs and Immigration, please check out what the University of Minnesota's Study Abroad Office provides on their website:

<https://umabroad.umn.edu/students/travel/customs>

Slide 10: Plan how you'll get from the airport to where you're staying ahead of time. Will you use a rideshare service, train, or bus? Some programs (like SIT or ISA) offer pick-up and drop-off services at the airport. Just in case, download a map to your phone or take screenshots of the directions between your arrival location and your residence. Memorize your address abroad! It can also be helpful to memorize the address of your student center or program center, if you have one. Don't forget to let loved ones back home know that you've arrived safely.

Slide 11: Your commute between your residence and school or other places may be longer than what you are accustomed to here. A 30-minute plus commute each way is common abroad. Make sure you give yourself extra time to get around during your time abroad. Buses, trains, biking, and walking are all common ways to get around. Ridesharing services are becoming more common abroad, but be careful when using them. Some countries may not allow these services, or you may have to use them differently than you would here. Do some research before using ridesharing services abroad.

#### Packing:

Slide 12: Pack wisely! Checking bags can get pricey, especially if you have a lot of connecting flights. Keep important things like documents, electronics, and medications in your carry-on in case your

checked bag gets lost. It can also be helpful to leave empty space in your bags on the way to your host country, because you will likely fill that space with things you gather during your time abroad.

Slide 13: Don't worry too much about not being able to find your favorite products abroad. You may not be able to find specific brands abroad, but you will most likely be able to find products like deodorant, shampoo, razors, and mascara. If you have questions, you can do some research or reach out to returnees from your program to see how they packed and what's available abroad. Some programs and program providers, like SIT, will also provide you with a packing list that they've carefully created to fit the needs of the program.

Tech:

Slide 14: Many of us (me included) can't live without our phones. To get coverage abroad, you have some options. You can get a local SIM card in your country. Just make sure that you unlock your phone with your US phone carrier before leaving the US. You can also buy a cheap phone in your host country. Keep in touch with people in other countries via WiFi and apps like GroupMe and What'sApp. Despite what your language professors say, you can use Google Translate to communicate abroad. We recommend that you do try to learn the basics of the language of your host country, though.

Slide 15: Also, you may not have the same level or quality of Internet access abroad as you do at home. You may have to be flexible in seeking out places that give you better Internet access. Don't forget that you may have a big time difference between your host country and home country! You can use time zone converters to make sure you register for DU classes on time or call your friends and family while they're awake. You can look online to find out how to make and receive calls from outside your host country, or you can use WiFi-based tools like FaceTime.

Slide 16: Bring outlet adapters with you. Many countries have different voltage and outlet shapes than what we have in the US. These adapters will allow you to use your electronics in your host country and safely convert the voltage so that you don't burn them out.

Health & Safety

Slide 17: International SOS is your best friend when it comes to health and safety abroad. Rules about how to stay safe and what medications you can bring vary with each country. For instance, Adderall is illegal in Japan. You can call ISOS and speak with a member of the security team or health team and ask them every question you can think of, like if taking an Uber at night alone is safe or if you can bring allergy medicine with you.

Slide 18: You can also ask ISOS what vaccinations you need before you go abroad. Many countries have vaccination requirements—like for tetanus and yellow fever—for foreign travelers. Do research on health and safety best practices before you go abroad. For example, I learned to not eat marmots in when I was abroad in Mongolia because they carry the bubonic plague. You also need full health insurance coverage while you're abroad. [Click here to watch the video about health insurance abroad.](#)

## Family:

Slide 19: Don't forget about your family back home. They may be really worried about you being so far away, and they will miss you a lot. If you're only calling them to vent about things that aren't going well abroad, it may make them even more worried about you. Don't forget to tell them about all the good parts of being abroad and ease their fears a little bit.

Slide 20: You can also give the ISOS number to them, so they can reach out to security and health professionals themselves when they have questions. Keep them updated on what you're doing abroad, and help them find answers to any questions they may have. Remember to communicate the value of study abroad with concerned family members and share available resources with them. The Study Abroad Handbook is an excellent resource for families.

## Go Easy on Yourself

Slide 21: Finally, be easy on yourself! Studying abroad is a fantastic experience, but it can come with culture shock, loneliness, homesickness, and frustrations. It's good to push yourself out of your comfort zone, and you'll grow a lot during your time abroad. Give yourself time to adjust to your host country, and remember that you'll learn a lot from your mistakes. If you're really struggling, though, don't be afraid to reach out for help. The OIE, your host program, and your peers are all good resources to help make your time abroad easier.

Slide 22: If you have questions, you can always find more information at [www.du.edu/abroad](http://www.du.edu/abroad) or contact us at [duabroad@du.edu](mailto:duabroad@du.edu). For program-specific questions, like what a packing list might contain, you can also reach out to your program provider. Get excited to study abroad!!