

LeadAbroad

2024 Accepted Student Welcome Packet



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Contact

For any questions please email info@leadabroad.com or call 404.720.5657

Get Ready to Take Off

Passports

To apply for a U.S. passport, click here. If you are not a U.S. citizen, you must thoroughly research passport and visa requirements for citizens of your home country. **New passports can take between 4-5 months to process. We strongly recommend all students to apply for a passport no later than December.**

If you already have a U.S. passport, check to confirm the following:

- The expiration date – countries require your passport to be valid **BEYOND** your planned return date. Make sure your passport is valid for this length of time **BEYOND** when you get back to the United States after your program.
 - 6 months: Greece and South Africa
 - 3 months: Italy, Spain, Portugal
 - 30 days: Costa Rica
 - as an example – if you are traveling to Cape Town and you are scheduled to return to the States on May 22 after your program is complete your passport can not expire before November 23, 2024.
- The passport has at least two blank pages
- Your name is spelled correctly

If your passport does not have all requirements above, you must renew your passport before traveling abroad.

All students are required to submit passport information via the passport form in the LeadAbroad portal in February. Please do not submit a passport that is expired or in the process of being renewed. When your new passport arrives, you can then submit your form.

For more information on documents for travel, visit the [Department of State passport website](#) or their [Students Abroad](#) section.

Booking Your Flight

The LeadAbroad team will support you every step of the way when planning your flights! Please review the sections below as well as the [flights FAQ section](#) for tips on booking flights. LeadAbroad encourages students to align your flights with our recommended flight itineraries to ensure you are traveling with other students and to allow for you to participate in our group shuttle to the accommodations.

- Recommended Flight Priorities:
 - **Connection time** (preferably more than 1.5 hours and less than four):
 - We prefer this window of time for connections to mitigate the risk of missing connections and lost luggage but not making the travel experience overly long and exhausting.
 - **Return flight** (preferably by 4PM local time arrives in the US in time for connecting flights (if necessary):
 - By arriving back to the US earlier in the day you will have more options for connecting flights to your home city. Otherwise, if you return too late you may need to book a hotel and plan to stay before departing for your home city in the morning.
 - **Program arrival window** (usually a one to two hour block of time all flights arrive):
 - By aggregating all the recommended flights during one arrival window we are able to welcome students abroad, offer group transportation and give students time to rest before their program orientation begins.
 - **Number of connections** (ideally direct flights but up to one connection):
 - We prefer flights with less connections for ease, convenience and less risk of travel delay.
 - **Departure hub cities** (preferably geographically mirroring the majority of our students):
 - We do our best to colocate our recommended flights in cities that are proximate to our students such as Dallas and Atlanta to create the least amount of connections.
- Students should book all flights under one reservation, not separate tickets, if connecting flights are needed.
 - Go to the airlines website, enter your hometown as the origin city and program city as your final destination.
 - Search for available itineraries within our dates (listed on your program specific page).
 - Review the options and search for an itinerary with a layover in the recommended city.
 - Purchase a ticket! This way, all of your flights are booked together, and you'll be on one of our recommended itineraries.
- Group shuttle to the hotel **after arrival**:
 - Students must arrive within the arrival window in order to be greeted and join the group shuttle.
 - Arrival windows are posted on your program pages.
 - If you are scheduled to arrive before the group lands, you can wait at the airport for the group shuttle or pay for your own transfer to the accommodations. LeadAbroad will assist you in arranging this transportation or give you guidance on taxis in your program city.
- Group shuttle to the airport for **departure back to U.S.**:
 - LeadAbroad will provide a shuttle to the airport on departure day. Specific times are posted on your program page.

Tips for Flying

In order to arrive abroad rested and ready to go, consider the following tips to make your flight experience as enjoyable and safe as possible:

- **GET TO THE AIRPORT EARLY.** Do not start your trip stressed. For most international flights, we recommend that you arrive at the airport at least three hours prior to departure.
- **Print flight itineraries** for the trip and have them easily accessible.
- **Weigh your bags before you leave home.** Check baggage size and weight restrictions for ALL AIRLINES you might be flying during the program. Smaller budget airlines abroad usually have stricter baggage policies than the larger U.S.-based carriers.
- **Pack the following items in your carry-on.** If your checked baggage takes an adventure of its own, having these items with you will create less stress and allow for a more comfortable plane ride:
 - Two days worth of clothes
 - Medications/contacts
 - Laptop, cell phone, chargers, other electronics
 - Water bottle
 - Headphones/earbuds
 - Blindfold and ear plugs if you are sensitive to light/sound when trying to sleep on planes
 - Journal/books/Kindle/magazines
 - Program director's phone number
 - Accommodations address
- **Stay hydrated.** Drink plenty of fluid while in the air. It is easy to become dehydrated when flying.
- **Know where your passport is at all times.** When checking in at the airport, you will have to get your passport in and out of your bag several times; at each stop, be sure to take a moment for a passport check.
- **Try to get some sleep!** We have busy days upon arrival.
- **Make a medication plan.** If you have to take medications at a certain time during the day or at the same time everyday you might need to adapt this prior to departure.
- **Make special meal requests if necessary.** If you have any special requests, be sure to contact the airline at least 72 hours prior to departure.
- **Pack a pen.** Make sure you have a pen for any immigration forms. Flight attendants usually distribute arrival forms shortly after take-off. On these forms, note that you are a tourist, not a student.

COVID-19 Information

Study abroad specifically – and life in general – was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020-2022. However, as the world normalized in 2023 our programs saw no material COVID-19 effects.

We hope COVID-19 will not be a meaningful risk nor alter the way we deliver programs in the future. Nonetheless, we remain vigilant and prepared. We believe studying abroad can be a transformative experience. Travel and living in a new environment leads to personal, academic and cultural growth which cannot be replicated without leaving your comfort zone.

Please review the following resources regarding COVID-19 and your LeadAbroad program:

[COVID-19 Vaccine Policy](#)

[COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[State Department Travel Information](#)

Health & Insurance

LeadAbroad strongly encourages students to be mindful of their health prior to departure and while abroad. Living in a new environment, eating different cuisine and adjusting to a new schedule can impact one's immune system. Before you travel overseas, students should examine the factors that contribute to their physical and emotional wellbeing so that they can stay healthy and get the most out of their trip.

1. Review the [LeadAbroad Code of Conduct](#). Students should be familiar with requirements and recommendations to ensure a safe travel experience.
2. Check that you are caught up on routine shots and vaccinations. Consistent with the requirements of the Georgia Board of Regents, the following routine vaccinations are required for all students enrolled in LeadAbroad:
 - Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) 2 doses
 - Tetanus or Diphtheria (Tdap or Td) must be up to date
 - Hepatitis B series
 - Varicella (Chicken Pox) 2 doses or date of disease
 - [COVID-19 vaccine policy](#)
3. [Read and understand the CDC recommendations for your upcoming travel](#). The CDC website includes information on vaccines, medicines, packing lists as well as information to prepare students to stay healthy and safe.
4. Make an appointment with your university's travel clinic, dentist and other medical professionals. Students can proactively eliminate many potential health issues by ensuring they are in good health prior to departure. Additionally, during these visits, make sure your health records and prescriptions (including eyeglasses) are up-to-date. If you are taking a prescription medication, please ensure that you have enough for the whole program and that the medication is in the original container. If you self-inject prescribed medication, please carry needles and syringes with you. It's important to understand that LeadAbroad will not distribute any form of prescription or nonprescription medication to students. We recommend every student travel with a medical kit.

5. Be honest with yourself regarding your emotional health. Students that are concerned about their emotional stability or use of alcohol/drugs should address it honestly before making plans to travel. Contrary to many people's expectations, travel does not minimize these problems; in fact, it can often exacerbate them.
6. Contact us directly at info@LeadAbroad.com with any specific medical issues we should be aware of at least two months prior to departure. Our team is better equipped to support you abroad if we know your health history and emotional health. Please share this information with us prior to departure.

[Click here to view LeadAbroad's health insurance policy on our insurance page.](#)

Basic medical insurance is included in all students' program fee. Please review the policy to become knowledgeable regarding the types of medical conditions and situations that are covered while you are participating on the program. If you are injured or ill while you are abroad and need medical attention, you will likely need to pay for the treatment upfront and, if covered, the money will be reimbursed by LeadAbroad's insurer after submitting your claims form. If for any reason you need to seek medical assistance while abroad, a LeadAbroad staff member will accompany you to the doctor. Please contact us first if you have any sort of emergency.

It's important to note that this medical insurance is not 'travel insurance' and therefore does not cover the cost of lost or stolen luggage or cancellation of the trip. Students may purchase travel insurance independently through an outside provider. For more information on the different types of travel insurance you can click [here](#).

Cell Phones & Communication

LeadAbroad requires students to have cell phones while abroad for risk management purposes.

Most students opt into an international plan with their local carrier. Contact your carrier to see what plans they have available that meet your needs. Though there is wifi at the dorms and on campus, having access to data while out and about in the city is important for safety. Another option that is slightly more cost effective, but requires some additional steps, is getting your cell phone unlocked and purchasing a local sim card abroad. Most carriers require that your phone is paid off in order for it to be unlocked. Finally, E-Sims is another alternative for international cell phone usage.

LeadAbroad integrates technology into our communications and risk management strategy to keep students safe. Therefore, we require students to download the following applications on their phone prior to departure:

- GroupMe
- Find My Friends
- State Department Smart Traveler

If there is an emergency at home while you are abroad, our team will support you and your family in every way possible. Should any friends and/or family need to contact LeadAbroad, please have them call our U.S.-based domestic team at 404.720.5657. For emergencies, dial extension 710 when prompted. Our on-call team will assist with the situation and get in touch with your program staff as needed.

In Country Details

Housing and Roommates

Links to all accommodations can be found on your program pages. LeadAbroad prioritizes safety, walkability and community when selecting our accommodations. In every location, our staff will stay at the property with our students.

To request a roommate, please submit the Housing Form in your online portal by the posted due date. Forms submitted after the due date may not be reviewed. Once roommates are posted, we cannot make any changes. If you've already submitted your roommate form but wish to make a change to your request before the form due date, please email info@LeadAbroad.com ASAP.

Spending Money Abroad

We will have updated 2024 budget worksheets coming soon!

This worksheet will allow you to understand costs outside of the program fees and airfare. Review this section in detail and email us at info@LeadAbroad.com with any further budgeting questions.

1. Call your bank

- Before you leave, call your bank and credit card company to notify them that you will be traveling abroad. Give them the dates and countries of your itinerary, including any layovers. Debit and credit cards can be blocked after transactions abroad because your bank may assume it is a fraudulent transaction.

2. Have a way to access cash

- Though credit cards are widely accepted abroad, it is also important to be able to access cash. The easiest way to do this is to use your debit card at a local ATM machine. Debit cards with Visa, MasterCard, Cirrus or Plus signs are the most widely accepted. There may be a transaction fee for using ATMs abroad; therefore, it's important to understand the fees associated with using your cards overseas. Keep a record of your debit card and pin numbers with someone at home.

3. Have more than one credit/debit card with you abroad

- In case one of your cards is lost, damaged or stolen it is important to have another way to access money. Having cards stored in Apple Pay is helpful as well, but physical cards are best. Similar to debit cards, credit card companies use the current exchange rate for your transaction.

- Call your credit card company to understand the fees charged per transaction. Once abroad, store one card safely in your room and carry the other card with you.

4. Don't bring a lot of cash

- We recommend that students do not bring large sums of US dollars with them. It is not convenient to exchange money and students typically get a poor exchange rate. Using your debit card abroad is the best option. We recommend that students do not bring traveler's checks. Most businesses will not accept them.

The program fees cover a lot of the costs of being in country, but you will need to provide additional funds for:

- a. Meals: Most meals are the responsibility of the student
- b. Incidentals: Such as taxis and laundry
- c. Free time: Independent evenings and additional adventure outings
- d. Gifts and souvenirs

Budgeting can be a challenging and personal process. On average, students spend between \$40-\$50 per day on food and incidentals. Please review the budget worksheet for more information about your program city specifically.

Electronics Abroad

To charge your electronics abroad, will need pack (or purchase when you arrive) an outlet adaptor.

- South Africa
- Europe
- Costa Rica – does not require an adaptor

For some items like hair dryers and straighteners, you will also need to purchase a voltage converter since voltage is much higher abroad than the US. If you do not use a converter, you could damage your appliance.

We encourage students to be mindful of their electronics while traveling. It is wise to conceal electronic devices when walking around as iPhones and laptops can be attractive for theft.

Risk Management

LeadAbroad's Emergency Response Protocol provides a system for coordinating the management of emergency services for all participants in our study abroad programs. In-country staff are the first point of contact for students on the program in the event of an emergency and assume leadership of the emergency situation until other resources (e.g., local police, etc) are available. However, in the event that the staff are unavailable, the following guidelines are provided here in case you, as a participant in the program, need to handle an emergency.

1. **Ensure safety**

- Your first priority is to safeguard the safety and well-being of yourself and other program participants. Do whatever is reasonably necessary to ensure safety.

2. **Seek medical care**

- Obtain any emergency medical care for affected participants as soon as possible.

3. **Control emotions**

- Remain as calm as possible. Do your best to diffuse any growing anxieties that may be occurring among participants.

4. **Communicate (as applicable).**

- Depending on the nature of the emergency, it may be necessary to contact medical or emergency services, police or local law enforcement or the US embassy.

5. **Ongoing support**

- Continue to monitor, aid, and communicate status updates as the situation progresses.

6. **Debrief**

- Meet with LeadAbroad staff to discuss the situation, how it was handled and steps that were taken to resolve the emergency.

Reducing Risk Abroad

LeadAbroad takes many steps to reduce risk abroad. You will be registered with the U.S. State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program. The benefits of STEP include the following:

- Receive important information from the Embassy about safety conditions in your destination country, helping you make informed decisions about your travel plans.
- Help the U.S. Embassy contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest or family emergency.
- Help family and friends get in touch with you in an emergency.

You will be given all emergency contact numbers upon arrival.

Please review the following resources to ensure that you are informed on how to have a safe and healthy trip abroad:

- [CDC recommendations on preparing for a healthy trip](#)
- [State Department travel recommendations for student travelers](#)
- [State Department recommendations for women travelers](#)

Rules and Expectations

All students are required to be familiar with all program rules. [Please click here to review on our policies page.](#)

Get Ready for Class

LEAD & GO Programs

Please visit <https://www.leadabroad.com/accepted/all/> for more information regarding syllabus, pre-departure assignments, workbooks and more.

Transient Students & Credit Transfer

Students accepted into a LeadAbroad program are also simultaneously accepted into Oglethorpe University as transient students. Students are required to participate in all program and curriculum activities during the program unless they are granted an exemption by staff due to a physical or emotional reason. Oglethorpe University students follow the same process as transient students when participating on a LeadAbroad program.

Many universities across the country accept Oglethorpe University transfer credit; however, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to find out how the course credit transfers to your home institution. Every university has a unique process for accepting transient credit. Please schedule a meeting with your academic advisor and the study abroad office as soon as possible to understand your school's requirements. These steps **MUST** be completed prior to departure. LeadAbroad does not guarantee credit transfer to any particular university or major.

Disability and Special Accommodations

All LeadAbroad programs are inclusive and respectful of the needs, backgrounds and experiences of all its participants. Our policies can be found [here](#). If you have an accommodations request, please complete the Disability Accommodations Request form in your customer portal.

PRO & DIRECT Leadership Curriculum

PRO

Please visit <https://www.leadabroad.com/accepted/all/#pro> for more information regarding pre-departure assignments and program journal ordering.

DIRECT

Please visit <https://www.leadabroad.com/accepted/all/#direct> for more information regarding pre-departure assignments and program journal ordering.

Program Specific Information



DIRECT Cape Town Session 1

<https://www.leadabroad.com/accepted/directcpt1>



DIRECT Cape Town Session 2

<https://www.leadabroad.com/accepted/directcpt2>



DIRECT Greece Session 1

<https://www.leadabroad.com/accepted/directgre1>



DIRECT Greece Session 2

<https://www.leadabroad.com/accepted/directgre2>



DIRECT Florence

<https://www.leadabroad.com/accepted/directflorence>



GO Barcelona

<https://www.leadabroad.com/accepted/gobarcelona>



GO Lisbon

<https://www.leadabroad.com/accepted/golisbon>



GO Rome

<https://www.leadabroad.com/accepted/gorome>



LEAD Cape Town

<https://www.leadabroad.com/accepted/leadcpt>



LEAD Greece

<https://www.leadabroad.com/accepted/leadgre>



PRO Costa Rica Session 1

<https://www.leadabroad.com/accepted/procr1>



PRO Costa Rica Session 2

<https://www.leadabroad.com/accepted/procr2>



PRO Costa Rica Session 3

<https://www.leadabroad.com/accepted/procr3>