Lessons for Success From Experienced Travelers

- Establish good means of communication with doctors, counselors and banks over the internet and by phone, and have copies of all important numbers of accounts, cards, and people.

- Have more than just a passport as a form of ID (driver’s license, ISIC card, state ID card).

- Don’t pack large amounts of locally available products like shampoo, lotion, etc. Traveling light and buying local makes sense!

- Don’t have things mailed abroad; avoid it, whenever possible. In some countries, surface mail can take weeks (in some cases, months) to arrive.

- Leave what you don’t need at home, such as valuable jewelry and watches, and carry what you do travel with in an inconspicuous place (money belt, document pouch).

- Pack a change of clothes in your carry-on; sometimes luggage does not arrive with you.

- Don’t pack more than you can carry, you can wash clothes and buy local clothes and supplies for a true local experience.

- Be careful with military time! Most other countries run on a 24-hour clock, not a 12-hour clock like the U.S.

- Inform your loved ones, friends and staff abroad of your travel plans and develop a communication plan to inform them if plans change.

- If you dress cleanly, and act respectfully you will be welcome everywhere.

- Always have a plan B; avoid taking the last bus/flight of the day, leave yourself extra time to enjoy the scenery instead of rushing, always have a "safety cushion" of emergency cash, etc.

- Enjoy good, mid-price, healthy meals where you can observe and meet interesting locals, that won’t leave you hungry for snacks on which you end up spending lots of money.

- Have a communication plan with your parents, family and friends!

- Research you destination! Don’t know where to start? Try here: http://studentsabroad.state.gov/smarttravel/researchdestination.php

- Know the local laws of your destination country: don’t get caught unaware!