

COUNTRY ORIENTATION TOPICS

Details received from past participants and/or international students are subjective. They can provide you with a good guideline of what to expect but every experience is unique and program details may differ during your time abroad.

GENERAL COUNTRY TOPICS:

PACKING

- Luggage: suitcases, backpacks, etc.
- What to take, send or leave. How much? (YOU have to carry it).
- Things to bring that you wouldn't normally think of bringing -- e.g. photos of family and friends from home. Photos of Irvine. Gifts for new friends, host family, etc.

FINANCIAL

- Budgeting for your time abroad, how much to bring and in what form
- Accessing your money: ATMs, credit cards, etc.
- Banking, using a checking account, exchanging money, etc.

HOST CULTURE

- Crucial "no-no's" in host culture
- Important manners, acceptable behavior, appropriate dress, gestures to use or avoid
- Time and punctuality
- Eye contact with strangers
- Major holidays: Different from in the U.S.? Celebrated differently?
- Role of religion in daily life
- What do they think of Americans?
- Historical relationship between U.S. and host country?
- One or two things you really should know about the host country's past

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT AND WELL-BEING

- Illness/ Depression/ Loneliness/Anxiety
- Support services abroad (counseling, study centers, clubs, continued resources here at UCI)
- Safety concerns and tips
- Keeping a journal
- Communicating with home: email, phones, postal system reliable? *Note:* Limiting your contact with home may allow you more time to engage with locals and with your host culture, which could enhance your experience.
- Yes, they are different, they are supposed to be!

DAILY LIFE

- Weather, Clothing
- Health and health insurance: where to find health care (know before you need it!)
- Food and drink: what's common, where can you find it.
- Local transportation, how to get around
- Relationships: how to make friends, dating, visiting a friends family
- Sex, contraceptives, and AIDS
- What do people do in their free time: activities, recreation, leisure, internships, volunteering

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC TOPICS:

For this section, *if possible*, connect with returnees who are doing the same program as you either in person at the country orientation, using our Returnee List, or request with your regional advisor, as these topics might vary by program.

ARRIVAL AND START-UP

- Where will you arrive? How do you get to the Study Center or housing?
- Who will be your primary program contacts? What can you expect from them?
- Orientation – What will happen? How long?

ACADEMICS

- What’s different?: how you choose courses, class size, class structure, assignments and exams, relationship between professors and students, libraries, where to find books, other resources, etc.?
- Grading system
- Communicating with your Academic Counselor at UCI

NOTES:
