

## ■ CUSTOMS

Just when you begin to think you are home free, you'll have to go through customs to re-enter the United States. Not to worry though — knowing the rules can make customs a snap. It's a good idea to keep the receipts of all the purchases you make while abroad, because you'll be required to declare all of those items before you re-enter. The first \$400 worth of goods is duty free, but there's a 10% duty imposed on the next \$1,000.

Although you may run into the cutest pet llama in Peru, "He followed me! Can't I please keep him?" is probably not going to get him through customs. Your best bet is to leave the animals and vegetables behind, and take a lot of pictures. For detailed information about customs, write for the free booklet *Know Before You Go* from U.S. Customs, P.O. Box 7407, Washington, DC 20044; (202) 927-6724.

## ■ TRAVELING WITH A DISABILITY

With adequate preparation and precautions, much of the world is accessible to a disabled traveler. The U.S. branch of Mobility International publishes a quarterly newsletter, *Over the Rainbow* (\$10), and a booklet, *A World of Options* (\$16), that provide useful information about both travel and study. Order them from Mobility International, P.O. Box 3551, Eugene, OR 97403; (503) 343-1284.

## ■ CASH, CREDIT AND TRAVELER'S CHECKS

It's been said that the best things in life are free. While perhaps your most memorable moments — the moment you understand French curses, or reach the summit of the Matterhorn or bump into Princess Di in a shoe store — may cost you nothing, the mundane details of existence, such as food and shelter, have their price.

When creating your budget, try not to underestimate. Better safe than sorry holds especially true for travel, particularly when "sorry" means sleeping in train stations. A low estimate of spending money for a conscientious student traveler is a minimum of about \$30 dollars a day — but this varies from country to country and person to person. It's a good idea to talk to someone who has been to the country to get a rough idea of how much you'll really need.

The safest way to carry money is in traveler's checks. They are available through American Express, Thomas Cook, Citicorp, Barclays Bank, Visa and BankAmerica. Call around and find who offers the best services to fit your needs. To be on the safe side, be sure you record the numbers on all of the checks and keep a copy of the list, as well as the toll-free hotline numbers of the company, at home and in your luggage. Have a little local currency in your pockets when you enter the country, but wait to exchange the bulk of your checks at a local currency exchange or bank. You'll get better rates than you would at a hotel or in the U.S.

In case of emergency, it's a good idea to carry a major credit card or charge card, such as American Express, MasterCard or Visa. American Express cards also can be used to draw money from an account at home, with competitive exchange rates. Cash can be wired to you from home through Western Union or American Express.

## ■ HEALTH

Getting sick — at home or abroad — stinks. It's a good idea to have a general physical before any long trip. While traveling, know your limits — don't push yourself to do a night on Paris and then try to climb the Eiffel Tower at eight the next morning. Bring your own drug store supplies, such as motion sickness medications, laxatives, antacids, aspirins, decongestants and antiseptics, in case they're unavailable when minor health problems strike.

Make sure that all prescription drugs are in their labeled bottles, and carry a copy of the written prescription. Imagine the embarrassment of being thrown into a foreign prison for carrying unmarked acne medication ...

The bad news for those who hate shots is that some countries off the tourist circuit require certain vaccinations before you enter. Many African and Asian countries require certificates for inoculation against yellow fever and cholera. Pills to prevent malaria also may be required. In a few countries, you may be asked to show the results of an AIDS test.

You should check with your doctor or a local public health department for specifics.

For further information:

*Health Information for International Travel*, \$5, from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402; (202) 783-3238.

*AIDS and International Travel*, free from any Council Travel office.

## ■ SAFETY

Although you should by no means let paranoia ruin your travels, don't be naive. The nice man offering to carry your luggage just may run like hell once he has his hands on it. Always carry important documents on your body — one student (ouch!) filled her sneakers with traveler's checks. A money belt or neck wallet is better, as long as it's securely hidden under your clothes and not prey to the insidious hands of pickpockets.

In the case of disaster, keep a clear head. Photocopies of passports and a list of important items can help in filling out a police report or obtaining replacements. Be sure to keep the copies somewhere other than your wallet — they won't be much help if they're stolen, too.

The best way to stay out of trouble is to use your common sense. Women shouldn't walk the streets alone at night in any big city, whether it's in Illinois or Italy, and drugs are illegal just about everywhere. Don't be afraid to admit to yourself that you feel uncomfortable in a situation. Get yourself out of it by heading back to your friends or hopping in a taxi back to your room.

You're out to discover new worlds, but you want to be smart about it.