

■ THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

Although it's nice to know the local language when you travel, it is by no means necessary to be fluent. Here are a few key words:

French

Hello	<i>Bonjour</i>
Please	<i>S'il vous plaît</i>
Thank you	<i>Merci</i>
How much is it?	<i>Combien ça coûte?</i>

German

Hello	<i>Guten Tag</i>
Please	<i>Danke schön</i>
Thank you	<i>Bitte</i>
How much is it?	<i>Wieviel kostet?</i>

Spanish

Hello	<i>Buenos días</i>
Please	<i>Por favor</i>
Thank you	<i>Gracias</i>
How much is it?	<i>Cuánto?</i>

■ PHONE HOME

As for phoning home, AT&T's USA Direct is the easiest means. They give you a little card to carry that tells you what numbers to punch no matter what country you're in. And you get straight through to an English-speaking operator, a little plus that can make life on the road so much easier. For a free card, call (800) 874-4000. Never, ever call from a hotel without asking if there's a surcharge. It could be as much as 150 percent! You'll save a lot if you can hold off talking and just communicate by mail.

■ GUIDEBOOKS

There are guidebooks for just about every taste, and fortunately many people have an appetite for cheap travel. Here are some of the series helpful to student travelers:

- *Let's Go*: This is the grand-daddy of student guides, put together by Harvard students. It gives you the details on everything from bus routes to vegetarian restaurants.

- *Berkeley Guides*: The students at Berkeley are taking on Harvard with their own budget guides. They have similar information and present it with a funky, loose attitude.

- *Lonely Planet*: For travel to all parts of the world, this series of guidebooks is for the true budget traveler, experienced or inexperienced.

- *Insight Guides*: There are two versions of these guides. The full books spend most of their time on history, culture and atmosphere. The pocket guides of major cities give an in-depth look at neighborhoods and sights.

■ PACK LIGHT - NO, REALLY LIGHT

The packing dilemma may be the biggest stress in your life in the weeks before you leave. Most airlines allow you to check two bags and bring one carry-on. Keep in mind that every item you pack may return to haunt your weary feet and aching back. Invest in a good quality backpack, and keep your load under 25 pounds. Then try walking around your neighborhood with all the luggage you plan to carry.

Your best bet is to keep it simple. Use this list as a guideline, and pick and choose what is essential for you:

CLOTHING

- 1 pair of walking shoes (*Light hiking boots are great, break them in before you go to avoid breaking your stride with blisters.*)
- 1 pair of flip-flops (*Showers may be less than scrupulously clean, and these will be easier to carry than Ajax.*)
- 3-5 pairs of socks
- 5-7 pairs of underwear
- 1-2 pair of shorts
- 1-2 skirts/trousers
- 2 shirts
- 1 sweater/sweatshirt
- 1 poncho/rain jacket (*If backpacking, find one that also will cover your pack.*)
- 1 light jacket
- 1 bathing suit
- 1 hat
- 1 semi-nice outfit (*Particularly if you plan to spend an extended time abroad, you never know when you might have to attend a function or get invited on a hot date.*)

MEDICINE AND TOILETRIES

- Prescription medicine (*Keep it in the bottle, and carry a copy of the prescription.*)
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Soap and shampoo
- Comb and brush
- Sunscreen, moisturizers, cosmetics
- Deodorant
- First aid kit
- Contraceptives/condoms
- Aspirin
- Tissues
- Tampons
- Razor blades
- Eyeglasses, sunglasses, contact lenses and cleaning solution

MISCELLANEOUS

- Camera and film
- Swiss army knife
- Flashlight
- Address book (*Make friends and family jealous and let them know you're healthy by sending tacky postcards.*)
- Books, guides and maps
- Day pack (*If your stuff is safely stored, avoid dragging it all around everywhere you go by carrying a small, compressible knapsack.*)
- Laundry soap and line
- Sewing kit
- Stuff bags/plastic storage bags (*If two of your three pairs of socks are wet and smelly, don't contaminate everything before you get a chance to dry them.*)
- Hostel sleepsack
- Change purse
- Umbrella
- Luggage lock and tags
- Battery-operated alarm clock
- Moist towelettes
- Batteries
- Adapter and voltage converter

DOCUMENTS, ETC.

- Passport (and visa)
- Tickets and rail passes
- Student ID card
- Hostel membership card
- Money belt or neck wallet
- Cash, traveler's checks, credit cards