

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

