

RESOURCES

- Diversity Abroad
(www.diversityabroad.com)
- The PLATO Project
(www.globaled.us/plato/about.html)
 - Resources for Underrepresented Students in General
 - Specific Resources for African-American, Asian/Pacific Islander American, Hispanic American, and Native American students
- “Glimpse” Race Abroad Acclimation Guide
(<http://www.umabroad.umn.edu/assets/files/PDFs/students/raceAbroad.pdf>)
- IES Abroad country-specific Diversity Resources (<http://www.iesabroad.org/study-abroad/about/diversity-resources>)
- Study Abroad for Bicultural Students
(http://web.archive.org/web/20030704052404/www.imdiversity.com/villages/hispanic/Article_Detail.asp?Article_ID=7164)
- Diversity Issues in Study Abroad (reflections by Brown University students)
(http://www.brown.edu/academics/college/special-programs/international-study/sites/brown.edu/academics/college/special-programs/international-study/files/uploads/diversity_st_abroad01.pdf)
- All Abroad US
(allabroad.us)



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Race and Ethnicity Abroad



BENEFITS OF STUDYING ABROAD

Studying abroad allows you to view yourself from a new cultural perspective and engage other communities with different racial/ethnic contexts. It will allow you to explore your own identity and perhaps your heritage. You will also benefit from seeing the world from an international perspective and developing independence and self-confidence. You may find yourself able to use cross-cultural and navigation skills developed in the US to help you adapt to a new cultural milieu.

PICK YOUR PLACE

Racial or ethnic identity should not be a deterrent or negative factor in your study abroad, but your experience will be affected by the current racial/ethnic reality of your host country. Will you be studying in a country where you will be in a racial majority? Will you be in a racial minority for the first time? It's important to remember that US attitudes toward race and ethnicity are shaped by our particular history, just as those of your host country are shaped by theirs. Use your off-campus opportunity to examine the ways another culture navigates racial and ethnic identities and issues.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

It is important to learn as much as you can about the country you'll travel to. Here are some questions to research before you go. They will help you to understand the cultural and historical context of race and ethnicity in your host country.

The more informed and cognizant you are of these issues before departure, the more likely you are to be able to handle challenging or confusing situations.

- What is the current racial composition of your host country? How does it compare to the racial composition of the US or your home country?
- Are there significant ethnic minority groups in your host country?
- What factors in the country's history might influence the current cultural context of race and ethnicity? For example, is there a history of legal discrimination? Is immigration a recent development?
- What can you learn about the racial and ethnic issues currently under debate in your host country? Is immigration a hot button political issue? Where do most immigrants come from? How are issues of race currently being framed? Are other factors such as religion intertwined with discussions of race and ethnicity?

NAVIGATING THE RACIAL/ETHNIC CONTEXT

Your race or ethnicity may be very salient to people in your host culture, or it may not seem as important or relevant to them as it does to people at home. You may experience anything from curiosity that borders on the intrusive to complete disinterest. Sometimes you may face uncomfortable stereotypes drawn from US cultural sources like TV and movies. You may also find that abroad you are more strongly identified by your nationality than your race or ethnicity.

No one can predict the experience exactly—it will be different for each student and even for the same student in different contexts.

Sometimes students feel isolated as they explore their identity abroad. If you have difficulty finding someone with whom to share your experiences directly related to identity, here are some suggestions for coping.

- Make friends in your host culture. They can be cultural interpreters who will help you understand the context that gives rise to current racial and ethnic discourse in the country.
- Remember that friends may be teachers or staff as well as peers. Take advantage of the support offered by your off-campus study program staff.
- Keep in contact with family and friends at home, especially friends who may have recently studied in another country themselves. Talk to them before, during and after your off-campus study!
- Colgate's Office of Off-Campus Study, your faculty advisers and other mentors here on campus are also ready to listen and help you throughout your experience.
- Try to remember that any challenges you face, and however you choose to face them, offer an opportunity for you to learn and grow.

