

## COMMONSENSE PRECAUTIONS

Following these precautions recommended for all travelers can be especially important for women:

- Travel light
- Leave expensive items at home
- Use a money belt or pouch
- Carry a zippered purse, and carry it in front of or across your body
- Stay alert and aware of your surroundings
- Avoid isolated situations
- Take extra precautions at night – in many countries, women do not go out alone after dark, and doing so may put you at risk
- Be careful who you trust, and don't share too much information (such as where you are staying or that you are alone) with new "friends"
- Don't look or act the tourist – know where you are going, avoid opening a map in public
- Don't hitchhike
- Use only legal, reputable forms of transportation (ask your program or hotel for recommendations)

## RESOURCES

- 1) Colgate faculty and OCS staff—talk to people you know who have lived in the country you'll travel to
- 2) The State Department ([travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov))
- 3) The Centers for Disease Control's Travelers' Health ([www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel))
- 4) Resources specifically for women:

### Websites:

- JourneyWoman ([www.journeywoman.com](http://www.journeywoman.com))
- Nomadic Chick ([www.nomadicchick.com](http://www.nomadicchick.com))
- Her Own Way—A Woman's Safe Travel Guide (<http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/publications/her-own-way>)

### Books:

- *Gutsy Women: Travel Tips and Wisdom for the Road* (Marybeth Bond, 2007)
- *A Journey of One's Own: Uncommon Advice for the Independent Woman Traveler* (Thalia Zepatos, 2003)
- *Safety and Security for Women Who Travel* (Sheila Swan and Peter Laufer, 2004)
- *Traveling Solo: Advice and Ideas for More than 250 Great Vacations* (Eleanor Berman, 2008)



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# Women Abroad

## Tips for Women Studying or Traveling Abroad



**STUDY ABROAD  
SPOTLIGHT SERIES**



## PICK YOUR PLACE

Learn as much as you can about the country you'll travel to. Research all aspects of your country: safety and security; health conditions; laws and customs, including those related to gender and sexuality; the political and economic environment. If you feel you can handle the challenges the location presents, go for it! If you feel it's too hazardous or you're uncomfortable about the conditions, you should consider other options.

## INTERCULTURAL ISSUES

You should not be forced to conform to concepts of gender and sexuality that you find unacceptable, but it is also important to be sensitive to the norms of your host country while you are abroad.

- Be prepared to adapt your dress and behavior. Follow the lead of local women in dress, grooming, and public behavior. Choosing more conservative clothing or avoiding prolonged eye contact with men could be important safety decisions.
- Learn as much as you can before you go. Do research in the library and online, talk to women who've traveled to the country and especially to those who were born and raised there or visit frequently.

## SEXUAL HARRASSMENT

Again, following the cues of local women is always a good idea! If you're adapting your dress and behavior to seem less of a tourist, that is a crucial step. In addition:

- Act confident—again, know where you are going, and look like you do.
- Maintain some formality, at least until you understand the setting. In some cultures, initiating conversations with men, even smiling or making eye contact, can be considered flirting.
- If someone makes you uncomfortable, don't feel pressure to reply or interact. Remain composed and remove yourself from the situation at once.
- Be alert and aware on public transportation. If you are harassed or groped, make a fuss. Say something loudly or point to your harasser. Try to sit with other women, not alone, or use a women-only car if they are available.

## PREVENTING SEXUAL ASSAULT

- Never leave your food or drink unattended.
- If you feel strange, sick or intoxicated for no reason, ask a friend to take you to a safe place. If you are alone, call your study abroad program's emergency number, the local police or a local hospital.

- Think twice before leaving a bar or party with someone you've just met or accepting an invitation to go out with a man alone, especially if you are in a country where this would be considered taboo for local women.
- If you feel threatened, don't hesitate to make a fuss or draw attention to yourself.

## IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OF SEXUAL ASSAULT ABROAD

- If you are on a study abroad program, your program director should be your first resource. They can help you find medical and counseling resources and can advise you on your legal options if the aggressor is not part of your program.
  - If you experience harassment or assault by an employee, teacher, or another student on your study abroad program, this constitutes an offense against Title IX. If you make a complaint of sexual harassment, your program should work to respond promptly and to resolve the situation.
  - Colgate's Assistant Provost for Equity and Diversity and Title IX Coordinator are also available to provide support and assistance, as is the Office of Off-Campus Study.
  - You may also contact the nearest US Embassy's emergency consular services office. They can provide advice about contacting local police, legal information, and a list of local doctors and hospitals.
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