



PROJECT EL SALVADOR 2007 PREDEPARTURE GUIDE

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International Service Learning Pre-Departure Checklist

- Passport:** A new passport or renewal can take up to 12 weeks. If you have a passport, make sure it is valid for at least six months after your program ends. Passport information and applications are available on-line at <http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/index.html>
- Passport photocopies:** If you did not submit 3 copies of your passport photo page with your ISL application, please submit these to our office prior to your departure. In addition, make a copy for yourself, and carry this with you in a location separate from your actual passport.
- International Student Identification Card (ISIC):** DU requires that you obtain this card for all ISL and study abroad programs. Please have this made at International House, as your ISL application fee included the cost of the card. We will take your photo during orientation.
- Course Pre-Approval:** Complete the Study Abroad Request for Credit form to determine how the Project credits will apply. This is available online at <http://www.du.edu/intl/abroad/sac.pdf>
- Medical Information Form:** This form was provided to you at orientation. If you need additional copies, please contact isl@du.edu.
- Airline tickets:** The ISL Office will arrange tickets. Double check all personal and flight information when you receive your itinerary. After tickets have been issued, students are responsible for arranging and paying for changes.
- Financial aid and Scholarships:** Note that financial aid granted during the academic year is not applicable towards this program, although you may look into additional sources by consulting with your department and the Office of Student Financial Services. It is your responsibility to research, complete, and submit scholarship and grant applications.
- Vaccinations:** It is your responsibility to consult your physician regarding recommended vaccinations. Note that some vaccinations are given in a series several months apart or must be completed 4-6 weeks prior to your departure, so plan ahead!
- Insurance:** Contact your health insurance company to make sure you will be covered while abroad. It is crucial that you have international health insurance coverage.
- Emergency contacts card:** Take your emergency contact card with you. Provide your family with these numbers.
- IRB approval:** If you plan on doing any research involving human subjects while participating on your ISL Project, you must apply for Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects approval: <http://www.du.edu/osp/irb.html>

Administrative Issues

REGISTRATION AND BILLING

The International Service Learning Office will register all accepted students. You do **NOT** need to register for this course. Once registered, tuition bills will be sent out to your billing address in Banner. Program financial aid awarded to students through the Office of Internationalization will be reflected in the tuition billing. Social Science Foundation scholarships will also be applied to your student account, if applicable. For information on scholarships not awarded through ISL as well as fundraising ideas, see our website at: http://www.du.edu/intl/isl/elsalvador_financial.html

REQUIRED PAPERWORK

You will need to complete the *Request for Study Abroad Credit* form (<http://www.du.edu/intl/abroad/sac.pdf>) prior to departure to determine how this course will apply towards your studies at DU. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the ISL courses, students have been able to use them as electives or towards major/minor requirements. This will vary according to your major/minor; please follow the instructions on the form. Once this form is completed, please return it to our office.

In addition, all participants will complete an *Information Regarding Medical and Other Needs* form and submit it to our office.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IDENTIFICATION CARD (ISIC)

The University of Denver **REQUIRES** that all ISL/Study Abroad participants purchase an ISIC card. The cost of the card was included in your application fee. If you did not have your photo taken during orientation, please come to the International House to have your photo taken/card made. We will make a photocopy of your card for your file. The ISIC card is proof of your student status, and also includes some emergency medical evacuation and repatriation insurance.

WITHDRAWAL/REFUND POLICIES:

- All withdrawals must be made in writing and e-mailed to isl@du.edu
- The application fee is non-refundable unless the applicant is not accepted to the program.
- The program fee is non-refundable.
- The participant is responsible for the airfare deposit, any airfare cancellation expenses, or full airfare, should he/she withdraw after

airfare has been contracted.

- The participant is also responsible for any additional expenses that have already been spent on his/her behalf should he/she have to cancel prior to departure or mid-program.

Travel Information and Documents

PASSPORT

If you do not have a passport, apply for one IMMEDIATELY. It can take up to six weeks for a passport to be processed. If you have a passport, check the expiration date to make sure it will be valid for six months AFTER your ISL Program ends. You can apply for a U.S. passport at the University Park Station Post Office, 3800 Buchtel Blvd, Denver, CO 80210. The passport office hours are 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Application forms and instructions can be found at <http://travel.state.gov>. The application fee is \$97 for a new passport (\$55 plus a \$30 execution fee and \$12 security surcharge) or \$67 for a renewal (\$55 plus \$12 security surcharge). For more information and an application, see at <http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/index.html>

In addition to the passport photocopies required by our office, please make two additional copies for your own use. Leave one with family and friends at home, and pack the other in a location separate from your passport. If your passport is stolen, having a copy will help expedite its replacement.

VISAS

No visas are needed for U.S. citizens traveling to El Salvador. If you are not a U.S. citizen, please contact the ISL office; you may have additional requirements.

AIRLINE TICKETS

If you plan to stay in Central America after the program is complete, you must work with the ISL office before booking your tickets to make these arrangements. Double check all personal and flight information after receiving your itinerary. Students are responsible for arranging and paying for changes once tickets have been issued.

PACKING TIPS:

- Carry all essential items in your carry-on luggage. It is a good idea to pack at least one change of clothes in your carry-on bag, some toiletries, as well as anything else that would be a serious problem for you to not have if your checked bag is lost or delayed.

- Students are required to bring all medication and prescriptions from their doctor in their carry-on bag.
- Pack light! Pack what you think you'll need, and then remove half of it! After you pack, try carrying your luggage around the block. If you are unable to do so easily, repack.
- Lightweight, washable and interchangeable clothes are key.
- Consider using a backpack; some students prefer to use duffel bags.
- Keep in mind baggage restrictions (only one carry-on and purse or briefcase), and also keep in mind that YOU will be carrying your luggage. We suggest that you use a smaller backpack or duffel bag as a carry on and a larger backpack or bag for the rest of your belongings. Please check with the airline for updated baggage regulations prior to departure.
- Make sure all bags have a label inside and out containing your name, contact information in El Salvador, and home address.
- Keep your passport, tickets, boarding passes, money/credit or debit cards, camera/film on you at all times!
- Put money in more than one place.
- You are no longer allowed to lock your luggage while flying (due to security concerns) unless you use a TSA approved lock. You might want to bring a small combination or key lock to use while in El Salvador.
- Remember that while it may be hot in El Salvador, it may be cold when you return to the U.S. Pack accordingly!

NOTES ON THINGS NOT TO BRING

- Avoid bringing expensive (looking) watches and jewelry. Keep in mind that although your jewelry may not BE expensive, it may still LOOK expensive.
- A day pack or collapsible tote is better than a purse. Fanny packs are NOT recommended (they are easily torn or cut off at the waist).

SUGGESTED PACKING CHECKLIST

Here is a general list of items you may need while in El Salvador. The temperature will probably be between 70 and 90 degrees Fahrenheit in San Salvador. Remember, the lighter the load, the happier you will be!

Items to carry with you on the plane

- Passport and vaccination record
- ISIC Card
- Money belt/neck pouch
- Emergency Contact Card
- Health insurance information

- Airline tickets/e-tickets
- All medications
- Money: some cash, credit card, ATM card, traveler's checks (may be difficult to cash)
- Journal
- Travel alarm clock
- Change of clothing
- Toiletries
- Copy of passport and other important documents (carry separate from original documents)
- Reading material
- Spare eyeglasses/contacts; also bring a copy of your prescription

Anything that would be a serious problem for you if your checked bags were lost or delayed!

Clothing

Be modest in your dress. While shorts are fine for the beach, you should not plan to wear them in San Salvador. Do not bring mini skirts, low cut tops, or extremely form-fitting clothes.

- Pants/skirts (Capri-length or longer pants; knee-length or longer skirts)
- Short and long sleeved shirts
- Sweater(s) or light jacket that could double as a rain jacket. While it is hot in El Salvador, it's possible that evenings could be cool. It will be the dry season, but could potentially rain.
- Underwear
- Good shoes (tennis shoes or sandals that are comfortable for walking and working)
- Shower shoes/flip flops
- Swimsuit: once piece more suitable
- Nightwear

Other Items

- Camera and film; extra batteries/memory card
- Books for leisure reading
- Travel towel (thick towels may take a long time to dry)
- Guidebook
- Toiletries/tampons
- Non-prescription medications (aspirin, Imodium, etc)- there are many pharmacies in San Salvador, but you may want to bring a supply if you have brands that you use frequently
- MP3 player
- Sunglasses
- Pocket knife (pack in checked bag)

- Day pack
- Water bottle
- Sunscreen
- Hat for sun protection
- Insect repellent
- Travel clothesline, if you plan on washing clothes in room
- Hand sanitizer gel/wipes
- Photos of family, friends; postcards of Denver
- Email and mailing addresses of family/friends
- Playing cards, Frisbee
- Ear plugs, if you are a light sleeper
- Flashlight/headlamp
- Ziploc bags- useful for packing liquids or items that might spill
- Tissues

SHIPPING BAGGAGE

It is very expensive to ship boxes to and from a foreign country, and is sometimes risky. Custom regulations can delay boxes. In addition, there may be large duty charges for items. Since you will be in El Salvador for a relatively short period of time and space will be limited, we **do not recommend** that you ship any boxes or baggage.

El Salvador Information and Travel Tips

DOING HOMEWORK ABOUT YOUR HOST COUNTRY

You will want to learn as much as possible about El Salvador before departure, as this will enhance your understanding of your in-country experiences. We have provided you with a Culturegram on El Salvador, which contains very basic facts on the country, customs, and history. Guidebooks such as Lonely Planet contain more in-depth information; Lonely Planet has just issued an El Salvador/Nicaragua guidebook. We also recommend that you purchase a map of El Salvador to get a better sense of the country's geography. Below are some additional resources:

WEBSITES

Circulo Solidario: www.circulosolidariosv.org/

or <http://www.circulosolidario.org/>

Latin America Network Information Center:

lanic.utexas.edu/la/ca/salvador/

Tourism Ministry of El Salvador: www.elsalvadoriturismo.gob.sv/

Lonely Planet: www.lonelyplanet.com

Map of El Salvador: www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/elsalvador.jpg

DRESS

- It is important to look clean, “neutral,” or even conservative in appearance. Although you will see all kinds of people wearing all kinds of clothing, as an international student/guest working with Salvadorian people, do your best to look respectable. This is how we can show sensitivity host country sensibilities and customs.
- Women should NOT wear shorts or short skirts, tight clothes, or revealing/low cut shirts in the city. Capris or cropped pants are fine, as are knee length or longer skirts. Tank tops are fine as long as they aren't too revealing. Shorts are appropriate for the beach or recreational areas.
- Men should not wear shorts, tight clothes, or go bare-chested in public. Stick with pants, short-sleeved or long-sleeved t-shirts and button-down shirts.

MONEY MATTERS

It is a good idea to have several forms of money while traveling, including a small amount of cash, a credit card, and an ATM card. While traveler's checks are beneficial in that they can be replaced if stolen, they may be difficult to cash. You might want to bring a traveler's check or two in case of emergency, but do not use them as your primary form of money..

The official currency of El Salvador is the U.S. dollar. You may have difficulty using large bills, however, so plan to bring denominations of \$20 or smaller.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

The cost of Project El Salvador includes accommodations, transportation (except during free time), and group activities. You will receive a meal allowance to cover your meals. You will be responsible for personal expenses such as souvenirs and going out at night, if applicable. You will have one free weekend; if you choose to travel, this will be at your own expense. For more information on estimated expenses, visit the Project El Salvador website at <http://www.du.edu/intl/isl/escost.pdf>

COMMUNICATION

In El Salvador, e-mail is the cheapest way to “call” home. The hotel will have email and telephones, and internet cafes are also readily available.

Note, however, that you will be in El Salvador for a relatively short period of time; don't spend so much time communicating with friends and family at home that you aren't able to take advantage of your surroundings!

We will set up a portfolio page for Project El Salvador, and hope that you will submit emails, journal entries, and photos while abroad for your friends, family, and other students to read- when participants take turns sending updates, this is an excellent way to allow others to follow the Project's progress! This is located at <http://portfolio.du.edu/isl>

ELECTRICITY

Electric power is the same in El Salvador as in the U.S., so you can easily use electrical appliances.

LAUNDRY

Laundry services are available in San Salvador as well as at the hotel for a fee. You may find it is easier (and less expensive) to hand wash much of your clothing at the hotel, so make sure that most of your clothing will dry quickly. While jeans are comfortable to wear, you probably don't want to bring jeans as your only pants option, since they take some time to dry.

TIPPING

While tipping is common in El Salvador, there is not a set percentage given as in the U.S. It is up to the individual. In some restaurants the tip is already included in the bill, so please check before adding more!

TRANSPORTATION

For program activities, we will use a van and driver. When you need to get around on your own time, taxis are available at the hotel, and buses are plentiful and inexpensive (and crowded). The amount of traffic in San Salvador may come as a shock – it can take a long time to travel even short distances. Plan accordingly when you are traveling, and be careful of the traffic as you are crossing the streets!

PHOTOGRAPHS, VIDEO, AND AUDIO RECORDINGS

Do not intrude with a camera, unless it's clearly fine with the people you want to photograph. Do not exchange addresses or offer copies of photos unless you definitely intend to follow up on it later. Also ask permission to record interviews or dialogue and inform the interviewee of the intended use of the recordings.

U.S. CUSTOMS

Upon your return to the U.S., you are allowed to bring back \$800 worth of merchandise duty-free; you will need to declare purchases on a customs declaration form. Be sure to have your receipts, and pack these items in a place where you can get to them easily- you may be asked to show them to a customs agent. You can only bring alcoholic beverages to the U.S. if you are at least 21 years old. You are not allowed to bring fresh foodstuffs into the U.S.; canned foods are allowed. You are also strongly discouraged from purchasing animal-related products such as skins, bones, feathers, or eggs, as you will likely run into problems with customs. For more information, see the U.S. Customs Service website:

<http://www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg/>

Service and Service Learning

“If you have come to help me you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”

~Lila Watson (Australian Aboriginal)

Service IS:

- Working alongside and in cooperation with nationals/host community members
- Working with agencies that have grown out of the community/are initiated by locals
- Teaching AND learning
- Building mutual relationships
- Listening
- Projects designed around community need
- Community empowerment
- Reciprocity – mutual ability of all involved to serve one another
- Engaging in a deeper understanding of your own values and aspirations.
- Humility/stepping outside of comfort zone
- The needs of the host community, rather than of the academic program, come first in defining the service work of students placed there; and the community defines those needs
- Showing interest in the host culture and the lives of individuals from there

Service is **not**:

- Giving, donating, charity
- Being a project that is unsustainable and leaves the community worse off than before
- About community projects initiated by non-host community without input from host community
- Fixing (creates distance between ourselves and whatever or whomever we are “fixing”)
- Necessarily based on physical/tangible results and outcomes
- Always being “productive”
- “Helping” in a way that perpetuates further inequalities
- A constant feeling of self-satisfaction
- Only “hands-on” work/projects
- An opportunity for you single-handedly to change the world
- Eradicating poverty, hunger, disease, homelessness, etc.
- Always a series of happy endings. There are ups and downs, advances and setbacks
- Converting others
- Teaching others how the U.S. does things
- Creating a dependency in a community for outside help/aid

“Every individual, organization, and entity involved in service-learning functions as both teacher and a learner.”

~Service Matters

Service learning combines service with academic study; it is characterized by a deliberate connection between what is learned in the classroom setting and what is experienced while serving and in the community. Service learning fuses theory with practice, knowing with doing, and action with reflection.

For additional information on service learning, please refer to your copy of [How to Serve and Learn Abroad Effectively: Students Tell Students](#).

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TIME ABROAD

The International Service Learning experience is YOUR responsibility. You can make or break your program through your willingness to look, listen, and learn. Don't judge your surroundings and remember that you are there to learn about how others live. They may do it differently

than you are used to, but that doesn't mean that it is better or worse, just different. Take advantage of your opportunity to experience first hand the culture in which you are living. Taste the local foods, visit local historical and religious sites, learn and practice the language of the area, open your mind and live like a native. Most importantly, enjoy your time abroad!

Suggestions from past International Service Participants:

- Make the most of the trip... whatever that means for you. Put yourself out there. Learn as much as you can. Read up before you go. Talk to as many locals as you can. Try to learn as much as you can from everyone you meet. Make the most of your free time.
- Basically, be open to every opportunity. Be respectful that people do not have your background knowledge and may not see things the same way you do. Be a good listener.
- Explore, reflect, meditate, journal, love, smile, cry, learn, teach, listen, hear, grow
- Ask questions and shape your experience for you. Take initiative and research before you leave because it makes your time so much more rewarding.
- Be yourself but be braver than yourself because to truly enjoy a culture you have to be pushed out of your comfort level. You already will be, but whether you embrace it or are awkward with it is up to you.
- Have a positive attitude; you'll probably get frustrated, you may not connect with everyone in the group, but if you stay positive it helps so much! Interact as much as you can during meetings with local organizations, letting yourself engage really helps. It can be as simple as 'What does ____ mean?'
- Be prepared to throw away all judgments of good and bad, fair or unfair... What you will experience is real life and it is important to accept that and learn to be grateful for the things that you see and experience.

Cultural Adjustment

Culture shock is the mental, physical, and emotional adjustment to a new environment. Anyone living in a new environment long enough cannot ignore the differences. Sometimes frustrating and even infuriating, identifying differences is part of the learning process. Often people don't even realize they are suffering from culture shock. This confusion can be the result of looking at several symptoms as isolated problems rather than as related components of a single affliction. Some signs may be:

- Homesickness
- Boredom
- Irritability
- Withdrawal
- Negative feelings and stereotyping locals
- Lack of appetite
- Physical ailments, such as stomach aches or headaches
- Excessive sleep or insomnia
- Depression

The first thing to remember is that everyone experiences some degree of culture shock. Remember that this will pass. You are traveling to a “foreign” country. Don’t be judgmental of how things are done or compare them to how you would do things; instead, try to examine why things are done differently. Finally, remember to laugh at your mistakes. Your acceptance of the differences will put you on the road to learning about other cultures and will facilitate your inclusion into the culture. Culture shapes everything- keep this in mind as you experience it!

GUIDELINES FOR EASING CULTURE SHOCK

- Know that anyone who spends a significant time abroad will experience culture shock. Be aware of the symptoms, and if you or others are experiencing them, talk about them.
- Identify, as accurately as possible:
 - your assumptions about things, ideas, and people
 - the assumptions of the Salvadorian system
 - the clash between the two (or more) sets of assumptions
- Expect something completely different and be open to new ideas.
- Focus on the positive aspects of the adjustment process; learn all you can about the host culture.
- Move one step at a time; don’t expect too much from yourself too soon.
- Establish a two-way communication process. One of the best ways to ease cross-cultural adjustment is to make a friend from the host culture.
- Know that you will make cultural mistakes.
- Journal!
- Practice stress management.
- Keep your sense of humor; it will be your most valuable asset!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Cultural Adjustment

- What's Up With Culture?
http://www3.uop.edu/sis/culture/pub/CULTURE_ISSUES_2.htm
An excellent self-guided look at mainstream U.S.-American cultural patterns, intercultural communication, and cultural adjustment.
- *The Art of Crossing Cultures* by Craig Storti, 1990.
- *Survival Kit for Overseas Living* by L. Robert Kohl, 1996.

GLBT Issues

- NAFSA Rainbow SIG Student Resources
<http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/student.htm>

Diversity Issues:

- Brown University Diversity Handbook
http://www.brown.edu/Administration/OIP/pdf_docs/diversity_st_abroad01.pdf

Health and Safety Abroad

YOUR HEALTH HISTORY

All students participating on a study abroad or international service learning program are asked to complete the Medical Form.

If you have any long-standing illness or a severe allergy that requires regular medication, emergency medication, or special attention, please document this on your form and bring a letter from your doctor detailing your needs and history and/or talk to Zulema or Karyn. If you will need to see a doctor on a regular basis once you arrive overseas, inform Zulema, Karyn, and the International Service Learning Office **BEFORE** you leave. This is not because we want to pry, but because we want to make sure you have identified whether your needs can be met in your host country; we also want to be prepared should you have a medical emergency and need immediate assistance. Take a complete copy of your medical record to your program site, along with medical and prescription histories. If you need a doctor, you will have access to physicians in El Salvador. However, it is a good idea to bring along your ISIC card to use in an emergency if you need to locate an English-speaking doctor.

You should know your blood type and write it on the DU-issued Emergency Card in the space provided.

MEDICATIONS

Bring enough medication with you to avoid refills abroad. Just in case you lose your prescription medication, bring along a prescription from your doctor indicating the generic name and the composition of the medication you are taking (brand names can be different overseas). **ALWAYS carry your medication in its original container(s) and carry ALL of your medication with you on the plane; do not pack in your checked luggage.** The drugs produced in the U.S. are regulated by the FDA, but this is not the case abroad. Medications produced abroad may vary considerably from those produced in the U.S.

Pharmacies are readily available in San Salvador. If there are over the counter medications you use frequently or particular brands that you like, you may consider bringing a supply with you. Medications commonly used by travelers include:

- Analgesics (Advil, Tylenol, etc.)
- Antacids
- Imodium AD
- Antihistamines (Claritin, Benadryl, Chlortrimeton)
- Decongestant (Sudafed)
- 1% hydrocortisone cream
- Antibiotic ointment (Polysporin)
- Cipro (this is an antibiotic which you can obtain by prescription from your physician; it is useful against bacterial diarrhea, urinary tract infections, skin infections, sinusitis, etc.).
- Band-Aids of various sizes

You should bring the following with you:

- Extra contact lenses and/or glasses
- Your usual testing and treatment needs if you are diabetic. Carry a doctor's prescription for syringes.
- All your usual prescription medications- bring a copy of your prescription.
- Epi-pens if you have a bee sting or severe food allergy.

DISABILITIES

DU encourages all students to consider participation in International Service-Learning programs. Because U.S. laws and regulations related to disabilities generally do not extend beyond this country's borders, and because ISL sites vary greatly regarding their capacity for accommodation, you should make use of all campus resources to research appropriate ISL programs and

services available abroad. DU will work with you to identify ISL opportunities which meet your individual needs.

If you need to request adapted accommodation for your disability at your ISL program site, you must talk to DU's Disabilities Services Office and DU's International Service-Learning Office about what kinds of accommodations you should request and how you go about making that request.

Below are two resources for students with disabilities who are interested in study abroad programs:

- Univ of Minnesota Access Abroad
<http://www.umabroad.umn.edu/access/>
- Mobility International <http://www.miusa.org/>

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL ISSUES

Psychological and emotional issues can become more pronounced during an ISL experience because of the additional stresses of culture shock. You may wish to speak with a counselor prior to departure about techniques to help lessen these effects.

Some positive coping mechanisms can include the following:

- Engaging in reading/studying you enjoy
- Meeting regularly with a counselor at your program site
- Communicating with your family and friends at home through email or letters
- Spending time with your friends abroad
- Talking about issues with your on-site program contact

Some destructive coping behaviors you should **avoid** include those listed below:

- Binge drinking
- Oversleeping
- Spending excessive amounts of time in your room/apartment
- Overeating
- Avoiding your friends, classmates, and/or program contact
- Escaping into sexual relationships

If you notice yourself or your classmates developing a serious problem, an intervention may be necessary. Such behaviors may include:

- Prolonged depression
- Changes in sleeping and eating habits
- Anxiety that interferes with normal functioning

- Violent or self-destructive behavior
- Alcohol or substance abuse
- Ignoring medical recommendations

RELATIONSHIPS, SAFE SEX, & AIDS

If you are sexually active, take care of yourself and practice safe sex. Be aware that any type of relationship, whether heterosexual, bisexual or homosexual, entails the risk of a sexually transmitted disease. Entering into a relationship overseas should, therefore, be approached with the same precautions you would use at home. The charm of a once-in-a-lifetime romance in another country may be tempting, but consider any relationship carefully and remember that you are only in your host country for a short time. There are different cultural values regarding dating and relationships.

We recommend that you take normal, everyday precautions to avoid putting yourself at risk. Do not use intravenous drugs. Practice safe sex. Think carefully about administration of CPR if you are trained to do so. Do not share personal care items, such as razors, with others.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Health services and costs vary considerably. It is vital that you have a health insurance policy that covers you adequately while abroad. Check with your insurance provider about benefits abroad as well as emergency medical evacuation and repatriation insurance. Make sure your plan provides you with more than emergency coverage. The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) provides \$250,000 in emergency medical evacuation coverage, but has very minimal medical coverage.

The University of Denver Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) covers all health care expenses incurred abroad at 90% of actual billed charges and has unlimited evacuation and repatriation coverage. If you are interested in knowing more about the SHIP, please check the website:

http://www.du.edu/duhealth/healthcenter/general/insurance_dates.html

No matter what overseas coverage you choose, you should continue to carry health insurance that is applicable in the U.S.

Carry your insurance card or other insurance information with you at all times. Obtain a telephone number from your carrier in case you should need any information while abroad.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND TESTS

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has a website at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>. This is an excellent resource for information about required immunizations and health recommendations for areas you will be visiting. Another resource for information about immunizations and vaccinations is the Jefferson County International Travel Clinic (303-239-7020).

In addition, please check with your physician for specific immunization requirements and/or recommendations. Because some inoculations require a series of medical visits over the course of several months, prior to you entering your host country, you should begin investigating this matter as soon as possible. Please take a copy of your immunization record with you as you travel.

If you are traveling elsewhere after the end of our program, you will need to check requirements and/or recommendations for the specific areas you will visit. Additional vaccines may be recommended for other areas.

WATER AND FOOD

- Drink only bottled or boiled water, or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes. Don't drink beverages with ice unless you know the ice is made from purified water.
- Eat only thoroughly cooked food or fruits and vegetables you have peeled yourself. Remember: boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it.
- Avoid eating foods from street vendors.
- Avoid eating dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized.

Other tips to stay healthy:

- Wash hands often with soap and water, or antibacterial gel. Frequent hand washing will help prevent diarrhea and other infectious diseases.
- Keep your feet clean and dry. Don't go barefoot.
- Use latex condoms, if sexually active.
- For long plane flights, drink plenty of fluids, avoid alcoholic beverages, walk around frequently, do indicated exercises in your seat, and consider wearing compression socks or hose to

minimize the chance of developing deep vein thromboses (DVTs). DVTs can occur in either men or women at any age without any risk factors. Dehydration and immobility increase the chance of developing a DVT, as do birth control hormones, other hormonal supplementation, and a genetic predisposition.

PERSONAL SAFETY ABROAD

The ISL office will register the group with the U.S. Embassy; if you plan on traveling after Project El Salvador, please go online and register your additional travel plans <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/>. By registering your whereabouts, the U.S. Embassy is able to contact you in case of an emergency, or notify you of events happening in the country in which you are traveling.

When out in public, do your best not to look or act like a tourist because tourists are often a target for theft, harassment, and possibly assault. This means adapting both your dress and mannerisms to the local mode. In particular you should avoid wearing baseball caps as well as t-shirts or sweatshirts that seem uniquely U.S. American. Please avoid speaking too loudly, as many U.S. citizens are known to do. Obey the laws in your host country, and avoid demonstrations.

Travel in El Salvador requires caution. Once in country, you will NOT want to carry all your money and passport around with you at all times. We can leave passports and tickets at the hotel's reception to be locked in a safe. Make sure you have an extra photocopy of your passport and airline ticket in a separate location, along with your traveler's check numbers and numbers to call should your credit card/ATM card be lost or stolen. It's a good idea to leave this information with family at home as well. Please don't take anything with you that you cannot stand to lose (jewelry or expensive cameras, for example).

Pay attention to your surroundings, and look like you know where you are going. Avoid deserted areas even in daylight. Do not walk anywhere alone at night, and let someone else in the group know where you are going. In the unlikely event that you are mugged, do not resist; "things" can be replaced. You may even want to keep a small amount of money on hand in the event of a mugging.

Don't be an easy target for theft; pay attention to your belongings. Wear a money belt or neck pouch, don't keep all of your money in one place, and don't put valuables in your pockets or outside pockets on your backpack or luggage. While you are no longer able to lock your checked luggage while flying, bring a small lock to lock your luggage

while in-country. If you use a bag with a strap (like a purse), wear it across your chest rather than over your shoulder. In crowded areas, wear your backpack in front of you rather than on your back.

Be aware of different concepts of friendship between men and women in your host country. Observe host country nationals, or ask local students/contacts for advice.

Local contacts are an excellent resource for determining what areas and activities are not safe; this will be discussed further in your in-country orientation.

Realize that your behavior and personal decisions have a significant impact on your health and safety. Situations that can place students at risk include being intoxicated, being alone at night, or being in a known high crime area.

Traffic can also be a safety hazard; please be careful when crossing streets!

HEALTH AND SAFETY RESOURCES:

- The World Health Organization (WHO) recently published its 2005 International Travel and Health manual, which covers a variety of topics ranging from general health considerations to air travel considerations to environmental health risks to accidents, injuries, and violence. You can either order this publication in a printed form or access its contents for free from www.who.int/ith/.
- U.S. State Department <http://www.travel.state.gov>
Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings, and Public Announcements for each country; other useful tips for U.S. citizens traveling abroad
- SAFETI Adaptation of Peace Corps Safety Resources
<http://www.lmu.edu/globaled/peacecorps/>
- National Center for Infectious Disease Traveler's Health
<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>

DISCRIMINATION

As a U.S. citizen you may experience discrimination abroad. In particular you may be questioned about U.S. foreign policy in a way you feel is threatening. You must recognize that in most cases, the intention is not to make you uncomfortable but merely to spark discussion. The best course of action for you in this situation is to remain objective, speak honestly but not defensively, and recognize that others have a right to an opinion.

You may observe that some groups experience discrimination because of religious beliefs, race, sexual preference, gender, and/or nationality. While you should not adapt to this cultural attitude, you also should not force your ideals on others. Rather, you should remain objective and speak honestly but not defensively.

IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY

Because “911” is not the universal emergency number, you should memorize and write the local emergency number for police/ambulance on your Emergency Card.

The ISL/Study Abroad Office also keeps on an emergency cell phone 24 hours a day for student emergencies. Do not be afraid to use it. The phone number (720-530-7008) is listed on your Emergency Card.

ALCOHOL & ILLEGAL DRUG POLICY

Illegal Drugs

When you are overseas, you are subject to the laws of that country. U.S. or other citizenship does not give you immunity from the local jurisdiction. You should not make assumptions about your “rights” since, in many countries, legal procedures are very different from what we enjoy. Penalties for crimes might be harsher, bail might not be granted when drugs are involved, evidence obtained illegally by local authorities may be admissible in court, or the prisoner might not be present at the trial.

Never travel with contraband drugs. The University of Denver cannot assume responsibility for any student apprehended for drug offences.

If you are arrested on a drug charge, even the U.S. Consular Officer **cannot:**

- Demand your immediate release or get you out of jail
- Represent you at trial or give you legal counsel
- Pay legal fees and/or fines with U.S. Government funds

If you are caught buying, selling, carrying or using any type of drug, you could face severe consequences:

- Interrogation and delays before trial, possibly in solitary confinement
- Lengthy trials, potentially conducted in a foreign language

- Weeks, months, or life in prison, including hard labor and/or lashings, in sub-standard conditions (i.e. no bed, toilet, or sink)
- The death penalty

Even in places where the use of illegal drugs by local citizens is ignored or treated lightly, the University of Denver will not tolerate use by its students. Drug use will not only jeopardize the welfare of the student but also the future of the study abroad program.

Use vs. Abuse of Alcohol

Be responsible if you choose to drink. You will find that many countries have different attitudes about the consumption of alcohol than we do. Overseas, beer and wine may be consumed with meals at home by people of all ages. In addition the legal drinking age may be lower than in the U.S.

However, drinking to excess is not acceptable while on your ISL program. First and foremost, you are most vulnerable to violence, theft, or other crime when under the influence of alcohol. (In fact, excessive alcohol consumption has been identified as the single greatest risk factor for students abroad!) In addition, excessive drinking marks you as an “ugly American” and guarantees that you will not be accepted by your host culture. Finally, drunk driving, besides the obvious dangers, carries much heavier penalties abroad than in the United States.

Returning Home

Many students find that coming home is actually more difficult than adapting to a new country and culture! This is referred to as “reverse culture shock”, and is a very common reaction. Feelings can range from the sense that no one understands your experience or how you’ve changed, to feeling panicked that you will lose part of your identity if you don’t have an outlet to pursue the new interests that were sparked abroad. Your own reactions to reintegrating to life in the U.S. may vary from those of your fellow ISL participants, but may include one or more of the following:

- Restlessness
- Boredom
- Uncertainty, confusion about the future
- Reverse homesickness; missing the people, places, attitudes, or lifestyles of your host country
- Changes in life goals and priorities
- Negativity or intolerance towards the U.S., including behavior, attitudes, customs, and common social practices

If you're having difficulty with your return, think back to the adjustments you made to succeed while you were abroad. The coping skills and strategies that were successful in helping you adjust to your overseas culture will be just as helpful in making the return home. Get involved, identify a support group of fellow ISL participants, keep a journal, and above all, maintain a sense of humor.

Many of the feelings you may experience stem from the changes you have undergone and the ambiguity about how the new, changed you fits into your old life. Change is a positive thing. You have new ideas and new insights; this may lead to a better sense of yourself and your future plans. The challenge is to figure out how to incorporate this into your life at DU. Don't consider your ISL Project as an isolated experience; instead, look at it as the start of a lifetime of international opportunities. Find ways to pursue new or renewed interests, and make the most of the resources that exist at the University of Denver and the Denver community.

Here are a few ideas:

- Keep in touch with your new friends from Project El Salvador
- Consider studying abroad, participating in another ISL program, or an international alternative break program
- If you'd like to add an international component to your current major, you should consult the DU course list to find classes that may complement your current studies but have an international focus.
- Join a student group with an international or a service focus <http://www.du.edu/stuprograms/groups.html>
- Become involved in the Denver and global communities through the Community Action Program: <http://www.du.edu/cap/>
- Continue to learn about your host country, and keep up on international news
- Revisit the "What's Up With Culture?" website <http://www3.uop.edu/sis/culture/>
- Enter your best photos in the Study Abroad Photo Contest in February
- DU's Career Center is another resource you should use to incorporate your ISL program into your job search. The advisors there can help you research positions with international components or direct you to resources for finding jobs overseas. They can also give you advice on

using your ISL experience as a “unique selling point” on your resume and during interviews.

- The Denver community is an international one with large populations of people from Mexico, Peru, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Japan, and Korea, just to name a few. The International House has a designated Community Outreach Coordinator who links DU’s international community with the Denver community at large. As a returned ISL student, you are part of DU’s international community and therefore are welcome to attend the I-House’s activities and monthly free lunches. The I-House coordinates many events as well, including the Festival of Nations. The website, www.du.edu/intl, lists many of these opportunities for you to get involved.
- Don’t forget that DU hosts nearly 750 international students each year. When you think back to the kindness shown to you as an international student on your ISL program, remember to extend the same to our visiting students.
- Your ISL experience does not end when you step off the plane in the United States. Some students choose to “study abroad” in their hometown or back here in Denver. That means maintaining the same level of adventure and sense of exploration to discover people and places they may have overlooked prior to going overseas. You may find a new restaurant that has the same foods you enjoyed abroad. You may find a neighborhood that you didn’t know about of immigrants from the region you just visited. You may also find that the Denver Art Museum has a collection of paintings from your host country. Once your eyes have opened through your experience, you will discover a new world right in your own backyard.

EVALUATIONS

At the end of your program, you will be required by DU to complete an online assessment form. The constructive feedback you provide on this evaluation will help DU improve its ISL programs and orientation materials for future ISL students.

Buen viaje!

A special thanks to the Study Abroad Offices at the University of Denver, University of Colorado at Boulder, Colorado College, and the Colorado/Wyoming Reentry Conference committee for sharing their resources.