

Traveling Abroad

Safety when traveling abroad is an important issue for men and for women. Most American students are not aware that women, who comprise 70% of U.S. undergrads abroad, will have different experiences in their host countries than their male counterparts. Many women may find themselves the object of unwanted attention. It is important for their male colleagues to be aware of these challenges as well as their own safety issues.

At the risk of perpetuating stereotypes, women students who study abroad are urged to be more careful about where, when, and with whom they go out than they are accustomed to being at home. This is not to say that women shouldn't go out and establish relationships of various kinds with people from their host countries. It is, however, to warn women about casual encounters, possible misreading of non-verbal cues, potential misunderstandings due to language difficulties, and inaccurate notions about American women.

Despite the fact that the rate of violence towards women, including rape, is higher in the U.S. than in many other countries, facing the unfamiliar can raise a student's anxiety level when studying abroad. This is compounded by language and cultural differences.

American women have a reputation for enjoyi

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in a foreign culture. Losing full use of your faculties can cause errors in judgment and other situations that may lead to unwanted sexual harassment or assault.

Sex and Gender Issues

Sexual behaviors and gender relationships vary around the world. It is important to take some time before you leave the U.S. to learn more about this aspect of your host culture to avoid difficult or even dangerous situations. Because of different laws, customs, and attitudes regarding drinking, nightlife, and relationships, and because students want to fit in, they sometimes feel very bold and invincible. At all times, students should listen to their gut instinct and not take unhealthy risks.