

## Welcome

Welcome to Ohio University of Osteopathic Medicine's preparation section for International Experiences. The information found on the following pages is available to help you as a student or an individual participating in one of OUCOM's many international experiences, prepare for your time abroad. Please take the time to read through the available links and information to gather information and educate yourself regarding the growing field of Global Health and your role in it!!

The site contains a wide variety of information:

- pages to help you plan and think about an international experience;
- information about Global Health as a whole;
- medical and clinical conditions that you are likely to encounter; and
- travel materials/forms that you need to complete.

Our hope is that you or your group will use this site to not only better prepare for your trip, but also to gain new insights and perspectives that will enhance your trip and help you integrate your experience into your clinical practice and medical career after you return.

### Table of Contents:

Travel Safety

Country Education

Keeping Yourself Healthy Abroad

    Medical Kit

Packing List

Clinical Medical Knowledge

    International Health Topics and Tropical Disease

    Recommended Readings

Travel and Culture

    Culture Shock

General Fun Tips

Reflection

(Downloads for Front Page)

**Pre-departure Packet PDF**

**Traveling Abroad Powerpoint**

**Elective Packet PDF**

**Tropical Medicine Learning Module** - Available for download with permission from authors: John Bowling, DO, FACOFP, Assistant Dean for Rural Medicine at UNTHSC Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine and Scott Emerson OMSIV. Written and produced in 2006.

## **Travel Safety**

Use the following links to learn more about safety and security abroad.

(from [www.cuabroad.cornell.edu](http://www.cuabroad.cornell.edu))

**U.S. Department of State:** [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov) Offers a consular information web page site for every country in the world and current travel warnings. Also a great resource for international educational and cultural affairs, including information about living abroad.

**Tips for Student Travelers:** [http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/studying/studying\\_1238.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/studying/studying_1238.html) An excellent website from the Department of State designed specifically for students who plan to travel and/or study abroad. Among other things, the site includes information about safety abroad and medical insurance for traveling abroad.

**The World at Your Fingertips: Safety Issues:** <http://www.cie.uci.edu/world/safety.html> A helpful website in considering safety issues abroad by the Center for International Education at the University of California, Irvine.

**The Electronic Embassy:** [www.embassy.org](http://www.embassy.org) The Electronic Embassy links the staffs and resources of the Washington D.C. embassy community to their constituencies in business and industry, education, the press and government.

Please see additional form that requires your confirmation of embassy registration with Mary Dailey

## **Country Education**

The following are places or links where you can find information regarding the country/ies where you may be traveling.

### **Suggested Topics to Review:**

Currency

Safety in the country

Languages spoken, food, government, economy

Obtaining a Visa

Maps

### **Popular Links:**

**CIA – The World Factbook:** <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

**Lonely Planet:** <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/>

**World Travel Guide:** <http://www.worldtravelguide.net/>

**Fodor's:** <http://www.fodors.com/world/>

**Frommer's:** <http://www.frommers.com/>

## Keeping yourself Healthy Abroad

As a traveler engaging in the providing health care to others, it is sometimes easy to forget to take care of yourself. However, if you are sick or injured, you no longer are a help to others not to mention it is not fun to be sick away from home. These links help you find information on:

- Immunizations needed where you will be traveling
  - CDC Vaccinations <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentVaccinations.aspx>
  - International Association for Medical Assist <http://www.iamat.org/>
- Tips on keeping yourself healthy abroad
  - CDC Travel Health [www.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx)
- Safety and illness information for water and food
  - [wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentSafeFoodWater.aspx](http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentSafeFoodWater.aspx)

## Air travel

Did you know??

1. **Air Pressure:** Boyle's Law states that as atmospheric pressures fall (with rising altitude as in flying), gases expand. Therefore, problems mainly develop from gases trapped in spaces such as sinuses, middle ears, teeth (who knew), and abdominal cavity. For most healthy people, minor abdominal or ear discomfort is manageable with yawning, sneezing, swallowing, chewing gum, or gentle valsalva by closing nose with thumb and finger and exhaling gently with mouth closed. For those with colds or prior difficult experience try:
  - Afrin nasal spray 3 min prior to takeoff
  - Oral decongestant like Sudafed
2. **Blood Clots:** Virchow's Triad for cause of blood clots includes venous stasis, hypercoaguability, and endothelial injury to trigger clotting. Flying may incorporate all of these in the triad with:
  - a. Venous stasis with prolonged immobilization
  - b. Concentration of the blood due to the relatively low humidity of the cabins producing dehydration
  - c. Endothelial injury by compression of the popliteal veins against the edge of the seat
  - d. Decreased oxygen tension and ambient cabin pressure may impair the body's ability to lyse clots or may induce clotting
  - e. Accumulation of fluid or edema in the legs may compress veins and may further clotting

Do not fear though overall incidence is EXTREMELY LOW...here's what you can do to prevent DVTs:

Stay well hydrated – one glass of water every 2 hours

Avoid alcohol and salty snacks

Periodically move about the cabin

Stretch or exercise lower legs in seat – try doing alphabet with ankle or “pumping” feet

Wear loose fitting clothing

Avoid crossing legs

Those at “**high risk**” include those who have a prior history of DVT, a clotting disorder, cancer in previous 2 years, limitations of mobility due to bone or joint issue, recent surgery, obesity or large varicose veins. “High risk” individuals should: strongly consider purchasing and wearing Scholl's Class I Flight Socks or US Equivalent Travel compression socks. Consider with medical consultation the use of enoxaparin.

## Traveler's Diarrhea

Definition: the passage of at least 3 unformed stools in a 24-hour period. May be associated with vomiting (15%), abdominal cramping or low grade fever. Severe cases involve bloody diarrhea (dysentery), high fevers, or prolonged course (10%) lasting longer than 7 days. Usually self limiting course 3-4 days.

Common Bugs: Enterotoxigenic E. coli (ETEC) (Most common), Campylobacter, Salmonella, Shigella, Vibrio parahaemolyticus (seafood in Asia), viral and parasitic (entamoeba, giardia, cryptosporidium, cyclospora and intestinal helminthes)

Prevention:

- “boil, peel, bottle”
- Don't drink water not in a sealed bottle or purified by boiling, filtration or iodine

Treatment:

- Toilet paper in a plastic bag
- Rehydration – match stool output with fluid input, oral rehydration packets, or create oral rehydration solution with 8 teaspoons sugar (handful) with 1 teaspoon salt (pinch) in 1 liter clean water, pedialyte
- Loperamide (Immodium): 4mg after first loose stool and 2mg after each subsequent loose stool to total of 16mg daily – avoid if associated with bloody stools or fever
- Fluoroquinolone in adults or Bactrim in pregnant and children
- Seek help if no improvement with antibiotics

O'Neil, Edward. Practical Guide to Global Health Service. American Medical Association: 2005

## Malaria

Species of intraerythrocytic protozoa *Plasmodium*: *P. falciparum*, *P. vivax*, *P. ovale*, and *P. malariae*.

The female Anopheles mosquito spreads malaria by transmitting the protozoa through her salivary glands during the bite. The protozoa replicate and infect red blood cells and when they mature they lyse the RBC and cause fever, anemia, low oxygen levels. *P. vivax* and *P. ovale* have latent phases in the liver where they can live long term and cause relapsing infections.

Prevention:

- Long shirts and pants for evening activities
- Spray clothing with permethrin
- Use DEET = gold standard. 4.75% DEET lasts 1.5 hours of protection, 6.65% DEET lasts 2 hours. 20% DEET lasts 4 hours, 23.8% DEET lasts 5 hours.
- Chemoprophylaxis:
  - Check CDC or WHO for up to date recommendations
  - Chloroquine is drug of choice for chloroquine sensitive areas =
    - Mefloquine (Lariam) – once weekly dosing is easy, contraindicated in people with history of depression, psychosis, or other major psychiatric problems, may cause disruptive nightmares or vivid dreams. Not to be used in Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar (Burma) due to mefloquine resistant areas on borders.
    - atovaquone-proguanil (malarone) - well tolerated, expensive and daily dosing, may be good for shorter trips
    - doxycycline – daily dosing and may cause photosensitivity. For the Kenya trips, Doxycycline (Vibramycin), is not effective as the other medications and therefore is **NOT** currently recommended.

O'Neil, Edward. Practical Guide to Global Health Service. American Medical Association: 2006

**A basic medical kit can include: (may want to get with other people to share some of these items) and also depends upon how rural you may be**

- Antibiotics (e.g. Cipro, Bactrim, Metronidazole) – consultation may be needed to know when to properly use these
- Acidophilus and Lactobacillus can be considered – one brand that has come Physician recommended is Culturel (can be found at Walmart) – most are better refrigerated but this one is ok not
- Muscle relaxant
- Sleeping pills (over the counter or prescription) may help with jet lag or insomnia but careful with “hangovers”
- Anti-diarrheal (Bismuth, loperamide) – safe and effective for mild to moderate diarrhea
  - Loperamide: 4mg after first loose stool and 2mg after each subsequent loose stool to total of 16mg daily – avoid if associated with bloody stools or fever
- Anti-nausea meds (i.e. prochlorperazine (Compazine) Promethazine (phenergan) or Ondansetron (Zofran – more expensive))
- Fiber laxative (i.e. Metamucil, Konocyl)
- Hemorrhoid wipes – i.e. tucks medicated wipes for diarrheal days
- Anti-gas medication
- Antacid
- Antihistamine (i.e. Benadryl -topical and oral – can be used for allergic reactions and to help with bug bites)
- If you have a history of severe allergic reaction an Epi-pen is recommended
- Motion sickness pills (i.e. Dramamine)
- Cold medication
- Antifungal cream or spray, antifungal for *Tinea cruris* for men, something to treat yeast infections for women
- Antibiotic cream
- Variety of bandaids, ace wraps or braces for existing joint problems
- Sunscreen
- Burn ointment (i.e. aloe)
- NSAIDS (i.e. Ibuprofen)
- Acetaminophen (for fevers and pains)
- Multivitamins
- Q-tips
- Tweezers
- Prescriptions and any other items that you use on a regular basis (including feminine hygiene products) – also any medications that would be used for any chronic conditions you may have even if you have not had a problem for a long time – i.e. Asthma – come prepared with an inhaler, etc.

**Packing List: (this is adapted from the Ecuador guide but can fortunately be translated to many of our trips due to similarities in climates)**

**Critical Items:**

- **Passport**
- **Vaccination record**
- **Prescription drugs – Med Kit**
- **Plane ticket**

**Clothing:**

- one or two sweaters (Quito and other cities in the Andes get quite cool at night (45 F)
- one or two sets of “dressy” clothing for visits to hospitals and other institutions
- Clothing for long hikes and vehicular travel (long sleeve shirts recommended for jungle walks; fast dry trousers & shirts recommended) – cotton recommended
- T-shirts
- Hat (a good hat is a must for sunny climates where you will be outside a lot)
- Rain gear (light poncho)
- Rubber boots/hiking boots (comfortable)
- bathing suit – not bikinis typically
- sandals

**Other:**

- Two flashlights plus extra batteries and bulbs
- Travel alarm
- Bednet -Twin size (Required - Small mesh recommended; half size or head only are NOT recommended; shop for economical models (\$20 - 30)
- Camera & supply of film (or extra memory) and extra batteries and/or charger
- Insect repellent (~20% DEET recommended; 100% DEET is NOT recommended)
- Pocket knife (in checked luggage)
- Small notebook to keep as journal
- Ziploc bags (mix of sizes, e.g. large one to keep journal in)
- Small backpack, Small duffle
- guidebook
- Spanish language guide (calculator-type useful too) or other language translator
- Sun block (High PF recommended)
- Hand sanitizer gel / Baby wipes
- Powdered Gatorade
- High Protein snack or comfort foods
- Large garbage bags
- Rope/string/duck tape
- An emergency pair of glasses/contacts and a copy of your eye prescription
- Drivers License – cannot be used in all countries but can be in Ecuador
- Money belt and/or concealed money/passport bag – do not bring a purse
- MONEY for personal use- bring mostly low denomination bills (\$1 to \$20) in good condition
- Comfort items – (but know that you may not return with them) MP3 players, DVDs, books, cards, etc.

**To bring for clinic (for those providing clinical care)**

- Stethoscope
- Penlight or flashlight – camping lights work well (extra batteries)
- Blood pressure cuff
- Eye protection – you MUST wear eye and face protection during procedures
- Extra box of gloves
- Ophthalmoscope/Otoscope and ear specula
- Percussion hammer
- Procedure/patient log
- Sanford/Pharmacopeia — any small references
- Tropical disease reference book, such as the Oxford text

## Medical and Clinical Knowledge

### International Health Topics and Tropical Disease:

1. Tropical Disease Institute website at OUCOM
  - a. Topics on International Health  
[http://www.oucom.ohiou.edu/tdi/Topics\\_International\\_Health/index.htm](http://www.oucom.ohiou.edu/tdi/Topics_International_Health/index.htm)
2. World Health Organization (WHO) list of topics if you know what you are looking for  
<http://www.who.int/topics/en/>
3. Globalhealthlearning.org  
The Global Health eLearning Center provides Internet-based courses that:
  - Provide useful and timely continuing education for health professionals
    - Suggested - Diarrheal Disease, HIV Basics, Malaria, Pneumonia, TB Basics
    - LOTS on Women's Health
  - Offer state-of-the-art technical content on key public health topics
  - Serve as a practical resource for increasing public health knowledge
4. Global Health Education Consortium  
Recommended modules listed below  
<http://globalhealthedu.org/Modules/Pages/default.aspx>
  - a. Planning your global health elective
  - b. Globalization and its impact on health
  - c. Global Health and Development: The Basics
  - d. Global Child Health, Part I
  - e. HIV Basics for Health Professionals
  - f. Intestinal Protozoa of Relevance: Giardia, Cryptosporidium, and Cyclospora
  - g. Tuberculosis
  - h. Surgery and Global Health (for specific surgical experiences)
  - i. Introduction to comparative health care systems (for interest in this topic)
5. Supercourse
  - a. [www.pitt.edu/~super1/](http://www.pitt.edu/~super1/)
  - b. this one is really better if you have A LOT of interest and A LOT of time – I wouldn't recommend this for this kind of preparation
6. AMSA International Health information - <http://www.amsa.org/global/ih/>
7. AOA International Website - [http://www.osteopathic.org/index.cfm?PageID=lcl\\_interntnl](http://www.osteopathic.org/index.cfm?PageID=lcl_interntnl)
8. Student Osteopathic Medical Association (SOMA) -  
[http://www.studentdo.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=74&Itemid=89](http://www.studentdo.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=74&Itemid=89)

### Suggested Books:

Handbooks for use during your experience – these are more clinical or health care oriented versus research oriented:

1. Oxford Handbook of Tropical Medicine (personal favorite of many students here) - by Michael Eddleston, Robert Davidson, Robert Wilkinson & Stephen Pierini
2. The Travel and Tropical Medicine Manual by Elaine C. Jong

3. Where There Is No Doctor: A Village Health Care Handbook (available free online) - by David Werner, Carol Thuman & Jane Maxwell

For further reading if you are interested in Global Health:

1. Awakening Hippocrates: A Primer on Health, Poverty, And Global Service by Edward O'Neil Jr. (highly recommended by faculty who have traveled with OUCOM)
2. A Practical Guide to Global Health Service by Edward O'Neil Jr.
3. Mountains Beyond Mountains: Healing the World: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer - by Tracy Kidder

Articles regarding International Rotations:

1. "A Caution Against Medical Tourism" <http://virtualmentor.ama-assn.org/2006/12/oped1-0612.html>
2. "International Electives: Maximizing the Opportunity to Learn and Contribute" [www.medscape.com/viewarticle/503450\\_print](http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/503450_print)
3. "Knowing When to Say "no" on the Student Elective" Nicholas Banatvala and Len Doyal. BMJ. Vol 316
4. "The Educational Value of International Electives" <http://virtualmentor.ama-assn.org/2006/12/medu1-0612.html>
5. "Understanding Global Health Issues: are International Medical Electives the Answer?" Richard Edwards, Jack Piachaud, Mike Rowson and Jaime Miranda
6. "Rethinking Your Elective" J Jaime Miranda and Sarah Finer
7. "Educational Effects of International Health Electives on U.S. and Canadian Medical Students and Residents: A Literature Review" Matthew J Thompson MBChB, MPH, Mark Huntington MD, PhD, D. Dan Hunt MD, Linda Pinsky MD, and Jonathan J. Brodie MD.

Further reading on how to make this an effective elective time:

- Alma Mata. Available at <http://www.almamata.net>. This is a free resource and network of about 500 health professionals and students interested in global health careers, training, and research. It contains a database of humanitarian organizations, articles, and interviews with doctors and students who have worked overseas.

## Travel and Culture

### Cultural Training

- What's up with Culture?: On-line cultural training resource for study abroad from the University of the Pacific <http://www3.uop.edu/sis/culture/>
- Intercultural Press – for books on travel <http://www.interculturalpress.com/store/pc/home.asp>

### For students with Disabilities

- Mobility International <http://www.miusa.org/>
- Transitions Abroad <http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/travel/disability/index.shtml>

### For Gay, Lesbian, and Transgendered students abroad

- Lesbigoay special interest group <http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/>
- International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission <http://www.iglhrc.org/site/iglhrc/>
- International Lesbian and Gay Association <http://www.ilga.org/>

The following is a compilation of ideas and information about cultures, culture shock and how to cope on your trips!

When planning a trip abroad it is easy to remember to gather important documents for travel, to pack and to plan what you will do but often times we forget to plan to prepare for how we will feel or how we will deal with situations that will be different from what we are used to.

Dr Edward O'Neil Jr. writes, "culture is in us and all around us, embedded in our mannerisms, language, beliefs, actions, rules of law, governance, patterns of socializing, and any number of subconscious ways in which we go about our daily lives." The French nobleman Alexis de Toqueville and modern writer of travel Rober Kohls have described the American culture as "hurried pace, informality, loudness, respect for the law, strong work ethic, frugality, aggressiveness, tendency to criticize the government, and lack of clear class boundaries, boastful, disrespectful of authority, ignorant of other countries, materialistic, superficial, friendly, punctual, and confident we have all the answers," quite a list of what we may perceive as both negative and positive qualities. Those going abroad will immediately see differences from our own and

Some of most valuable traits one can carry abroad are:

*flexibility, adaptability, a sense of humor, a willingness to lower expectations, and ability to fail.*

Ask yourself realistically if you can handle problems that may arise with these qualities and if you cannot it may be better to serve in another way. (O'Neil, 2006)

**Ethnocentricity** the view held by members of a particular culture that the values and ways of one's own group are superior to others, and that all other cultures are judged inferior with reference to this view. Ethnocentrism rests upon the assumption that the worldview of one's own culture is central to all reality. This strong cultural trait remains one of the main obstacles to functioning well in other societies, particularly those that are predominantly poor. Try to look past this. (<http://www3.uop.edu/sis/culture/> and O'Neil, 2006)

**Naïve Realism** - meaning that they believe that everyone else in the world sees the world (or should!) and interprets events as they do. For them there is only *one* reasonable explanation for everything. When they discover that other do NOT share those views, the tendency is to denigrate those who are different. Implicit in

such a view is the belief that if one culture *is* inherently better, then all others must compare unfavorably or lack some essential quality that one's own culture possesses.

**Cultural generalization:** Broad characterizations can be useful as a general guide to anticipating and discussing cultural reactions, attitudes, and behaviors in a neutral way. While cultural generalizations are helpful in analyzing cultural patterns (e.g., Americans *tend* to be individualistic while Japanese *tend* to be collectivist), it is understood that *no cultural generalization will ever apply to everyone in a culture* (no matter how small or isolated) because individual personalities and backgrounds always play a role in how people think and act. In intercultural communication, cultural generalizations are used as a shorthand way to make non-judgmental cross-cultural comparisons, not to oversimplify or deny the complexity of social interaction.

Successful communication = 2 ways to interpret a behavior – from the one performing and the one observing – when they are the same we have successful communication

### **General Tips for Crossing Cultures Effectively**

\* As you encounter differences in culture and behavior between American culture and the host culture, remind yourself that one way is not the “right” way to live and the other way is “wrong.” Most of these differences are simply that — just differences.

\* In most cultures, greetings are of paramount importance. Even in the U.S., we prefer a strong handshake and polite, clearly spoken greeting to mumbling or a limp wrist. Learn the common greetings in your host culture and use them with everyone you meet. Practice on your supervisor or team members if you are uncomfortable with the foreign words or actions.

\* Be aware of the volume of your voice when you travel overseas. Often Americans are viewed as loud and brutish because of our tendency toward boisterous conversation. Also, if someone from the local culture does not understand something you say, talking louder will not help. Take your cues from the local people for the appropriate volume of speech and laughter.

\* Privacy is more valued in western cultures than in non-western ones. In East Africa, 20 Kenyans can fit on a church pew that would hold only 12 - 15 Americans because of the American sense of personal space that does not exist in East Africa. Be prepared for your personal space and privacy to be invaded in other cultures.

\* “Hurry up and wait” is a typical experience overseas. Be prepared to be on time for all events, but be prepared to wait for the events to begin. Most non-Western cultures are more people-oriented and event-oriented than task oriented. That means that a meeting won't start on time if all of the participants have not arrived because the presence of the people is more important than the time the meeting begins or ends. If you are a task-oriented person (i.e. you like to get the job done and don't “need” to spend time socializing before you finish the job), you will want to practice enjoying events and people and leave your watch at home.

\* Men holding hands while walking down the street in non-Western cultures is simply a statement of friendship, not of sexual orientation. Men often hold hands with male friends in public as do women with female friends. If you find a local person of your sex wanting to hold your hand in public, consider the action a giant compliment — you have been accepted as a friend. However, men and women usually do not display affection to each other publicly, whether by holding hands or otherwise. These social rules protecting cross-gender interaction are of utmost importance and should be respected by guests.

\* For women visiting a male-dominated society, you are not there to impose your cultural and societal freedoms on the women of that culture. Your experience will be most effective and beneficial to you and the local people if you live in accordance with their modes of behavior for women that do not compromise yourself.

\* “There is something in the mindset of the American that says being comfortable is of higher importance than dressing appropriately” says cross-cultural educator Sarah Lanier in her book *Foreign to Familiar*. As you pack, be sure to take some nice clothes as well as work/play clothes and remember that modesty is always the best policy. Otherwise, says Lanier, “a too-casual manner of dress says, ‘I don’t respect you or your protocol and I express how casually I take it by not bothering to dress appropriately.’” If you find yourself without appropriate clothes for a situation, borrow some from your host or go to the market and buy something appropriate. You will be purchasing a souvenir at the same time.

\* On the field, you will be out of control of your life. You will not be able to go where you want to go when you want to go; you will not be able to eat the food you like at every meal; you (probably) will not be able to communicate fluently with the local people. Be prepared to give up control of your time, your freedom and your “rights” in order to work/live effectively.

If you like to have a plan and live by the plan, teach yourself to be flexible and to embrace change. Your plans on the field will change several times and being in control of the situation is not a realistic desire. You will feel less frustrated and out-of-control if you recognize your need to know the plan and act according to the plan and teach yourself that change and flexibility can be good.

### **Culture Shock: What is it and how to cope:**

Any traveler who spends more than a couple weeks abroad may experience some sort of culture shock and anyone staying longer will experience it.

**Culture "Shock":** Culture Shock comes from the natural contradiction between our accustomed patterns of behavior and the psychological conflict of attempting to maintain them in the new cultural environment. While culture shock is common, relief is available. There are ways to minimize its effects -the first of which is to accept that it is a real phenomenon- and to learn to recognize its sometimes vague, if persistent, signs in yourself as well as others. Realize that there are different stages of culture shock and it does not hold the immediacy the term implies rather it may happen slowly from many cumulative events that are difficult to pinpoint.

If negative attitudes towards minor annoyances do not change, a low level of persistent frustration is likely to build up. This can quickly lead to volatile anger when accumulated stress inappropriately and unexpectedly erupts and you vent your feelings, but you are unable to trace the outburst to a single source. People around you might comment, "What was that all about?" or "Where did that come from?"

Just remember that unlike temporary annoyance when you are in the presence of a particular cultural practice (e.g., mistreatment of animals or public displays of affection), culture shock is neither caused by a single act nor easily traceable to a particular event. It is cumulative, attributable to many small things that happen over time, and it has the potential to be more deeply felt and take longer to alleviate.

Reference: <http://www3.uop.edu/sis/culture/> - Reprinted with permission from “What’s up culture?” who allows use of materials for educational purposes.

## Culture Shock

### Symptoms:

- Sadness, loneliness, melancholy
- Preoccupation with health
- Aches, pains, and allergies
- Insomnia, desire to sleep too much or too little
- Changes in temperament, depression, feeling vulnerable, feeling powerless
- Anger, irritability, resentment, unwillingness to interact with others
- Identifying with the old culture or idealizing the old country
- Loss of identity
- Trying too hard to absorb everything in the new culture or country
- Unable to solve simple problems
- Lack of confidence
- Feelings of inadequacy or insecurity
- Developing stereotypes about the new culture
- Developing obsessions such as over-cleanliness
- Longing for family
- Feelings of being lost, overlooked, exploited or abused

### Stages of Culture Shock

Culture shock has many stages. Each stage can be ongoing or appear only at certain times.

1. **Incubation stage** – Excitement - In this first stage, the new arrival may feel euphoric and be pleased by all of the new things encountered. This time is called the "honeymoon" stage, as everything encountered is new and exciting. Also called **Culture "Surprise"**
2. **Second Stage – Withdrawal-** A person may encounter some difficult times and crises in daily life. For example, communication difficulties may occur such as not being understood. In this stage, there may be feelings of discontent, impatience, anger, sadness, and feeling incompetence. This happens when a person is trying to adapt to a new culture that is very different from the culture of origin. Transition between the old methods and those of the new country is a difficult process and takes time to complete. During the transition, there can be strong feelings of dissatisfaction. This can also be termed times of **“culture stress” or “culture fatigue” and is often accompanied by “language fatigue”**
3. **Third stage – adjustment-** is characterized by gaining some understanding of the new culture. A new feeling of pleasure and sense of humor may be experienced. One may start to feel a certain psychological balance. The new arrival may not feel as lost and starts to have a feeling of direction. The individual is more familiar with the environment and wants to belong. This initiates an evaluation of the old ways versus those of the new.
4. **Fourth stage – Enthusiasm-** the person realizes that the new culture has good and bad things to offer. This stage can be one of double integration or triple integration depending on the number of cultures that the person has to process. This integration is accompanied by a more solid feeling of belonging. The person starts to define him/herself and establish goals for living.

5. **Fifth - "re-entry shock"** This occurs when a return to the country of origin is made. One may find that things are no longer the same. For example, some of the newly acquired customs are not in use in the old culture.

These stages are present at different times and each person has their own way of reacting in the stages of culture shock. As a consequence, some stages will be longer and more difficult than others.

### How to Fight Culture Shock

The majority of individuals and families that immigrate from other countries have the ability to positively confront the obstacles of a new environment. Some ways to combat stress produced by culture shock are:

- Before you go:
  - Learn as much about the host country before you leave.
  - Make every effort to learn at least some of the language, particularly for longer visits
  - Befriend those who have gone before you
- While you are there:
  - Make effort to learn more language asking those around you for help
  - Don't forget the good things you already have!
  - Be patient, the act of immigrating is a process of adaptation to new situations. It is going to take time
  - Learn to be constructive. If you encounter an unfavorable environment, don't put yourself in that position again. Be easy on yourself.
  - Don't try too hard.
  - Relaxation and meditation are proven to be very positive for people who are passing through periods of stress
  - Allow yourself to feel sad about the things that you have left behind: your family, your friends, etc.
  - Recognize the sorrow of leaving your old country. Accept the new country. Focus your power on getting through the transition.
  - Maintain confidence in yourself. Follow your ambitions and continue your plans for the future.
  - If you feel stressed, look for help. There is always someone or some service available to help you. "have the time" to talk with trusted sources and friends

Reference:

<http://edweb.sdsu.edu/people/CGuanipa/cultshok.htm>

O'Neil, Edward. Practical Guide to Global Health Service. American Medical Association: 2005

## **General Information and Articles and other fun tips!!**

### **Spanish Resources**

- Medical Spanish Monthly - <http://mayanmedicalaid.org/subscribe.html>
- Northwestern University School of Medicine Pre-departure website  
<http://www.medschool.northwestern.edu/education/global-health/pre-departure/index.html>
  - Includes downloadable English-Spanish Dictionary, and
  - Conversación – a language guide to a patient interview in Spanish

### **Swahili Resources**

- [http://mwanasimba.online.fr/E\\_TABLE.htm](http://mwanasimba.online.fr/E_TABLE.htm)
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swahili\\_language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swahili_language)
- <http://www.blissites.com/kenya/language.html>
- <http://africa.uga.edu/Kiswahili/doe/index.html>

### **Luo Resources**

- <http://economics.ozier.com/language/dholuo.html>
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dholuo\\_language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dholuo_language)
- <http://www.everyculture.com/wc/Japan-to-Mali/Luo.html>

## **12 Clever Uses for Your Digital Camera**

Posted by Mike Richard on November 8, 2007

<http://www.vagabondish.com/clever-uses-digital-camera-traveling/>

(Reprinted with permission from [vagabondish.com](http://www.vagabondish.com).)

Your digital camera can be a lot more useful than you might think, especially while traveling. Here are twelve novel uses you probably never thought of for your digital camera:

### **#1 - Post a Digital Reward Flyer**

Draw up a reward flyer on with a standard piece of a paper and magic marker. Include your e-mail address and a reward amount, if applicable. Take a picture of it with your camera and use your camera's options to "lock" this file and prevent accidental deletion. It's a small precaution, but if your camera's ever lost, its finder will at least have a way to contact you.

### **#2 - Subway Map**

Find a large, complete map of the local subway system and snap a picture of it. It's like your very own Google Maps for the subway. You can zoom in and out of it. And, if you get lost, you can easily find a local bystander, zoom in on your destination station and point it out to them on the screen.

### **#3 - Stadium and Arena Map**

When we arrived in Montreal on a recent trip and found that U2 was in town, we knew we had to pick up a pair of tickets on the streets. We used our digital camera to capture the complete seating chart of the Bell Centre. We felt much more at ease talking to ticket scalpers outside the arena because we knew exactly where the seats were for the tickets they were trying to sell us.

#### **#4 - Mirror**

Depending on the ambient lighting, you can both use the blacked-out LCD to check out your reflection or simply take a picture of yourself and review it.

#### **#5 - Keep You Company**

If you're traveling alone for any length of time, you'll no doubt experience bouts of loneliness. Before you leave, take pictures of your loved ones, pets, car, Xbox ... whatever conjures pleasant memories of home. You also might want to lock these photos to protect against accidental deletion.

#### **#6 - Snap Your Luggage**

Face it: your luggage probably looks just like 90% of the luggage out there. Let me guess: it's black with a few zippered pockets? Snap a few pictures of the bags you're toting around before you leave. If they wind up in Tahiti when you're headed to Taiwan, it'll be much easier to show the airline clerk a photo rather than trying to explain how "It's big and black with zippers."

#### **#7 - Recalling Where You're Staying**

With a digital camera, you can take a picture of your hotel and the nearest street sign, as well as any nearby landmarks, and then show those pictures to your taxi driver or to anyone from whom you might need to get directions. For English-speakers this is especially helpful in Asia, India, and any country where the language may be difficult to pronounce and read.

#### **#8 - Photograph Your Child**

Perhaps the quickest, easiest precaution you can take while traveling with children is to take their photo everyday. If they get lost, you'll have an instant visual of exactly what they were wearing to show local law enforcement.

#### **#9 - Avoid Rental Car Scams**

Use your digital camera to take your own photos of your rental car the minute you pick it up. As an added safeguard should you ever wind up in court disputing when any damage occurred, you might want to get your cell phone in the photo too since the date and timestamp is difficult to fake.

#### **#10 - Remembering Where You've Been**

This may seem obvious, but I personally admit to taking a dozen or so pictures of newfound friends while traveling and then having no idea where I met them or where the photo was taken. Oddly enough, this happens most often at bars and pubs. Hm.

As mentioned above, this is also particularly useful far off the beaten path, where English is not likely to be spoken. You may have only symbolic signs to show where you're eating and visiting. And the pronunciation of locals may be of little help. Snap a photo of the outside of your favorite restaurant, club, etc. and later you can show someone where you'd like to go back to or where you've been.

#### **#11 - Photocopy Flyers**

Urban centers are riddled with flyers promoting club goings-on and events at local bars and pubs. If you see one you like, snap a photo of it rather than carrying the tattered remnants of a flyer in your pocket.

## #12 - A Backup Light

If you find yourself waking up in the middle of the night in a dark hostel somewhere, use your digital camera as a makeshift lantern. Flick through your recent travel photos to a nice, bright outside shot or simply keep a photo you've taken of a washed-out, sunlit sky. The light from the LCD screen on most digital cameras is bright enough to work as a backup flashlight/lantern in a pinch.

### 5 Tips for Writing Better Group Emails about Your Travels

25 Apr 2008 in Travel Writing, Photo, and Video by David DeFranza

<http://thetravelersnotebook.com/photography-q-a/how-to-write-better-mass-emails-about-your-travels-to-keep-people-up-to-date-on-your-travels/>

(Reprinted with permission from [thetravelersnotebook.com](http://thetravelersnotebook.com).)

With a few simple tricks you can make mass emails more reader-friendly and generate better discussions and comments. Group emails are a great way to quickly update a lot of people with what you have been doing. The only problem is that they often come off as a bit impersonal and can be very difficult to read. More often than not, you will spend an hour writing a detailed update, send it off, and get few, if any, responses.

#### 1. Protect people's privacy

This first tip is actually not a suggestion; it's a rule. You should not place everyone's address in the "to:" field because it will allow every recipient to see all the other addresses.

While there may be no problem with this for some, many people don't appreciate it. Instead, place your own address in the "to:" field and everyone else's address in the "bcc:" field. This will block out the addresses, while at the same time delivering a copy to yourself for review.

#### 2. Pick one story

It is tempting to write long, detailed, updates every time you sit down in the internet cafe. This is an understandable impulse, but it tends to produce an email that is very difficult to read.

Instead, pick one story or anecdote that stands out and focus on telling it well. Keeping it short, not more than two well formed paragraphs will make the email easier to read and help sharpen the writing.

When thinking of a story to send, try to pick something that is interesting and will encourage people to ask more about what you have been doing. Hopefully, your friends will read the email and then write back asking for more.

#### 3. Use photographs

Everyone likes to see pictures and a group email is no exception. Pick a single, favorite, photograph that illustrates something you have done recently and attach it to the email.

When it comes to the message, try to think of the email as a postcard. A short, descriptive, message accompanied by a well chosen photograph can say significantly more than a long, overly detailed, update.

#### 4. Ask questions

Email is about communication and, ultimately, you would like your messages to engage your reader enough that they will respond. A great way to elicit a response is to ask a question or two.

Of course, typical correspondence questions fall a bit flat and sound impersonal when read in a group email. Instead, draw some questions out of your experiences that might spark conversation.

For example, you could ask a speculative question like “I wonder if I’ve been missing an amazing ski season back home?” or something about more universal experiences like “why haven’t I been drinking wine with dinner all my life?”

## **5. Set up a blog on Matador**

This allows you to share all of your favorite stories and photos, give thoughts and opinions, and engage a like-minded community. It gives your friends the freedom to check in on your progress whenever they want, and the ability to comment on each entry.

A great place to create a free travel blog that you can share with existing friends and use to make new ones is [Matadortravel.com](http://Matadortravel.com). Set up a [profile](#), start a [blog](#), and send out your last group email providing a link to the blog and RSS feed!

## **Reflection and Journaling**

Reflection is an important part of each new experience and can help you and your group process the new information gained or experienced as well as help you or your group decide what you will do with the information obtained or experience and how to incorporate it back into your everyday life. We encourage journaling and group or one-on-one discussion for reflection times.

Here are questions that can spark ideas for writing in your journal and creating your portfolio.

### **Connecting with Experience**

- Look back on today. What struck you most strongly? What happened?
- What images stand out in your mind? What sights and sounds and smells? What experiences and conversations? What was it about those images that made you remember them?
- What was happening in your heart? What did you feel? Upset? Surprised? Confused? Content? What touched you most deeply today? Why?
- What did you find most frustration? Most hopeful? Why?

### **Connecting with People**

- Look back on today. Who did you meet and work with during the day? Who did you relate to most easily? Who did you find it hardest to talk with? Why?
- What did you learn about the people you met? How are their experiences most like yours? How are they most different? How would you feel if you had to change places for a week? For a year? For a lifetime? Why?
- What did you learn about *yourself* today? What do you like about what you learned? What do you dislike and most want to change?

### **Connecting with Issues**

- What was happening in your head? How did the experience change or challenge your convictions and beliefs?
- What needs did your service involvement try to meet? Why did or didn't it succeed?
- How were justice and injustice present in the situations you faced today? Did you learn anything new about what causes suffering? About what you can do to make things better?
- How are you part of the problem? Part of the solution?

### **Connecting with Your Learning**

- What information or skills did you learn today?
- How did you apply knowledge and information you had learned before this project?

### **Connecting with the Future**

- What did you learn today that will help you in your service work in the future? What needs to change in the world to make things better? What needs to change in you?
- What hopes and expectations do you have for those you served? For yourself?
- Did the service experience affect what you think you deserve from life? How you would like to live? What type of job or career you might choose?