

CULTURE SHOCK! BEING AN AMERICAN ABROAD

Helpful Tips from SCU International Ambassadors

Language

- Having a pocket dictionary is important as you get to know the local language.
- In China & Europe, get used to people trying to practice English.
- Learning the language depends on how open you are to trying it and being unafraid of making mistakes!!!
- Knowing the local language is important and many teachers are not expected to help after class. In other programs, teachers are a great resource for language, culture, and slang learning.

Food/Drinking

- Try new things, research, don't be paranoid, and ask locals!
- Be careful with water and alcohol.
- In some cultures like Spain, it's very difficult to be a vegetarian.
- Be careful with street food.
- If a food or drink isn't part of a culture, try not to eat or drink it.
- Be aware the manners are very different and be slow to take offense.

Social Customs

- Be slow to criticize and be respectful.
- Don't yell, especially in English.
- In China, "saving face" (not embarrassing people or yourself) is important.

Fashion

- Blend in; try not to be "that American".
- Be respectful of their culture and be careful of being too showy or fancy.

Other Challenges/Tips

- Being homesick is okay and will happen
- *Savor your time*, many students want to return to their countries right after coming home.
- You will be overwhelmed at first, so don't worry if you feel that way
- Be prepared for *reverse culture shock*, not feeling home when you get home.
- A culture class can help you get adjusted.