

Making Your Trip A Success

Most travelers experience some degree of culture shock. How much depends on each person's personality, knowledge of the country, expectations, maturity, and previous travel experience. The following is a list of skills that have shown to be very important in making an overseas experience successful:

- **Tips to success**
- **Culture Shock**
- **Safe Travel Abroad**
- **A Few Points To Remember**

Tips to Success

1. Knowledge of the country, language and cultural aspects.
2. Tolerance of ambiguity and the ability to cope with vagueness.
3. Open-mindedness and the ability and willingness to accept diverse viewpoints.
4. Low goal and task expectations. Do not expect to accomplish too much.
5. Empathy. Try to see through the eyes of the local people.
6. Nonjudgmental. Accept and try to understand differences between cultures.
7. A sense of humor and the ability to laugh at yourself for your mistakes.
8. Good communication skills with and interest in the local culture.
9. Flexibility and the ability to change, adapting to new situations as they arise.
10. Ability to fail, learning from your mistakes and ignorance.
11. Accepting the responsibility to adapting and succeeding in the program.

Culture Shock

It may comfort you to know that no individual is immune to "culture shock". Anyone traveling to a different country for the first time - including expatriates who have previously lived in different countries - will inevitably experience "culture shock". It's helpful to know what "culture shock" is and the symptoms that accompany this syndrome.

Culture shock, simply, is an uneasy feeling of disorientation brought on by the inability to respond appropriately to the social cues of another country which you may be introduced to in daily life situations. Your own values, perceptions and ways of doing and organizing things may seem threatened as you begin to notice the differences between your destination country and home. It is the accumulation of this psychological disorientation which is known as culture shock.

Some key symptoms of culture shock include:

- Homesickness/ Boredom
- Withdrawal/ Frustration and anxiety
- Depression/ Irritability
- Stereotyping of host nationals
- Hostility toward host nationals

Keep in mind that these symptoms and others will vary depending upon your length of stay. Most tourists never experience this syndrome because they are seldom faced with the daily realities and situations encountered in the longer-term visitors or the country's citizens.

Safe Travel Abroad

1. Use common sense abroad, just as you would at home.
2. Learn about local rules and obey them.
3. Carry travelers checks instead of a lot of cash.

4. Do not flash large amounts of cash when paying bills.
5. Be sure your credit card is given back after each transaction.
6. Be sure you receive a "claim check" for each piece of luggage you check-in.
7. Conceal your money, travelers checks, passport, and other valuables.
8. Do not leave bags unattended in public places. Traveling light will help.
9. Women should carry handbags in a secure manner to prevent "snatch" theft.
10. Be wary of con artists. They exist around the world.
11. Keep hotel and car keys with you.
12. Be alert to street gangs in big cities abroad.
13. If confronted by a superior threat, don't fight attackers - give up valuables.
14. Report any loss or theft to the police or other appropriate authorities.
15. Report any loss of your passport to your nearest Embassy or Consulate.
16. Keep a low profile. Dress and behave conservatively, avoiding flashy dress.
17. Be polite and low-key. Avoid loud conversations and arguments.
18. Avoid dangerous areas. Do not use short cuts, narrow alleys, poorly lit streets.
19. Do not give your room number to persons you do not know well. Meet in lobby.
20. Remember, you are in a foreign country and subject to the laws of that country.
21. Penalties for drug violations are very severe in many foreign countries.
22. Deal only with authorized agents when you exchange money, buy tickets, etc.
23. Avoid taking pictures of military personnel, police, or any military installations.
24. Book hotel rooms between the 2nd - 7th floors to prevent easy entrance.
25. Know the fire exit in your hotel.
26. Learn some of the local language so you can obtain help if needed.
27. Contact your Embassy if you get in any trouble.
28. Become familiar with customs policies when you return home.

A Few Points To Remember

1. Do not expect the same comforts as home. No grumps or whiners please!
2. Expect things to be different. Expect to be confused sometimes and frustrated.
3. Learn to adapt and appreciate the cultural differences.
4. Please read all the HKLTC materials. Ask any questions or concerns.
5. After arrival, direct all questions to the on-site Director.
6. Please take copies of your confirmation to show upon arrival and check-in.
7. Do not criticize the country or culture. Be positive.
8. Use common sense regarding safety issues. Obey laws of the country.
9. Follow the old adage: "When in Rome, do as the Romans do."
10. Arrive at the housing and program assignment as scheduled.
11. Pack light. Many items can be purchased locally.
12. Bring a major credit card, travelers checks, and some cash.
13. If you plan to arrive earlier, please plan on staying at a local hotel or hostel.
14. Take 2 passport photos with you for ID cards.
15. Be sure you have a valid passport and Visa (if needed).
16. Consult on-site Director for any changes after arrival.

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