

Ashley Schotsman

BREAKING NEWS: Traveling isn't always smooth sailing!

Fret naught, my dear reader! You have come to the right place! I have selected the top three challenges when preparing to travel or study abroad with my advice on how to conquer them!

#1 Q: Dear Ashley, I am worried I will not be able to take care of myself and adapt to the different cuisine options while I am abroad. How can I prepare for this?

A: Dear reader, food is a very important aspect of everyday life and science has proven that 90-95% of the happy neurochemical known as serotonin is found in our gut (<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2012/09/gut-feeling>). I would suggest that you start with some research about what foods you like and how they may be similar to food abroad. It is always a great idea to sign out a cookbook from your local library to learn some new recipes (<https://www.cookforyourlife.org/recipe-collections/home-alone-great-ideas-for-meals-for-one/>). You can also download some helpful apps such as Mealime (<https://www.mealime.com/>) or Whisk (<https://whisk.com/>). The newfound independence is probably the most challenging, yet most rewarding part of studying abroad. I suggest treating yourself with kindness and know that learning takes time.

#2 Q: Dear Ashley I am worried I will run out of money or that I will not enjoy my experience because I do not have a lot of money. How can I prepare myself financially?

A: Dear reader, financial stability is a big sigh of relief, but as with everything it can easily change, so I understand your concerns. Travelling is not the time to be conservative, BUT we can't go bankrupt over a \$20 souvenir key chain. Try speaking with your parents, friends or even other experienced travellers to see how they budgeted (<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/how-to-budget-for-a-big-trip>). Start to make a list of essentials that you will need and write down the average cost it would be in your home currency and the foreign currency (<https://online.royalbank.com/cgi-bin/tools/foreign-exchange-calculator/start.cgi>). Be sure to budget for unexpected issues that may arise (forgetting your raincoat in the bathroom and needing to buy a new one). In terms of saving (<https://www.ef.com/ca/blog/language/how-to-travel-on-a-budget-9-best-tips/>), try your best to earn money before going abroad by obtaining a job, asking relatives for financial support, applying to grants or scholarships or even taking a small loan to pay back to the bank.

#3 Q: Dear Ashley, I am worried about being taken advantage of, as a tourist. How can I ensure I 'fit in' to avoid being a target?

A: Dear reader, as Idena Menzel would say you are travelling "into the unknown!" The unknown is always scary, but you can reach out to others who may have travelled where you are going, through social media or even your school's international center. Travel books, like Lonely Planet or DK eyewitness, are another excellent source with a variety of tips and tricks on how to blend in with the locals (<https://blog.eftours.com/how-to/travel-tips/17-cultural-differences>). The internet is another awesome source with many tips (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/johnnyjet/2017/10/23/ten-tips-for->

traveling-alone/?sh=5722e1f57c49) and tricks (<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/20-tips-for-travelling-solo>) for travelling alone! You could even practice some of the common cultural differences at home with your family (<https://www.adventuretravelnews.com/understanding-cultural-differences-a-guide-for-travel-professionals>).