Avoid Participating in Demonstrations and Other Political Activities

Here in the U.S. we enjoy many liberties. However, political activities in other countries can result in detention and/or deportation by officials. You can "stick it to the man," but on your own soil.

Be Conscientious

Be aware of surroundings, and take general precautions. Remember that standards of safety and supervision (i.e. for swimming pools or hotel balconies) may not reach those expected in the United States. Also, don't take your valuables with you on your trip—leave them at home in your sock drawer.

For the latest student travel safety information, go to
www.studentsabroad.state.gov

Contact Overseas Citizens Services:

1-888-407-4747 (toll free in the United States and Canada)
1-202-501-4444 (outside the United States and Canada)

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STUDENTS ABROAD

go from here.

Your Spring Break

to Mexico and the Caribbean

Ready for Spring Break?

Don't let your escape from dorm life and research papers turn into a spring break horror story. Put your mind (and your parents) at ease by using these strategies to avoid dangerous situations.

First Things First

Before you pack your snorkeling gear, make sure you have your passport! Apply for one now. Learn how at www.studentsabroad.state.gov.

Avoid Underage and Excessive Alcohol Consumption

Excessive drinking often plays a role in many arrests, accidents, violent crimes, rapes, and deaths suffered by American students on spring break. As in the U.S., disturbing the peace, lewd behavior, littering, driving under the influence, and drinking on the street or on public transportation may all be considered criminal activities by local authorities—is it worth it?

go from here.

Don't Import, Purchase, Use, or Have Drugs in Your Possession

It just makes good sense; drug charges can carry severe penalties, including imprisonment without bail for up to a year before a case is even tried. A conviction carries several more years of imprisonment in a foreign jail. In some countries it doesn't matter if you're underage either; you can still be charged as an adult. *Mommy!*

Obey the Local Laws

An arrest or accident during spring break can result in a difficult legal situation. Your U.S. citizenship does not make you exempt from full prosecution under another country's criminal justice system. Many countries impose harsh penalties for violations that would be considered minor in the United States. If you find yourself in a legal jam, contact the closest U.S. consulate, U.S. consular agency, or the U.S. embassy for assistance. Keep in mind, U.S. consular employees cannot arrange for local officials to release detained American citizens.

Take Warning Flags on Beaches Seriously

This seems like a no-brainer, but many drownings occur when swimmers are overwhelmed by the water conditions. If black or red flags are up, do not enter the water. Strong undertow and rough surf along beaches are more common than you may think, especially on the Pacific Coast. If you choose to swim, always exercise extreme caution.

Only Use Licensed and Regulated Taxis

Some illegitimate taxi drivers are, in fact, criminals in search of victims. Some users of unlicensed taxis have been robbed, kidnapped, and/or raped. When in doubt, ask the hotel, club, or restaurant staff to summon a legitimate taxi for you.

Do Not Carry Weapons

A pocketknife can result in a serious weapons charge while on foreign soil—even if the knife is found when arrested for a separate offense. Visitors driving across the border to Mexico should ensure that their vehicles contain no firearms or ammunition.