

Travel Advisory - Study-Abroad Russia

This is not a complete list of travel advisories.

Please visit [U.S. State Department travel site](#) for an up to date and extensive listing.

Russia Entry Requirement

- U.S. PASSPORT - You must obtain a passport to participate. Your passport should be valid at least six months after your return date.
- NON-U.S. CITIZEN PARTICIPANT - International students must be sure to have appropriate documentation for entry into Russia and re-entry into the United States. Documentation is the responsibility of the student. Please contact the Office of International Education for assistance.
- VISA - A Russian visa is required to participate in the Study-Abroad Russia Program. The Coordinator of the Study-Abroad Russia Program will direct your visa process. The Russian government maintains a restrictive and complicated visa regime for foreigners who visit the Russian Federation. A U.S. citizen who does not comply with Russian visa laws can be subject to arrest, fines and/or deportation. Russian authorities will not allow a U.S. citizen traveler with an expired visa to depart the country until a new visa is approved, which may take up to 20 days. U.S. citizens should also be aware that Russian immigration and visa laws change regularly, and the implementation of new regulations has not always been transparent or predictable.

Emergencies Abroad

If an emergency happens while abroad, contact the on-site administration, Coordinator for Study-Abroad Russia Program, and ask for assistance. You can contact APSU at any hour by calling 001-931-221-7786. Please be prepared to provide your name, the telephone number where you can be reached, your BANNER I.D. number and the nature of the problem.

The local equivalent to the “911” emergency line in Russia is 03 (“Skoraya Pomoshch”).

Crime Abroad

You need to be alert of your surroundings in Russia. Pick-pocketing and purse-snatching is a worldwide problem.

- You should never leave your baggage unattended and never put bags containing valuables, such as your passport, down on the ground. Do not check luggage for anyone else onto airplanes, trains or buses. Do not borrow suitcases and do not allow anyone to put anything in your luggage.
- You should never carry large quantities of money. Money should be carried in security wallets. Do not carry all of your money in the same place.
- The loss or theft abroad of a U.S. passport should be reported immediately to the local police and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.
- You should keep billfolds in inner front pockets or carry purses securely tucked under your arm. Wear the shoulder strap of cameras or bags across the chest. You should walk away from the curb and carry purses and other bags away from the street.
- In many cases, stolen credit cards are used immediately. As a victim of credit card or ATM card theft, you should report the theft to the credit card company or issuing bank without delay.

For your safety, you should always be aware of your surroundings, travel in groups and avoid traveling after dusk. You may also want to exercise caution when using credit or debit cards in ATM machines or unestablished facilities.

Russian Laws

While in Russia, you are subject to Russian laws. Penalties for breaking Russian law and regulations are more severe than in the United States. It is illegal to pay for goods and services in U.S. dollars except at authorized retail establishments. You should inform yourself of rules and regulations of Russian law prior to arriving in Russia.

Visiting Moscow

- **Transportation in Russia:** Travel by car and plane poses a significantly higher risk in Russia. You are advised to choose public transportation, the metro and buses, whenever possible. You should avoid hiring taxis as this mode of transportation poses the most significant risks.
- **Medical Facilities:** Medical care in most localities is below Western standards and expectations due to shortages of medical supplies, differing practice standards and the lack of comprehensive primary care. The few facilities in Moscow that approach acceptable standards do not necessarily accept all cases. Access to these facilities usually requires cash or credit card payment at Western rates at the time of service.

Travel Advisory - Study-Abroad Russia

- **Politics Abroad:** You are strongly encouraged to avoid political protest and other potentially volatile situations.

Studying on Lake Baikal

- **Accommodations:** The Biodiversity study site is very rustic and accommodations are located in a small village on Lake Baikal. You will take a high-speed ferry to reach the village. Cabins are basic with 2-4 beds per room. In the cabin there is a living room with table, chairs and couches but meals will be served in a screened porch cabin just beside the sleeping cabin. Bathrooms and showers are located separately from sleeping quarters; however there is a sink in the cabin.
- **Medical Facilities:** An emergency medical care facility is available to send aid to the village and is located approximately 30-minutes away by high-speed boat or air transport if available. You can also travel back to Irkutsk by high speed ferry to visit medical facilities. An interpreter would need to accompany you to assist with medical arrangements.
- **Recreation Activities:** Swimming and boating in Lake Baikal is dangerous due to the depth of the lake close to the shore and the unpredictable wind currents that cause sudden large waves. Hiking trails around the lake are steep and risky.

Student Conduct Abroad

You are required to participate and attend all classes and excursions for academic credit and continued participation in the program. While you are studying abroad you are a representative of Austin Peay State University. You are expected to follow the Austin Peay State University student code of conduct at all times and abide by the student code of conduct for Irkutsk State University. Failure to do so could result in expulsion from the program and academic penalties.

Trip Cancellation

You are encouraged to consider purchasing trip cancellation insurance. Many travel agents and private companies offer insurance plans that will cover the cost or part of the cost of your trip.

- **International Student Identity Card (ISIC)** offers limited travel and health insurance as well as discounts abroad.

Health Precautions

Please note that tuberculosis, hepatitis, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS are worldwide problems. Protect yourself and act responsibly to ensure your health.

Please consult with your medical physician on the following vaccinations recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Routine - Recommended if you are not up-to-date with routine shots such as, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine, etc.

Hepatitis A or immune globulin (IG) - Recommended for all unvaccinated people traveling to Russia (intermediate level of Hepatitis A virus infection) where exposure might occur through food or water. Cases of travel-related Hepatitis A can also occur in travelers to developing areas with "standard" tourist itineraries, accommodations and food consumption behaviors.

Hepatitis B - Recommended for all unvaccinated persons traveling to Russia (intermediate level of endemic HBV transmission), especially those who might be exposed to blood or body fluids, have sexual contact with the local population or be exposed through medical treatment (e.g., for an accident).

Typhoid - Recommended for all unvaccinated people traveling to Russia, especially if visiting smaller cities, villages or rural areas where exposure might occur through food or water.

Rabies - Recommended for travelers spending a lot of time outdoors, especially in rural areas, involved in activities such as bicycling, camping or hiking. Also recommended for travelers involved in any activities that might bring them into direct contact with bats, carnivores and other mammals.

Diseases like encephalitis are spread through tick bites. Ticks carrying encephalitis are present at the field laboratory station on Lake Baikal. Please consult with your medical physician about appropriate precautions, immunizations and treatment prior to departure. One of the best protections is to prevent these bites by:

- Using insect repellent with 30%-50% DEET.

Travel Advisory - Study-Abroad Russia

- Wearing long-sleeved shirts which should be tucked in, long pants and hats to cover exposed skin. When you visit areas with ticks wear boots, not sandals, and tuck pants into socks.
- You should report any illness to your local host coordinator, roommate, APSU or local faculty and ask for assistance. Keep receipts for any medical care, prescriptions or other medical costs.
- If you wear glasses or contacts, bring a backup pair in case your primary pair is damaged and make sure you have your prescription with you.

Medical Insurance

Consult with your medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether your policy applies abroad. If your insurance policy does not cover you abroad, you should consider purchasing a short-term policy. You should consider a policy that includes the following: emergency expenses such as sickness, injury, emergency medical evacuation, emergency reunion, accidental death and dismemberment, and repatriation of remains; coverage mental health issues; and 24-hour emergency assistance and coverage payment at the point of service. Many travel agents and private companies offer insurance plans that will cover health care expenses incurred abroad.

Medical Conditions

You should consult with your medical physician and take appropriate precautions before traveling. If you have medical conditions, it is recommended that you bring a letter from your physician detailing your condition, prescription medications, including their generic names and treatment that you are undergoing.

Medical Prescriptions

Medicines may be brought into the country as long as they are intended for personal use. Have all your prescriptions filled that you will need during your stay prior to your departure. Keep all medications in their original containers and clearly labeled. You should check with the foreign embassy to make sure any required medications are not considered illegal in that country.

Mental Health

It is normal and expected for a person who has just entered a new culture to feel overwhelmed, excited, nervous, sad, frustrated, happy, etc. all at once. Moving away from friends, family and the familiarity of home is both positively and negatively challenging. Do not be alarmed or surprised if you find yourself feeling confused or frustrated as you make the big move and adjustment to life abroad. Remember that you are not alone. There are several places where you can seek help and support if you are feeling overwhelmed. You are encouraged to contact International Education and/or the Student Counseling Services with any questions or concerns.

Cultural Differences

Adapting to a new culture is a continual process that will last throughout your stay. It is important to hold on to your basic values, while inevitably assimilating to some new cultural values as well. Understanding the adjustment process will help you accept cultural differences and the occasional feelings of alienation and frustration. Common adjustment stages are outlined below:

Honeymoon - Exhilaration and anticipation characterize the “honeymoon stage” when you are generally fascinated with all that is new and are open to meeting new people. However, in an enthusiasm to please, you may nod or smile to indicate understanding when in fact, you may not truly understand what is being said or done. When misunderstandings build, you are likely to experience the second stage of cultural adjustment.

Hostility - Frustration, anger, anxiety, and sometimes depression take over during the “hostility stage.” The initial excitement is replaced by frustration with bureaucracy and the weariness of speaking and listening in another language. At this point, you may display hostility toward people of the new culture and minor frustrations may manifest into fear, mistrust and lack of interest in the new culture.

Humor - The “humor stage” follows when you begin to relax in the new culture and to laugh at the minor mistakes and misunderstandings that previously caused headaches. This often occurs after the individual has gained friends and is able to manage the new environment.

Home - The “home stage” occurs when you feel at home in the new culture yet retain allegiance to your home culture - gaining the ability to live successfully in two cultures.

Try to stay busy, walk around and explore your host-site, and keep a journal of your experience to help communicate some of your feelings and remember your experience.

Travel Advisory - Study-Abroad Russia

Trip Orientation

Orientation is mandatory to participate in APSU study-abroad and exchange programs.

Orientation dates for summer 2010 programs are listed below.

Study Abroad Orientation I
9 a.m., Thursday, April 8
MUC 305

Study Abroad Orientation II
3:30 p.m., Monday, April 12
MUC 305

R.S.V.P. by e-mail to internationaled@apsu.edu to confirm your attendance. Space is limited to 40 persons per orientation date and space is available on a first-come, first served basis. Orientations will last approximately an hour and a half.

Trip Preparations:

- You should register your trip with the [U.S. Department of State](http://www.state.gov) at www.state.gov.
- You are encouraged to visit studentsabroad.state.gov for valuable information regarding American students abroad.
- You should make two copies of your passport. Leave one with APSU and take the other with you in a safe location separate from your original passport to Russia in case your passport is lost or stolen.
- Contact Housing prior to your departure if you require university housing after your time abroad.
- You should take approximately \$50-\$75 in Russian rubles with you on the flight or purchase it in the airport.
- Contact your bank prior to departure to let them know that you will be out of the country.