

LEARN ABOUT YOUR DESTINATION

RESEARCH YOUR DESTINATION BEFORE DEPARTING ON YOUR TRIP

- Consult with local staff and others who have traveled to the same destination.
- Visit country-specific websites for information on your destination country's political, social, economic, geographic, and other characteristics.

LEARN ABOUT CULTURE AND CUSTOMS. FOR EXAMPLE:

- How people relate to one another.
- How local people perceive visitors.
- What types of behaviors are provocative or draw unwanted attention.
- Whether genders are treated differently than in your country.
- The appropriate language and body-language etiquette.
- Important local customs.
- The proper dress code.
- Views on sexuality (for LGBTQ travelers: understand the laws, levels of enforcement, and cultural restrictions toward homosexuality in destination countries).
- The major religions, their practices, and the relationships between different religious groups.
- Local gift and hospitality policy.

FIND OUT ABOUT THE POLITICAL SITUATION. FOR EXAMPLE:

- Type of government.
- Political climate.
- Legal rights of foreigners in the country.
- Customs restrictions or banned materials.
- Current political conflict or potential for conflict.
- Main political groups and the symbols/colors associated with them.
- Major upcoming political events or elections.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE MEDIA

- Follow the media, news, and current events that affect local communities and visitors.
- Find out whether the government monitors or restricts social media. Verify whether your social media comments could be deemed critical of the host government, which could result in detention or other unwanted responses.

LEARN ABOUT THE ECONOMIC SITUATION. FOR EXAMPLE:

- The economic climate.
- The unemployment rate and how it affects crime.
- Whether legitimate banks are available.
- Locals' perceptions of your economic status.
- Acceptable methods of payment.
- Local currency exchange rates, sales tax, and tipping.

LEARN ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT. FOR EXAMPLE:

- Climate.
- Risk of natural disasters (floods, earthquakes, hurricanes).
- Common diseases.
- Conditions and resources for personal hygiene.