

## Fueling Your Wandering Jew: Maximizing Your Abroad Experience

Your study abroad experience will be defined by all the qualities that make you uniquely *you*. As one of those qualities, your Jewishness has the potential to add a powerful dimension to your time abroad. Below are a few tips on incorporating a Jewish element to make the most of your abroad experience.

### Before You Go

- **Ask to be placed with a Jewish host family.** Living with a Jewish family can reveal new twists on familiar Jewish traditions while providing a taste of the comforts of home. Contact your study abroad program director to see if placement with a Jewish host family is an option.
- **Consult with Jewish professionals.** Talk to your university's Jewish professionals about your destination—they may be able to connect you with Jewish locals or offer advice on local Jewish life.
- **Do your research.** Gather background on Jewish life and history in your destination. In addition to helping you learn more about the city, this may help you prepare for its sensitivity to Jewish issues.
- **Prepare a short explanation about being Jewish.** Depending on your destination, you could be someone's first exposure to anything Jewish. Be prepared with a few comments about Jewish beliefs and customs to help bridge cultural divides and combat ignorance.

### While You're Away

- **Connect with local Jewish students.** Seeking out local Jewish student life is a great way to meet locals and further engage with your new city. Look for Jewish student opportunities organized through a Hillel ([hillel.org/studyabroad](http://hillel.org/studyabroad)) or local union of Jewish students (found via [wujs.org](http://wujs.org) or [eujs.org](http://eujs.org)). Also check out online services that link Jews around the world, such as ConnectJewish! and Jewgether.
- **Know your Jewish options.** Websites like [TotallyJewishTraveler.com](http://TotallyJewishTraveler.com) and [JewishTravelAdvisor.com](http://JewishTravelAdvisor.com) can point you to kosher restaurants, synagogues and other Jewish resources in your city. Depending on your degree of observance, you may also consider having a native-speaker write any dietary restrictions on a card that can be presented to restaurant staff or family cooks, or choose to simply live as a vegetarian while you're abroad.
- **Pursue Jewish opportunities.** Exploring the Jewish community and traditions of your adoptive city can foster a greater personal connection and uncover off-the-beaten-track sights. Many cities' local Jewish community websites provide links to synagogues, activities, and Jewish heritage tour operators.
- **Explore your family story.** Being abroad is a great opportunity to research your genealogy and connect to family you may have never known existed. Check sites like [JewishGen.org](http://JewishGen.org) to explore your local roots.
- **Maintain personal safety.** You may encounter anti-Semitism during your abroad experience. How and if you choose to react is a personal decision, but any course of action should have safety in mind. Should you choose to engage with the instigator, remain calm, respond with facts, and react to the words and not the person. Consider reporting the incident to local authorities or your program staff.

### Back on Campus

- **Share your experience.** If you had a meaningful Jewish experience while abroad, consider sharing your story with your school newspaper or campus Jewish community. This is a great way to reflect on your experience and encourage others to pursue similar connections.
- **Maintain ties with your abroad community.** Pursue ways to connect your campus Jewish community with that of your abroad city. Consider organizing a related alternative break or Tzedek project.

### Online Resources

- **Local Jewish resources:** TotallyJewishTraveler.com, JewishTravelAdvisor.com, and the website for your city's Jewish community
- **Local Jewish student organizations:** Hillel ([hillel.org/studyabroad](http://hillel.org/studyabroad)), World Union of Jewish Students ([wujs.org](http://wujs.org)) and the European Union of Jewish Students ([eujs.org](http://eujs.org))
- **Local Jewish individuals:** JewGether ([jewgether.org](http://jewgether.org)) and the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago's ConnectJewish! ([http://www.juf.org/college/connect\\_jewish.aspx#](http://www.juf.org/college/connect_jewish.aspx#))
- **Reform Judaism:** World Union for Progressive Judaism ([wupj.org](http://wupj.org)) and Kesher's *Study Abroad Guide* ([keshhercollege.org](http://keshhercollege.org))
- **Anti-Semitism:** Anti-Defamation League's *Confronting Anti-Semitism* guide, available at [www.antisemitism.org](http://www.antisemitism.org)

Have more questions? Know a major Jewish study abroad resource not on this list? Contact [global@hillel.org](mailto:global@hillel.org).