

MEANINGFUL TRAVEL TIPS AND TALES

FIRST GEN. STUDENTS ABROAD



An Initiative to Make Travel More Inclusive



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WHY WE CREATED THIS BOOK FOR FIRST GENERATION STUDENTS

A NOTE FROM GOABROAD



Going to college as a first generation student is stressful enough, so to add studying abroad into the mix can seem overwhelming and no one knows that better than we do. That's why we scoured our expert articles directory to come up with a comprehensive resource of study abroad tips for first generation students who are interested in studying abroad.

Just like going to college, studying abroad isn't an excuse to take throw-away elective classes and party in a foreign country. You work hard, you study hard, and you're there to learn—about yourself, about your host culture, about your chosen field of study, and about the world at large.

As a first generation student, you're more than up to the task. You know exactly what it takes to succeed and you have the drive to make it all happen. We're just here to give you the tools and resources to do so, through GoAbroad's mission to make travel more inclusive and to provide the best and most comprehensive resources for meaningful travelers.

Our writers share their best study abroad tips every step of the way—from picking a program to figuring out how to pay for it and anything else you might need to think about as a first gen student studying abroad.

They're the experts with real experience and all the best info on how and when to apply, the best possible program options for you, scholarships and grants, and everything you might need to know. So, now you can go out into the world and really soak it all in!

Interested in joining this initiative? [Partner with us!](#)

OUR CONTRIBUTORS



Erin Oppenheim is a news and current events junkie, all about that #IntlEd life, and is also the funniest person she knows. She just wants to be a guest on a podcast—doesn't matter which one.



Megan Lee is an international educator, traveler, and writer. After leading study abroad programs in Asia, the South Pacific, and East Africa, she now is the Director of GoAbroad.com.



Raised in a multicultural family in the colorful Chicago suburbs, **Raquel Thoesen's** greatest joy is gallivanting around the world, and learning about its endless cultures, languages, and foodie treasures. With a degree from Arizona State University in hand, Raquel taught English abroad in Germany through the Fulbright program. Now she's back home in the desert working at a local peanut butter company, picking up eccentric hobbies in her spare time.



← This could be you! Want to share your own travel tips and tales? [Give us a shout!](#)



HOW DO FIRST GENERATION STUDENTS UNIQUELY BENEFIT FROM STUDY ABROAD?

By Erin Oppenheim

You're the first in your family to go to college and now we want you to (possibly) be the first in your family to travel abroad? We know it sounds a little crazy.

Your first priority is simply to navigate your collegiate career successfully, be the first in your family to do so, and get. That. Paper. Studying abroad might not even break the top 10 most important things for you to accomplish during your time at school, but we think it should be. There are so many long term benefits to studying abroad and first gen students uniquely benefit from this experience.

Expand your studies—keep earning academic credits

You've already taken one huge step out of your comfort zone—you should take another one. Don't worry, contrary to popular belief studying abroad isn't actually time "off" and you won't just be taking blow off electives.

You'll still earn academic credits and you'll be taking classes that fit into your major, and broaden your understanding of any given field or topic. You'll feel newly invigorated about your studies, and that much more motivated to make it across the stage and get your diploma.

Travel is a benefit in itself

You might be the first person in your family to travel internationally. Becoming comfortable with traveling and all that it entails (transportation, accommodations, booking activities, finding the top things to do, etc.) can seem impossible when you have a zillion tabs open on your computer and plenty of other things to think about like... school, work, and family.

But, with your skills in time management and budgeting, the process becomes less arduous the more you do it. So, traveling really isn't as hard as you might think it is.

You'll also have the opportunity to learn about yourself and your home country in a new context. It will make you more appreciative of where you come from, and more prone to continue exploring.

Learn another language

This benefit seems like a given. Learning multiple languages changes how you see the world and makes you realize what a small sliver of information you have access to on the whole. Whether you're picking up a second, third, or even FOURTH language, the more ways you have to say "hello" the more doors will open for you in the future.

Career & résumé boost

Remember those doors we just mentioned? Well, a whole world of opportunity opens up in your career if you study abroad. International experience on your resume is like gold dust for potential employers—it makes you stand out among hundreds of applicants.

You'll have more job opportunities come your way, your future salaries will be higher, and you'll have a grasp on where you want to go and what you want to do in life. Studying abroad as a first generation student shows that you are dedicated to your studies, independent, resourceful, adventurous, internationally minded, and appreciate diversity.

Make your family proud

Not to get all sentimental, but going to college is a huge step for you and your family. They're already so proud of you and what you can and will accomplish—study abroad included. You're one of their best accomplishments, so studying abroad will only serve to make them even more proud of you as you venture off across the world and keep building a life and career. Make your mark on the world for your family back home. It will mean the world to you and them.



A lot of times, studying abroad impacts our lives in ways that we can't even begin to imagine. You'll just have to find out for yourself!

Keep reading this Ebook to make your study abroad dreams a reality.

5 WAYS FOR FIRST GEN. STUDENTS TO STUDY ABROAD

By Season Cooper

Believe it or not, studying abroad isn't something that just happens, it takes a lot of preparation and background knowledge. While you don't need to know absolutely everything, navigating all that needs to be done before going abroad can be very overwhelming. Behind the scenes you have providers organizing trips, reading applications, and filling out visas. While you're trying to decide where exactly you where you want to go and if your credits will transfer.

The process of figuring out how study abroad works is similar to shopping. You browse and look at all your options. While you naturally want to buy or explore everything, there always one program that will be the "perfect fit." Deciding to study abroad is never hard, it's just narrowing down your options. With so much to do and so many to explore, where is an ambitious traveler supposed to start?

If reading this was any indication, you are certainly in the right place and off to a great start. So let's get down to it, how do study abroad programs work? What are the ways to study abroad?



1. With a provider

While the term study abroad makes you think of educational institutions like high school or college, these are not the only places where you can find programs. Providers like [IES Abroad](#), [API](#), and [CEA Abroad](#) have worked for years to provide top-notch programs all around the world. While some providers have partnerships with American universities most third party providers work alone and dedicate their efforts to providing all the support necessary for their travelers. Associated costs for the trip which can include flight, lodging, and food are given directly to the program but always make sure to see what the program includes since they can vary. Some third party providers also offer scholarships through their programs to lower the cost.

Pros: You don't have to worry about a thing! The greatness of study abroad providers is that they support you every step of the way, from taking care of your needs before you leave, having support on-site, and even when you return from your trip.

These programs are true providers and help you with literally anything. Your study abroad experience is planned from start to finish with no uncertainties.

Cons: Your trip is planned from start to finish. Provider programs are very organized, so your schedule, trips and excursions are all pre-planned for you. This leaves little time to explore the country and culture on your own terms. Of course, you'll have a good time (they are the experts, after all!), but if you love independent adventures on a whim or if you're looking for a more personalized experience, a provider wouldn't be your fave option.

2. Through your university

The old faithful of the group, studying through your university offers a familiar path to your international learning experience. Choosing between Fall, Spring, or a Summer semester, you have the freedom to choose what's is best for your academic schedule. For the cost of tuition, you can travel with familiar faculty and classmates to have an intimate learning experience abroad. Bonus: Your scholarships and financial aid might carry over to help alleviate your study abroad expenses, too! On top of familiar faces, university programs also guarantee support and transferrable credits that won't be questioned (so you won't be worried about taking classes that don't count).

Pros: Your financial aid is transferable! If you're traveling during the fall and spring semesters, your regular financial aid rewards can go toward your travels. So take a semester abroad and get out of the college bubble (your university can pay for it!).

Cons: If you're going through your university, you're going to have a limited selection. Most university sponsored programs are restricted by major, so if your dream destination doesn't correlate with the focus of the trip, you won't be tagging along.

3. Through an exchange

Ah, so you want the chance to be the cool exchange student, eh? Well, it's possible. Take matters into your own hands and apply directly to the international school of your dreams. Dive into a new education system and see what they have to offer. Whether you're living in an apartment or a homestay—on a university campus like other students!—your exchange experience is a great glimpse at student life and real life in your country of choice. So save up and take part in an experience to broaden your horizons. [The National Student Exchange](#) is a great site to start researching placements and programs.

Pros: New international friends and experiences to broaden your perspective. Living with a host family and interacting with local students give you a glimpse of other issues affecting the world and can show such issues outside of an American context.

Cons: While really diving into the culture is necessary to adjust and really get the most out of your exchange. Culture shock is real, and it stinks. The unfamiliarity of everything can be overwhelming. It's definitely a downer at first but keep your head up and you'll transition eventually.

4. At a language school

Become a multi-linguist genius in one semester or year with a language school program. While there are of ways to study abroad and boost your language proficiency on this list, these programs are the most committed to upping your language skills. Learn the proper writing, dialects, grammar, and even casual lingo of the language of your choice and become more confident. So choose a language, find a program, and go!

Pros: With the variety of language schools out there, you can grasp the language beyond the textbook. Practice with locals and in-class conversations to increase your fluency. With your mastery, you'll have a skill that's a true asset and is applicable in real life situations. The gift of language is the gift that keeps on giving.

Cons: Brain overload. For most intensive programs, you will only be allowed to speak that language during the length of that program. So you might feel stressed out and tempted to compare yourself to other students in your program; However the purpose of these programs is to learn. So while it's gonna be intense, learn at your pace and dig a little deeper.

5. Through a government program, like Fulbright

The Department of State funds a number of programs for students to study abroad. Promoting diplomacy and cultural exchange these funded programs come at a lower cost. While the famous Fulbright program is the flagship program and the most competitive to study abroad. You have flexible choices. Other famous government program to look at include the [Benjamin Gilman Scholarship Program](#), the [Peace Corps](#) and the [People to People Ambassador Program](#).

Pros: You can make an impact. While every program has a different focus, you can conduct research and use their time abroad to tackle and assist global issues.

Cons: For programs like the Peace Corps, and the Fulbright program your time abroad isn't your typical year or semester. These programs have a mandatory two year commitment for you to participate. If this is too long to be away from home or you envisioned a shorter study abroad experience. These programs won't be your cup of tea.

Next steps to finding ways to study abroad

If you're the ambitious adventurer we know you are, you might be wondering about a few more things when it comes to studying abroad. How do study abroad programs work in China for instance, or how do study abroad programs work for students with disabilities? Well, we got your back on both fronts right here on GoAbroad!

And just because we love travel so much we've got more links below to guide you on your study abroad journey. We have steps for every single part of the process and possibly everything you're thinking about regarding travel. (Consider us magical mind readers!). Check out our additional links below and get closer to the travel experience you've dreamed of!

- [Online Advisor](#)—for custom program recommendations (#lifehack)
- [Study Abroad Program Directory](#)—to filter your search by country and major
- Schedule a meeting with **your study abroad advisor on campus**—you'll have to do this eventually.

Select the program that fits your personality and goals the best and start pursuing it. Lizzie McGuire didn't figure out what dreams are made of from her room back home.



STUDY ABROAD CONSIDERATIONS FOR FIRST GENERATION STUDENTS

Here are a few extra things first generation students might want to think about before studying abroad.

Do you need a passport?

If this is your first time traveling internationally, you'll need to start your passport application sooner, rather than later, so you can get a jump on your student visa. These resources can help:

- [USPS Passport Application/Renewal](#)
- [GoAbroad Embassy Directory](#)

Have you ever flown on a long-haul flight?

A two hour puddle jump is not at all like a 10+ hour flight across the Atlantic or Pacific. You need to prepare: mentally, physically, and with plenty of downloaded podcasts in order to make it through your first big international flight.

- Maybe these accessories will help: [15 Must-Have Accessories for Traveling Abroad](#)

Are you going to do heritage travel?

Heritage travel or legacy travel is when you decide to visit places of personal or cultural significance. Do you still have family living abroad? Do you want to visit your grandmother or mother's hometown and learn more about your roots? This might impact where you study abroad or where you travel on the weekends.

Here are some fun reads about heritage travel to inspire you:

- The New York Times: [Traveling to Find Your Roots](#)
- USA Today: [Travelers take trips to explore their genealogy](#)

Do you need extra funding help?

In addition to any scholarships and financial aid you may receive, if you need some extra funding to cover costs like flights?

- Start a campaign on [FundMyTravel](#)
- Read this: [How to Raise Money for a Trip Fast: 14 Killer Tips](#)



10 MOST AFFORDABLE PLACES TO STUDY ABROAD

By Raquel Thoesen

Time Magazine compiled a list of the 50 cheapest countries to live by taking into account four different factors: grocery, rent, local goods and services, and purchasing power with an average salary of each country. New York City was used as a benchmark to compare countries' living costs around the world. We took popular study abroad destinations with traditionally tons of study abroad program options from the lot to show just how much cheaper life abroad can be—voilà, our cheap study abroad cheat sheet.

As a reference point, we've included the average cost of a meal at an inexpensive restaurant for each country (Hint: In the United States, the average price is \$13.00). Get more experiences out of the same budget. With these 10 cheapest places to study abroad, you'll be left wondering how you ever afforded living back home!

1. Peru

Paying a fraction for food, transportation, and personal expenses means you'll have a portly bundle of savings left over for exploring the world-renowned jungles and Inca ruins that draw millions of international visitors a year. If you're looking to spend like a local and save, steer clear of tourist traps, where prices are heavily inflated for naive travelers who prize convenience. Instead ask around for the best deals for locals to make excursions to Machu Picchu or Cusco.

- **Meal at an inexpensive restaurant in USD:** \$3.06
- **Recommended affordable programs in Peru:** [ISA](#) and [CISabroad](#)

2. Morocco

In the winding, cluttered alleyways hidden in bustling bazaars of Fez and Rabat, calculating shoppers passionately engage in the ancient art of haggling. The telltale sign of a successful day out in the market is knowing that you got the best possible deal for your treasures. Written prices are just a friendly suggestion, and any student studying abroad learning French or Arabic will delight in the chance to exercise their language skills to barter for their goods.

- **Meal at an inexpensive restaurant in USD:** \$3.08
- **Recommended affordable programs in Morocco:** [Qalam Center For Arabic Studies](#) and [Morocco Off the Beaten Track](#)

3. Portugal

For those wanting affordable study abroad choices in Western Europe, but not too keen on paying a fortune, Portugal is a match made in budget heaven. Just a train ride or cheap flight away from favorite European destinations, Portugal makes a great home base, where virtually everything is priced lower than its neighbor nations.

Did we mention Portugal has amazing beaches, dreamy weather, and savory cuisine?

- **Meal at an inexpensive restaurant in USD:** \$7.85
- **Recommended affordable programs in Portugal:** [CIEE](#) and [Center for Study Abroad \(CSA\)](#)

4. Hungary

Eastern Europe has developed a reputation for not just being an affordable travel region, but also housing some of the cheapest places to study abroad. The capital city of Budapest in particular evokes images of the ornate Parliament building on the banks of the River Danube and accommodates most of the study abroad programs in Hungary. Packed with history, sprawling, and picturesque, Budapest boasts a very reasonable cost of living, far topping other major European cities.

- **Meal at an inexpensive restaurant in USD:** \$5.45
- **Recommended affordable programs in Hungary:** [Youth For Understanding \(YFU\)](#) and [API Study Abroad](#)

5. Germany

While eating out is comparable to in the United States, Germany's average rents and discount grocers are the country's most attractive budgeting feature. Rents are estimated to be on average a third less than in the United States, and a weekly trip to the supermarket for healthy, quality ingredients is satisfyingly cheap. Not only are student discounts commonplace, if you attend a public university, you may get a free regional train and bus transportation card thrown in.

- **Meal at an inexpensive restaurant in USD:** \$11.21
- **Recommended affordable programs in Germany:** [Wayne State University](#) and [European Study Center \(ESC\) Heidelberg](#)

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR FIRST GENERATION STUDENTS ABROAD

By GoAbroad Writing Team



6. Mexico

Hola, street food! Mouthwatering tacos, aguas frescas, fruit cocktails, and essentially any spicy delicacy your mind can conjure are available for dirt cheap prices on virtually any street corner in Mexico. The Mexico's close proximity to both Canada and the United States means that airfare (a huge fraction of your study abroad budget) will be less than a day-long flight to Japan. With a low cost of living and endless opportunities to learn about a rich, complex history, Mexico is a prime affordable study abroad destination that's often overlooked for being too close to home.

- **Meal at an inexpensive restaurant in USD:** \$4.81
- **Recommended affordable program in Mexico:** [Sol Education Abroad](#)

7. Greece

Greece's dreamy coastlines and ancient ruins will give you more to think about than Aristotle and Socrates would have imagined possible. Greece's financial nightmare has severely crippled the economy and has made tourism and visitors an essential source of income for the top destinations across the country. The dollar is eagerly welcomed and in the countryside food and everyday expenses are incredibly low. Move full steam ahead towards cheap study abroad in Greece!

- **Meal at an inexpensive restaurant in USD:** \$11.21
- **Recommended affordable programs in Greece:** [College Year in Athens](#) and [Hellenic International Studies in the Arts](#)

8. Chile

The living costs for study abroad students in Chile might just be hotter than the country's chili pepper shape. With tons of nature-loving activities, affordable eats and hotels, Chile offers a diverse mix of travel choices for when you pop out of class on the weekend.

Visiting the remote Easter Island 2,000 miles from the Chilean coast or launching off on an expedition to Antarctica are naturally much more expensive than trips to nearby cities and national parks.

- **Meal at an inexpensive restaurant in USD:** \$7.48
- **Recommended affordable programs in Chile:** [USAC](#) and [AIFS](#)

9. Poland

The standard of living in Poland's large cities like Warsaw and Krakow are on par with those of Western Europe, but for a fraction of the cost. Rents are even cheaper than in Poland's neighbor, Germany, with one-bedroom apartments costing around 300 Euro a month in Krakow, and a bit more in Warsaw. If you're feeling lazy or live far from campus, public transportation cards are available to students for a discount.

- **Meal at an inexpensive restaurant in USD:** \$5.35
- **Recommended affordable programs in Poland:** [Carleton-Antioch Global Engagement](#) and [Syracuse University](#)

10. South Africa

Although purchasing the flight to this rather out of the way corner of the Earth may sting, you'll recover while going about your daily life here. A large portion of the country remains underdeveloped and correspondingly quite affordable by western standards, yet the prosperous cities of Johannesburg and Cape Town will cost a bit more.

- **Meal at an inexpensive restaurant in USD:** \$7.56
- **Recommended affordable programs in South Africa:** [IES Abroad](#) and [Good Hope Studies](#)

Getting funding for college was enough of a headache and now you have to figure out paying for study abroad?!

We know, we know. It's stressful, but we're here to help however we can in your scholarship search. That's why we put together this list of study abroad scholarships for first generation college students (plus a few more scholarships just for good measure).

Don't forget to start the scholarship application process as early as you can, and talk to your study abroad office AND your financial aid office about any other avenues for funding your study abroad program.

1. Fund for Education Abroad

This scholarship is suited for most study abroad participants of all backgrounds and majors, although the Fund for Education Abroad especially vibes well with traditionally underrepresented students in study abroad (this includes **first-gen college students** and community college students). Apart from the posted award sums, grantees are automatically considered for additional add-on scholarships, so you can cash in even more depending on your personal traits, study abroad destination, and home region.

- **Degree Level:** Undergraduate
- **Award:** Up to \$10,000 for academic year, \$5,000 for semester, minimum of \$1,250 for summer
- **Deadline:** January 10, 2018

[2. Benjamin A Gilman International Scholarship](#)

The U.S. Department of State's Gilman International Scholarship's purpose is to dissolve the financial hurdle that many students face when considering study abroad. Thousands of students receive the Gilman award every year, so there is plenty of intern and study abroad funding to go around.

- **Degree Level:** Undergraduate
- **Award:** \$5,000
- **Deadline:** (Spring) October 3, 2017 (Summer) March 6, 2018 (Fall) TBA

[3. IIE Generation Study Abroad Scholarship Program](#)

This insanely cool initiative has raised over \$55 million, yes MILLION, as of December 2015 to help students with backgrounds of all shapes and sizes achieve their goals overseas. Rather than offering a single scholarship, there are dozens of unique funding outlets through Generation Study Abroad's various partners. Be sure to check out all the scholarship opportunities, deadlines, and qualifying factors on their website.

- **Award:** Various—Check site for different scholarships, requirements, and deadlines

[4. ISA Diverstiy Scholarship](#)

Students of a "broader cultural make-up" participating in an ISA study abroad, internship, or service learning program can apply to the ISA Diversity Scholarship. Have a unique background or unusual story of your heritage tell?

- **Degree Level:** Undergraduate
- **Award:** \$1,000 for summer, \$2,000 fall/spring
- **Deadline:** (Summer) February 28, 2018 (Fall) April 30, 2018 (Spring) October 30, 2017



[5. Minority Serving Institution Grant](#)

Yes, we know, this one is technically a grant. In any case, the Minority Serving Institution (MSI) Grant deserves the recognition and shouldn't be passed up. Any student attending an MSI would do well to make a beeline toward study abroad organizations like CIEE that hand out free money for attending a specific school. It's also worth mentioning this grant is GUARANTEED, no strings attached.

- **Degree Level:** Undergraduate
- **Award:** \$500 for summer, \$2,000 semester

[6. Diversity Network Summer Scholarship](#)

Just when you didn't think international scholarships could get more specific, we'd like to introduce summer study abroad scholarships for minorities. Students studying at a member institution of the Diversity Abroad Network who are planning to study abroad for at least 4 weeks in the summer can apply for the Diversity Network Summer Scholarship. In return for the award you get the opportunity to spread your voice through various channels by writing about your experiences as a person of a diverse student abroad.

- **Degree Level:** Undergraduate
- **Award:** \$1,000

[Universities with first generation student scholarships](#)

If you are a student at any of the following universities, you have the opportunity to receive funding as a first generation college student:

- [Saint Mary's University](#) First-Generation Initiative
- [University of Iowa](#) First Generation Iowa Program
- [CU Boulder](#) First Generation Grant
- [Texas A&M](#) Regents' Scholarship

[More study abroad scholarships you should apply for](#)

[Boren Awards](#)

Boren is a dream come true for any language junkie out there thirsting for the opportunity to venture off the beaten path and increase fluency in a less commonly taught language. Because Boren is backed by the National Security Education Program, the program has some pretty nifty ties with the government and recipients get to work with the federal government for a year after they graduate. Nothing like some money and a gig with the government all in one deal.

- **Degree Level:** Undergraduate
- **Award:** \$8,000 for summer programs, \$10,000 for semester, \$20,000 for 6-12 months
- **Deadline:** February 8, 2018

[Study Abroad Scholarships Essay Contest](#)

Are you a poet and definitely know it? Take your best shot at cooking up a literary masterpiece about your utter passion for study abroad with StudyAbroad.com's Essay Contest.

- **Degree Level:** Undergraduate
- **Award:** \$1,000
- **Deadline:** December 31, 2017

[DAAD Undergraduate Scholarship](#)

Germany has been in the spotlight recently for its (nearly) free, quality higher education that's attracted 100,000s of international students from around the world in the past few years. If that doesn't sound drool-worthy enough, the DAAD Undergraduate Scholarship offers a stipend to cover your living costs so you can focus 100% on studying the art of sausage eating. The program is open to students interested in study abroad, interning, or conducting research in Germany.

- **Degree Level:** Undergraduate
- **Award:** 650 Euro per month
- **Deadline:** January 31, 2018

[Critical Language Scholarship](#)

Ever wish you could have learned lesser taught languages in high school instead of Spanish? The Critical Language Scholarship, under the U.S. Department of State, will fully fund you to immerse yourself abroad for a summer and learn a critical language such as Persian, Indonesian, or Russian (14 total). Not only are your living costs and 20+ hours a week of intensive language courses covered, participants of this swanky scholarship walk away with a year's worth of college credit.

- **Degree Level:** Undergraduate, Graduate
- **Deadline:** TBA

[Scholarships for first gen students help make studying abroad possible](#)

Institutions and program providers want to do everything in their power to make sure ALL students have the ability to study abroad in college—especially first generation students.

Start your scholarship hunt early, talk to your advisors about using any of your current financial aid for study abroad, and make your study abroad dreams come true.



KEEP EXPLORING

For more travel resources, check out:

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We want to hear from you! [Contact us](#) to share your experience.

HAVE SUGGESTIONS OR RESOURCES TO ADD TO OUR COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE?

Email erin.oppenheim@goabroad.com

This Guide will continue to expand as more and more resources are shared and developed, be sure to check back frequently to get the most up to date version.

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<http://bit.ly/FirstGenStudyAbroad>