

How to Conquer Your To-Do List While Studying Abroad

Balancing school and travel can be harder than it seems. This might be because studying abroad is a bit similar to taking a really long vacation. There's this sense of newfound freedom that can make you want to forget your responsibilities. But the truth is that your academic life still requires a lot of your time and energy while you're away.

With both class and wanderlust on your mind, it's likely that your to-do list (bucket list) is pretty long. Maybe you have two programming assignment deadlines coming up, but you already booked those cheap flights to Berlin. Or maybe you have a ton of reading to catch up on, but you're dying to spend more quality time exploring your home city like the locals do.

The good news is that you really can do it all—as long as you put helpful habits into practice. Here are some ways to stay organized and conquer your to-do list while studying abroad:

1. Write things down.

It not only helps with memory but also maximizes your productivity. A daily planner is great for recording deadlines and setting daily academic goals for yourself. It's also incredibly helpful (and motivating) to write down a list of your intentions for your time abroad.

2. Create visual reminders.

Put your list of intentions & goals up on your wall like it's art. Look at it often. Re-read it whenever you need some inspiration. It'll help you remember why you're here!

3. Be consistent.

Set aside time every week-day to work on your academics and stick to it. Start studying for exams early. Working consistently for a shorter time each day is a lot less stressful than cramming in hours of last-minute work. Consistency and diligence leads to success. (Plus, it'll free up more of your time on the weekends!)

4. Book your travel plans far in advance.

First of all, it usually ends up being way cheaper when you plan travel ahead of time. And it also makes it easier to balance school work when you know which days are already booked up in your calendar. Don't forget to set aside specific weekends for local adventures and study time.

5. Choose a favorite working space.

Your surroundings can seriously impact your productivity. Working on your studies in a designated location trains your mind to focus whenever you're there. It's best to study somewhere outside of your accommodation, such as a library or coffee shop.

6. Find study buddies.

Sometimes we're more motivated to do work when we're surrounded by other people who are being productive themselves. It convinces us to focus. And it can be more enjoyable and helpful to learn alongside other people!

7. Become an expert note-taker.

Taking really great notes can be a serious game-changer. Don't go to class just to daydream. Grab a coffee if you need it, listen intently and write things down. Highlight the important stuff. When exam time rolls around, you'll have better study materials and you'll avoid the stress of having to cram an entire semester of material into your brain.

8. Keep yourself busy.

It turns out that you're more likely to get things done when you have limited free time to do them. Keeping a busy schedule each week means that you'll be more motivated to study for classes while you actually can, because you're constantly aware of your upcoming engagements.