

Making the Most of Your Summer Study Abroad Program

1. **Step out from behind the camera!** If you are constantly trying to get the right shot you are limiting yourself from truly experiencing your surroundings as the camera can act like a barrier between you and your host culture. Leave the camera behind one day – you may be surprised at how much more colorful your experiences become as you allow all of your senses to appreciate each moment. Consider trading “camera duty” with a fellow participant: you take pictures one day, him/her the next.
2. **Don't spend all of your time with other Americans.** You will undoubtedly become fast friends with your fellow program participants and find yourself with a constant group of companions; however, if all of your interactions with the local culture are group interactions you risk missing authentic cultural immersion. Once you are comfortable with your local surroundings, spend a day independently exploring the area and revisiting some of the local shops, museums, cafes, and/or sites you have only visited with the group. Tell a friend and your Resident/Program Director your plans for the day and give yourself plenty of time to return to your program site before nightfall.
3. **Disconnect** – challenge yourself to go a few days without checking facebook, twitter, email, myspace, etc. Similar to #2, if you constantly spend your free time checking-in on life back home you will miss out on opportunities to fully immerse yourself in your host culture. “Disconnecting” will free up both actual time to get out into the local community and mental space for you to reflect upon your cross-cultural experiences.
4. **Keep a journal.** Maintaining a regularly written account of your experiences can help you to reflect thoughtfully on the differences you encounter in your host country. Journaling can help you to make meaningful comparisons between your own culture and the host country. Rather than being quick to judge and negatively evaluating differences you encounter, try to interpret the culture behind these differences. Journaling is also a great way to keep the experience of your study abroad program alive long after you return home. You'll have more than just memories, souvenirs, and photos of your time abroad; you'll have a written record of your changing attitudes and process of learning about the foreign culture. Already enthusiastic about journaling? Consider becoming an Athena blogger!
5. **Recognize** that you are only experiencing a snapshot of daily life – and vow to continue learning about your host culture after you return home!

Athena Announces Spring 2009 Photo Contest Winner!

*Congratulations Nicole Tellier
of Chapman University – winner of
an iPod Nano for her winning entry
"Put Your Hands in the Air."*



Nicole's photo captures the spirit of study abroad: jubilation to be surrounded by great culture and great friends. Her photo won the popular vote in Athena's first online vote.

Check out the second place and honorable mention photos at <http://www.athenaabroad.com/promotions/photo-contest-2009winners.php>.

AROUND TOWN

SYDNEY

Sydney Winter Festival

18-21 June (various events)

<http://www.winterfestival.com.au/>

Join local Sydneysiders at the first annual Sydney Winter Festival – featuring the city's first outdoor ice-skating rink! The festival will also feature attractions such as an adorable winter petting zoo and an outdoor cinema screen with a diverse program of music concerts, classic winter movies and ski and snowboarding action clips. Traditional winter cuisine from around the world will be available at 32 food & beverage stalls tempting visitors with delights such as apple strudel and mulled wine.

FLORENCE

Calcio in Costume (Soccer Tournament)

1-24 June 2009 (various matches)

<http://www.hotelsangiorgioflorence.com/florence-sporting-events.htm>

The Calcio in Costume (soccer tournament) has been going on for over 600 years! Don't miss your chance to watch tough guys in traditional medieval garb play this medieval form of soccer (which is more like a mix of rugby & U.S. football). Held every June, the matches are contested between the 4 historical neighborhoods of Florence and take place in the Santa Croce Square. Warning: Calcio in Costume is not for the faint of heart - kicking, shouldering, elbowing, punching and blows below the belt abound!

ROME

Estate Romana (Roman Summer)

Mid-Late June (various events)

www.estateromana.comune.roma.it

The Estate Romana offers hundreds of events with thousands of artists. The varied program includes rock, symphonic, solo and ethnic-music performances, literary readings, film screenings, theater and international dancing. Venues are located throughout the Rome area – including open air stages in the city's many parks and historical sites.

PAROS ISLAND

Feast of Saint John

26-27 June 2009 (various events)

<http://www.explorepapos.com/paros/events.html>

Every June 26 and 27, the Feast of Saint John is observed, and the old Greek custom of Klidonas has been revived specifically for this particular feast. Join locals on the beach of Aliki, where they will light fires to burn wreaths that were woven on May 1 and celebrate with customary music and dancing.

Have your own favorite restaurant, site, shop, that you'd like to share with future study abroad participants? SUBMIT YOUR OWN "AROUND TOWN" SUGGESTIONS TO INFO@ATHENAABROAD.COM

Keeping the *Study* in Summer Study Abroad

Balancing academics with social life can be challenging in any setting, and especially so when studying abroad. There is an understandable urge to see & experience as much as possible in your short-time abroad which can often make it difficult to convince yourself to work on that looming essay or project. While a great deal of learning certainly does take place outside of the traditional classroom, it is important not to neglect the academic component of your summer program. Do not skip class! Set aside time each day to work on any assignments. Make a conscious effort to incorporate your cultural experiences into your academic work when appropriate. If you are having trouble understanding course content or assignments, ask your instructor for clarification right away, don't delay until the day before the due date or final exam.

Again, the learning in study abroad will also greatly come from your experiences outside of the classroom. Seek out opportunities to learn more about your host culture and don't hold back from immersing yourself into daily life!

DON'T FORGET!

Athena Study Abroad still wants to hear from you after your program ends - please remember to submit your completed Program Evaluations & S.O.S. Charitable Organization Choices!

"The traveler sees what he sees, the tourist sees what he has come to see"

--G.K. Chesterton