



**STUDY  
ABROAD  
ASSOCIATION**

**STUDY ABROAD ASSOCIATION  
HEALTH, SAFETY,  
AND COVID-19  
GUIDELINES**



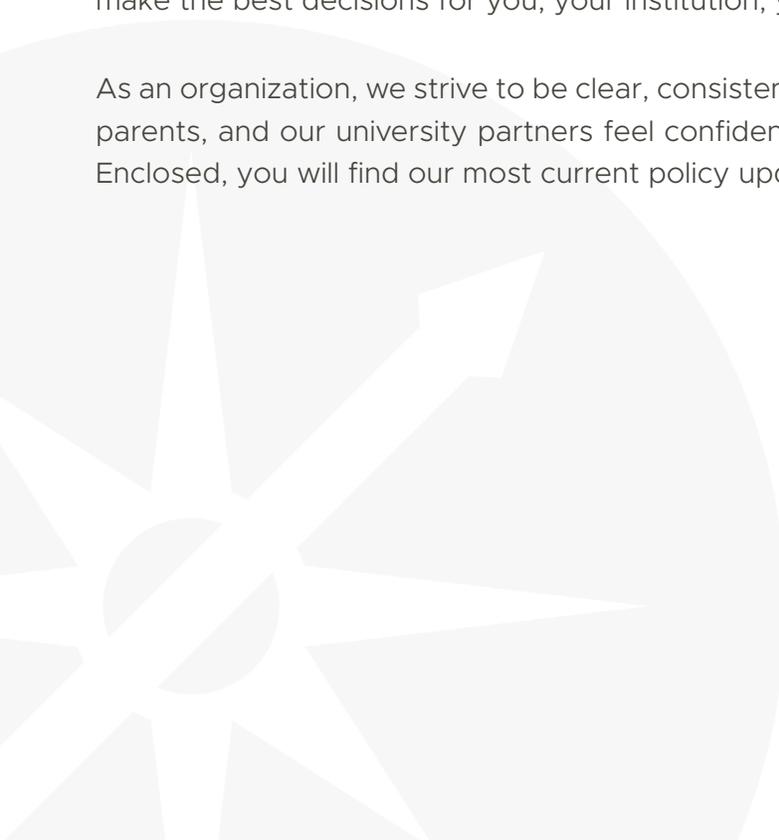
We look forward to working with you to plan your group programs for 2021 and 2022! Study Abroad Association's number one priority is the health, safety, and security of students, staff, and faculty participating in our programs. We offer faculty-led group programs and programs for individual students in many locations around the world. In all of these locations we work closely with our local contacts, local authorities, and consulates to ensure we follow the most up to date guidelines and procedures, especially related to COVID-19.

Just as a student's safety cannot be guaranteed at home, safety cannot be guaranteed while studying abroad. However, SAA is committed to taking all appropriate actions to mitigate risk and will continue to use all resources at our disposal to guide our decision making in our efforts to keep our constituents safe.

Prior to departure, we monitor updates from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), the U.S. State Department (DOS), and local authorities overseas. We also consult with our third-party global insurance and security specialist company, LewerMark Insurance, that advises us on the risks associated with travel to different areas in the world. Finally, we have local staff and trusted partners in our locations who provide additional on-the-ground information for consideration by our Health & Safety Team.

We recognize there are still many uncertainties regarding the opening of borders, visa needs, and quarantine and vaccine requirements. We are committed to providing our university partners flexibility whenever possible, and therefore, will work with you as needed to move deadlines, consider changes to program dates and/or locations, adjust program activities or housing, etc. Our goal is to allow you to make the best decisions for you, your institution, your students, and your program.

As an organization, we strive to be clear, consistent, and timely with our communication so that students, parents, and our university partners feel confident in deciding to travel with Study Abroad Association. Enclosed, you will find our most current policy updates, guidelines, and Frequently Asked Questions.





# STUDY ABROAD ASSOCIATION

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## GENERAL HEALTH & SAFETY FAQs

### **Are there any locations to which SAA will not offer travel for faculty-led programs in 2021 and 2022?**

- We will follow local recommendations for the viability of travel in conjunction with the possibility for US citizens to travel abroad and return safely.
- We monitor to what extent the host country is mitigating the COVID pandemic and risk, as well as hospital capacity.
- Should a location become compromised during the program dates, we will work to find acceptable alternative locations.

### **Are students and faculty required to quarantine upon arrival in a country and if so, who pays for that?**

- In the case of a last minute country entry quarantine requirement change that greatly impacts the ability for the program to take place and that occurs within 60 days prior to the start of the program, SAA will work directly with the institution to find an alternative program location.
- If a country requires quarantine upon arrival, we will work with the home institution to incorporate those days into the program itinerary and program cost, when possible.

### **How are SAA staff trained for emergency situations?**

- We provide thorough and ongoing training for our staff to proactively plan for, and respond to, emergencies and crises abroad. In addition, we have a Crisis Management Team made up of U.S. and on-site staff members, who are on-call and available 24/7/365.

### **What security measures does SAA have in place during faculty-led programs?**

- The group will have at least one full-time, on-site, group director in order to provide the highest level of safety and support throughout the program. A very thorough arrival orientation will be provided to make sure all participants are aware of the protocols in case of an emergency. Please refer to our “Emergency Response Guidelines For Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs” for more details.

**What are SAA's COVID-19 protocols abroad?**

- SAA refers to the requirements of local authorities regarding social distancing and the wearing of masks in all locations abroad. Some requirements may vary in strictness compared to the U.S. by country or city. All students, faculty, and staff are expected to comply with whatever requirements they may encounter while abroad to reduce the spread of COVID-19, including recommendations for dining, public gatherings, transportation, museum visits, etc.
- Additional details of SAA's health and safety guidelines and policies while on-site are contained herein.

**Does SAA carry liability insurance?**

- SAA maintains professional liability insurance in the amount of \$3,000,000 and, with adequate advanced notice, can add an institution as an additional insured.
- Note that SAA strongly discourages any participants in our programs from operating motor vehicles (cars, scooters, boats, etc.) in general while abroad, and more importantly during the program, and urges them to refrain from participating in certain activities identified by insurance companies as hazardous or life-threatening, including but not limited to professional sports, scuba diving, swimming with sharks, hang gliding, parachuting, skydiving, or bungee jumping. Such activities will often invalidate any existing life, medical, or liability insurance normally carried by students, parents, staff, travel providers, or institutions.

**Does SAA require participants have international health insurance for the duration of the program?**

- Yes and in many cases, the home institution will have their own required international health insurance policy for study abroad programs. Groups where the home institution does not itself require or provide comprehensive international health, evacuation, and repatriation insurance, will be required to include in the program costs, the SAA insurance plan through LewerMark.
- Details on the most up-to-date LewerMark insurance coverage will be provided to institutions during the program planning process. LewerMark also has a dedicated COVID-19 resource page which you can review here: <https://www.imglobal.com/coronavirus>.

**Given the pandemic, SAA strongly recommends participants consider purchasing separate individual insurance to cover events such as: trip cancellation (CFAR), trip interruption (IFAR), travel delay, lost luggage, etc.**

## Who are the emergency contacts at SAA?

In the case of an emergency on-site, faculty and/or students should first attempt to contact the SAA on-site group director, whose contact information will be provided in the orientation packet. If not available for any reason, the second contact should be the SAA Account Manager, also listed in the orientation materials.

At any time if either of these on-site group contacts cannot be reached or is indisposed, please contact any of the following SAA leadership:

### **Christian Alyea** - *Co-founder & Business Developer*

christian@studyabroadassociation.com

+1 972 464 9609

+1 202 910 6176

### **Leonardo Gubinelli** - *Co-founder & Business Developer*

leonardo@studyabroadassociation.com

+1 202 910 6318

### **Alessio Mazzolini** - *Chief Operating Officer*

alessio@studyabroadassociation.com

+34 664850625

**What additional steps has SAA taken to enhance students' safety overseas?**

We continually refer to the US Government's Department of State (DOS) website and travel alerts (<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html>) along with other resources to guide our decision making, in conjunction with the home institution. In addition, our in-country managers provide us up-to-date information on the local country and city situation.

We are continually monitoring the global COVID-19 situation and we use the WHO & CDC websites, along with the list of resources at the end of this guide, as useful sources of information on the current status, travel advice, and general healthcare guidelines.

We also consult with our third-party global insurance and security specialist company, LewerMark Insurance, that advises us on the risks associated with travel to different areas in the world and monitor advice from local authorities.

**How does SAA vet vendors and contractors used?**

SAA is very keen in the selection of any vendors and contractors used and has high expectations on services provided. The SAA Health & Safety team carefully selects providers and accommodations for groups, analyzing different options in the location, and depending on group size and itinerary. In general, SAA considers the following:

**In selecting local guides, services, or travel providers, they must:**

- have risk management and emergency procedures in place,
- have policies and procedures aligned with SAA organization expectations,
- be a reputable travel provider with experience in the travel industry and dealing with groups, and
- carry adequate liability insurance, especially in the case of private transportation companies.

**In selecting on-site accommodation providers, they must:**

- be centrally located or in locations that are strategic for the itinerary,
- have a minimum of 8.0 rating on booking.com or other credible ratings website,
- have high cleanness and hygiene standards, and whenever possible,
- be selected from our trusted internal database based on previous groups' experiences, and feedback from the on-site team, faculty and/or students.

# PRE-DEPARTURE

## HOME SCHOOL PRE-DEPARTURE PREPARATIONS

SAA recommends institutions provide a pre-departure orientation before departure, so participants know what to expect upon arrival, during the program, and are familiar with home school policies. SAA is happy to participate in or provide details for the home school's orientation.

In addition, SAA encourages program participants and faculty/staff leaders to register with the U.S. Department of State's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) (STEP) before departure.

### What is STEP?

- The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service to allow U.S. citizens and nationals traveling and living abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

### Benefits of Enrolling in STEP:

- Receive important information from the Embassy about safety conditions in your destination country, helping you make informed decisions about your travel plans.
- Help the U.S. Embassy contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency.
- Help family and friends get in touch with you in an emergency.

## SAA PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION PACKET:

Prior to departure, SAA will provide participants and institutional program leaders an in-depth orientation packet with all the necessary information in relation to the program and host country(ies).

### The orientation packet will include:

- Flight information (if SAA has arranged a group flight)
- Packing recommendations
- Travel checklist

- Accommodation information and contact details
- On-site Group Director/Country Manager information and contact details
- SAA Account Manager information and contact details
- Emergency numbers for the group and local authorities (such as 911, local hospital, consulate, etc.)
- Trip itinerary
- The latest COVID information and guidelines for the specific country(ies) visited
- A copy of the student COVID policy acknowledgment form

### **PRE-DEPARTURE COMMUNICATIONS:**

- One month prior to departure until the arrival date, SAA will send participants and group leaders regular updates on the current COVID situation in the country that they will be visiting.
- SAA will work with the home institution and group leaders on any last minute program adjustments, as needed.

### **PRE-DEPARTURE COVID TEST**

You may be required to have a COVID test prior to departing the US. The protocol for traveling to and from international destinations, and for reporting information on COVID-19 is country-specific. The best place to find information on COVID-19 in a specific country is through that country's Ministry of Health and government websites, US Embassies and Consulates overseas, The Center for Disease Control Travel Health Notices, and the US Department of State.

## COVID VACCINATION

SAA strongly recommends participants be vaccinated at least 2 week prior to travel. Please be aware that it is likely some countries may require proof of vaccination in order to gain entry. Recent reports suggests that some countries may be opening to fully vaccinated individuals to travel, removing the need for quarantine on arrival.

Once abroad, life may be restricted or severely limited for the non-vaccinated depending on the country. Participants may be subject to specific rules requiring proof of vaccination to board a flight, enter the country, or obtain an entry visa.

## WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU FLY?

SAA is monitoring the main airline companies protocols for flying. If you want to know more about what to expect during your flight, please review the specific airline companies' travel safety measures.



<https://www.aa.com/i18n/travel-info/travel-with-confidence.jsp>



<https://www.united.com/ual/en/us/fly/travel/what-to-expect.html>



<https://www.delta.com/us/en/travel-planning-center/know-before-you-go/delta-care-standard>



<https://www.lufthansa.com/us/en/protection-measures>

## VISA ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

In addition to potential COVID requirements for obtaining an entry visa for US citizens, we understand some countries are allowing students on short-term study abroad programs and/or for faculty leaders, to enter without an entry visa, even when general restrictions exist. SAA will work with the home institution on the latest updates for entry requirements.

Should visa entry travel restrictions affect the ability of participants to enter a specific country, we will work with the home institution to determine the feasibility of running the program and alternatives.

Note, students and faculty holding passports from countries other than the U.S. should consult the host country's consulate website for up-to-date information on entry requirements.

## GROUP FLIGHTS ARRANGED BY SAA

Participants should expect to follow COVID protocols as required by the specific airline.

For programs that have group ticketing arranged by SAA, we will send information to participants to make travel as smooth as possible. In case of any travel emergencies during the program, follow the emergency information provided by SAA.

Participants should PRINT the emergency information provided by SAA prior to travel. In the case of issues during travel, the airline staff at the airport is almost always the best first step for resolution.

As groups prepare to travel, SAA highly recommends individuals sign up for flight notifications on the airline website and check the e-ticket for information about the specific airline provider. To ensure participants are updated in case of any last minute changes, SAA recommends international travelers download and install the Mobile Passport App which will also help expedite the US Customs process upon return to the US.

<https://mobilepassport.us/>

*For general questions in regard to group airfare, please contact our team at [info@studyabroadassociation.com](mailto:info@studyabroadassociation.com)*

# UPON ARRIVAL AND ON-SITE

## ORIENTATION

The SAA Country Manager or Group Director will provide an in depth orientation to the group upon arrival that includes:

- main safety measures and hygiene practices, with additional focus on the current status of COVID-19 and country general policies,
- overview of health, safety, and risk management protocols, along with emergency contact information and insurance details (if SAA-provided insurance is used), and
- information about general precautions and prevention of getting sick will be provided following the CDC standard guidance and local host country recommendations.

In addition, for the health and safety of all participants, at orientation SAA will:

- provide antiseptic hand gel,
- follow social distancing best practices, and
- ensure any food or drink provided during orientation is packaged individually or if at a restaurant, will be a la carte and seating will follow social distancing guidelines.

Throughout the program, the SAA on-site team will be checking participants' temperature every morning during the day briefing to ensure that participants are fit to continue the day activities.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

- SAA will limit the number of people in each bedroom to two to avoid overcrowding and in shared accommodation spaces, masks may be required, and participants need to ensure social distancing adheres to local authorities standards.
- Students may request a private room prior to the departure date, if allowed by the home institution.
- Accommodations selected by SAA will provide a high standard in cleanliness and have strict hygiene protocols, including following safety protocols given by local authorities and clean using chemicals that are effective against Coronavirus.
- Staff working at accommodations selected by SAA will be required to wear personal protective equipment, including masks and gloves where required.
- Hand sanitizer must be provided for guests in public areas.
- SAA will only select housing vendors that guarantee rooms have been thoroughly cleaned between check out and check in.
- All linens, towels, and laundry need to be washed in accordance with local authority COVID guidelines.

## ON-SITE TRANSPORTATION

- Public transportation is SAA's usual means of transportation and if used, will follow in country guidelines and recommendations for use.
- If an institution would prefer to have private group transportation arranged, then SAA will require transportation vendors to provide evidence of pre-trip sanitation of the transport vehicle. In addition, seating will be arranged to allow for social distancing and all transport passengers will wear face masks as required by local guidelines. Hand sanitizer will be provided.

## MEALS

- SAA will work closely with each meal vendor to follow local COVID guidelines.
- Any group meals provided will be discussed with the institution in advance to determine the appropriate meal type and group seating set up.
- When possible, SAA will secure outdoor dining and limit contact with other patrons.
- If possible, meals will be packaged individually or if at a restaurant, will be a la carte and follow social distancing guidelines.

## CURRICULAR & CULTURAL PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Arranged program activities and locations such as museum visits, lectures/events, business visits, etc. will be reviewed for feasibility of social distancing and cleanliness and SAA will follow all local guidance regarding COVID protocol.

## PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY

The SAA on-site ground team will work closely with the home institution and group leaders during the trip to accommodate any last minute changes needed or requests to allow flexibility and smoothness of the itinerary and in the case anything unexpected arises during the trip, including changes necessitated due to COVID.

## ON-SITE PROGRAM SUPPORT IN CASE OF ILLNESS

In the event of an on-site illness by a program participant, SAA will provide a local staff member to take care of the ill participant, so the rest of the group can continue with the program Group Director.

There will be an assigned SAA country Account Manager that will help the on-ground team with logistics and resolve any emergencies that might occur during the program.

Should a participant on the program be diagnosed with COVID, SAA will provide logistic support and assistance. During the quarantine period, SAA will:

- assist with getting tested for COVID,
- locating private accommodation arrangements,
- obtaining meals or meal delivery,
- arrange any transport needs, such as to/from clinic or doctor, airport, etc.,
- communicate with local authorities, health department, or other entities, and
- provide any translations that might be needed.

Any additional costs associated with any of the above will be at the expense of the participant.

SAA strongly recommends participants consider purchasing IFAR/CFAR insurance at their own expense to cover such potential costs.

## RETURNING HOME

- It may be required that participants have to quarantine upon arrival in the US from abroad. As of April 27, 2021, the US CDC is not requiring fully vaccinated people to self-quarantine after arriving in the US.
- Should CDC guidance change and entry requires a negative COVID test to return to the US, onsite SAA staff will assist participants in obtaining the test.

## WHAT SAA CANNOT DO

( from the [Forum/NAFSA](#) latest guidelines)

- Guarantee or ensure the health, safety, or security of participants or eliminate all risk from the education abroad environment.
- Monitor or control all of the participants' daily personal decisions, choices, or activities.
- Prevent participants from engaging in illegal, dangerous, or unwise activities.
- Be expected to offer mental or physical health advice or administer any medications unless authorized to do so for program participants.
- Assure that home country standards of due process apply in international legal proceedings or provide or pay for legal representation for participants.
- Assume responsibility for actions or events that are not part of the program, nor for those that are beyond the control of partners, nor for situations that may arise due to the failure of a participant to disclose pertinent information.
- May be limited in the information that personnel are able to share with partners or with participants' support networks, as we recognize that all personnel are bound by the legal and regulatory environments of the countries in which the program is based.

## FINANCIAL POLICIES & FAQs

Our goal is to work jointly with our partners to reduce the risk of financial loss and maintain viability of programs successfully running. To do this, we work with our on-site staff and providers in all our overseas and domestic locations on a continual basis and monitor current entry requirements and health and safety measures that are in place.

We will keep home institutions updated regularly during the planning and application processes and as important deadlines approach, so that a joint decision can be made about program viability.

### Programs with Group Airfare booked by SAA:

Payment Dates:

- **150-101 days before departure:** First payment deposit of \$500 per participant is due to SAA.
- **100-61 days before departure:** The second payment of 50% of the remaining amount is due to SAA.
- **60 days or less before departure:** The third and final payment of remaining balance is due to SAA.

*Minimum Number of Travelers: If SAA organizes airfare, the Program Group must have no less than 10 travelers 100 days prior to departure, otherwise SAA may cancel the Program at its own discretion. In the event a program is cancelled with less than 100 days to the first date of travel, due to there being less enrollees than the agreed upon minimum number of travelers, all travelers shall be provided a full refund of payments made.*

	COVID-related Cancellation	Non-COVID-related Cancellation
150-101 days before departure	SAA will fully refund the \$500 deposit per person to the institution	SAA will use the \$500 deposit per person for a future travel credit that can be used within 1 calendar year from the trip date
100-61 days before departure	SAA will keep \$100 per person (which is the deposit for the airfare) from the payment made and refund the rest to the institution	SAA will return any recoverable cost
60 days or less before departure	SAA will return any recoverable cost	SAA will return any recoverable cost

**Programs without Group Airfare booked by SAA:**

Payment Dates:

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- **100-61 days before departure:** The second payment of 50% of the remaining amount is due to SAA.
- **60 days or less before departure:** The third and final payment of remaining balance is due to SAA.

	COVID-related Cancellation	Non-COVID-related Cancellation
150-61 days before departure	SAA will refund the full amount paid	SAA will return any recoverable cost
60 days or less before departure	SAA will return any recoverable cost	No refund can be provided

For institutions that booked their own group flights or for students who booked their flights independently, SAA cannot help cover any flight-related costs if a program is cancelled. SAA strongly recommends participants purchase separate CFAR/IFAR insurance.

**Under what conditions will SAA cancel a program and if that occurs, what are the refund policies?**

SAA is always monitoring planned programs with our local partners and airfare provider to ensure that we have the latest information. In the case of having to cancel a program, SAA will notify the institution at least 60 days prior to the program departure date. SAA will work closely with the program leader to look for alternative destinations or available options.

SAA may cancel a program for events beyond its control, including but not limited to, instability in a destination country, acts of God, war (whether declared or undeclared), terrorist activities, incidents of violence, public health issues or quarantine, substantial currency fluctuations, strikes, governmental restrictions, fire or severe weather conditions which make it impossible or commercially unreasonable, in the opinion of SAA, to properly conduct the program.

In the case of a “force majeure” event such as, but not limited to: government actions, pandemic, war, Acts of God, earthquake, etc. participants will receive no refund, unless SAA can recover paid costs.

In case the program needs to be cancelled or rescheduled due to a Department of State travel advisory which determines the location is unsafe, refunds / credits will be determined by the airline, hotel, transportation, and on-ground providers. SAA will make every effort to recoup as much as possible in terms of recoverable costs or future travel credit.

**What if a student decides to withdraw once the program has started?**

If a student withdraws once the program has started, no refunds will be provided as expenses have already been paid on behalf of all participants. SAA’s on-ground team will communicate with the home school and faculty in charge of the program, analyze the situation and help the student with the logistics to return home, and provided non-monetary assistance as needed. SAA recommends students purchase additional CFAR/IFAR insurance that covers such incidents.

**What if an institution decides to cancel the study abroad program?**

The standard SAA refund policies for the group will apply, should an institution decide to cancel the program.

## COVID RESOURCES

<b>Extra Insurance plan (To be purchased individually) direct link:</b>	<a href="https://www.imglobal.com/img-producer-insurance-plans?imgac=527818&amp;productType=trip">https://www.imglobal.com/img-producer-insurance-plans?imgac=527818&amp;productType=trip</a>
<b>European Q&amp;A on COVID-19:</b>	<a href="https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/covid-19/questions-answers">https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/covid-19/questions-answers</a>
<b>World COVID Reported Cases and Deaths by Country or Territory:</b>	<a href="https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/">https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/</a>
<b>CDC Travel Notice:</b>	<a href="https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/noticescovid19">https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/noticescovid19</a>
<b>DOS COVID-19 Information:</b>	<a href="https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/covid-19-information.html">https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/covid-19-information.html</a>
<b>DHS Homeland Security News &amp; Updates:</b>	<a href="https://www.dhs.gov/coronavirus/coronavirus-news-updates">https://www.dhs.gov/coronavirus/coronavirus-news-updates</a>
<b>WHO - World Health Organization</b>	<a href="https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019">https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019</a>
<b>COVID-19 Aviation Health Safety Protocol (EU)</b>	<a href="https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/EASA-ECDC_COVID-19_Operational-guidelines-for-management-of-passengers-issue-2.pdf">https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/EASA-ECDC_COVID-19_Operational-guidelines-for-management-of-passengers-issue-2.pdf</a>
<b>Mobile contact tracing Apps in EU Member States</b>	<a href="https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/coronavirus-response/travel-during-coronavirus-pandemic/mobile-contact-tracing-apps-eu-member-states_en">https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/coronavirus-response/travel-during-coronavirus-pandemic/mobile-contact-tracing-apps-eu-member-states_en</a>
<b>International Travel Emergencies</b>	<a href="https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/emergencies.html">https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/emergencies.html</a>
<b>COVID-19 Travel Regulations Map</b>	<a href="https://www.iatatravelcentre.com/world.php">https://www.iatatravelcentre.com/world.php</a>
<b>Travel Restriction Map</b>	<a href="https://apply.joinsherpa.com/map">https://apply.joinsherpa.com/map</a>





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