

# Blogging While Abroad

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Why blog while you're abroad?

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**To stay connected.** With family, friends, Agnes Scott and other students who want to study abroad.

**To deepen your experience.** Consistent reflection helps you interpret your experience. While recording what you're doing and how you're feeling, you'll be able to process what you're learning.

**To remember your experience.** While it feels like you'll always remember those once-in-a-lifetime moments that happen throughout your trip, unfortunately you won't. Even pictures lose value without captions.

**To build your e-portfolio.** It's easier to start an e-portfolio when you already have some content to work with. A travel blog is a great place to start. Adding a link to your e-portfolio on your resumé or CV will show employers and graduate schools how many critical thinking skills you gained during your travels.

**To reference for future publications, interviews and applications.** You may be able to pull content from your posts for articles you can submit to various publications, including *Abroad View*. When you're asked about challenges you've overcome, skills you've gained or lessons you've learned, those details you put in your blog may help you formulate answers.

Do's and Don'ts of Travel Blogging (*inspired by Abroadview.org*)

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**DO** be honest, reflective, comparative, succinct, personal, visual, auditory, tactile, and olfactory. Explore feelings (humor, fear, pain, surprise, dismay, excitement), new relationships and different cultural values. A strong post may incorporate one or several of these elements.

**DON'T** write blow-by-blow explanations of events; use derogatory, disrespectful, or culturally insensitive statements; lack a sense of personal involvement; write about inappropriate topics, such as personal drunkenness or drug use. Unless you adjust your privacy settings, remember that your content is public and anyone can read it.

Getting Started

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**Read other travel blogs.** There are tons out there! Find examples of Scottie blogs on Facebook and [digitaldesignfellow.wordpress.com](http://digitaldesignfellow.wordpress.com).

**Research which blogging platform is right for you.** Scottie favorites are WordPress ([wordpress.com](http://wordpress.com)), Tumblr ([tumblr.com](http://tumblr.com)) and Blogger ([blogspot.com](http://blogspot.com)). Travel Pod ([travelpod.com](http://travelpod.com)) is one platform just for travel blogs. All of these options are free and have clear instructions for signing up.

**Start several weeks before you leave.** Everything when you go abroad will feel new. Get a hang of blogging before you go so you're ready to start posting as soon as your experience begins. You may post about the preparations you're making, recent news events in the place you'll be living, what you're choosing to pack, learning goals or wish lists for what you want to do and see.

*over please*

## Maintaining Your Blog

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*Once all the newness of your experience starts wearing off, you feel less inspired to blog. However, it's important to continue documenting and reflecting.*

**Encourage people to comment.** Send your link to friends and family asking them for feedback. Often, more feedback leads to more excited bloggers.

**Take notes.** If you can jot down a few phrases about an experience when it happens on a piece of paper, you'll be more inspired to expand on it in a blog post later.

**Shorten your posts.** You can post a few pictures or a couple sentences if you don't want to spend too much time. Consistent short posts are often more engaging than sparse long posts.

**Get creative.** Blogs aren't just writing. Add photos (lots of photos!), videos, links to local music and news articles, restaurant reviews, weekly fundraising ventures, vocabulary lessons, recipes—whatever feels important, relevant and fun to you. Remember to ask permission before you take and use images of people.

## If You Get Stuck

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*These tips are slightly modified versions of those found on [abroadview.org](http://abroadview.org)*

- Describe a ritual that you observed.
- Discuss an object that has become meaningful to you abroad.
- Discuss a place that has become meaningful to you abroad.
- Discuss a surprising interaction that you had with a local person or fellow international student.
- Discuss an article/book/movie related to your host country and why it is relevant.
- Think about topics such as money, housing/home, health, gender roles, family/children, religion—how does one of these subjects differ in your host country from your understanding of the topic at home?
- Discuss a time when you felt “foreign,” or a time when you felt like a “local,” or a time when you felt both.
- Discuss a time/place/experience that made you think of home. Explore the similarities and differences, and why they might exist.
- Describe a gesture or phrase common in your host country, but foreign to your home.
- Do a restaurant, movie, book, festival, band, museum or beach review.

*For more information*

<http://www.abroadview.org/advisers/lewis.htm>

<http://www.vagablogging.net/tips-for-your-travel-blog.html>

[http://blogs.suite101.com/article.cfm/travel\\_blog\\_tips\\_for\\_beginners](http://blogs.suite101.com/article.cfm/travel_blog_tips_for_beginners)