



Welcome!

We are thrilled you will be traveling with USA Athletes International (USAAI)! USAAI tours are built with an understanding that sports and travel changes lives. To make your trip the adventure of a lifetime, it is important that you begin preparing for it now.

This packet is the first in a series of materials we'll send you as you get ready to travel! It outlines the important details that you should be aware of when preparing for your USA Athletes International trip. As the most respected name in sports and education travel, we are committed to the well-being of our athletes, coaches, and other participants. Your program coordinator will be happy to answer any questions you may have or get you the information you need about your trip. Don't hesitate to call our USAAI office at (913) 397-9024 or email us at any time.

Don't forget—you can get up-to-the-minute account information by accessing your account online at www.usaai.org.

We're excited that you have decided to join us as we unite athletes across the world through sports.



Getting Started

Welcome to the USA Athletes International Team. We know you must have a million questions regarding your trip. This packet was designed with those questions in mind. Should you find that not all of your questions have been answered, please contact your program coordinator at 913-397-9024.

Verify your registration information online!

You can access your account information anytime by logging onto www.usaai.org and entering your User ID and Password in the Member Login section.

Be sure to verify the following:

- Shipping Address (where you want your uniforms shipped)
- Passport Information (this should be updated as soon as you receive your passport)
- You have arranged transportation to the team's gateway airport.
- Emergency Contact Information

DON'T FORGET...

- ✓ **Apply For Your Passport**
- ✓ **Check your account regularly for notes posted from your program coordinator.**
- ✓ **Begin Your Fund-Raising Campaign**
See the fund-raising section for details on how to begin. Don't hesitate to contact us with questions about the fund-raising process or new ideas.
Set monthly goals for fund-raising to help ensure that monies are raised prior to the payment deadlines.

“Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to *unite people* in a way that little else does.” --Nelson Mandela

Scholarships

USAAI athletic tours are built on a passionate belief that sports and travel changes lives. In this spirit, USAAI is pleased to offer the **USAAI Travel Scholarship**. These scholarships are designed to assist and encourage those who have pursued their responsibilities as a student-athlete and who have made a notable difference in their community.

To become a candidate for scholarship, student-athletes must:

1. Student-athletes applying for any scholarship offered by USA Athletes International must be affiliated with the USA Athletes International program and registered as such. Each Student-athlete is allowed one scholarship per fiscal year, with the fiscal year beginning in September of the subsequent year.
2. Have a cumulative GPA for all higher education work of 3.0 or better at the time of the application deadline. Applicants must provide transcripts from all postsecondary schools, colleges, or universities, and are expected to maintain full-time status.
3. Provide three letters of recommendation, one from academics, one from an appropriate athletic coach, and one from an appropriate employer/supervisor.
4. Provide a list summarizing principle academic, nonacademic or employment activities and interests (clubs, religious/civic associations, special recognitions, honors, offices held, volunteer work, etc.).
5. Provide a "Statement of Purpose" that includes the applicant's academic and career goals, and any unusual or unique circumstances related to these goals and/or objectives.
6. Demonstrate the responsibility to pay the costs above the amount provided by the scholarship, some knowledge of the country and/or region to be visited, seriousness of purpose, and the motivation and capacity to adapt to a foreign learning and living environment.

All documents should be submitted together in the specified order to:

**USA Athletes International
Scholarship Fund Committee
12819 S. Navaho Dr
Olathe, Kansas 66062**

Your application status will be noted in your on-line account.

Application packet should be postmarked no later than February 8, 2020.

All awards will be posted to on-line accounts no later than March 1, 2020.

USAAI Scholarships will be awarded annually in the following categories:

- Presidential (\$2,500)
- Gold (\$1,000)
- Silver (\$500)
- Bronze (\$250)

Please contact your program coordinator with any questions regarding the USA Athletes International Scholarship Program. Scholarship requirements and cover pages are available by logging in online or requesting one from your program coordinator.



Travel • Compete • Experience

Fund-Raising

There are many ways that you can raise the money for your trip. Typically the most widely used and successful way is by utilizing the fund-raising letter provided in your invitation.

Obviously there are a variety of other ways you can raise your money. USAAI offers additional fund-raising opportunities in the form of:

Selling USAAI T-Shirts | Selling USAAI Merchandise | USAAI International Trip Raffle Chances

You might also want to consider some creative ventures of your own:

Bake Sale • Benefit Dinners • Bingo Night • Car Wash • Corporate Sponsorship • Rummage Sale or E-bay Sale • Company Matching Funds • Benefit Walk • Volunteer Services • Sports Camps • Old fashioned work and sweat...yard work, painting, etc

Hopefully this gives you some ideas to get started on your fund-raising plan. Be inventive and resourceful. Keep in mind the size of the town or community you come from and go to school in. (Yes!! Even the small communities are willing to help!) If you need some suggestions or want to explore possibilities with USA Athletes, call us at 913-397-9024 and speak directly with your program coordinator.

Remember: Fundraising is successful if you are willing to put the time and energy into making it work.

Finishing Strong!

Payment Deadlines

Payment Deadlines:

- * \$300 is due at the time of completing your online registration.
- * 30 days after the effective date (the day you register)—an additional \$300.
- * 105 days prior to trip departure – an additional \$1250-account must total \$1850 in deposits at this time.
- * 60 days prior to trip departure – outstanding (unpaid) amount of the package price listed in your invitation.
- * 2 weeks prior to departure – fuel surcharge due. (if implemented by airlines) --- if a fuel surcharge is implemented by the airline, the amount of the fuel surcharge will be added to your account when USAAI is notified at the time of final ticketing.

If your registration occurs at anytime after one of these due dates, the balance to bring you up to speed is due immediately.



Travel • Compete • Experience

Finishing Early!

Late Fees

If your account is not paid in full by the final payment deadline, you will be assessed a \$100 one time payment late fee. If your account is not paid in full 65 days prior to departure, your reservation can be canceled and subject to the current cancellation policy. In order to avoid a late fee when registering near the postmark date, we recommend that you send the full payment immediately. If you applied after the final payment deadline, your payment must be made in full upon registration.

Your invoice and balance due is available by emailing USAAI at info@usaai.org.

Passport Information

PASSPORTS

Passports are required for all USA Athletes International trips abroad. **You are responsible for obtaining your own passport, so please don't delay!**

Visit your post office or a local office of the federal government for an application form. Passports obtained under the age of 16 are only valid for five years. Passports obtained at age 16 and older are valid for 10 years. If you already have your passport, please check to make sure that it has not and will not have expired by the date of your tour. Note that some countries require that passports be valid for six months after you return to the United States.

We recommend visiting the website <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html>

This informative site answers passport and visa questions, and allows you to print a passport application form.

TRAVEL VISAS

Visas are not required for U.S. citizens traveling to Western or Central Europe, Costa Rica, Peru, the Caribbean or Mexico. Visas are required for U.S. citizens traveling to Australia, Brazil, China, Egypt, Russia and Turkey. For a fee USA Athletes International can assist U.S. passport holders in obtaining visas for these countries. All passport information will be submitted for visa application processing approximately 30 days prior to departure. Visas are necessary for participants connecting through these countries, even if they are not the final destination. Please check with your program coordinator to see if this is the case for your team.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR NON-U.S. CITIZENS

Non-U.S. citizens are responsible for obtaining all documents needed to enter the countries to be visited or connected through and for reentry into the U.S.A. Please consult the consular offices of the countries on your itinerary, as well as the U.S. Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, for complete information.

**Non-U.S. citizens denied boarding for the countries to be visited or connected through are not eligible for a refund.*

Traveling Together

Your Team

USAAI travel groups average between one to three teams, approximately 12 to 35 travelers. These are the people with whom you will share your travel experience. You eat your meals together, stay in the same accommodations, and travel together. It's an opportunity to make lifelong friendships!

Your Tour Manager

"Tour manager" is an important term in sports travel. It refers to your team leader, who is specially trained and selected to assist your group while overseas. Your USAAI Tour Manager is part commentator, counselor, troubleshooter, advocate and stopwatch! He or she supervises hotel check-ins, posts bulletins, directs the bus driver and handles other logistical details.

USAAI Tour Managers are energetic and enthusiastic and are dedicated to making your trip a safe and memorable one. Your tour manager is your immediate authority on the trip. If at anytime you believe your trip is not meeting USAAI standards or your personal expectations, you should advise your tour manager immediately. He or she has devoted time and energy to preparing your trip and ensuring that your safety and enjoyment are a top priority. You must realize that everything you do reflects on him or her in your respective country. Please adhere to any rules or regulations set forth on your trip.

Parents, Siblings, Others

While the majority of USAAI participants are athletes, increasing numbers of friends and family are enjoying the cultural enrichment and stimulation of USAAI tours and programs too. Family members travel with athletes and are encouraged to attend all activities of the group.

**This information in this packet is geared primarily to athlete travelers, but will also be relevant for our other travelers.*

On Tour

HOTEL

USAAl uses three- and four-star accommodations. We place a priority on booking accommodations in good locations that are near team competitions or other local attractions that we participate in. In various countries, these arrangements are made by our competing teams and may not be equal to what you might expect in the United States. USAAl asks that you respect the people and culture which you are visiting. Flexibility can often lead to a more enjoyable tour and experience.

ROOMING WITH THE TEAM

You will generally stay in hotel rooms with two to four beds. During peak travel periods, hotels sometimes add an extra bed to accommodate heavy bookings. USAAl attempts to prevent this but cannot guarantee that it will never happen. Some hotel rooms in France have a Grand Lit (an oversize double bed for two) instead of twin beds.

A USAAl group is typically made up of one, two, three, or four teams with players from all over the U.S. who quickly get to know each other and feel part of one overall group. Depending on the mix of athletes, you may be rooming with participants from other teams. Don't worry, this is a great way to meet new people and make some new friends! Your program coordinator will create a rooming combination before you leave in order to make it easier for your tour manager to work out the rooming when you check in to your hotel. Check-in time at most hotels is early to mid-afternoon. If you arrive overseas early in the morning, you will likely have time to change money and do some exploring before you check in.

*** Please be advised that USAAl cannot accept rooming requests prior to departure.**

Supporting Travelers - Requests for private accommodations are subject to rates and availability.

MEALS

You will enjoy a variety of meals en route, mixing both native and familiar cuisines depending on your area of travel. Keep an open mind and be willing to sample everything, that's what travel is all about! Most days, you will be served a continental breakfast that includes a variety of fresh rolls, cereal, pastries, butter and jam, coffee, tea or hot chocolate.

** In some hotels in Britain, eggs or other items may be included. In Europe, the larger hotels sometimes serve eggs and other American-style breakfast items for an extra charge.*

On most USAAl tours, you will enjoy lunch on your own. Be adventurous and experiment. Many travelers do what the locals do: Instead of having an expensive restaurant meal, they buy fresh ingredients at a local market and put together a sandwich. Beverages at dinner are not included. Sometimes your waiter may put soda or mineral water down on the table without being asked.

Be aware that you will be charged for any beverages you consume.

**Although USAAl will try to accommodate special needs meals including kosher, vegetarian and low salt, we cannot guarantee all requests.*

DAILY SCHEDULES

Your daily schedule will vary depending on the country, the weather, and the day's events. Certain aspects, however, are the same for all tours.

Arrival Briefing

On the day you arrive (normally Day 2 of your itinerary), your tour manager will hold a get-acquainted arrival briefing. This is when you get to know your tour manager, as well as the other U.S. teams who are traveling with you and receive important trip information.

Punctuality

As a member of a team, your punctuality is critical. Coming down even five minutes late in the morning can force your tour manager to go looking for you and this can throw off the day's schedule for everybody. Bring a reliable watch and alarm clock.

Don't count on morning wake-up call service most hotels do not have in room telephones!

Money Matters

Spending Money

The amount of spending money you'll need depends on personal habits, but a good rule of thumb is \$40-60 USD per day. This allows for lunch, snacks, soft drinks, postage, souvenirs, free-time activities, optional excursions not already included in your itinerary, and local transportation during your free time.

"Cash, debit/credit cards, travelers checks... they're all money so which should I take with me?" When it comes to international travel, each of these types of money have their pros and cons, but you may be surprised to learn that not all of them spend the same.

Cash – It is always a good idea to have some cash on hand. It is accepted everywhere, and you never know when you will run into a vendor or taxi driver that accepts nothing else. There *is* a fee to exchange American dollars for foreign currency. You can choose to exchange your money before you leave; however it is not necessary since there are a number of currency exchanges in the countries once we arrive. Often times they charge a smaller fee than in the United States.

Debit/Credit Cards – Cards are extremely helpful because they give you up-to-the-minute exchange rates at the time of purchase. The drawback is that they are not accepted everywhere and most debit cards will charge a small transaction fee for their use. The most commonly accepted credit card is VISA.

You may obtain cash with your credit card or local bankcard at ATMs. ATMs generally give a wholesale exchange rate, as much as 5 percent better than banks. Most big department stores and restaurants in major cities will take U.S. credit cards; these cards give you the best exchange rate.

Be sure to memorize your 4-digit personal identification number (PIN) to use your bankcard. Plus, check with your bank or credit card issuer to make sure your card is compatible with international ATMs. If you don't already have a PIN number for your credit card, you'll have to call ahead to get one. If a logo for PLUS or CIRRUS is on the back of your ATM card, you should not have problems obtaining cash. *Don't forget to let you bank or credit card company know the time frame that you will be out of the country. Unless notified, these organizations may see money being spent overseas and lock down the account thinking the card or number has been stolen.*

Travelers Checks – These are very secure but **EXTREMELY** problematic when trying to cash or use for purchases. Most vendors do not accept them and many banks will not cash them. We strongly discourage athletes from using them.

We suggest you bring a combination of cash and debit/credit cards to be used at your own discretion.

Keeping It Safe

Your common sense will take you a long way.

- Never leave money in your hotel room. Keep your money, passport and other valuables with you or in a hotel safe when available.
- Use a money belt or neck pouch for carrying money. Wear purses and cameras diagonally across your shoulder and preferably under your coat or jacket.
- It is a good idea to leave expensive cameras, sound equipment and jewelry at home.

Tippling?

For most of you this may be your first time to travel on your own, which means that your parents have always taken care of the tipping, but it's your turn to be the adult. It is customary to tip your bus driver and tour guides. Bus drivers are usually tipped \$2.00 per day. Tour guides are at your discretion.

In all the countries we travel to they have a value added tax; commonly referred to as V.A.T. This tax, which you will see on any food receipt, covers the cost of services rendered at such places like restaurants.

Since spending money tends to run low at the end of the trip, your tour manager may collect the minimum standard tips before you depart.

Staying In Touch

Mail

If you're on a one-week trip, you won't have time to receive mail from home. Postcards you send from Europe or Australia will probably arrive at home after you do; nevertheless it can still be fun to send them to friends and family! When mailing something, make sure 'U.S.A.' is a part of the address. Postage and mailing prices will vary in individual countries. Please check with the local post office.

Phones & Calling Cards

International calling can be expensive. For those wishing to save as much as possible while still keeping their friends and family in the loop, we suggest using a phone card and calling from a pay phone. Pay phones (if they can be found) charge a fee for use. However, once you're connected your only expense is what you've paid for your calling card. Stay away from using hotel room phones if at all possible. They typically charge a very expensive price for the connection fee and airtime, especially if you don't have a calling card.

BEWARE! We recommend waiting until you reach your destination before purchasing your calling card. Many cards for sale in the United States advertise their use as international, but this typically refers to calls made *from* the U.S. to countries abroad, not from those countries *to* the U.S. You will get a lot more minutes for your money if the card is purchased in the country the calls are going to originate from.

***FYI:** Calling the United States from another country requires that you dial the prefix (001) before you can proceed with your call.*

Weather Forecast?

As we say in Kansas, "If you don't like the weather; wait twenty minutes and it'll change." Generally, weather is very comparable to the weather in the United States during our spring season. It's best to be prepared for all types or temperatures ranging from 50°F to 95°F and everything in between. Make sure to check the extended forecast for your destination before you leave and **think "layered"**.

Cell Phones

Although the world of satellite technology continues to bring us closer together, there are still some American cell phone service providers that do not extend their coverage overseas. Providers that do, such as AT&T and T-Mobile, have international plans that can be added to your current one or an additional international fee per call. If you plan to bring your cell phone make sure you check with your provider to find out what your international calling options are and exactly what the international calling fee is.

E-mail

Almost all of the destinations USAAI travels have internet availability, either at the hotel or internet cafés. Internet time must be purchased and the cost varies depending on the country, but it is usually a more cost-effective alternative to phone time. You typically purchase set blocks of time that begin and end with the user logging on and off. A select number of places may also allow you to buy unlimited access within a 24-hour time period. Internet access cannot be guaranteed.

Travel Changes

Alternate Departures & Returns

In some cases, one or more team members may depart from a different U.S. city on a different date than the main group. Such participants pay a \$350 service fee, plus the applicable connecting fee for that city, and cannot be guaranteed the same air routings as the main group. Neither USAAI nor the tour manager is responsible for those 'subgroups' until they meet up with the tour manager at the first accommodation.

Some participants may choose to extend their stay. They will be charged a \$150 deviation fee, the applicable ticket change fees, difference in fare and any applicable accommodation costs. All alternate return requests must be received by USAAI in writing (using Form D - Deviation Request) at least 90 days prior to departure. Ask your program coordinator for more details if you are considering an alternate departure or return.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Keep this information together with your other trip details and use it as a reference while planning your adventure. This sheet will help you keep track of some details, notes, and your thoughts as you prepare for your USAAI Experience.

List 5 fund-raising ideas to get started

ATHLETE CHECKLIST

- USAAI online registration
- USAAI deposit sent
- Passport Application
- Scholarship Application
- Fund-raising target list
- PRACTICE AND PACK

Culture Shock

Even though your departure date may seem far away, it is a good idea to start thinking about what it will be like to travel to a different country. There is so much to look forward to—new places, people and customs! While these new experiences will surely be exciting, they may also make you experience a bit of culture shock.

Hotel rooms half the size of what we are accustomed to here in the U.S., no ranch dressing, and daily tasks like buying a candy bar can suddenly seem daunting. Those and other experiences are all normal responses to a new culture and environment. Remember, you will adjust and these experiences will become an integral part of your memories.

You can prepare for the cultural differences and learn more about the countries you will be visiting by reading books, watching films and talking to your program coordinator before you leave.

I am looking most forward to ...

Things not to forget to ask ...
