



ACADEMIC
STUDIES ABROAD

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HELPFUL TIPS ON BOOKING YOUR FLIGHT

ASA provides an AIRPORT PICK-UP for students who arrive at the designated airport on the official arrival date, by the designated time.

After you are accepted, ASA will email you specific arrival and departure instructions. We strongly advise you to wait for this email from ASA before booking your flight, as date changes sometimes happen even after they have been posted to our website.

Detailed arrival and departure instructions for all ASA programs are also posted [here](#) once they are confirmed. If you do not see your program referenced on [this page](#), the dates for your program are not confirmed yet. You may refer to [this page](#) when booking your flight, to ensure you arrive on the correct day and time, as well as depart on the correct day.

Guidelines & Reminders

- ▶ **You are advised to book a round trip ticket.** If you're applying for a Student Visa, you may need to show proof of a round trip ticket in order to get your visa. Either way, we still advise you to book a round trip ticket because the Immigration officer at your point of entry may ask to see your return ticket to make sure you eventually plan to leave.
- ▶ **You are NOT allowed to move into your program housing before the official arrival date or stay after the housing move-out date.** You must arrange your own lodging for any extra days.
- ▶ **Please do NOT plan to leave the program before the housing move-out date, as you will have responsibilities (such as exams) through the end of the day prior to housing move-out.** The designated housing move-out date is both the earliest day you can leave the program, as well as the day you must move out of your program housing. If you are thinking of leaving the program a day or two early for personal reasons, PLEASE call ASA to discuss your plans first at 617-327-9388 and prior to booking a flight!
- ▶ **You are free to travel before or after your program end date.** Just be sure to research the visa/entry requirements for any countries you plan to visit, as well as [U.S. State Department travel advisories](#).
- ▶ **If ASA's arrival and departure instructions say the airport pick-up is between 9am-12pm (as an example), this refers to *your flight's scheduled arrival time*.** We understand it will take you additional time to pass through Immigration, retrieve your luggage, etc. As long as your flight is scheduled to arrive by the time we specify (in this example, 12pm), you will be picked up. (The pick-up window varies by program! Please [click here](#) to find out what time you need to arrive in order to be picked up.)
- ▶ **We are ONLY able to pick students up at the specified AIRPORT CODE. [Check ASA's arrival and departure](#) instructions before purchasing your ticket to find out which airport you should arrive to, as many cities have more than one airport.** The airport where our pick-up will take place will also be specified in the email ASA will send you after you're accepted, where we confirm your program dates.
- ▶ **Unless a specific housing check-out time is given, your return flight can depart at any time on the housing move-out date.** (Students going to Florence, Italy – you must be checked out of your housing by 10am on the housing move-out date.)
- ▶ **If you are flying from the U.S. to Europe, your flight typically needs to leave the day BEFORE the official arrival date in order to arrive on the official arrival date, due to the difference in time zones. This is also sometimes true when flying from the U.S. to South America.** Be sure to check your itinerary carefully before you purchase your ticket, to make sure you [arrive on your program's official arrival date, by the designated time](#).

Before You Click “Purchase Flight”... Things to Watch Out For

- **If you are studying in the UK, your flight going into the UK must NOT originate in the Republic of Ireland (includes Dublin and Shannon airports).** If your flight into the UK originates in the Republic of Ireland, you are unlikely to encounter any Immigration Officers when you enter the UK because both the UK and the Republic of Ireland are in the Common Travel Area. This will be problematic with regard to your UK visa and, ultimately, your ability to legally stay in the UK for the duration of your program.
- **Make sure your ticket doesn't have any airport-to-airport connections. (Ex: Arrive to LaGuardia and depart from JFK; arrive to London Heathrow and depart from London Gatwick.)** It is NOT advisable to book an airport-to-airport connection, no matter how much money you save.
- **Make sure your ticket doesn't have an overnight layover** by checking your arrival and departure times carefully. (Ex: Arrive at London Heathrow at 7pm and your connecting flight leaves 10am the next day.) As tempting as it might be to sleep in the airport to save some cash, this is not a good idea for safety reasons.
- **Tickets that are significantly below average in price usually have a CATCH** – like an overnight layover or an airport-to-airport connection. If you find a ticket that is significantly cheaper than everything else you've been seeing online, be wary.
- **Check all airport codes, dates and times CAREFULLY before purchasing a ticket!** Be sure to **double check your program's arrival/departure instructions** before booking, to ensure you are arriving on the correct day and time!
- **If you find a ticket that's cheaper because it arrives a day early, consider carefully before purchasing because you may not save much money in the end.** If you arrive outside of ASA's pick-up window, you will have to: 1) Pay for a hotel (you cannot move into your program early); 2) Pay for your own transportation to your program housing. PLEASE talk to ASA before booking a ticket that arrives outside of our pick-up window, so we can advise you!
- **Avoid websites like www.hotwire.com, www.priceline.com, or any other site where you must purchase the ticket before knowing which airline(s) you're on, what time you're leaving, arriving, etc.** Not only are these tickets non-refundable, but you will probably end up with an undesirable itinerary (e.g. multiple connections, long layovers, etc.) It hardly ever ends up being worth the savings. You could miss our airport pick-up or having an overnight layover, which would *increase* your total cost because you would have to get a hotel room for the night and pay for your own transportation.

Recommended Websites for Purchasing Airfare

You are under no obligation to book a flight at these websites. We simply provide these for your reference.

Student Fares

- www.studentuniverse.com/travel-services/asa/affiliate/all%20programs
- www.statravel.com

While student fares are usually cheaper than “published fares” (fares sold on the Internet or through travel agencies) you should shop around because student fares are not *always* lower in price. **If you may want to change your return date later, it may be advisable to buy student airfare**, as you can usually do a date change by paying a change fee, plus any difference in fare. However, the change fees, fare rules, and terms vary with each ticket, so you should check your ticket's Terms & Conditions before purchasing to see if date changes are allowed, and if so, how much will it cost.

Published Fares

- www.kayak.com (Searches multiple airlines' websites at once, making it easy to compare prices and itineraries offered by various airlines.)
- Go directly to the airline's website (e.g. www.aa.com, www.delta.com, www.lufthansa.com, etc.)
- www.expedia.com, www.orbitz.com, www.cheaptickets.com**

****Note:** Tickets purchased here are usually non-refundable and non-changeable.

Frequently Asked Questions!

What if my flight is delayed? Will I still be picked up?

If your flight has been delayed, we will make every effort to wait for you. *However, it is YOUR responsibility to immediately notify us of any changes by contacting ASA staff member designated on your ASA Last Minute Checklist.* You will receive your ASA Last Minute Checklist via EMAIL approximately one month prior to departure and again a few days before your program's official arrival date. While it is usually possible to pick up late arrivals due to flight delays, it cannot be guaranteed, as your ASA Site Director may be unavailable due to pre-planned program activities (such as Orientation).

I want to travel after the program is over and don't know when I want to come home. Can I book a one way ticket and buy my return ticket after I'm already abroad?

This may or may not be an option, depending on your program location. For example, sometimes if you are applying for a Student Visa before departure, the Consulate may ask for a copy of your round-trip itinerary and will not issue your visa without this. You can contact ASA to find out if this will be required of you.

In addition, whenever you travel abroad (regardless your visa situation), the Immigration officer (who will stamp your passport when you arrive in country) may ask to see your return ticket, to make sure you eventually plan to leave. For this reason, ASA does recommend that all students book a round trip ticket. However, if a round trip ticket isn't required of you in order to get a Student Visa, it is ultimately up to you to decide whether you travel abroad on a one way ticket or on a round trip ticket.

A possible compromise is to book a round trip ticket that allows you to change the return date later, for a fee. If you book Student Airfare (see previous section) you can usually change the return date later by paying a change fee, plus any difference in fare. However, the change fees, fare rules, and terms vary with each ticket, so you should check your ticket's Terms & Conditions before purchasing to see if date changes are allowed, and if so, how much will it cost.

At the end of the program, will ASA give me a ride to the airport to catch my flight home?

No, this is not provided. You are responsible for your own transportation back to the airport at the end of the program.

At the end of the program, does my return flight need to leave at any particular time?

Please [check your program's arrival/departure instructions](#) – this will tell you if you need to be moved out of your program housing by a particular time. If no specific check-out time is given, your flight can leave at any time on the housing move-out date. You are responsible for your own transportation back to the airport at the end of the program.

I am going to arrive early. Can I move into my program housing early if I pay an additional fee?

No, you are not allowed to move into your program housing before the official arrival date.

I want to stay a few days after the program is over. Can I stay in my program housing for a few extra days if I pay an additional fee?

No, you are not allowed to stay in your program housing after the housing move-out date.

The arrival and departure instructions say that ASA will pick up students between 9am-5pm. Will I have to wait in the airport until 5pm to be picked up?

No, you will not. We pick up students periodically throughout the designated pick-up window. Typically, the longest you would have to wait would be an hour – although a lot of times it is much shorter than this.

Please note – the pick-up window varies by program! In some locations it could be a few hours (9am-12pm) and in others it is longer (9am-5pm). The pick-up window is designed to ensure you arrive in time for any mandatory activities taking place at your particular program/location. [Click here](#) to see the pick-up window for your program.

The arrival and departure instructions say that ASA will pick up students between 9am-5pm. Is it ok if my flight arrives before 9am that morning?

Yes, that is absolutely fine. You'll just need to wait for us in the airport until the pick-up starts. Please try not to fall asleep while you wait though, because we won't be able to find you! ☺

I am arriving early to travel/visit family/etc. Can I meet the group at the airport on the day of the pick-up and get a ride to my housing?

This may be possible, but it will depend on your program location and that day's logistics. Instead of meeting us at the airport, you may be asked to simply take a taxi directly to your program housing. This is usually recommended if it is counter-productive for you to go all the way out to the airport, only to travel straight back into the city (where you already were in the first place). Please discuss your plans with ASA in advance so that we can tell you your options.

I found a cheaper flight that arrives a day early. Can I stay in the airport overnight and be picked up in the morning?

We DO NOT recommend you stay in an airport overnight for safety reasons. It is easy to have your belongings stolen while you are asleep, among other personal safety concerns. Instead, we would probably recommend you book a hotel near the airport that offers a shuttle and then take the hotel's shuttle back to the airport the next morning, where you can then meet the ASA group. Keep in mind that paying for a hotel and meals would negate some of the money you save by arriving a day early, so it may not be worth it in the end. Please discuss your plans with ASA *before* booking a ticket that arrives a day early, so we can advise according to your particular situation.

I found a cheaper flight that arrives a couple hours after ASA's airport pick-up. Is this a good idea – will I miss anything?

Definitely discuss your plans with ASA *before* booking your ticket. (Tel: 617-327-9388) Our pick-up window is designed to ensure you arrive in time for ASA activities/meetings/orientation. Whether or not these activities can be missed will depend on your program. Be aware that if your flight's scheduled arrival time is after ASA's pick-up window, we can't pick you up, and you will be responsible for your own transportation from the airport to your program housing.

Do you recommend any particular airline?

No, we don't. We don't know of one airline out there that is significantly "better" than the rest. All airlines have delays!

I want to come home a day or two early for personal reasons (wedding, family reunion, graduation, starting a job or internship, etc.) Is this allowed?

It will depend on your final exam schedule. Please call ASA to discuss your plans at 617-327-9388 as soon as possible and prior to booking a flight.

You will not know your exam schedule until after you arrive and start your classes, so you may need to table this decision until after you arrive, start your classes, and confirm your exam schedule. However, feel free to call ASA at 617-327-9388 and talk to us about your plans, as we may be able give you at least some idea of your options, based on your program/host institution.

Above all, please DO NOT book a flight to come home early until you are 100% sure that it will not interfere with your classes or exams, as most institutions do not permit students to retake or reschedule final exams. A missed exam will result in failing the class.

We schedule our program dates to ensure you are on site through the end of the day on the last day of exams. Housing move-out is always scheduled for *the day after* the last day of exams.

I want to arrive a day or two late for personal reasons (wedding, family reunion, graduation, starting a job or internship, etc.) Is this allowed?

It will depend on your program/host institution and the schedule of activities on-site. Please call ASA to discuss your plans at 617-327-9388 as soon as possible and prior to booking a flight.

Can I travel during my program?

Yes, many students travel on their free weekends and breaks. We do recommend you wait until after you arrive and confirm your class schedule before making any non-refundable travel arrangements. Your host institution may penalize you for having too many unexcused absences. Missed classes due to travel will count as unexcused absences!

Be sure to research the visa/entry requirements for any countries you plan to visit, as well as [U.S. State Department travel advisories](#).

I will save money if I fly to Rome and take the train to Florence. Is this a good idea?

No, it is not worth the savings because of the inconvenience and the issues you could encounter along the way:

- ASA only picks up students at Florence (FLR) airport between 9am-5pm. We cannot pick up students at Florence train station. You will be responsible for your own transportation from Florence train station to your program housing.
- You cannot take a train directly from Rome airport to Florence! You first have to take a bus, taxi, or local train from Rome Fiumicino airport (which is 30 km outside of Rome) to Termini train station in Rome city center. Be aware that strikes are very common on Italian local trains. If the local train is on strike, you would instead have to take a bus from Fiumicino airport to Termini station (very slow) or a taxi (expensive).
- If your flight into Rome is delayed, you may not get to Florence until late that day or the following day. This could result in missing ASA activities or orientation, as well as incurring additional costs for a hotel, *as we cannot guarantee you will be able to check into your program housing if you arrive in Florence after 6pm.*
- It is easy to fall asleep and miss your train stop in Florence because you'll be tired from the long flight. *European trains stop FOR ONLY A FEW MOMENTS to let people embark and disembark!*
- Once you're on the train, you will have to leave your luggage in the luggage bay, which will be located at one end of your train car. Not only will it be difficult to keep an eye on your bags from your seat, but by the time you get to Florence, your luggage may be buried under other passengers' luggage. Retrieving your luggage and moving it off the train can be tricky to pull off during the few minutes the train is stopped. The trains can be crowded, making it difficult to move around quickly. Unless have prior experience getting multiple pieces of luggage on/off European trains, this process will probably be challenging for you!
- Finally, some of your savings will be eaten up by the costs involved with getting from Rome airport to Termini train station, the train ride from Termini to Florence, and then a taxi from the train station in Florence to your program housing. If you are delayed and end up having to get a hotel for the night, this would be an additional cost as well.
- As a final note, students who have gone this route in the past have commented later that if they could do it all over again, they would just pay the extra money and fly straight to Florence.