

LGBTQ Study Abroad Destinations

(Adapted from University of California Education Abroad Program)

Host Country Laws and Cultural Norms

Attitudes, tolerance, support, and laws regarding sexual orientation, same-sex sexual contact, and gender expression vary widely around the world. There are also wide ranges when it comes to human rights and anti-discrimination laws. Cultures define and understand sexual orientation and gender identities differently. Some countries are more liberal on these matters than the U.S., while some may not acknowledge (or will even deny) that homosexuality exists. Even within a nation or city, there may be variations as vast as those between two different countries. Some countries offer many legal protections while other countries criminalize same-sex sexual activity. **Research your destination.**

The local gender norms in a host city abroad may be different from your understanding of gender norms.

We urge all participants to obey the laws of the host country, and respect and abide by local cultural norms. Before selecting a country, be well acquainted with host country laws and tolerance levels. Consider how a potential host country defines and views interpersonal relationships and what it views as appropriate behaviors. A Global Attitudes Project survey by the Pew Research Center, [The Global Divide on Homosexuality](#), found many differences around the world as to how homosexuality is viewed by various societies. For example, in countries like the Netherlands, a wide range of gender identities and expressions are visible and accepted, whereas most nations in Africa reject homosexuality.

Low Caution and Tolerant Destinations

While not a comprehensive listing, these nations are included based on recognition of same-sex unions and the existence of human rights laws prohibiting discrimination against gay individuals. This resource considers potential risks as they specifically affect members of the LGBTIQ community, and not necessarily the overall threats posed to all students traveling and studying abroad. *Attitudes and tolerance toward LGBTIQ persons vary from country to country, just as they vary among U.S. cities and states.*

Argentina

Although Argentina historically has been widely accepting of homosexuality, in 2015 the country struggled to address an upsurge in what appear to be hate crimes targeting transgender individuals. The threat to travelers remains minimal, and no LGBT travelers have reported being the victim of hate crimes. Travelers are most likely to find cities safe and welcoming, though travelers to rural areas are at higher risk of encountering some degree of social discrimination.

Argentina's government extends a wide range of legal protections to the LGBT community. Same-sex marriage and adoptions by same-sex couples have been legal since 2010. Transgender individuals have been permitted to change legal gender without undertaking a surgery or having to navigate a complex bureaucratic system since 2012.

Socially, homosexuality has been widely accepted, but transgender acceptance has lagged behind. Buenos Aires and other large cities host established and vibrant homosexual communities.

Level of Risk: Minimal

Australia

There are no laws criminalizing consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity is prohibited by law in a wide range of areas, including in employment, housing, family law, taxes, child support, immigration, pensions, and social security.

Level of Risk: Low

Canada

Same-sex marriage became legal in Canada nationwide in 2005. The law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, and the criminal code provides penalties for crimes motivated by bias, prejudice, or hate based on personal characteristics, including sexual orientation. Manitoba and the Northwest Territories prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity, and Ontario and Nova Scotia prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity and gender expression. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender organizations operate independently and without restriction. There is no official discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment and occupation, housing, statelessness, or access to education or health care.

There have been occasions of violence and abuse against individuals based on sexual orientation, but the government generally implements the law criminalizing such behavior effectively.

Level of Risk: Minimal

Costa Rica

LGBT individuals enjoy full rights in Costa Rica. The LGBT community is protected by anti-discrimination laws, and there are no legal or governmental impediments to the organization of LGBT events.

Level of Risk: Minimal

Czech Republic

Prague has a large gay community, centered in the city's *Vinohrady* district, with several openly gay venues. In contrast, outside of Prague—particularly in small towns—views are still relatively conservative and open displays of affection between same-sex couples are less common. LGBT travelers should use discretion when traveling in these areas.

There are some reported instances of discrimination against persons based on sexual orientation or gender identity. For example, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) couples may not adopt a child, nor may a gay or a lesbian individual in a partnership adopt his or her partner's biological child, although single LGBT individuals may adopt. Antidiscrimination and hate-crime legislation exists, but does not specifically cover LGBT individuals.

Level of Risk: Minimal

Denmark

Same-sex marriage became legal in Denmark in 2012. The LGBT community organized the 2009 World Outgames in Copenhagen to promote homosexual rights worldwide.

Level of Risk: Minimal

France

France has both sexual orientation and gender identity anti-discrimination laws in place and is generally considered one of the most gay friendly places in the world. In May 2013, President Francois Hollande signed a landmark gay marriage and adoption bill into law.

Level of Risk: Low

Germany

Germany has progressed quickly on LGBT issues in the last 20 years. Although same-sex marriage is not legal, registered partnerships have been available since 2001. Anti-discrimination laws exist to protect LGBT people in the workplace, and the public is generally supportive of equal rights.

Level of Risk: Minimal

Ireland

Same-sex marriage is now legal in Ireland. The outcome of the May 2015 referendum reflects shifting values in a traditionally conservative country. Other laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation with respect to employment, goods, services, and education.

Level of Risk: Minimal

Israel

The law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, and the government generally enforces these laws, although discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity persists in some parts of society. [*The Aguda*](#), the National Association of GLBT in Israel, reports cases of discrimination in the private sector. According to *The Aguda*, Israel today is one of the world's most progressive countries in terms of equality for sexual minorities. In recent years, Israel has produced more progressive legislation and court decisions in the areas of

sexual orientation and gay and lesbian rights than many Western countries. Israel has an active gay community and it is by far the most tolerant Middle Eastern country towards homosexuals.

The Aguda began collecting data on violence against LGBT individuals in mid-2012. In the first six months, *The Aguda* received 28 such reports. A survey of teenagers found that 20 percent of LGBT teens reported they had attempted suicide, with a higher rate among religiously observant LGBT youth.

Level of Risk: Low

Italy

Urban centers such as Rome, Bologna, and Florence, are generally tolerant of LGBT individuals. Students may face isolated incidents of discrimination throughout the country, particularly in more conservative, rural areas. Smaller communities may be less welcoming. Isolated cases of anti-gay hate crimes are also always possible, though much less likely.

Students may face social discrimination in a variety of situations. Students living with host-families should exercise discretion, as acceptance of LGBT persons may vary from family to family. Talk to the local staff immediately, if it becomes necessary to move. While public displays of affection may be common and accepted among heterosexual couples, same-sex couples – even in more liberal cities – may elicit odd glances and occasional comments by passers-by.

The Italian Senate recently approved a bill allowing same-sex couples to legally register civil unions. While the bill granted legal recognition of unions, it does not legalize full marriages. Italy's legal situation is very similar to many states in the United States.

Level of Risk: Low

Japan

According to the U.S. Department of State's [Human Rights Report](#), no law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and there are no penalties associated with such discrimination and no related statistics available.

Japan is one of the few countries in Asia that does not criminalize same-sex relations. Acceptance can vary from place to place, and situation to situation, but, overall the country tends to be tolerant of LGBTIQ persons. The safety and security of LGBTIQ persons is unlikely to be a concern. Japan has one of the lowest levels of violent crime in the world. LGBTIQ persons are highly unlikely to experience any particular safety and security risks.

Traditional Japanese society stigmatizes homosexuality, often discouraging an open expression of identity. Despite some occasional social discomfort, the LGBT community enjoys a high degree of freedom and increasing levels of support from communities and the government.

Level of Risk: Low

Mexico

Legally, LGBT persons enjoy relatively strong protections in Mexico. In 2001, a constitutional amendment officially banned discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Many parts of Mexico offer a vibrant environment for LGBT individuals.

Level of Risk: Low

Netherlands

LGBT individuals enjoy full rights and are protected by anti-discrimination laws. There are no legal or governmental impediments to the organization of LGBT events. A new law, that will take effect on July 1, 2014, will allow transgender people to change the gender marker in their official identity papers to their preferred gender. It does away with previous requirements for taking hormones and surgery, including irreversible sterilization. In April 2001, the Netherlands became the first country in modern times to legalize same-sex marriage and grant full marriage and registered partnership rights to same-sex couples. The Dutch Justice Ministry has reported a rise in reporting of harassment (mostly verbal abuse) of LGBT individuals as a result of government campaigns urging victims to report incidents.

Level of Risk: Minimal

New Zealand

In June 2013, the country became the 13th in the world and the first in the Asia-Pacific region to legalize same-sex marriage. Since 2005, New Zealand has allowed civil unions, which confer many legal rights to gay couples.
Level of Risk: Minimal

Norway

Gay rights in Norway are among the best in the world. There are no legal restrictions on same-sex sexual relations or the organization of LGBT events in Norway. Norway became the first country in the world to enact an anti-discrimination law protecting homosexuals in certain areas, and same-sex marriage has been legal since 2009. Rights for trans people, however, have received less attention and protection.

Level of Risk: Minimal

Spain

Since 2005, gay and lesbian couples have had full rights to marry and adopt children. According to Spanish gay associations, around four million residents identify as LGBT. Spain became Europe's third nation to legalize same-sex marriage, following the Netherlands and Belgium, and the fourth in the world after Canada, which passed its law in June 2005.

Level of Risk: Minimal

Sweden

Same-sex couples have been legally allowed to adopt in Sweden since 2003. In 2009, gay and lesbian couples were granted the right to legally marry.

Level of Risk: Minimal

Switzerland

There are no legal restrictions on same-sex sexual relations or the organization of LGBTI events in Switzerland.

Level of Risk: Minimal

Thailand

No laws criminalize sexual orientation or consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults.

For the first time, university rectors permitted five transgender students to participate in the August 30 commencement ceremony for Thammasat University's graduating class while wearing gender-specific uniforms of their choice. This decision set a precedent followed by several other educational institutions during the year. Such permissions remained voluntary for each school.

Level of Risk: Low

United Kingdom

The law prohibits discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation, although individuals report sporadic incidents of homophobic violence. It encourages judges to impose a greater sentence in assault cases where the victim's sexual orientation is a motive for the hostility, and many local police forces demonstrate an increasing awareness of the problem and train officers to identify and moderate these attacks.

In Scotland, racial, sexual, or other discriminatory motivation can be an "aggravating factor" in crimes. Scottish law also criminalizes behavior that is threatening, hateful, or otherwise offensive at a regulated soccer match and penalizes any threat of serious violence and threats to incite religious hatred through the mail or the Internet.

In March 2012, the UK government published [*Challenge it, Report it, Stop it*](#), a new strategy to combat hate crime through more effective prevention, reporting, and response.

Level of Risk: Minimal

Destinations Where Moderate Caution is Advised

Exercise particular caution when traveling or studying in the following locations. Although not comprehensive, this list includes some of the UCEAP locations where (1) the rights of LGBTIQ persons are less definitive or (2) there are restrictions on the freedom of expression and association of LGBTIQ individuals. As in many countries, tolerance levels vary by region; major cities may be more accepting of the LGBTIQ community than rural areas. (Sources include: [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#) U.S. Department of State.)

Brazil

Moderate risks exist in both the Brazilian states of Rio de Janeiro and Bahia. The threat of harm (physical/verbal harassment or discrimination) is lower in larger cities, such as Rio de Janeiro city, where the local population tends to be more accepting of different ways of life. In more conservative areas, such as the heavily religious northeast, LGBT individuals continue to face a risk of violence. A large portion of Brazilian society still strongly opposes homosexuality, and LGBT individuals in Brazil may encounter greater risks of violence. Maintain a low profile when out and about, and be especially cautious when visiting rural areas or lower-income districts. Same-sex couples in particular should exercise discretion with public displays of affection.

Level of Risk: Moderate

Chile

The Chilean [Movimiento de Integración y Liberación Homosexual](#) (MOVILH) noted a worsening in the acts of violence against LGBT individuals between 2011 and 2012, including three killings, 20 acts of physical or verbal aggression, six incidents involving aggression and/or arbitrary police arrest, nine incidents of employment discrimination, 10 incidents of education discrimination, and 12 acts of violence or forced community segregation by family or friendship circles.

On March 4, 2012, four alleged neo-Nazis attacked and tortured a 24-year-old gay man because of his sexual orientation. The victim died on March 28 from his injuries. At year's end the alleged perpetrators were charged with murder and remained in detention. On July 20, 2012, seven individuals attacked a 16-year-old female in her home in Santa Juana and again in the hospital, leaving the victim with numerous injuries to her scalp and face. The attackers consisted of family and friends of the victim's former girlfriend. The perpetrators told police that they attacked the girl for "turning" their relative into a lesbian. A police investigation continued at year's end.

Level of Risk: Moderate

China

Urban Chinese tend to be accepting of homosexuality, but in deeply conservative rural areas, homosexuality is neither discussed nor socially accepted. The result is a complex risk environment that has few clear social guidelines but little overt threat of violence or abuse.

According to the United Nations Development Program UNDP report, discrimination against LGBT people is still rampant in China, where many people hold negative attitudes toward diversity of sexual orientation, particularly in schools and workplaces. Discrimination against openly gay people in Chinese workplaces is common, and there are no laws protecting LGBT individuals.

In 2001, China removed homosexuality and bisexuality from the list of mental disorders and in 2012 changed its blood donation policy from banning homosexual donors to only "men who have sex with men" in line with international practice.

Socially, homosexuality is seldom discussed. Large generational, educational, and societal gaps persist, with older generations tending to be less accepting toward same-sex relationships.

Level of Risk: Moderate

Dominican Republic

Treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals ranges from ambivalent tolerance to staunch homophobia. No specific law protects individuals against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and NGOs report widespread social discrimination in areas of society including health care, education, and the workplace. LGBT individuals often face intimidation and harassment. Transgender individuals are particularly at risk of discrimination. NGOs report that LGBT persons are reluctant to file official charges or complaints due to fear of reprisals or humiliation.

According to various reports, LGBT individuals have been arrested without reason, not hired, denied access to rent/own homes, and denied access to health services. During the first half of 2012, NGOs reported that two LGBT persons were detained by police in *Villa Mella* without charges. They were subsequently released after 24 hours. Members of the LGBT community reported at least six cases in which individuals were denied health services in both private and public hospitals. The transgender community reported widespread discrimination and violence against transgender persons.

Although official permits have been granted for LGBT individuals to carry out activities in public spaces, these permits often include special conditions that prevent LGBT organizations from holding their events. In 2012, formal activities of LGBT organizations were generally subjected to approval by the Community Board of Neighbors, an institution influenced by the Catholic Church and its conservative views on LGBT issues.

Level of Risk: Moderate

Korea, Republic of

According to the U.S. Department of State's [Human Rights Report](#), LGBT groups keep a very low profile because same-sex relationships are not widely accepted in the country. During 2012, there were no known cases of violence against LGBT persons. However, concern about stigmatization likely prevents some victims from reporting incidents of discrimination and abuse.

Level of Risk: Moderate

Singapore

Singapore remains conservative regarding LGBT rights. Singapore poses a moderate threat to LGBT individuals and remains conservative regarding LGBT rights. Social acceptance of homosexuality varies, with most of the population opposed to decriminalizing homosexual behavior. Anti-LGBT laws are rarely enforced, and there is a grassroots movement to abolish them, though the government and Parliament currently show no indication of repealing restrictions.

Socially, acceptance of the LGBT community in Singapore is mixed. Both Singaporean government and society generally view same-sex relationships as a threat to traditional values and the nuclear family.

Level of Risk: Moderate

South Africa

South Africa presents a moderate risk to the LGBT community due to its uneven provision of legal protections and a largely intolerant society. South Africa is generally accepting of the LGBT community, but incidents of homo- or transphobia still occur, particularly in traditional rural communities and developing areas. Despite discrimination by some of the population, the South African LGBT community is strong. The LGBT community has been campaigning for equal treatment in South Africa, and is working to draw attention to the issue of homophobia prevalent throughout all of Africa. Johannesburg has a particularly vibrant LGBT community.

Level of Risk: Moderate

Taiwan

There are no laws prohibiting consensual same-sex sexual activity. According to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights activists, violence against LGBT persons with HIV/AIDS is a problem, but instances of police pressure on LGBT-friendly bars and bookstores declined during 2012.

Authorities recently canceled plans to begin teaching LGBT issues in the elementary and junior school curriculums, in accordance with the 2004 Gender Equity Education Act, because of a "lack of social consensus."

Level of Risk: Moderate

Turkey

Although no laws ban homosexuality, Turkey poses moderate-to-high risk to students. Throughout the country, there is a general air of intolerance, which is most publicly promoted by legal and religious authorities. LGBT individuals are not protected by anti-discrimination laws.

Level of Risk: Moderate

Vietnam

The law does not address prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. In 2012, there was no reported official discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, but societal discrimination and stigma remained pervasive.

No laws criminalize consensual same-sex sexual conduct, although by decree, individuals may not change their gender.

A lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community exists but is largely underground. Most LGBT persons chose not to tell family of their sexual orientation for fear of being disowned, and a 2011 online survey,

conducted by the Information Sharing and Connecting Group with more than 1,000 LGBT respondents, noted that their families forced more than 20 percent into counseling.

On August 5, more than 100 individuals demonstrated in Hanoi for equal rights in the country's first gay pride parade. Organizers requested but did not receive permission, and there were no incidents.

Level of Risk: Moderate

Destinations Where Extra Caution and Awareness is Advised

Students traveling or studying abroad in certain locations face unique, and sometimes significant, safety and security challenges. Ambiguous legislation and legal restrictions banning same-sex relationships may incite persecution ranging from verbal harassment, stalking, intimidation, and even violence. Simply disclosing alternative gender and sexual identities can have dangerous consequences, and some countries threaten to impose fines, long jail sentences, or even the death penalty for those accused of engaging in sexual activity with same-sex partners. In general, LGBTIQ students studying and living in Africa and the Middle East regions face the highest levels of risk.

Sub-Saharan Africa is generally intolerant of the LGBT community. Legal codes in 28 countries include legislation banning same-sex relations and imposing harsh punishments for violators. People convicted of engaging in same-sex relations in Mauritania, Sudan, northern Nigeria, and southern Somalia can face the death penalty. Regionally, social attitudes are generally unaccepting of the LGBT community, even in countries where same-sex relations are or have always been legal. Social acceptance in Cape Verde and South Africa is marginally better than their regional counterparts, and overall tolerance of the LGBT community is increasing in these countries.

Laws and social attitudes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are generally intolerant of the LGBT community. Homosexual acts are illegal in nearly all countries in the region. In the territories of Iraq and Syria held by the extremist group Islamic State (IS), men found guilty of homosexuality have been brutally tortured and killed. Socially, MENA is widely opposed to the LGBT community. Civic and religious leaders regularly and publicly express anti-LGBT sentiments. The regional exception to anti-LGBT attitudes is Israel, which is largely accepting of the community.

Exercise caution.

Barbados

According to the U.S. Department of State's [Human Rights Report](#), Barbados' law criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual activity between adults and does not prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, housing, education, or healthcare. A recent study of attitudes toward gay men and lesbians among local university students found that stigma against LGBT persons continues to exist. While study participants demonstrated a broad range of attitudes toward gay men and lesbians, overall participants' feelings were moderately negative.

Level of Risk: High

Botswana

LGBT individuals should exercise extreme caution in expressing affection in public. Although Botswana does not explicitly criminalize homosexuality, same-sex sexual activity is prohibited by criminal law. It appears that the law has not been used to prosecute LGBT individuals; nor do police generally target same-sex individuals. The U.S. Embassy is also unaware of any reports of violence against persons based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Nonetheless, societal stigmatization is common.

Level of Risk: High

Ghana

As in many West African countries, same-sex relations are illegal in Ghana. Political leaders and the general public tend to disapprove of homosexuality. Participating in consensual same-sex sexual activity is a misdemeanor in Ghana. Although the U.S. Embassy is not aware of any recent arrests or prosecutions for such activity, they remain illegal under some interpretations of the country laws. LGBT students should exercise caution in expressing affection in public.

Level of Risk: High

India

On December 11, 2013, India's Supreme Court issued a ruling reinstating the criminal ban on homosexual activity. The legal and social environments in India present a moderate threat to LGBT travelers. Homosexuality remains a taboo subject in Indian society, but decriminalization has been a prominent legal issue for almost a decade.

The law is unlikely to be consistently and evenly enforced across the country with the extent of enforcement typically dictated by state or sub-state, administrative-level politics. In most areas of India, homosexuality remains a subject many do not wish to discuss. Despite the recent amendment and shifting cultural attitudes, longstanding anti-homosexual sentiments remain prevalent.

Level of Risk: Moderate

Jordan

Although homosexuality is not illegal in Jordan, societal discrimination against LGBT persons is prevalent. In 2012, a number of citizens reported sporadic police mistreatment of suspected or actual LGBT persons.

Homophobic sentiments in Jordan are pervasive. According to the 2013 Pew Research Center's poll, 97 percent of Jordanian respondents disagreed that "society should accept homosexuality." Given such overwhelmingly negative perceptions of homosexuality, LGBT activism is limited. There are no officially recognized LGBT organizations operating in Jordan. Fears of social exclusion, as well as the overwhelming pressure to marry a member of the opposite sex, leads many LGBT individuals to engage in heterosexual relationships.

Level of Risk: High

Morocco

Homosexuality is illegal. Social pressure forces most LGBT individuals to conceal their orientation, though an advocacy group works unofficially to help serve the needs of the LGBT community.

As in most African countries, homosexuality is illegal in the kingdom. LGBT issues are not publicly discussed, and there is no recognition of transgenderism. Both men and women convicted of homosexuality are subject to a fine or imprisonment for up to three years. There have been relatively few incidents of enforcement over the past five years. Anecdotal evidence suggests that individuals arrested have been locals, and most have been given short sentences.

The culture tends to be more accepting of male homosexuality in private, but female homosexuality is uncommon and unacknowledged. Female homosexuals are viewed as weak and incapable of fulfilling their societal role as child-bearers. Both male and female homosexuals face exclusion and harassment. Most LGBT individuals conceal their sexual orientation and engage in heterosexual marriages.

Level of Risk: High

Russia

For the LGBT community, Russia is one of the most socially intolerant countries in Eurasia, and public opposition to gay rights is increasing. The sentiment appears slightly less intolerant in larger urban areas; however, most societies in the region are unaccepting of the LGBT community. Governments in the region continue to maintain laws meant to repress the free expression of the LGBT community. In Russia and all the Commonwealth of Independent States, intolerance is widespread, even in countries that have decriminalized homosexual behavior and signed UN human rights petitions against discrimination.

Level of Risk: High

Senegal

According to the U.S. Department of State's Human Rights Report, consensual same-sex activity is a criminal offense punishable by fine and/or imprisonment for one to five years. LGBT persons often face arrest, widespread discrimination, social intolerance, and acts of violence. Senegalese NGOs work actively on LGBT rights issues, but because of laws against homosexuality and social stigma, they maintain an exceedingly low profile. The media rarely reports acts of hatred or violence against LGBT persons.

Level of Risk: High

Solomon Islands

Homosexuality is a criminal offense in most of the South Pacific/Oceania region. The legal penalty is imprisonment. Even though there were no reports of violence or discrimination against persons on the basis of sexual orientation

or gender identity in Solomon Islands, stigma deters reporting. Social intolerance exists. Exercise caution in expressing affection in public.

Level of Risk: Moderate

Tanzania

Tanzania is a traditional society where consensual same-sex sexual relations are criminalized. Public displays of affection between persons of the opposite gender garner serious disapproval; those between persons of the same gender could risk violence. Consensual same-sex activity is illegal on the mainland and in Zanzibar. On the mainland same-sex activity between persons of the same sex are punishable by up to five years in prison. Same-sex intercourse carries a prison sentence of 30 years to life. The law in Zanzibar establishes a penalty of up to 14 years' imprisonment for men who engage in same-sex sexual activity and five years for women. In the past, individuals perceived to be gay or lesbian have been charged with loitering or prostitution. LGBT persons face societal discrimination that restricts their access to health care, housing, and employment. There is no openly gay community in Tanzania; discretion will greatly reduce the risk of confrontation with local authorities.

Level of Risk: High

Risk Mitigation Strategies

Below are strategies and recommendations for reducing the risk of becoming a victim of a hate crime, of police harassment, or of being discriminated against by the local population. Advice below is organized by the overall level of risk for a country.

High Risk Locations

- Be careful of cultural bias when assessing acceptance. In Africa, do not assume to understand mannerisms, unless you are familiar with the culture; for example, hand-holding between men is common and meant as a gesture of friendship, not sexual attraction. Other behaviors that may appear to be romantically intimate may in fact be purely platonic.
- Avoid all LGBT Pride events and festivals.
- If caught in a potentially violent situation, immediately seek shelter in upscale hotels or large public buildings, such as libraries, theaters, hospitals, or museums.
- Be very cautious if engaging others in conversations about sexuality or LGBT issues. Only do so with well-vetted acquaintances in safe locations.
- Do not engage in behaviors that may draw unwanted attention.
- Do not visit local LGBT bars or clubs.

Moderate Risk Locations

- Exercise caution during LGBT Pride events and festivals.
- If caught in a potentially violent situation, immediately seek shelter in upscale hotels or large public buildings, such as libraries, theaters, hospitals, or museums.
- Evaluate the city and surrounding neighborhood for prevailing social attitudes before deciding on what public behavior is appropriate. This is particularly true for travel in countries with mixed tolerance.
- Be cautious if engaging others in conversations about sexuality or LGBT issues.
- Avoid public displays of affection.
- Be cautious if visiting local LGBT bars or clubs.
- Be cautious if engaging in behaviors that may draw unwanted attention.