Overseas Schoolies

Drug and Alcohol travel advice: a guide for teenagers
Welcome to schoolies

You have reached the age that you are starting to think about schoolies. Your school days are coming to end. All you and your friends want to do is party and celebrate. For many of you, it’s your first opportunity for a holiday without parental supervision.

Travelling overseas to Southeast Asia for schoolies is an exciting adventure. This booklet addresses any drug and alcohol safety concerns you may have about traveling overseas.
It has become increasingly popular with students to look overseas for schoolies week. Overseas destinations include Indonesia/Bali, Fiji, Thailand and Vanuatu. These countries are popular and affordable beach resort destinations. Each country offers different things to suit different people.

There are many booking companies that do overseas schoolie packages. Some include alcohol free, under 18 and planned activity or volunteer packages. These packages are wise options to make the most of spending your money and travelling overseas. Be careful to read the fine print and chose the location and package that best suits you and your friends.

It is important to be wary of deals that seem “too good to be true”. Cheapest is not always the best. Read the reviews and follow up on what others have said about the packages before signing on the dotted line.
Planning schoolies adventures are often made years in advance. Destinations are chosen and accommodation deposits are paid. You want to make the most of this opportunity and go somewhere fun and different from the normal Australian destinations.

Once you have chosen your destination you will be traveling to, there are still other plans that need to be mapped out. Research your destination and read the travel advice on the Government smart traveller website; [www.smarttraveller.com.au](http://www.smarttraveller.com.au). This website will give you information about the safety and security situation, local laws and customs at your chosen destination.

**Know the local laws**

It’s important to understand what the local laws are. Once you leave Australia you will be governed by the laws of the country you travel to. Penalties for disobeying the law could be tougher than what they are in Australia. If you are arrested or jailed, the Australian Government will do what it can to help you but they cannot get you out of trouble or out of jail.
Local laws are important to know and understand before going, look for:

- legal drinking age
- travelling with prescription medication
- what drugs are classified as illegal
- gambling laws

Some parts of Southeast Asia are of Muslim faith. Muslim customs and laws should be respected and honoured when travelling. Other cultural and religious beliefs should also be respected and honoured. Not following these can result in being arrested.
Travel insurance

Travel insurance is often separate to health insurance within Australia. There are a number of sites that will compare travel insurance products and prices.

Medical expenses, emergency accommodation, replacing stolen items and last minute emergency flights can be extremely expensive. It’s definitely worth investing in travel insurance.

Plan and register your trip

Register your travel plans. Register with www.smarttraveller.com.au in case you find yourself in an unexpected situation such as a natural disaster (which can happen from time to time).

Smarttraveller is a great way to keep updated and to let people know that you are safe. It’s also a smart idea to make copies of all of your travel documents, passport and itinerary as it’s surprising how easily these can get lost. Having copies will make the recovery process that little bit easier.

Make copies of your documents. Carry a copy in your hand luggage, one in your suitcase, and leave a copy with your family.

Think about how you are going to stay in touch with your family while you are away. Investigate options for making international telephone calls. It might be a good idea to buy a local pre-paid telephone card upon arrival to avoid racking up a massive phone bill for your return.

Arrange an emergency plan with your family before your departure.
Vaccines

Depending on where you plan on travelling you may require a vaccination. Some vaccinations may require several doses or can take a while to take effect. It is a good idea to visit your doctor as soon as your travel plans are confirmed, some countries may require proof of your vaccinations. Don’t forget to pack the documentation. It is worth checking your vaccinations are up to date with your family General Practitioner, (GP). Sometimes boosters are required.

Take a small first aid kit with you. Paracetamol, Band-Aids, allergy and sea sickness tablets are a few things you should include.
Plan activities

Going on adventures during schoolies and experiencing the culture is a must. Here is a list of things to try to make meaningful memories outside of partying.

- Try guided day trips to see the local waterfalls, temples, snorkelling or whatever sparks your curiosity.
- Try the dance floor instead of night swimming. Save the swimming to refresh yourself in the resort pool in the morning with your mates rather than testing your swimming skills under the influence of alcohol.
- Try souvenir shopping at local shops and markets instead of the “forever souvenir”, a tattoo you will more than likely regret.
- Try making new friends by joining in on other traveller’s plans or inviting them to be a part of yours instead of taking part in street fights or violence.
- How about volunteering and really getting to know the local community.
Packing your bags

Regardless of traveling within Australia or overseas airports ask each person standard questions before boarding a plane. One question is, if you packed your bag and how many bags are you travelling with. It is important to know what is in each of your bags and to secure them with your personal locking device. Airports also offer a protectabag wrap. Protectabag wraps minimise the chance of luggage being damaged or objects being inserted or removed from your luggage. Never leave your bag unattended at the airport.
At the airport

Travelling to another country on an international passport requires a visa from the country you are entering. Visas allow you to be in the country legally. In most countries in Southeast Asia, visas can be purchased on arrival.

Entering a new country means having to go through customs. Custom officers are different in every country and it is best to check with your booking agent before you pack your bags on what you can and cannot bring into each country. If in doubt don’t pack it. Vice versa on coming back to Australia.

Having your luggage rummaged through by a sniffer dog or people is not a pleasant experience especially in front of your friends. Some countries have sniffer dogs and different ways of picking up the scent and traces of drugs. Once you have left Australia and have arrived at your destinations you are governed by the laws of the country you are entering.

Carrying anything illegal and being caught can include life imprisonment or the death penalty. It is not worth the risk.

When you are going through customs it is best to be your polite self. Being loud and in a hurry will only slow the process down and could get you in trouble.
Check your surroundings

Safety standards overseas are not the same as in Australia. Venues such as clubs, bars and other meeting places may become overcrowded and impossible to move around. Check for emergency exits, fire extinguishers and alternative ways to get out. If an emergency happens you will want to get out as soon as possible.

Be wary of scams, credit card fraud and petty crimes. Thieves often use scooters to whiz past and snatch handbags and back packs.

Sexual assault can happen at home as well as overseas and to anyone. It’s not a pleasant experience for anyone. Being overseas away from your family will only make it harder to cope if you are assaulted. Be aware of who is around you and remember to stay with your friends.

Only let people you know into your room. If you are sharing with friends make sure you have set some ground rules as to who else should be allowed into your room. If your room has a balcony, be careful and don’t sit on the ledge or try and room hop along the balcony.

Check your surroundings, stay alert and be conscious of the potential risk of crime.

Did you know

In case you need the Ambulance, Police or Fire Brigade phone 112 (the international emergency telephone number)
Check if your travel and accommodation travel package has airport transport included. Taking a taxi sometimes involves a bit of bartering. Hiring cars or other equipment may require you to leave your passport behind. This is not a safe thing to do, leave a photo copy of your passport or find another company to deal with.

Riding scooters or motorbikes on Southeast Asia roads looks fun and easy to do. Even if you have a licence ask yourself if you really need to do this on foreign roads with different road rules and does your travel insurance cover you? Remember to wear safety equipment and to never risk being the driver under the influence of alcohol.
Safe sex

Just like at home in Australia, practicing safe sex at schoolies is a must. Always carry condoms with you, even if you aren’t planning on having sex.

Respect everyone’s right to say no. Don’t be pressured into doing anything you don’t feel comfortable in doing.

Safe sex means it:

- is in a private safe environment
- shows respect
- is pleasurable
- is freely consented to by both partners
- reduces the risk of passing on any infections
- reduces the risk of unwanted pregnancy
- is safe emotionally.

Making safe decisions can be reduced if you are:

- drunk
- using drugs
- feeling pressured
- believing you can tell if someone has a sexually transmissible infection (STI).
To reduce the chances of things going wrong when you are out consider these stay safe tips:

- only buy drinks in bottles that can be opened in front of you.
- go to the bar with a friend to avoid being a target for drink spiking
- physically go to the bar and watch the bar-tender open your drink
- NEVER leave your drink unattended
- limit the number of drinks you have
- try not to go in rounds
- drink safe bottled water in between drinks.

**Alcohol**

Visit the Government smart traveller website to find out the legal drinking age in the country you are visiting, [www.smarttraveller.com.au](http://www.smarttraveller.com.au).

Drinking alcohol in a foreign country can be risky business. It is not uncommon that alcohol in Southeast Asia is mixed with methanol. Consuming methanol can result in serious health effects resulting in blindness, brain injury or even death. Even one drink can lead to methanol poisoning.

Symptoms of poisoning include: fatigue, headaches, nausea, blurred vision, flashes of light, tunnel vision, changes in colour perception and dilated pupils or blindness. If you or a mate have suspected methanol poisoning, seek medical attention immediately.
Although drinking and partying may be an accepted part of Australian culture, stay mindful that not all parts of Southeast Asia may be appreciative of young drunken Australians. Remain respectful of local customs and culture.

Alcohol and other drugs can cause people to act out of character so stick by your friends and encourage them to seek medical attention if you feel they require it.

Look after each other, especially when you go to the bar. Celebrating schoolies is very exciting and getting caught up in the good vibes is easy to do.

Before you head out make sure you have a plan in case you get separated.

Try to:

- avoid getting into a fight
- set boundaries on how much if at all you are drinking
- set ground rules on never leaving anyone alone at a party
- remember it is ok to say no if someone offers you alcohol or drugs.

Always make sure you are with a mate, even if you are going to the bathroom or just getting a drink. When you are ready to call it a night make sure you go back to your accommodation with at least one of your mates. Never leave the bar alone or with someone you don’t know.
Whilst it may seem easier to get drugs overseas than in Australia the penalties for possessing drugs are much harsher. For example, the maximum penalty for possession of just 0.3 grams (half a joint) of marijuana/hash is 15 years in Bali. If you are under 18, you may be treated as an adult and held in an adult prison.

Don’t be lulled into a false sense of security because you see other people selling or taking drugs, even if they are your friends. If you get caught, you could find yourself languishing in a prison for a very long time.

If you get caught, it will not only affect your life, but your family and friends lives as well.

All drugs synthetic or natural have the potential to cause harm. Be aware of drug names so you know what is being offered to you. Don’t be pressured into taking drugs.
Kava is a ceremonial traditional national drink in Fiji. Kava or grog is a mildly narcotic drink made from mixing the powdered root of the pepper plant with water and results in a numb feeling around the mouth, lips and tongue and a sense of relaxation. It may be legal but there is no safe level of drug use.

Do not drink Jungle Juice. Jungle juice is common in Bali and is mixed with different types of alcohol. Often it is whatever is left over, tipped together and mixed with local made alcohol. This cocktail of drugs has caused severe damage and death. It is advised not to even taste or drink jungle juice.

Mixing alcohol and other drugs can have unpredictable consequences, negative effects and be dangerous.
Where do I go for more information or assistance?

Lives Lived Well’s dedicated and professional staff are here to provide a safe and friendly place for you to consider your choices and explore your options. We also offer support and information to friends and family. Our community services are free and confidential. Our residential services are provided at a minimal cost.

Call 1300 727 957 to speak to someone today.

Our operating hours are **8:30am to 4:30pm** Monday to Friday.

If you need after hours support, please contact Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) on 1800 177 833.

If you need to speak to someone immediately please contact Lifeline on 13 1114.

If you have an emergency, please call 000 or your nearest hospital.
Lives Lived Well
Level 1/Boundary Court
55 Little Edward Street
Spring Hill QLD 4000
p. 07 3834 0200 or 1300 727 957 (cost of a local call)
f. 07 3832 2527
e. info@liveslivedwell.org.au

Useful links and resources
druginfo.adf.org.au/drug-facts/alcohol
headspace.org.au/get-info/alcohol/
smartraveller.gov.au/guide/schoolies-leavers.html#law
schoolies.qld.gov.au/
Schoolies checklist

1. Flights and accommodation booked and confirmed ☐
2. Purchase travel insurance ☐
3. Visit your doctor & be up to date on vaccinations ☐
4. Give a copy of your itinerary to your parents ☐
5. Make photocopies of your passport and other important documents ☐
6. Obtain foreign currency before you go ☐
7. Confirm the method and frequency of contact with your parents for the duration of your trip. ☐
8. Notify your bank that you’re travelling overseas ☐
9. Make a list of emergency contact numbers to take with you ☐