

Easy and cheap ways to communicate while abroad

Advice from one study abroad
kid to another

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Ways to communicate back home

- Skype (computer/phone)
- Google Hangout (computer)
- Viber (phone)
- WhatsApp (phone)
- Line (computer/phone)
- Facebook Messenger (computer/phone)
- iMessage (Apple products)
- Snapchat (phones)



A little old school but a must have.

Allows you to **video chat** **and call** friends and family from your phone and your laptop.

A LOT of people use Skype so your contact list can be comprehensive.

It's free.

Google



Hangouts

Similar to Skype that it is computer-based.

Allows for interactions between multiple users.

It's a bit more entertaining than Skype since there are fun components incorporated into the interface – you can draw a virtual beard on someone else during the conversation!

Smartphone application only.
Allows for texts and calls with
other Viber users.

Free.

Special note: You have to activate
Viber when you're still at your
home country because you need
to be able to receive a text
message code to jumpstart the
application.

Syncs contacts
with your
Facebook and/or
address book.



Connect. Freely.

Probably the most commonly used smartphone app for communication.

Allows texts, voice messages, and you can share photos

(Calling feature just added recently)

Same special note as Viber:
Download in home country for access code.

Syncs contacts with your Facebook and/or address book.



WhatsApp

Allows voice/text messages,
video/photo sharing, video chat,
calls and of course...stickers!

For computers, tablets and
smartphones.

Easy to make groups/hidden chats.

All you need is wi-fi.

Syncs with the contacts in your
phone.

Free.

Download this app in your home
country to receive a text message
with a verification code.



Line



Facebook Messenger

Can be used
on most
mobile
phones/
tablets.

Free calls.

Pretty much
every single
person is on
Facebook.

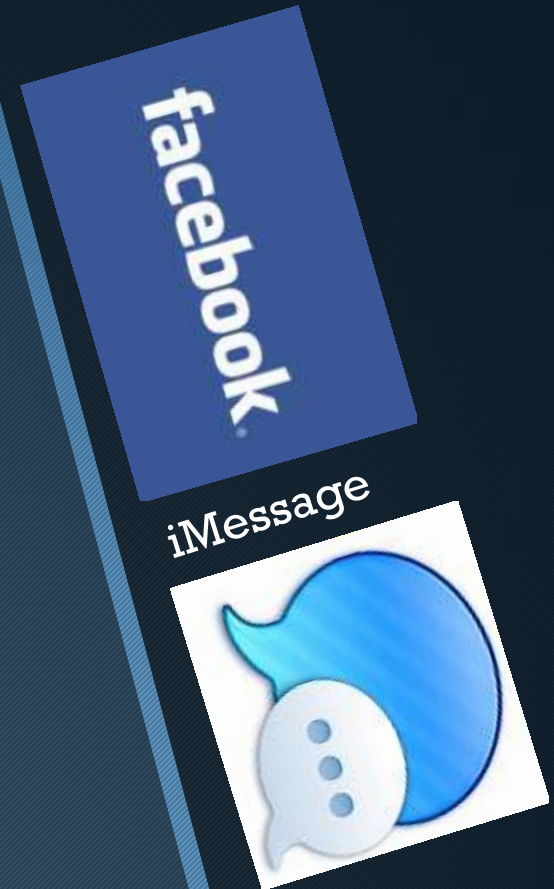
iMessage/ Facetime

Only works between
Apple products
(iPhones/iPods/
iMacs/
MacBooks/iPads).

Video/calls.

Connections can be
rather slow – not
super reliable.

Easy to use since it's
already incorporated
into your phone.



Send Pictures, Videos and Messages

One of my favorite apps to use while overseas.

Gives your friends just a little taste of the sights you are seeing and the adventures you're having.

Does its job in making people feel a little envious about the fact that you're somewhere REALLY COOL. Popular – your contact list will be long.



Ways to communicate in your host country

- Monthly pre-paid phone plans (in host country)
- Activate international calls through your home phone plan
- Inquire about SIM card switching with your mobile provider.
- Go off the grid.

Amsterdam: Vodafone, T-Mobile,
Lebara

Auckland: 2degrees, Telecom,
Vodafone

Hong Kong: China Mobile, 3 Hong
Kong, SmarTone

London: Lebara, O2, Vodafone

Rio de Janeiro: TIM, Claro, Vivo, Oi

Sydney: Virgin Mobile, Vodafone,
Optus Yes

Monthly pre-paid phone plans

* You can bring an unlocked phone and just buy a sim card and prepaid plan over there OR you can purchase a really cheap phone over there to use.

- Activation for most services are free and I think you should definitely do it just in case you need your smartphone for emergencies.
- To use this on a regular basis though costs **A LOT OF MONEY**.
- Sending an international text cost around 50 cents and receiving one cost 20. That adds up really quickly. Calls are even worse.
- If you do want to use your international plan, be sure to uninstall apps and choose not to sync your emails. Those things will continually use data and it will aggregate pretty quickly.
- I would rely on other cheaper/free options.

Activate international calls
through your home phone plan

* But if that is something that you want to use so you don't need to get a new phone over there, it's as easy as contacting your cell phone provider and activating your international roaming.

Your university and your home should both have wi-fi so you can simply rely on that and your smartphone to communicate.

Advance planning skills is needed for this option but it saves you a few bucks while you're abroad.

This is a good time to experiment what life without constant technology is like if you're into that kind of thing.

Go off the Grid.

Last little bit of advice:

While it is important to communicate with your family and friends back home, don't use these relationships as a crutch to not make new friends while you're abroad. Your study abroad experience can be as good or as mediocre as you want it to be.

Go out and make friends with the locals. Be bold and exchange numbers with them. Hit them up to do something. Repeat.

Your time there is limited, **get out of your comfort zone!**