LanguageBookings.com

2027 EDITION

Study Abroad Guide: learning a language abroad

How to choose a school and a course, how booking works, and a step-by-step checklist to prepare your trip.

This is the revised version of the guide we have sent to our students since 2012, updated for 2027. It is free and you do not need to register.

If you have any question while reading it, write to us at info@languagebookings.com and we will answer you.

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1. Choosing a school and a course

Why study the language in the country?

Learning a language where it is spoken is the fastest way to go from understanding it to using it. You keep practising outside class: in shops, on public transport, with your host family or your flatmates. You also discover another culture, make friends from many countries and gain an experience that employers value.

Time is what matters most. One or two weeks will make you more fluent; four or more bring progress that lasts. Many students say the third and fourth weeks are the most useful, once they have settled into the city.

How to choose a school

- **Compare the total price**, not the weekly price: course, registration, materials and accommodation. Every school page on LanguageBookings.com shows the total for your dates before you book.
- **Check the school's accreditations** (official bodies or industry associations): they mean inspections of teaching and facilities.
- **Read other students' reviews**, especially recent ones.
- **Think about the location.** In the city centre everything is close, but accommodation is usually more expensive; in the suburbs or a smaller town it is quieter and there are fewer students from your country.
- **Size.** A large school has more levels and timetables; a small one, a more personal touch.

Types of course

General course

15 to 20 lessons a week: grammar, vocabulary, listening and speaking.

Intensive course

25 to 30 lessons a week, to make fast progress in a short time.

Exam preparation

IELTS, Cambridge, TOEFL, DELE, DELF, CELI, Goethe and others. They usually have fixed start dates.

One-to-one lessons

At your own pace and on what you need. They can be combined with a group course.

Junior courses

Summer courses for under-18s, with supervision, accommodation and activities.

Adult courses (30+ or 50+)

Groups of a similar age and a calmer pace.

Business and specific purposes

Professional vocabulary: business, medicine, law, tourism… Some require a minimum level.

Language plus activity

Lessons in the morning and cooking, surfing, dancing, culture or another activity in the afternoon.

When do courses start?

Almost all general courses start any Monday of the year. Complete beginners and exam courses usually have fixed dates: check them on the course page.

When is the best time to go?

July and August are high season: there are more students and, at many schools, the course and accommodation cost more. From September to June it is usually cheaper and classes are smaller. If you travel in summer, booking one or two months ahead gives you more accommodation to choose from.

How far in advance should I book?

One month is usually enough. If you need a visa, allow three to six months: the school issues the letter of acceptance once the course is paid, and then the consulate needs time.

How long should I stay?

The minimum is usually one week, but the difference really shows from four weeks.

How old do I need to be?

Each course shows its minimum age on its page. Most adult courses accept students from 16 or 18.

What if I don't know my level?

No problem: you take a level test (on the first day or before, online) and you are placed in the right group. Levels go from A1 (beginner) to C2 (proficient).

Materials, class size and certificate

- Some schools include the **materials** and others charge for them separately; the course page shows whether they are compulsory and how much they cost. They are paid to the school.
- The **number of students per class** is on every course page; 8 to 15 is usual.
- Almost all schools give you a **certificate** of attendance and level at the end.
- Many organise **activities** and excursions; some are free and others are paid there.

Can I work while I study?

It depends on your nationality, the country and the type of visa, and the rules change. Check the country's official immigration website before counting on it.

2. Accommodation, arrival and transfer

Accommodation through the school

The easiest option is to book it with the course, on the same page. The school selects and checks its accommodation and, if something goes wrong, moves you elsewhere. The school gives you the exact address once the course is paid and you have sent your flight details.

Host family

You practise all the time and see local life. Usually with breakfast or half board. Many families live outside the centre, so expect to use public transport. Tell the school about allergies, diet or health issues when you book.

Student residence

Single or shared room, common areas and an international atmosphere. Sometimes with meals.

Shared apartment

More independence: you cook for yourself and share with other students.

Studio

For more privacy: your own bathroom and kitchen.

Teacher's home

You live and study with your teacher: total immersion.

Meals

- **Self-catering**: no meals, with access to a kitchen.
- **Bed and breakfast**.
- **Half board**: breakfast and dinner.
- **Full board**: breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Security deposit

Some accommodation asks for a deposit on arrival, returned when you leave if there is no damage. Always ask for a receipt.

Accommodation on your own

If you prefer to choose the room yourself, see it on the map and talk to the host first, or to stay without taking a course, look on Gomfy, our student accommodation website.

Which day should I arrive?

The day before you start: if the course starts on Monday, arrive on Sunday. Accommodation is usually available from the day before the start.

Airport transfer

Many schools offer a transfer from the airport or station: a driver waits for you with your name and takes you to your accommodation. It is optional and you add it when you book; it helps after a long flight or if you arrive at night. On your own, the train, bus or a taxi are usually cheaper.

For the transfer and your host family, send the school your flight number and arrival time as soon as you have them.

3. How to book with LanguageBookings.com

1. On the school's page, choose the course, start date and number of weeks, and add accommodation and a transfer if you want them. You will see the total, what you pay now (the deposit) and the rest.
2. Fill in your details and pay the deposit. It is part of the total price, not an extra cost.
3. The school confirms your place and the price within one or two working days. You receive an email with the confirmation, the school's details and what is left to pay.
4. You pay the rest directly to the school, usually 15 days before you start. Materials charged separately are paid there.

The deposit

- **By card**, the deposit is only held: nothing is charged until the school confirms. If there is no place, the hold is released.
- **By PayPal or bank transfer** it is charged when you book; if the school cannot accept the booking, it is refunded.
- Bank transfer is not available from every country. With a transfer, the booking is sent to the school when the payment arrives.
- Once the school has approved the booking, the deposit is not refundable. Later cancellations and changes follow the school's terms, which you will find on its page and in the confirmation email.

The school confirms the price

Prices on the website come from each school's rates, and the school confirms the price of every booking. If there is any difference, we will tell you and you decide: go ahead, change school or cancel with a refund of your deposit.

> **Don't buy your flight yet.** Wait for the school's confirmation before buying non-refundable tickets.

What we do

We help you compare schools, answer you in your language and talk to the school if any problem comes up, before and during your course. Write to us at info@languagebookings.com.

4. Checklist to prepare your trip

Step 1. Check your booking

- Your name and contact details are spelt correctly.
- The school, city and course.
- The start and end dates, and the accommodation and transfer if you asked for them.
- When the confirmation arrives: how much is left to pay, how and when, and the school's contact details.

Step 2. Passport or identity card

Check that it is valid for your whole stay; some countries require six months of validity from entry. If you need to get or renew it, do it as soon as possible.

Step 3. Visa

> **Check the current visa requirements.** Entry rules change often and depend on your nationality, the country and the length of your course. Check the official immigration website of the destination country, or its embassy or consulate, before buying your flight.

If you need a visa, the school will send you the letter of acceptance and the payment receipt once the course is paid. Ask the school beforehand whether it issues visa documents: not all of them do. Some charge for sending the originals by courier.

Applying for the visa is the student's responsibility: LanguageBookings.com cannot apply for it on your behalf.

Step 4. Flight

- Buy it once you have the school's confirmation.
- Ideally, arrive on Sunday and leave on the Saturday or Sunday after your last day of class.
- Send the school your flight number and arrival time.
- Keep the school's emergency phone number in case your flight is delayed.

Step 5. Insurance

Take out travel insurance with medical cover for your whole stay; for some countries and visas it is compulsory. If you are from the EU and study in another EU country, also take your European Health Insurance Card, which does not replace insurance. Check what it covers for cancellation, luggage and liability.

Step 6. Money

- Tell your bank you are travelling and check the fees for paying and withdrawing cash abroad.
- Take two means of payment (for example, two cards) and some cash for the first day.
- Make a weekly budget: transport, eating out, leisure, excursions and phone.
- The rest of the course is paid to the school in its currency: your bank may charge for the exchange.

Step 7. Phone and internet

Check whether your plan includes roaming (within the EU it usually does) or buy a local SIM or an eSIM when you arrive. To talk to home, any messaging or video-call app over wifi will do.

Step 8. Packing

Check the city's weather for your dates and your airline's baggage rules.

- Documents: passport or ID card, visa if needed, booking confirmation, insurance and copies (on paper and on your phone).
- Clothes you can wear in layers, and a raincoat or umbrella.
- Comfortable walking shoes.
- Plug adapter and chargers.
- Your usual medicines with the prescription, preferably in your hand luggage.
- Toiletries for the first few days.
- A notebook or tablet for class.
- A small gift from your country if you will live with a family.

Step 9. Prepare the language

A few weeks before, practise with apps, series or podcasts in the language. If the school has an online level test, take it before you arrive: you will start in the right

group from day one.

Step 10. Health

Ask your doctor whether you need any vaccination or precaution for the country. Tell the school and your accommodation about allergies or health issues. Note the local emergency number (112 in the EU).

5. Make the most of it

- Speak from day one, even if you make mistakes: that's why you are there.
- Join the school's activities and go out with classmates from other countries.
- If you live with a family, share meals and tell them about your day.
- Keep a notebook of new words and phrases.
- Break the routine: markets, libraries, language exchanges, volunteering.
- If you want an official certificate, ask the school about exams in the area.

When you get back

Keep your certificate, keep practising with the friends you made, and tell us how it went: your review helps other students choose.

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Prices, terms and requirements may change. Each school's information is on its page, and the school confirms the price of every booking.