



April 2018

Greetings from New York!

We hope you and your host family are doing well. It may be hard to believe, but it is only a few months before your AFS program comes to an end. As the summer approaches, we wanted to give an outline of how your departure will go.

Participants from France and Spain: You will depart from your host family on June 26th and arrangements will be made for you to travel from your host community back to **France** or **Spain**. During the next few months, the volunteers in your area will be contacting you to give you specific details.

Participants from all other countries: You will depart from your host family on June 25th and arrangements will be made for you to travel from your host community to **Houston**. During the next few months, the volunteers in your area will be contacting you to give you specific details. You will travel from your host community by bus or plane to **Houston**. Over 200 AFS students from the central region will be in one place for Departure Day, June 26th. It is always a great day, with lots of excitement, tears, and good-byes. On that day, you will get back together with other students from your country and return to your home country.

Here are the guidelines that you will need as you prepare for the end of the year. Please read the guidelines carefully and understand that the requirements apply to all students. **Luggage restrictions have become very strict. Too much luggage can be a problem for you and for others. AFS will not take responsibility for your overweight or oversized luggage.** Please make arrangements to ship home any belongings to ensure that your baggage does not exceed luggage limits. AFS luggage tags will be available during your End of Stay orientation on the 25th of June.

We hope your last few months go well. As we said, your area volunteers will be contacting you with End of Stay information during the next few months. We look forward to seeing you in **Houston!**

Kate Mulvihill, Regional Travel & Logistics Coordinator, AFS-USA

June 2018
HOUSTON DEPARTURE
BAGGAGE GUIDELINES FOR AFS PARTICIPANTS

Please remember that you are responsible for ALL extra charges for overweight and oversized luggage!

Call your domestic and international airlines NOW to find out the restrictions!

AFS Baggage Guidelines

Remember that AFS USA's rule on luggage is one bag and one carry-on. Most of you will take charter buses to the gateway cities. If you have more than one checked piece of luggage, it may not fit on the bus and you will have to leave it behind. Please pack carefully and only bring 1 bag to be checked and 1 carry-on!

Domestic Flights within the United States:

Luggage restrictions have become very strict on all airlines. Too much luggage can be a problem for you and for others. AFS will not take responsibility for your overweight or oversized luggage. Many of you will have domestic flights from your orientation site to your gateway city. Most airlines now charge **\$35** for the first piece of luggage and **\$50** for the second plus any additional fees for overweight or oversized luggage meaning you will need to pay **at least \$85** to the airline at check in. Overweight and oversized luggage can be charged anywhere from \$100-\$175 per piece. Some airlines require a credit card to pay for luggage fees. Please make sure you have a credit card you can use to pay for your bags, and in case of excess charges. **AFS will not pay these charges for you!**

Weight and size limits for international flights:

Many airlines now only allow one piece of luggage to be checked in per passenger free of charge and have reduced the weight limit to 50 pounds per bag. Please call your airline to check the restrictions. For some airlines, it is **not** possible to pay overweight charges. The airline will make you leave anything over the weight restrictions behind. Also, airlines have **very strict** rules about carry-on luggage. Most airlines are allowing only **one piece** of carry-on luggage plus a purse or small backpack. The **average size limit** for each checked piece of luggage is **62 inches** (about 152.4 centimeters - add the length + depth + width of your luggage to figure out the size). Your carry-on bag must be less than 45 linear inches. Again, call your airline to make sure you are not bringing home bags that are oversized.

Be aware that if either of your bags is larger or heavier than these figures, you may be charged an "excess baggage" fee - which can be anywhere from \$75-\$300 per bag (to be paid by cash or by credit card). **AFS will not pay these charges for you!** The airline may also not allow you to check these bags in at all. You will have to leave behind anything that is overweight. Please make sure you have a credit card you can use in case of excess charges.

Carry-on luggage needs to be able to fit under the airline seat or in an overhead compartment. Items such as golf clubs, bicycles, skis, and snow-boards are generally considered "over-sized" baggage and you will have to pay additional charges. If you have an oversize suitcase you will usually have to pay a charge (\$80-\$110), depending on the item's size and weight, even if such an item is your second "checked" piece of luggage. **It is a good idea to call the airline before-hand to check on any oversized baggage. These regulations are also posted on the websites for each airline.**

Musical Instruments, such as guitars are considered part of your luggage allotment on flights. If you plan to return with a musical instrument you will only be allowed one other piece of checked luggage.

Such items will need to be checked as an extra piece of luggage, and you will need to pay additional baggage fees as required by the airline.

Security:

Airlines are now searching all bags when a passenger checks in for their flight. Please take this into consideration when packing. Someone may go into your bag after you have closed and locked it and may not help you re-close your bag! In addition, locks on luggage can pose a problem at security checkpoints in airports. Please make sure to unlock your luggage while it is going through security, and/or keep your luggage key available while checking in.

Please check the website of your international and domestic airline for restrictions on bringing liquids in either your carry-on or checked luggage.

We have listed the majority of the airlines that students will most likely be travelling on when departing from Houston. We recognize this list is not complete, but wanted to provide the information that is currently available.

Argentina: Delta Airlines

Austria: Lufthansa

Belgian Flemish: United Airlines

Belgian French: United Airlines

Bolivia: American Airlines

Brazil: American Airlines

Canada: United Airlines

Chile: American Airlines

China: Air China/American Airlines/Korean Air

Costa Rica: United Airlines

Czech Republic: KLM

Denmark: KLM

Finland: KLM

France: American Airlines

Germany: Lufthansa

Hong Kong: Cathay Pacific

Hungary: KLM/Lufthansa

Iceland: American Airlines/Iceland Air

Italy: British Airways

Japan: ANA

Latvia: Lufthansa

Netherlands: KLM

New Zealand: United/Air New Zealand

Norway: British Airways

Paraguay: Copa Airlines

Portugal: British Airways

Russia: Lufthansa

Slovakia: Air Canada

Spain: American Airlines

Sweden: United Airlines

Switzerland: Lufthansa

Thailand: Korean Air

Turkey (core): Air France

Baggage Tags:

You will receive the yellow AFS baggage tags at your End of Stay. All of your luggage must be clearly labeled! Be sure to put your **natural family address** on the baggage tags.

