



2022 TRAVEL TIPS & IMPORTANT TRAVEL INFORMATION

Please, **Read the Following & View Your Enclosed Itinerary for Bus Times & Roommates Names**

- ✓ You must arrive at the pickup location and check-in a minimum of 30-MINTUES BEFORE the designated departure time on your itinerary.
- ✓ You must have a valid Photo ID, to check in check-in with GradWeek Staff and board the bus
 - **If you still have a balance due on your account, you will be DENIED boarding and hotel check in.*
- ✓ You must board the bus number listed on your itinerary. NO exceptions.
- ✓ **Bus Baggage Allowance:** 1 suitcase to check-in and 1 very small carry-on, per traveler.
- ✓ **No traveler can leave the trip early without checking out with one of the on-site GradWeek Managers and/or Staff Members.**
- ✓ All travelers (bus and hotel only) **MUST** check-in with GradWeek Staff and go through Welcome Orientation at Harpoon Harry's Oyster Bar (12627 Front Beach Road, Panama City Beach, FL 32407). **Travelers cannot go to their hotel first! Once check-in and Welcome Orientation is completed, GradWeek Staff will instruct you on what to do and where to go next.**
 - **Traveler/Group Arrivals for May 22, 2022 (both bus and hotel only travelers) – Check-in starts no sooner than 3pm to 6pm** for all travelers at Harpoon Harry's (location listed above). Hotel Only Travelers (no bus) – If you miss the check-in timeframe, you MUST call GradWeek Staff at (225) 301-1691 to make special arrangements.
 - **Traveler/Group Arrivals for May 30, 2022 (both bus and hotel only travelers) – Check-in starts no sooner than 2pm to 7pm** for all travelers at Harpoon Harry's (location listed above). Hotel Only Travelers (no bus) – If you miss the check-in timeframe, you MUST call GradWeek Staff at (225) 301-1691 to make special arrangements.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR YOUR ASSIGNED HOTEL:

- ✓ **Shores of Panama Hotel Travelers** – No later than **3-Days BEFORE** you arrive to your hotel, all guests are required to fill out the hotel's required Credit Card Authorization Form for hotel/room incidentals, and email it to the hotel (reservations@shoresofpanama.com) along with a copy of their Photo ID and Credit Card (front and back). *If no damages or cleaning fees are reported by the hotel for your room, then the hotel will release the pre-authorized amount of \$50.00 that was placed on your card upon check-in.
- ✓ **Holiday Inn Hotel Travelers** – Upon check-in, guests will be required to show their valid Driver's License to check in for this hotel (per hotel guidelines).
- ✓ **Casa Loma Hotel Travelers** – Upon check-in at the hotel, they will require each room to pay a \$200.00 Security Deposit (by cash only) in case of any room damages and/or excess cleaning fees. If no damages or cleaning fees are reported by the hotel for your room, then the hotel will refund the paid deposit to the room occupants at check out, after their room has been inspected. Also, there are no elevators on the property so travelers must be able to carry their luggage upstairs to their room.

FOR THOSE WHO ARE HOTEL ONLY TRAVELERS (NO BUS):

- ✓ All travelers arriving by car **cannot** follow any of the buses to the destination and will be required to check in with GradWeek Staff and go through the official Welcome Orientation that ALL students are required to attend prior to receiving the keys to their room.
- ✓ **MANDATORY Student Driver Waiver** – Make sure that you have **submitted your signed copy of this form** (previously emailed to you and can be accessed online by clicking here>> <https://form.jotform.com/221245480850149>), before your departure date or you will be denied check-in.
- ✓ ***DO NOT go to the hotel first!** You must go to Harpoon Harry's Oyster Bar (location listed above) check-in (for hotel) with GradWeek Staff and go through your Welcome Orientation.

Bus Companies – Restrictions & Expectations - Everyone is on the GradWeek trip to have a great time, but please be respectful of those around you. Especially the people of the city that you are visiting and the resort/hotel that you are staying at. Every year several travelers never make it to their destination or leave early due to their behavior prior to or during their trip. Misbehaving at the bus pick-up location could lead to being denied boarding. Rude or poor behavior during the bus trip will also not be tolerated and may necessitate removal from the program, your parents being notified, and being responsible for your return home. **No eating of sunflower seeds, gummy snacks or gum chewing on the bus. NO smoking of any kind including vapes, e-cigarettes or any other product. In addition, no coolers/ice chests are permitted on the bus. ONLY resealable twist top drinks are allowed.** Travelers must stay seated unless moving to/from the bathroom. **Violating any of the bus rules will result in termination of the bus portion of your trip and it will be the travelers' responsibility to find their own transportation.**

Getting Ready! – To help you decide what essentials to pack, check [Panama City Beach, Florida's](#) weather forecast online a few days before your trip.

Spending Money - We recommend using a debit card and to also take a small amount of cash. It is always advisable to let your bank know where you will be traveling before your departure. You can walk to many locations but if you want, you can take Uber, Lyft, or a Taxi (you will need to have cash on hand for that). Traveling in groups is the safest and most economical way to go. How much money you take is up to you, but \$300 to \$500 is recommended for souvenirs, Action Pac events, transportation, and meals.

Day of Departure - Do not be late! **You are 100% responsible for your own transportation to your bus pick-up location and must arrive at the location a minimum of 30-minutes prior to your scheduled departure time to check-in with GradWeek Staff.** We recommend checking the directions to your pick-up location online in advance, to ensure you arrive with plenty of time. **Hotel Only Package Travelers** – Your trip package DOES NOT include the bus transportation, so if you purchased a HOTEL ONLY package you are responsible for arranging your own rides/transportation to and from your hotel in Panama City Beach.

IMPORTANT – If mask guidelines are 'active/in effect', you must wear a mask while traveling and/or at your destination.

At Your Hotel! - Once you arrive at the destination, you will be given a full Welcome Orientation by a GradWeek Staff member. They will check you in, explain any events or activities that may be held during your stay, and go over some basic guidelines and rules to make your trip is great and worry-free. Enclosed in your Departure Packet you will find an Action Pac flyer that lists the various activities and price options as well as the application form (required to be filled out to purchase). **Action Pacs are available for purchase on-site only at the Welcome Orientation by CASH ONLY.**

GradWeek Staff - While our staff is available at your destination 24/7, the **Hotel Staff** can help you with daily requests, such as more towels, more pillows, and any questions about the hotel and nearby shopping, restaurants, etc. The GradWeek Staff are **NOT chaperones**. GradWeek Staff are at the student hotel and available to travelers on-site 24/7 to ensure the program is running smoothly, coordinate transfers for all the arrivals and departures, present the Welcome Orientation, go over rules, provide a Destination Guide with an area map, and will assist you with any serious emergencies or roommate situations. If you need assistance while on the hotel property, please reach out to on-site Staff, and be patient with both GradWeek and Hotel Staff, as rude behavior will not be tolerated.

Calling Home - Parents want to know you have arrived safely. A quick call, text, d.m., or e-mail home to say you have arrived and to provide them with your room number is **highly recommended**. It is *very expensive* to make calls from your hotel room. If you do not want to take your cell phone, the next best thing is to buy a long-distance calling card that can be accessed by any public phone.

In-room Security Box - Once you check-in to your room, we strongly recommend that you **use your in-room safety deposit box** to store your documents, cash, and other valuables including cell phones, cameras, etc. This will ensure that the items are securely locked away when not in use. Take a few minutes to check that everything in your room is in good shape and working order. Please **contact the GradWeek Staff or the Hotel's Front Desk personnel IMMEDIATELY IF you see anything broken, damaged, or not working properly, to ensure you will not be held responsible for preexisting damages.** **If the hotel reports any room or property damage from your room, ALL travelers in the room will be responsible for paying for those damages regardless of who in the room was at fault. Room doors should NOT be left open and unsecured.** Please be aware that the travel insurance **DOES NOT** cover you for loss of personal items such as cell phones, tablets, etc. If **ANY** incidences of theft occur on-site, it **MUST be reported** to the hotel first, and prior to departure home! While GradWeek will help assist with any local authorities if theft or loss occurs, we are not responsible for the cost of any cell phone replacements or other personal items.

Ahhh...Paradise! - This is your time to relax and have a fun time. **This does not mean you can do anything you want!** All local laws are strictly enforced in and outside of the hotel, and they **will not tolerate illegal activity, disorderly conduct** (including but not limited to, hanging from hotel balconies, underage drinking, etc.) or property damage. Travelers caught doing any of the above will be required to pay for any incurred damages and risk being evicted from their hotel at their own expense, no exceptions! GradWeek is not responsible for travelers that lose all or a portion of their vacation due to their behavior issues, violations, risking guests' safety, illegal actions, or damages and will not be entitled to a refund. Be smart, behave appropriately, be respectful to the locals and other guests, and stay safe by traveling in a group whenever leaving your hotel. **We highly recommend using the buddy system!** Please go out in groups, especially when going back to your hotel at night. Always remember that there is safety in numbers, and it is best to always tell a friend if you are leaving the hotel and/or an activity before everyone else.

Policy on Alcohol Consumption - **The legal drinking age in Florida is 21!** GradWeek does not promote or condone the use of alcohol to its travelers! Students caught drinking on the hotel premises will be evicted by the hotel immediately with **no refund**, and your parents will be notified, and you will be responsible for making new hotel accommodations and arranging your own transportation home! Each participant chooses whether to follow the rules. All local and federal laws are strictly enforced, and you will be held responsible if caught violating those laws.

Returning Home - GradWeek Staff will post the time you need to be ready to board the bus (or leave the property for Hotel Only travelers) for your return home in the lobby of your hotel the night before departure. Before leaving the hotel, your room must be picked up and cleared of all trash. All registered guests in that room must wait until GradWeek Staff or Hotel Staff have inspected the room for any damage. Should there be any hotel/room damage, you and your roommates will need to proceed to the hotel front desk immediately to take care of the damage costs and pay for any other incidental charges not included in your package price. Before checking out of your room, take a quick look around to make sure you have all your belongings. Once this is done, you will be given the "Ok" to board the bus for home. Make sure all your luggage gets loaded on your bus and always keep your valuables with you. **GradWeek is not responsible for any items left behind. IMPORTANT** - If mask guidelines are 'active/in effect' and instructed to by the bus company/driver, you must wear a mask while traveling on the bus. Travelers who do not comply with 'active/in effect' mask guidelines will be responsible for their actions.

How to use the Emergency Medical Coverage - Even though over 95% of our travelers do not encounter any sickness or injury, it still may occur. If sickness or injury occurs that requires medical attention, GradWeek or Hotel Staff can direct you to the medical facility at your destination. The travel insurance plan through Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI) does assist U.S. destination travelers with trip interruption, however, it does not provide coverage for medical sickness, security evacuation, or personal property/financial instrument. Travelers will need use their primary medical provider if medical care is needed. **For policy questions or to receive assistance while traveling, you must call (800) 303-8120, or email claimhelp@mycisi.com and provide policy # GLM N18660234-DT.** The insurance agent will guide you through the policy, and if needed, help you file a claim for reimbursed for qualifying costs up to the limits of the plan.

Money Wire Transfers - Should you run out of money at your destination, GradWeek provides a money wire transfer service for those students who may need additional funds on-site. This service is only available Monday through Friday from 8:30 am-3:00 pm (PST), and the required form can be accessed from our website at www.gradweek.com. The Wire Transfer Authorization form is located under the **ABOUT US** section, then click on **RESOURCES**. Please print and fill out the form completely and **EMAIL** it to info@istours.com **PRIOR TO 3:00 PM** Pacific Standard Time (PST), Monday through Friday. The traveler receiving the money on-site can pick up their cash with their photo ID from our 24-hour GradWeek Staff **after 7:00 pm (Florida local time)**. The wire limit is \$300.00 and there is a \$25.00 service charge per wire transfer.

Parents wishing to Contact their Son/Daughter - **PLEASE READ THE HIGH IMPORTANCE INSERT INCLUDED IN THIS PACKET!** 

Informational Documents - Please visit our website at www.gradweek.com under the **ABOUT US** section, then click on **RESOURCES** to view all of our valuable travel information and forms we provide including Preparing for Travel Letter, Travel Tips, Destination Guide, Action Pac, and Travel Protection Insurance. ***REMEMBER** - If you misplace your itinerary, you can always reprint a copy of your Trip Itinerary by logging into your online account at www.gradweek.com and click on TRIPS >> TRIP ITINERARY.

HOTEL CONTACT INFORMATION

Shores of Panama Resort
(888) 402-5155, press 3 | www.shoresofpanama.com

Holiday Inn Resort
(850) 234-1111 or (850) 230-4080 |
<https://www.ihg.com/holidayinnresorts/hotels/us/en/panama-city-beach/pfnbh/hoteldetail>

Casa Loma Hotel
(850) 234-1100 | www.casalomapcb.com