



Basketball Overseas Guide 2007

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Basketball Overseas How-To Guide Book

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Table Of Contents

Why Basketball Overseas?	3
Feel free to pass this guide forward to your friends free	4
How To Start Playing Overseas	5
How To Play Overseas Representing Myself.....	7
Pro's of Representing Yourself Without a Basketball Agent	7
Con's of Representing Yourself Without a Basketball Agent	7
All About Agents and their Scams.....	8
Creating A Basketball Profile	10
What to Expect Overseas	11
Best Basketball Countries	12
Before You Leave	14
Insurance and Contracts	16
Insurance Advice for Europeans	16
Culture Shock and New Languages.....	17
The Low Down On All of This.....	25
Overcoming Homesickness	25
Keeping Up With Your Finances	26
After The Season	28

Why Basketball Overseas?

Basketball Overseas is one-way ticket to so many opportunities and life experiences while playing the sport you love. Everyone from the day they started playing basketball has had some goals of playing professional basketball and following great pro basketball players such as Michael Jordan, Larry Bird, Walt Chamberlain, Lisa Leslie, Dawn Staley and other world greats. However, there is also a point in a player's life where that goal may not come as easy as dreamed or wanted. Only a select few are able to attain a professional status from the country they are from and it so many things attribute to this statute.

However, basketball teams, organizations and countries have made opportunities for more players to have a professional status by creating leagues and organizations for people worldwide. Playing basketball abroad is great for any player and playing outside of your home country provides so many new experiences with basketball and other cultures in general. Basketball overseas is also a great and proven way to showcase your talent to the world and create buzz for yourself that could spread like a wildfire. Hence, playing overseas should be taken very serious, because your dreams of playing in any of the highest professional leagues. Leagues such as the NBA, CBA, ACB, FIBA and other great leagues could be only one season away after playing basketball abroad.

This Basketball Overseas guide is to help you get started your career and move forward in the right direction. While this guide is to help you the author of this book shall not be held responsible for any changes that may affect applicability of these claims or techniques.

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How To Start Playing Overseas

So, you want to play basketball overseas? You can do it! The biggest question that I receive from players in my questionnaire is how to get started to play overseas. Well the first thing you should know is to research, research and research. Being educated about everything is important before leaping into any new venture in your life, whether basketball or normal jobs.

So what should you research?

You should first take a look at all of the leagues that could be possible for you to play in. Look at the teams and what type of players that play your current position. Find out where they came from, how long they have been playing abroad and their career thus far. Go to my favorite search engine: Google.com and do a search of their name "John Doe". You will find out most likely what college/university they attended and their career statistics there. This should give you a good gauge of what type of players those teams are looking for most likely.

Since you are researching a player that is similar to yourself, you will then know what your competition will be and what you have to resemble most likely. Now, that does not mean if your stats in college do not meet the same as the player you just researched, you will not be able to play. What matters the most is what and how you play today and not what you did years ago.

The Importance of Basketball Exposure Camps & Leagues

One of the most common questions about playing basketball overseas is being qualified enough to play. A common question that I receive often is: "Can I play overseas basketball if I don't have much experience but great abilities?"

YES!! Some type of organized basketball experience is important to most teams overseas. That is not to say if you haven't played organized basketball that you have no chance. If you have played one or two years

in college and for some reason you couldn't finish but you want to play, it's still possible.

There are many free agent exposure camps that are going on throughout the year. Also some organizations tour Europe, which you may or may not have to pay to join. However it's an opportunity to showcase your skills in front of real coaches from overseas, agents, and basketball club managers.

Exposure basketball camps

Some basketball exposure camps cost between \$100.00-\$250.00 for registration, excluding any transportation, food and accommodations. So taking a chance could be worth it depending how much you want to play. It's best to search the web for camps that could be possibly close to your home and jump on board! It can never hurt to try.

If you are in Christian organization there are many that tour overseas to do missionary work and play basketball as well. Those are great opportunities if you are interested in spreading the gospel and play basketball!

Where can I play?

Well if you want to be realistic as to where you have to potential to play then you must think at what level you play right now. If you consistently practice and play against players that currently play organized basketball overseas, college, or professional in the states then you can probably measure your skills and abilities by that. Otherwise it would be very hard to say if you have a chance to play against anyone overseas.

But if I had to guess where a player should play if they don't have much experience is to try the second or third divisions overseas. That way if you play well the coaches and clubs in that particular country will see your game and then start to make offers to play in the higher division. This approach in my opinion is the best option in terms of experience if you didn't get the right exposure you wanted in or out of college.

The key is to get your basketball profile together with all stats, pictures, and a basketball highlight tape. The tape is important because no matter where you did or did not play, what your game time skills appear on tape is the most important to basketball clubs. You could fit to a team perfect and then you're off to play

How To Play Overseas Representing Myself

Representing yourself is not at all an easy task but it can be done. All you need is a lot of courage, time, patience, and good persuasive abilities. Ok maybe I'm stretching it too much but you can play anywhere without an agent but be cautious. Here is a list of Pros and Cons of being a free agent and representing yourself.

Pro's of Representing Yourself Without a Basketball Agent

1. You know exactly what you're getting into
2. Direct communication with teams and management
3. Negotiate what you want
4. Work hard and know it

Con's of Representing Yourself Without a Basketball Agent

1. No legal help or partners in that particular country
2. Not much prior knowledge of team, management or players
3. Deal could go bad and you could be stuck
4. If things go bad it will be difficult to change teams fast without an agent/manager
5. A LOT OF HARDWORK

As all things have its good and bad points but overall if you have determination you could be very successful. With an agent a percentage is taken from your potential salary. The percentage isn't taken out of your salary but if your season salary is \$15,000 and your agent's fee is 10%, then the team would pay them directly 10% of \$15,000 which would be \$1,500. It would not come out of your monthly salary!

But if you represented yourself you could ask for more money without agent fees. It's not a lot more but it could be more for you. Add bonuses and things how you see fit but of course with negotiations with the management before you sign. Before you sign any contract if you representing yourself its best to get a lawyer to look over it first.

Basketball Agents commission and percentages vary each management agency but the range is between 3%-10%. Most overseas agents take between 8%-10% at average if you do want to get a basketball manager.

All About Agents and their Scams

Have you ever felt like you are being scammed? If you do, then an agent probably is scamming you. One thing that I have learned in life is that if you feel somewhat at unease then something is not right at all. With agents, people or work, trust how you feel and think about what made you feel that way.

There are two different categories of basketball agents in my opinion with my own lingo.

Paid agents:

Paid agents are the women or men that ask for some type of payment for their services to work for you. Basically, they won't exactly work with you until you have paid them upfront. Normally the payment covers sending out game film, phone calls overseas, mailings and additional paper work that may occur before you sign with a basketball team. The downside of paying agents before you find it a team is very risky and I would not recommend it to anyone. Here is a great example or scenario:

Michael is looking for team to play for next year but cannot seem to do it himself. So he searches the internet for agent to hire. Michael finds it difficult for top agents to take him or his game seriously, but he can easily find agents that ask for a payment first. So Michael gets tired of asking top agents and SETTLES for the "paid agent". He pays the agent and waits eagerly for his first team. The agent makes promises and says he will find a team but never does. The agent never even started making calls for him. The player wasted a whole year and the player has nothing. Michael spent around \$250 for an agent to do nothing.

This is why I wouldn't recommend a "paid agent" for any young player. Even though you are anxiously waiting to play basketball overseas. Patience is a virtue and you must have it in order to succeed in life and basketball.

Now with the real agents and what I call "percentage agents".

Percentage Agents:

Percentage agents are the women or men that have confidence in a player and their game. They take a risk that they will find a team and are willing to do the work upfront. The agents pay for everything and typically waits during the first several months of a player signing a team contract to receive payment from the team. The team is contracted to pay the player and their agent. Therefore in most cases you can count that you get paid.

There are more positives in my opinion if you sign with what I call a "percentage agent". There are a few negatives as well but I would take this over a "paid agent" any day of the year.

So if you ever feel unease about the work the agent is putting into finding you a team, then you should probably seek service some place else.

Agent Scams Part II - Real Example

During the late part of June a player contacted me about a country where they had received an offer to play this season. The player wanted to confirm this because it came between deciding to quit a current steady job to play overseas. The player had to make decisions pretty fast. So I acted as fast as I could because I had a reliable contact in that country they inquired about.

Well I informed the player that I would check if that basketball offer that was received actually true. My contact came back saying that the team had no plans on signing an American of that type. So I said hmm, let me check again. So I tried to contact again during my trip overseas and they in fact signed a player from the home country.

During all of my checking and asking my contacts, the player contacted me again asking if it seemed right that this would happen. The agent that was working for them wanted a fast decision and had a contract ready for them to sign with an actual team. The player at this time was a bit frantic as anyone would be when you have to decide to quit a steady job and take a risk to play overseas that is not always guaranteed.

So the player was smart and contacted another player that this agent was representing to see what this agent was all about. The player was told by the other person that the same thing had happened to them. Now this

seems a bit odd, but very sketchy. After little more investigating and calling around the player found that this agent was in fact a scam artist of some sort. The agent wrote up their own contracts and made the players to believe that they were going to play overseas. The player did not like this and took action by reporting the agent to the IRS and other reputable companies in that state in the USA.

Creating A Basketball Profile

If you have an agent or not it is very important to have a basketball profile or resume. Getting your basketball profile together can be easy if you played at your university or club for a long period of time. Also if the organization kept records of each season that you played.

Once you accumulated all of your basketball statistics from your university or club organize it in chronological order by last season played at the beginning. Next, put in words your strengths and weaknesses.

You should then get some type of photograph together, preferably an action photo. When all of this is complete make sure you have a game tape ready to send off, so when teams and agents contact you. You will be prepared and everything in order.

If you don't have all of those things make sure a solid highlight tape is able. Teams need to see in order to believe what is on paper or online!

Free Player Profile - Sign up Today!!!

I have simplified this process for you by offering players a free web page with your profile, photo, and bio. Visit the basketball player profile portal.

<http://www.basketball-connect.com/>

Sign up with your own username and after you have filled everything out we will have to give you access to place your full bio, stats, photo and other comments.

What to Expect Overseas

This question is often asked because it's very different from getting recruited from high school into college. Playing professional basketball and finding teams can be very bizarre and frustrating. But not to deter you away from your dreams, however it can be a task if you're not an All-American coming out of college or you do not come from a top 25 Division I team.

First, all your desire and will to play further than college will take you far as long as you trust your gut feeling about all your decisions. If you doubt something deep inside, more than likely you trust that feeling and weigh your options more thoroughly. When you leave college basketball you definitely on your own and making decisions about where to play can be challenging.

Second, you will have to find some way for teams to find you. There are many college basketball players coming out of college that want to continue playing basketball overseas and the states just as you. The most common way to get started is to find someone to represent you and help find a team that fits your needs. Basketball manager or basketball agent is the correct terms for people who you hire to find placement for you. You may have seen Jerry McGuire with Tom Cruise and Cuba Gooden and it's a ballpark view of the player/agent relationship. So the next question you might ask is "SHOW ME THE MONEY".

Playing professional basketball has many rewarding things and making big money is possible if you have goals and determined to do well.

Third, before you can be showed the money you have to prove what you are worth. Coming out of college being well known is good but maintaining great/consistent statistics throughout your career is important as well. You don't have to average 20pts or more but a good shooting percentage is important, turnover/assist ratio, rebounds, and hustle points that aren't on the stat sheet. So if you are coming on your senior year be sure to write these important points down and create a goal for your final showcase season in college. It will help and insure you a place on a team overseas.

So if you have covered these suggestions then I can show you how to ask your agent to SHOW YOU THE MONEY. Get your best basketball game film ready to send to your new basketball manager. Depending on what country your agent is pushing or which is interested in you its possible to make a bit of change during 7-8 months of a normal basketball season.

Best Basketball Countries

The best basketball countries depend on what you're looking for. If you are interested in the money only and not worried about team conflicts with management or players then here are a few countries where you could earn a lot during basketball season. Please do not quote me on this but from observing and comments from others.

- Russia
- Slovakia
- Yugoslavia

Countries that pay but the league isn't at the top in Europe. Most first year for men players could range between (\$1,500 - \$2,500). For women it could be between (\$1,300 - \$2,000) depending level and stats coming out of college. These earnings are per month and could be less or more.

- Sweden
- Finland

- Ireland
- Denmark
- Germany (Not Top League Salary)
- Mexico (Disregard Women Salary)
- Portugal
- Iceland
- Switzerland
- Luxembourg
- Netherlands
- United Kingdom
- Poland
- Norway

Hazardous countries where there is a war, high disease inflicted area, and teams that could be harmful.

- Israel (Pays Great but why risk your life - New players \$2,500 - \$5,000)
- Turkey
- Russia
- Korea (Nuclear War Program - North Korea but leagues in South Korea)

The best leagues and teams are below in no particular order. Salary is different so we cannot state but comments are available for which I know.

- Greece (Possible teams don't pay but league is big)
- Italy
- Germany (Top League)
- Spain
- France
- Brazil
- Russia
- Korea (South Korea)
- Australia
- Turkey
- Israel

- Croatia
- Hungary
- China
- Korea
- USA

NOTE: These salary listings and comments may change so don't quote me!

Before You Leave

There are many things that you might want to consider before going to play overseas. When I first left to play in 1999 I got two big bags (maybe too much). But one big durable luggage bag is sufficient for travel overseas. A duffle bag and backpack for practice and travel if the team doesn't provided it (small instances).

Frequent Flyer Bonuses

Frequent Flyer programs are smart to start because teams pay for your flight and travel in the country in your do fly within the country where you play. With all flights paid why not benefit and get a free flight and awards! I'm signed up with Lufthansa and it covers all Star Alliance members, which include United Airlines, Spanair and more. Flights across the Atlantic can earn you up to 3,000 miles and within Europe depending where you flight 500+. So get your cards before you leave and have them ready at the airport.

I suggest that you pack kind of light because there are more restrictions with luggage weight flying overseas. If you need something urgent you can buy overseas so take your most favorite gear. That brings me to basketball shoes. If it's not in your contract, then it's best to buy your shoes in your home country. If you are living in the USA then it's much cheaper to buy in the states because basketball sneaker prices are almost doubled, unfortunately. Take your favorite yummy candy, books and supplies because more than likely you won't find it overseas. Especially

books in English, that is unless it's a translation book or dictionary :) If you're in need of a good book overseas [Amazon Bookstore](#) is the best and cheapest place to buy books online. Shipping is cheap and standard low rates even for shipping books internationally!

Digital Cameras and Camcorders when you are abroad are nice to have because you can show your family and friends your team and environment. You can get your photos developed online and send them directly to your family. There are several companies that I use for online developing: [Shutterfly](#) (the best), Online Photo Album (Flip Album), [Snapfish](#) Online Developing. Two cheap places to buy great digital cameras are [Amazon](#) and [TigerDirect](#).

Tiger Direct sells computer equipment which brings me to my next point, communication back home and calls. With the internet being a popular way to communicate with family and friends its a great idea to have a laptop with you when you play overseas. Why? Although laptops seem expensive they are much cheaper now then when I first purchase mine! But calling rates with cell phones can become expensive. Calls from a cell phone could cost up to \$1.00 per minute to the USA. But calls within Europe could cost up to \$0.50 cents.

So if you have a laptop and have an internet connection it could save you hundreds on your phone bill. Some people have run up phone bills from \$500 a month. Yeah that's too much to spend for calls so its best to either get a calling card so check the best rates from the particular country or find a good laptop. I suggest Dell, Apple G-Book, Compaq, and Toshiba laptops for traveling. Writing letters and emails to stay in touch with family its cheap and economical. If you're anticipating being homesick visit our homesick guide for help and support!

For the past year I have been using a service called Skype to make calls overseas free. The service enables you to talk freely computer-to-computer and even call computer to regular line phones as well as mobile phones. The price to call any phone from Europe to the USA is only 0.01 cent per minute. You cannot beat that at all anywhere. You can recharge your credits online through Skype.com using [Paypal.com](#) or most credit cards.

Insurance and Contracts

If you are heading overseas to play basketball or any sport make sure your contract includes full insurance in case of an injury. All teams should provide standard health insurance in the event some happens while playing. The health insurance in all the teams I have played on does not include dental insurance. However if something occurs while playing they should be liable to get it fixed, otherwise you are responsible if something does happen. For example, if you have a cavity or need teeth cleansing and any other related dental help this would be your expense.

If you are in the US and you don't have dental insurance it is best to get coverage before going overseas to play. I have found that [Dental Plans.com](http://DentalPlans.com) have a wide variety of discount individual dental plans available. Some plans start at around \$79.99 for the year with 3 months free. That deal is hard to beat, unless you have 9-5 job that offers dental insurance. This is perhaps the best alternative if you don't have dental insurance and you are looking.

Some times overseas the prices for tooth filling's, teeth cleaning, root canals, and etc could be more expensive or cheaper depending on which country. For example, in Spain I needed to get several of my teeth filled and it was cheaper than my old dentist back home. I got my teeth filled for 34 Euros without insurance but like I said it depends on the country.

If you want to take a chance than its up to you. But I highly recommend [Dental Plans.com](http://DentalPlans.com) service and plans.

Insurance Advice for Europeans

If you live in Europe and you wish to play basketball in the US (college team) your insurance situation is the same. However all college teams provide health insurance in case of any injuries. Dental Insurance is not provided in this case as well. If you will be in the USA playing basketball for a four year college it is best to have dental insurance so I recommend

taking a look at [Dental Plans.com](http://DentalPlans.com) as well or ask your team for more information.

Culture Shock and New Languages

Are you prepared? Having an open mind usually help when you visit other cultures and countries. Complaining about things doesn't help anything. So if you're in a country where you don't understand ANYTHING, ZERO, NADA then take time to learn a word or two each day. Trust me it helps.

When I went to Finland for my first season overseas I had never even heard of the country or the language Finnish. It was very different from the other languages that I studied and heard before. It took time to get adjusted. Thank goodness I had a great roommate who started to ask and learn a word a day. I caught on and borrowed books from the library to get a better understanding of the language. I learned enough to understand but speaking Finnish was/is a different story. It is a difficult language. After three years of visiting and playing in Finland I still can't speak fluently. Only bits and pieces here and there but my understanding is average. Enough to know what the team and coach were talking about most of the time :)

So the key is to try to your best to acquaint yourself with the culture if you wish you make your stay worthwhile and fun. Visit the library when you're there for language books and tapes or plan and study before you leave your country. That is the best advice I have. Planning before you leave is better and you can find the translation dictionary that you need in your home country.

Included in the eLanguage Learning Ebook Package:

French, German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Swedish, Japanese Phrases and Words, and American Sign Language.



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It's better to be prepared I can testify to that because going to Spain was hard for me. Although Spanish is a second language in the USA I still didn't understand the rapid language or culture. I didn't have a translation book when I left. Trying to communicate with my team was hard but thank goodness a few kind people tried to speak English. After a month of struggling I started taking Spanish in a local university. From October - January I had classes that lasted 2hrs during three days out of the week. I met many nice people, two students from Alaska and many throughout Europe. It was nice meeting people and it gave me social time and fun outside of basketball. There are many places online that have small learning courses online to help you before you leave.

Life In Europe

How different is Living in the USA Compared to Living in Europe? Good question.

First of all imagining what it is like overseas is quite hard for most Americans. There is very little exposure to this on our television networks unless you watch the National Geography Channel or go to the movies to see international flicks. It can be mysterious unless you know where you would like to visit and you have research it in the library or the internet. However, I think that isn't enough!

All countries outside of North America think they know us inside-out because of Television. That media gives them more exposure than we have of most of them. When I first became introduced to life outside of the USA was as a senior in high school. Luckily, I visited a country where I had studied through language classes. If I didn't it would be a BIG shocker. I found out France was hardly what I imagined. Through basketball I saw the other side of French people and culture. But a few years later when I played on an all-star summer team in the Big East we went to Austria, Czech Republic. I had NO clue what those places looked like or the people that lived there.

So I will try to give you the best advice of what to expect when you visit a country overseas if you haven't had a lot of exposure to them.

1. Everyone is different

In life, everybody is different and that is the best part of it and uniqueness makes us special. Never forget that. People are shaped by their culture and their actions are demonstrations of it. Just like a dog. I hate to compare a dog but all dog breeds have a different character/personality or demeanor about themselves that is mostly shaped by their roots. For example, you have the pit bull that is furious at nature and then compare that to an Irish Setter who is pretty laid back for the most part. Well whatever type of training that you do both dogs will still have deep inside and won't go away. That's how they are made and its how we are made.

Basically try to remember that when you meet everyone. Through my experience from all of the countries I have been to, here is my summary about them. These are not bad, however, it is what I feel make them. These are in order of my first visits to now.

1. France - Friendly, Strangers (Rude), Very Stylish
2. Great Britain - Happy, Great Humor, Very Neat
3. Austria - Not Enough Time but a one word summary >> Culture
4. Slovakia - Not much memory
5. Czech Republic - Exciting, Fun,
6. Finland - Intelligent, Shy, Honest >> (Thirsty :))
7. Sweden - Bilingual, Friendly, Invisionary
8. Spain - Very Outgoing & Happy, Beautiful, Stubborn
9. Greece - Very Friendly, SUPER Beautiful, FUN, Happy

2. Forget your living environment for a minute

You have to have an open mind if you want to relate to people worldwide. Being an American I realized a lot the first time that I went to France and stayed in a 4-Star Hotel and the room was the size of two walk-in closets. There was no AC and the beds were actually smaller than a twin size bed, if you can imagine that. I can admit it was a shock because of playing AAU basketball we stayed in many motels and hotels which were a lot bigger than that.

Adjusting to overseas living standards could be hard for most Americans who are use to everything being BIG. Most Europeans make jokes that "EVERYTHING IS BIG IN AMERICA". I almost wish I could defend myself but its true. The cars in France during my first trip looked like hot rod toy cars my brother had at the time :) I'm not making fun but it is a fact. I could give endless examples. Now playing on a team that provides housing which most should in your particular contract when you sign.

Depending on your contract you might have an apartment alone or shared. If you have a shared apartment your apartment will be fully furnished and most beds are at LEAST full size/queen as a minimum. In Europe, you will see most people living in an apartment as opposed to the USA where there are more people with a home in none metro areas. I personally had no problems with any of my living arrangements other than heat as I got a little cold in Spain at one time.

However that is very small potatoes if you think about it. Through my experience from all of countries I have been to, here is my summary about them. The factors here are weather, home life, and city life.

1. France - Moderate Temperature, Decent Nature
2. Great Britain - Moderate Temperatures & Wet, Clean,
3. Austria - Not Enough Time but a one word summary >> Small,
4. Slovakia - Poor, Dirty, Sad (at that time 1997)
5. Czech Republic - Great Architecture
6. Finland - Mostly Cold, Beautiful Nature, Quiet
7. Sweden - Cold, Beautiful Nature, Mostly Quiet
8. Spain - Warm Climate, Many Mountain's, LOVELY
9. Greece - Very Warm Climate, Green, Historic

3. Not all things are created EQUAL

Yes, it is true and probably better that way in the long run! When you go overseas you will see some dramatic prices if you try to compare it to the USA. Dramatic, meaning HIGHER. But let me set the picture before you are afraid. ☺

First, all countries have a particular currency and it sets them apart depending on their economy and other factors. YOU have to remember that.

Second, most countries import A LOT of products that are manufactured in the USA or Asia and those products are taxed and in the end makes the value higher.

Third, hmm I can't think of any right now ☺ But there should be a third right? Might want to check back later. America is so big and we have access to things because it is in our home so everything is cheaper than you would see it in Europe.

Well, once again from my first trip to France I already knew that the Franc was expensive. I was so young that I didn't pay attention but I remember it wasn't that cheap. Now that most countries in Europe have adopted the Euro it can easily be compared to the dollar, although the dollar is extremely weak and has been for the last 2 years unfortunately. So when you visit any country just try to think of yourself shopping at a hotel mall :) Those are the prices you should expect. Buying food in some countries you might be paying \$6 for a Value Meal at McDonalds.

I'm just warning you so that you won't be shocked. Through my experience from all of the countries I have been to, here is my summary about them.

1. France - Food Great But Expensive, Clothes Expensive
2. Great Britain - Moderate Food Prices, Clothes Moderately Priced
3. Austria - Not much memory
4. Slovakia - Not much memory
5. Czech Republic - Not much memory
6. Finland - Food Expensive, Clothes Expensive
7. Sweden - Food Moderate, Expensive Clothes
8. Spain - Cheap Food, Moderate Price Clothes
9. Greece - Reasonable Priced Food, NO Time to Shop For Clothes :(

4. It's Time To Chow Down

Well, I love food. I can pretty much eat anything from anywhere. This section could be boring because I cannot say I have a complaint about food overseas. If you like all food you won't have a problem adjusting overseas. However, shopping for food could be an ISSUE. Lets face it, you won't be going to Safeway, Peapod or Wal-mart to go shopping for groceries, so remember that. You will be lucky if you see your favorite cereal like Honeycombs or whatever. All countries make their own goods so they won't have to pay to import them which is very understandable. My

first year in Finland I bought my favorite candies, mac & cheese, and other things that my agent suggested. I was lucky because my agent played there previously and had an idea of some things I might miss not being the grocery stores.

Pack your goodies but not too much because someone can always send things you might want. Searching for things and testing could be hard at first but you will get use to it. I did and it's kind of fun and frustrating at the same time.

Through my experience food hasn't been an issue and probably never will be anymore. Just keep in mind the prices are not the same as in the USA. But here is my summary of my taste buds in those countries and my favorite dish 😊

1. France - Delicate Well Cooked Food - Extremely Authentic
2. Great Britain - Love Fish & Chips
3. Austria - Not much memory
4. Slovakia - Not much memory
5. Czech Republic - Not much memory
6. Finland - Best Salmon & Fish - Cooked Thousands of Ways My Favorite Fish
7. Sweden - Typical taste of Scandinavian Foods
8. Spain - Probably My Favorite Country to EAT (From Wine to Olives) - EVERYTHING
9. Greece - Best Kabob, All Wines Are Great

5. The Days Go By - Day and Night Life Explained

Probably the biggest concern and question for most folk. What to Do and Where to Go? I would answer its all up to YOU. I am personally not an extra outgoing person but if I am bored I will definitely do something about it. Maybe it's my restless personality and some could complain :). But you can do most of the same things that you do in the USA that you do in America. Just on a much smaller scale. Remember, the USA is a BIG

COUNTRY. My suggestion for someone with an open mind is to suck in as much culture as you can. Life definitely can take you to places you never imagined you would ever live or go.

That being said, depending on what city you live in and visit, there will always be places to shop, movie theaters, movie rental stores, museums, libraries and nightclubs/bars. It is what you do with the things that surround you and also the people that you interact with inside a basketball team and outside of the team.

I remember the Big East Summer Trip when we went to Europe and went out to experience the Czech Republic nightlife. It was great and my first real taste of European nightlife as a young adult without supervisors as in high school. The people were very fun and a lot more open minded than most American bars and clubs. I think that is a plus in Europe. You can really be you and have fun in most bars without a lot of reaction. Whatever that may be.

It is not all about the nightlife either. During the day is the key point where you might have the freest time. When I first went to play overseas my most favorite European housemate & I wanted to learn and get around by learning the language. We started by trying to learn a word a day. It died off but we tried to learn as much as possible and went to the library often to send emails or read books in English. Most libraries in Europe have a small section of books that are in English. You will be grateful to see it too 😊 However, with the internet you have more access to more things than back in the day. Not that far away but for most who have played without that luxury.

I am all about the library because there are endless free resources that you can get pretty easy. From music, books, internet and magazines from the USA. But staying active will make time go by really fast. Also, find one teammate that you are comfortable with and visit their home. Ask them to show you around and explain their country and people. I guarantee that you will be happy that you know about the culture because understanding is the first step to being comfortable where you live.

In summary, get out and do something. Don't sit and rot 😞. Complaining about everything actually makes things worse, but adapting will make time go by faster than you can imagine.

To sum it up:

The Low Down On All of This

NO matter where YOU go. WHO YOU meet. OR when YOU go. Always have an open mind and be understanding to other peoples differences and culture. If you do, you will learn a lot about yourself and that country. Time will go by faster and being homesick won't be an issue too often other than during the Holidays :) Be positive.

Learn a language and surprise yourself. I have and you can do it. Even if you think you have trouble in your language classes now, living in that culture will change how you learn things forever. That is the truth :)

Click here to download the language book package:
<http://www.mysportfolios.com/>



Overcoming Homesickness

Being homesick can change many things during a basketball season. If you went away to college far from home you probably have experienced a little homesickness. It's quite normal and in my opinion nothing to be ashamed about! Arriving and living in a new culture for most people can be overwhelming and very difficult.

It's normal to miss friends, family and things you are used to back in your home country. When I first left to play basketball in Finland from the USA, I missed the grocery stores being opened everyday until at least 11pm. But in Finland and in most European countries, all big stores are closed on Sunday and usually stay open during the week until about 9-10pm. Yeah big shocker for American's who have experienced stores like Walmart and big grocery stores open 24-7.

So hopefully this will prepare you and not scare you from playing basketball overseas! However I recommend that you try to get adjusted to the culture and make the most of your time overseas. Staying in touch with friends by phone (expensive), email, and letters is important when going away for a 7-8 month basketball season.

Most basketball teams in Europe have a small break in November for European competition within that particular country if they participate. If you arrive in August or September then you could probably go home in November if the team allows it. In December you should have a break for Christmas to visit home for one or two weeks depending on the scheduling of your league. So time does fly by really fast if you look at it that way. In no time it will be playoffs and you're back home with your family and friends. Take a look at my basketball timeline for more information of a typical basketball season.

Staying busy is important for me because that point I find myself bored I feel like I want to go home. I always try to stay busy, in fact I volunteered to work in a local library in Finland. I went every morning about 9:00 and stayed until morning practice which was 11:00. Went back later for a hour or so. It was very rewarding for me because it was a chance to use the internet, make my basketball websites and keep myself busy. So if you are highly motivated you can find ways avoid homesickness and make your stay overseas worthwhile.

The first year I arrived in Spain I studied Spanish at a local university for two hours each day for 3 days during the week. Learning Spanish was very important for me to communicate with my team and just living in Spain. NO ONE likes to speak English there :)

Keeping Up With Your Finances

Your first year out of college, you should probably keep saving your money in mind very often. Testing the basketball market overseas is key your first year. During your first or second years of playing professional basketball you will probably make the decision to stick with it or drop it depending on your success, failure or circumstances.

In which case, saving money for future plans is important if you plan to change careers. Professional basketball salaries only last during the season so you won't receive any income outside of basketball if you are a regular average Joe. If you have endorsements and other outside rewards and benefits it could be substantial. You don't have to think about saving so much.

Although I save most of the time and rarely buy things I try to keep in mind my goals and future plans if basketball does fail. An injury can change your career in a heartbeat so be smart with your money.

Key points for maintaining a good budget

- Set a certain amount of money aside for food, entertainment, transportation (if not included)
- Don't lend money out to family, friends, and others (of course if it's emergency)
- Set a goal for which you will save during that year excluding expenses
- Invest in some type of stock (Learn more about stocks here)
- Open a savings account and keep a record of your spending at least once a month

If you follow some of those guidelines you should be set and ready to go.

After you first and second years of playing basketball you should have mastered budgeting your money, so now its time to increase your earnings has a professional athlete. If you perform well and improve each year it is important to ask for a raise and bonuses for each year you plan to play basketball with a particular club.

For example if you first year you earned \$11,000 year (7-8 months average) and you performed outstanding and let your team to a championship then a raise is inevitable. So I guess you could next as for around 15,000 year next or more. This is just an estimate because it all depends on the team's budget and how much they are will to invest in a player. So first impressions when you play are very important!

I don't have exact basketball salaries here but if you perform well and get in the know you can ask for what you want. It all depends on exposure and where you have played.

After The Season

When you typically end a full season overseas you are ready to come home so fast. The basketball season can be exhausting if your team has made playoffs and you are there for an extra month or so. But its smart to keep contact with your former teams because you never know what will happen.

If you had a good relationship of course with that team it is very important. You play another season there or you could recommend someone that you know to play there. Even better they could help you find a new team if you want to move further ahead. All things are possible so it is great to keep in touch where you can!

Coming back to your hometown could be different because when you are away things just don't stop. Life just goes on and the people around you do as well. It could feel weird when you come back and you realize that some things have changed and many things haven't.

Make the most of your time at home and rest completely until you are ready to start back up with training and playing pick up ball. REST is very important when you end your season.

If you are able to host your own basketball camps to earn extra money that is a great way to start your Spring and Summers back home. Organizing a basketball camp can be quite difficult when you first start your planning.

We will provide some links that will help you get started with organizing your own camps or recommend small firms that could help you do it. One partner that we have is BSESPORTS and they have organized camps for WNBA players like Tamika Williams, Demya Walker, Adia Barnes and more. Those are just a sample of basketball players that they have helped and not limited to men!

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