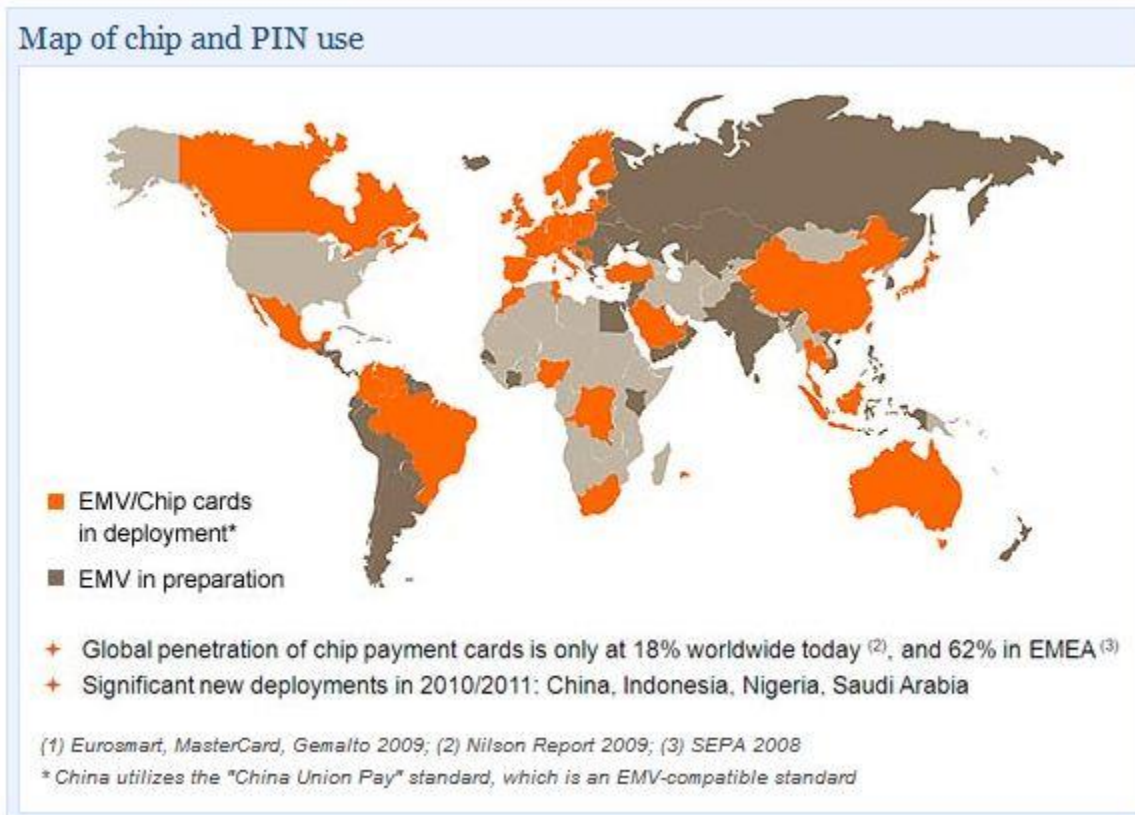


## Credit cards may work differently abroad

Be aware that credit cards function differently abroad. In many other countries (particularly in Europe), cards have not only a magnetic strip (like US cards) but also a chip (*not found in U.S. cards as of 2012*) which requires use of a personal identification number (PIN). The chip-and-PIN system is "smarter" technology that will allow you to use your card more widely in Europe than a US card.

For example, in some countries a card with a chip enables you to buy tickets from vending machines in train stations, allowing you to avoid the long lines at the windows. Below is a map showing chip-and-PIN (or EMV) countries.



Source: <http://www.bankrate.com/finance/credit-cards/will-your-credit-card-work-abroad-1.aspx>

However, **the PIN you use with your U.S. credit or debit card to withdraw money from an ATM machine won't work within chip-and-PIN system**, so you should always be prepared to use another payment method instead. Some options:

- It is possible to buy pre-loaded credit/debit cards with chips, such as [TBG's International Moneycard](#). Be sure to read the fine print and clearly understand the costs of buying and using such products.
- Another option is to establish a bank account in the country where you will study, but most study abroad students will find that the hassle of doing this is not justified unless they are studying in the same country for a full year. Be aware that what you will get will probably be a debit card rather than a credit card.
- A few programs can help you establish a temporary, no-fee bank account from which you get a debit card with a chip in it.

In any case, it is possible to get by with a U.S. credit card while traveling abroad; millions of Americans do this each year.

Prior to going abroad, students should inform their banks and credit card companies that they will be traveling overseas. Some banks have networks abroad so we recommend that you call your bank to ask if they participate in a global ATM network as you will be traveling abroad.

Below is some information from some of the major banks in the United States. **If you use a bank not listed below, please check its website for more information.**

**VISA ATM Locator:** <http://visa.via.infonow.net/locator/global/>

**MasterCard ATM Locator:** <http://www.mastercard.us/cardholder-services/atm-locator.html>

**Wells Fargo:** <https://www.wellsfargo.com/locator/>

**Bank of America:** <http://locators.bankofamerica.com/locator/locator/LocatorAction.do>

**RELATED ARTICLE ON USING CREDIT CARDS ABROAD:**

The following Wall Street Journal article also contains information which you should find very valuable: [Getting Going: The Hazards of Using Credit Cards Abroad](#)