



COUNTRY

OVERVIEW

& PACKING

GUIDELINES

IHP Food Systems: Agriculture, Sustainability, and Justice
Spring 2020

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COUNTRY OVERVIEW

IHP PROGRAM STRUCTURE & EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

IHP is a global comparative study abroad program – providing students a unique opportunity to examine a timely topic across four contrasting country contexts. Students analyze and compare critical global issues and challenges under an overarching theme related to the environment and social justice.

A fundamental pedagogical approach of IHP is **the learning community**. Students will be traveling, studying, reflecting, debating, and dialoguing together. The aim is to build an inclusive learning community that allows for intellectual and personal growth. Students who are committed, engaged, flexible and interested will grow immeasurably on this learning journey.

To pursue a nuanced and holistic understanding of the program's theme, students interact with activists, public figures, government and organizational leaders, innovators, artists and citizens from all walks of life who are directly involved in the topics of study.

IHP is also unique in that a **Trustees Fellow** and **Faculty** travel with the student group for the duration of the program. The **Traveling Faculty** teach 2 courses over the semester and work closely with in-country teams, attend and participate in all components of each country program, including field excursions, guest speakers, etc. Classroom and in-country activities complement one another to create a cohesive experiential intellectual experience. As is common with many roles in IHP, faculty will assume multiple responsibilities including teacher, co-explorer, advisor, and role model. In addition to Traveling Faculty, you will also have Local Faculty members who will teach the other 2 courses, deepening the student understanding of the local context.

The **Trustees Fellow** role is designed to support the individual and collective well-being of the student group throughout the semester. The Fellow acts variously as a group facilitator, communicator, mentor, educator, trip-leader, and risk manager. Fellows collaborate with faculty and coordinators throughout the program to guide students in accessing resources and establishing the support systems they need to adjust to living, learning,

and traveling abroad. This entails caring for students when they encounter difficulty, and challenging students to move through discomfort, try new things, and ask better questions that deepen the learning experience.

Launch and Country Coordinators are educators and practitioners, responsible for the program in-country and are supported by a local team (program assistants, interpreters, homestay coordinators).

Homestays give students the opportunity to become immersed in day-to-day realities as well as the traditions of each country, creating lasting connections and important memorable insights and respect.

IHP is an academic program which travels, and not a traveling program with academics. **Your days are heavily scheduled, and your learning is communal, not individual.** We recognize and respect that not all students learn or participate in identical ways, but we expect you to be fully prepared for classes, to engage with the highest level of respect and interest with all program participants, and to take on the intellectual work of this semester with enthusiasm.

This kind of engaged pedagogy is not typical in most classrooms or educational spaces. It can be physically and mentally tiring, but the time, effort, passion, and curiosity that each of us puts into this work is worth it. At IHP we believe in creating learning journeys that disrupt our ways of being and knowing. The result is a uniquely powerful educational experience that calls students to consider their own potential to act in response to critical challenges of our time. Welcome to this unforgettable journey!



IHP LAUNCH & PROGRAM ORIENTATION INFORMATION

Program Orientations

During the first few days of the program launch there will be orientation sessions covering program policy, staff and student roles and responsibilities, health and safety guidelines, academic policies, culture shock, and community building. In addition, there will be an orientation session in the first day or two of each subsequent country program covering country specific details. Some of these include cultural norms, survival language lessons, local health and safety considerations, access to ATMs, banks and local currency. The country coordination team will support students with accessing local sim cards (see more in the section, *Phones and Email*).

This is a rigorous academic program in which courses are designed to add depth and context to extensive field-based learning. During each country orientation, you will receive the program schedule. Program days are full throughout the course of the semester, and will have you engaged in field activities, classes, group assignments, community building activities, and individual homework. During weekends, optional activities may be offered. Alternatively, you may want to go on an adventure with your homestay family, prepare for next week's reading, or catch up on journaling.

Launch

The Launch is both an orientation and our first country program, and sets the tone and pace of the program. Academic courses begin, you will hear from guest speakers and travel to different parts of the city and state for site visits. Because a large part of being an IHP student is participating in a unique learning community, the first few days of the launch program are focused on meeting fellow community members, building community and understanding your role in the group. Additionally, Anti-Oppression Training will provide a space for reflection on identities and their relationship to power and privilege; to talk through how privilege and oppression play out on an IHP program; and to build community strategies and systems of accountability to guide the group over the course of the semester.

Many alumni have said that the Launch is “full-on” and have highlighted the importance of being organized and prepared and taking care of yourself and one another, in order to fully partake in the rich learning experience.

For the Food Systems program, our Georgia based launch is a time to look into the past, examine the present, and imagine the possible futures of the US Food System by addressing the realities of the systems' foundation in slavery and plantation agriculture and acknowledging the present inequalities rooted in histories of inequality.

CLIMATE

Atlanta, GA: AVERAGE HIGH/LOW TEMPERATURES (°F)

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR
52/34	57/38	65/44	75/52

Quito, Ecuador: AVERAGE HIGH/LOW TEMPERATURES (°F)

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR
68/51	67/51	67/51	67/51

Lilongwe, Malawi: AVERAGE HIGH/LOW TEMPERATURES (°F)

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR
79/63	80/63	80/62	80/57

Turin, Italy: AVERAGE HIGH/LOW TEMPERATURES (°F)

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR
44/28	48/31	56/40	62/42

LOCAL CUSTOMS

Ecuador:

Ecuador is a multicultural country; each of the four regions, the Coast, Andes, Amazon and Galápagos, present a variety of customs, which gives Ecuador an exceptional cultural richness. Even within the regions there are differences derived from rural or urban conditions.

Greeting: always greet with enthusiasm (not observing this rule may be considered rude). Saying “buenos días, tardes, or noches,” depending on the time of the day, is a must. Informing your homestay family at all times about

where you are and respecting your family hours is critical. This is also a must for any type of family in Ecuador. Failing to adhere to this rule is considered highly disrespectful and may be a source of stress and discomfort for the families.

Malawi:

The concept of time in Malawi is very different from what you may be used to at home. Since sunrise and sunset happen pretty much at the same time all year round, 6a.m. and 6p.m., the day starts at 6a.m. which is 0 hours. There are 12 hours during the day and 12 hours during the night. Remember this when thinking about how the day flows differently from what you are familiar with.

Half of your time will be spent in rural areas in homestays and classrooms with very limited electricity and no plumbing. Drinking water is boiled and filtered for consumption. Meals and dietary diversity will reflect what is consumed in a typical rural farming household. Every household is different, but expect an abrupt change in the dietary variety you may be used to.

Public displays of affection are unusual. Kissing, holding hands and hugging in the street is rare. Yet friendly affection, such as holding hands, is considered perfectly normal among members of the same sex. Malawians, generally, greet with a handshake. It is also perfectly normal for people to put a hand on your shoulder, touch your hand or look in the general direction of your face during conversations. On the other hand, prolonged eye contact may be unwelcome and regarded as an invasion of privacy and rude.

Bargaining is common in markets and shops so be ready to engage in some good-natured negotiations as you try your skill using the Chichewa language.

Italy:

Italians may commonly display a strong sense of affection and camaraderie with closer physical contact than you may be used to. People, regardless of gender, tend to greet each other and say goodbye with two to three kisses on alternating cheeks starting with the left cheek. Be careful not to swoop in to the right cheek in beginning your greeting as this may cause momentary confusion! Not every interaction requires such contact – in greeting strangers, a formal handshake will do - but as soon as any confidence is built do not be surprised to move towards more physical contact. Italians tend to hold your hand or your arm as they are greeting, and a hand on the shoulder or even back of the neck is not uncommon as conversation begins.

You may also notice a heightened sense of aesthetic awareness and sensibility, especially in the public realm, which may even seem excessive compared to your home institution. Italians tend to take great pride in dressing and presenting themselves in public and you may feel a bit underwhelming having been traveling for several months with the contents of your luggage. Do not worry, you will not be judged by your aesthetic sense but cleanliness and neatness are considered fundamental in both personal appearance and in general behavior. Urban homes tend to be much smaller than you may be used to and space is at a premium, so in your homestay you should make sure to keep your belongings gathered in your personal area rather than throughout the house.

Families tend to eat together and discuss the day's events, and your hosts will be curious to learn every detail about your day! Share as much as you feel comfortable sharing and be aware that excluding your homestay family from your daily activities may be seen as offensive. You will become a part of the family quickly and as such will be expected to share and exchange, obviously within your boundaries, as much as other members of the family.



DIET

Participating in the local food culture is a central aspect of daily life. Special or restricted diets may not always be fully understood by your host family, although they may have previously hosted a student with similar dietary restrictions. By trying to replicate your diet at home you may miss out on an important part of your host culture.

SIT Study Abroad provides experiential learning opportunities where students become embedded in their host community. As such, we strive to accommodate serious food allergies where possible but simply cannot

ensure that all dietary restrictions or non-medically mandated diets can be accommodated.

Due to the unique living and learning community central to all SIT programs, we cannot separate food and eating communally (including with your host family) from the program experience. Please consider local diet seriously when selecting your program of choice. Your admissions counselor is a great resource in better understanding the local diet.

Note: if you have special dietary needs, including allergies, please inform our office prior to the start of your program. We will advise you on realistic expectations about avoiding or incorporating certain foods within the program context.

Atlanta/Athens/Albany, Georgia, USA:

During the Launch, you will receive a daily meal stipend for all meals that are not provided for by the program. In Atlanta, the hostel and classroom spaces are conveniently located near many restaurants and cafes. The Launch Coordinator will provide a guide for reasonable restaurants and small delis in the area.

Ecuador:

Ecuadorian food is extremely diverse, reflecting the various ecological zones and cultures. The everyday diet varies by region, but typically consists of rice, potatoes, fresh fruit, vegetables, and occasionally red meat, chicken, or seafood. The diet can be heavy on starches, especially in the Sierra region. Lunch is the main meal of the day and typically consists of a soup, a segundo (second) of rice, potatoes, maybe a vegetable, beans, chicken or eggs, and fresh fruit juice. Some Ecuadorian specialties that you are sure to encounter include locro de papa (potato, cheese, and avocado soup), llapingachos (mashed potato and cheese pancakes), ceviche (marinated seafood stew), and an abundance of fresh fruit and fruit juices.

Typically, breakfast and dinner are eaten at home, while lunch may be eaten out (for those who can afford to). Students should avoid food prepared and sold on the street as well as juice and water that has not been boiled or filtered. Bottled water is readily available in most areas.

Students adhering to a vegan or kosher diet may have significant difficulty eating a balanced diet in Ecuador, as many dairy/egg products are regularly consumed, and vegetables are not a staple. Vegetarians should be fine, especially if they are able to be flexible; be aware that even non-meat dishes may be cooked with lard, beef

broth, etc. Also, vegetarians should be aware that “vegetarian” in Latin America is usually assumed to mean avoidance of red meat; you may still be served fish and chicken unless you specify.



Malawi:

Malawian cuisine varies according to its regional histories, peoples and geographies. Local customs are abundant and vary from grain-based staples to coastal catches. In your rural homestay you can expect your normal dietary diversity to shift toward the staple foods of *nsima*, rice, beans, locally available greens, and eggs.

Prior to meals and afterwards, a bowl of water and a towel may be passed around to the diners to wash their hands. The bowl is passed to the next person with the right hand, as the left one is considered unclean. The right hand should also be used to dip into the *nsima*, the staple food in much of the country.

Most families eat meat only on special occasions, such as a wedding or on holidays. Fresh fruit is seasonally available so don't expect to find your normal daily desired diet readily available. It is acceptable to leave food on a plate at the end of a meal, as this reassures the host that the guest is satisfied.

Students should avoid food prepared and sold on the street as well as juice and water that has not been boiled or filtered.

Italy:

Food is the bedrock of Italian culture and is at the heart of many traditions, holidays and everyday life. Your homestay family will try hard to ensure they are meeting your dietary needs and culinary expectations and it will not be uncommon for breakfast conversation to revolve around dinner planning for you! Italians generally eat a

very light breakfast of coffee with warm milk and a light pastry. Lunch can range from a light *panino* to a plate of pasta to a meat and vegetables dish, generally between 1-3pm. Dinner is the main culinary but also family event and is the focal point of your homestay family's daily home life. The variety of foods and the depth of gastronomic tradition makes it possible to meet the needs of most diets in Italy. Be aware however that your homestay family will be very keen to share many traditional foods including cheeses, cured meats, and a range of local and regional delicacies with you, and their preparation and your enjoyment of these will be a source of pride for your hosts. Meals tend to be long and larger than you may be used to, especially on weekends. You will not be forced to over-eat but be polite in declining food. You may also wish to specify that you prefer smaller portions given the variety of food you will be offered.

SAFETY, SECURITY, AND HEALTH

Maintaining good health is critical to having a successful semester. To help you do that, we have provided [Health Guidelines and Requirements](#) for your program.

It is very important that you read the Health Guidelines and Requirements document as early as possible and examine it with your medical provider. The guidelines include recommended immunizations; a suggested calendar for immunizations and other prophylaxes; and valuable information on how to avoid exposure to common carriers of disease.

Students are thoroughly briefed on safety considerations during in-country orientation and are updated throughout the semester if and when circumstances change. For information regarding safety and security, emergency communications, SIT policies, health and personal property insurance, and general program tips, please read the [Safety, Security, and Health](#) document and [Student Handbook](#).



HOMESTAYS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

As many SIT Study Abroad/IHP alumni will tell you, the homestay experience can be one of the most rewarding and most challenging aspects of the program. We hope you will come prepared for the experience and committed to moving beyond cultural immersion as you begin to question, distinguish, and analyze the host culture vis-à-vis your own culture and come to a deeper understanding of both.

Family structures vary in every culture. SIT Study Abroad/IHP values the diversity of homestay families, and your family may include a single mother of two small children or a large extended family with many people coming and going all the time. Additionally, please bear in mind that, in many countries, the idea of what constitutes a “home” may be different from what you expect. You will need to be prepared to adapt to a new life with a new diet, a new schedule, new people, and new priorities and expectations.

Each program's country coordinator team will be responsible for placing students in homestays. Students will often share a room with another IHP student. These placements are made first based on health concerns, including any allergies or dietary needs, to the extent possible. **Please note: in order to ensure the best fit for students and families, SIT may make final adjustments to homestay placements after student arrival in country. Therefore, SIT will not provide information about your homestay family before you depart for the program.**

Not all of your lodging will be in homestays. You may also stay in hostels, hotels, rural villages, and other types of lodging. The key is to be flexible. Many students appreciate bringing a ‘**sleep sack**’ (a sleeping bag liner or a sheet folded in half and sewn down the side).

All students are required to stay at all program-provided accommodations throughout the course of the semester.

CLASSROOM SPACE

In all of the countries you visit, you will generally have a “main” classroom location where you will attend faculty lectures and welcome guest lecturers. However, the communities and cities will also become your classroom as you go on site visits, explore neighborhoods, conduct research, and travel to other sites within the region.

TRANSPORTATION

Across locations, students will often use public transportation. Specifics on public transportation will be discussed during the orientation upon your arrival in a country.

Atlanta/Athens/Albany, Georgia, USA:

You will receive MARTA passes for public transit whilst in Atlanta for program-related travel. Taxis are also available and can be hailed on the street and Lyft and Uber are also available in Atlanta. Biking is also a great way to get around the city and there are bike share programs available.

Ecuador:

Most Ecuadorians travel by bus. Local city buses run frequently and cost very little. There are also numerous taxis, which will be the best bet for going out after dark, but be sure you are in a group (at least 2 or 3 people). Taxis use daytime meters but at night the price is haggled over and agreed upon before you get in the taxi.

Students typically travel between their primary homestay and classes by walking and/or bus. There are many types of buses and even the most comfortable (and safest) are generally inexpensive.

Malawi:

Transportation will vary depending on location and will include mini-bus taxis, and buses. The majority of program related travel will be on a private hire bus.

Italy:

Italy is generally easily navigable by public transportation. A dense rail network connects all major and secondary cities, as well as many smaller locales. Only few cities boast a subway system, but most have comprehensive light rail and bus systems which make getting around a comfortable affair. Taxi service supplements the public transit system but beware that taxis can only be called to an address or requested at a stand, not flagged down in the street. Uber does not operate in Italy at this time.

COMMUNICATION

While you may want to be in regular communication with friends and family from home during the term abroad, please bear in mind that different time zones, unreliable phone lines and slow or infrequent internet access, and changing program activities can complicate communication.

It's important to be clear with family and friends about your availability during the term. Many students recommend making an appointment to call home or to receive a call. You should also consider the impact of constant communication with friends and family at home on your cultural immersion.

Do not set family or friends up with expected communication during arrivals and departures to/from new locations. **It is not always possible for students to gain internet or phone access immediately upon arrival in a new country.** Please be aware of this when planning job or internship interviews or discussion with your home college or university. If you have an interview or important appointment to schedule while you are abroad, it is best to communicate this to your Program Director and Country Coordinator well in advance.

When you arrive in a new country, you will have many immediate obligations, including getting to your accommodations, eating a full meal, recovering from jet lag, meeting your new host family, attending required scheduled sessions, evening engagements, and getting oriented.

PHONES AND E-MAIL

As part of SIT's commitment to student safety and security, all students are required to have a working smart phone capable of making and receiving both local and international calls throughout the duration of the program. For that purpose, students are **required** to either (a) bring an open, **unlocked smart phone** from the U.S. to the program that is able to accept a local SIM card, and is compatible with and usable at the country location, (b) work with each country coordinator within the first week upon arrival in to each country to purchase a smart phone locally, or (c) bring a dual SIM smart phone. During orientation, with assistance from IHP staff, students will learn how to use their cellphone, how to purchase and use an appropriate local SIM card, and how to acquire minutes for calls and texting. SIT Study Abroad/IHP requires that each student have a local number for communication with the homestay family and program staff.

While we recognize that alternative communication methods can be free or cheaper than cell service i.e. Facetime, Skype, WhatsApp, etc. those programs alone do not satisfy our need for regular communication with the local program staff and partners, nor do they meet our emergency communication needs. Therefore, local

cellular capacity on each student's phone is required for the duration of the program. Students are required to maintain a minimum amount of phone credits at all times for emergency calls. Full compliance with this policy is expected, failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Please do not use a host family's phone for overseas calls. Even with a phone card, the host family may be charged a service fee just to dial out. Host phones should be reserved for the family's use.

Atlanta/Athens/Albany, Georgia, USA:

You are required to have a working local sim while in the US with a US phone number where local staff can reach you.

Ecuador:

A local SIM card for your unlocked smartphone will cost approximately \$10, and reasonable phone usage should cost about \$25 per month.

Malawi:

If you find that your phone will not work in Malawi, phones with basic features are available in many stores across Malawi and cost around MK 43,500 (60 Dollars). These will give you a local phone number and will allow you to receive free incoming calls. You will likely find that this unlocked phone will work in Italy as well, and you need not purchase a new phone there – rather, you can use the same one but replace the SIM card with a local SIM in each country.

Italy:

It is possible to buy a SIM card for Italian use, that will require a brief registration and it will cost you 5 euros, plus the amount of money you will decide to charge it with (for, example, you can start with 20 euros). These SIM cards will give you a local phone number and will allow you to receive free incoming calls.

MAILINGS

Unlike receiving a package here in the U.S., receiving a package at your program site is usually **expensive** and **problematic**. Customs agents must inspect all packages and you, as the recipient, are responsible for duty and storage fees. In addition, there are cases of items being lost in the mail or taking so long to reach the recipient that the recipient is nearly back in the U.S. by the time the items are received. **For these reasons, sending packages should be done only for emergency situations.** Additionally, sending valuables is highly

discouraged. SIT does not forward student mail, and cannot be responsible for lost mail. Please account for 2-3 weeks shipping time when deciding which address to use.

Despite cheaper prices, reliance on the U.S. Postal Service is not advised due to delays and unreliability. If it is an emergency and necessary for someone to send you mail then program staff can assist you with the most appropriate address to give the sender. Posted letters and packages should be sent via **DHL** as this is the service that we have had the most success with for international mail. When given the option, it's always a good idea to send packages certified and with a tracking number that allows the sender to track the package.

MONEY

In addition to tuition, SIT Study Abroad/IHP program fees cover room and board throughout the program **except during mid-semester breaks**. When room and/or board are not taken with the group, students will be given a stipend to cover related expenses. SIT will provide transportation for program-related excursions and activities that are part of the normal program itinerary, but students are responsible for the cost of daily transportation to and from class.

Course materials are made available digitally and there will be some photocopies of course materials available to check out. Printing additional paper copies of course-readers are the students' responsibility. Please plan accordingly.

You are responsible for all expenses during the mid-semester break including travel, room, and board.

Ecuador:

The US Dollar is the official currency of Ecuador, so you will not need to convert money. You will notice that some locally-minted Ecuadorian coins circulate alongside US coins, but all banknotes will be US dollar bills.

Most students access funds from their US bank accounts using their VISA or MasterCard debit cards. Any debit card that is linked to the PLUS or CIRRUS networks should also work at ATMs in Ecuador. Credit cards (VISA, American Express, MasterCard) will work in many stores in Quito, although there may be a surcharge that can be up to 8%.

Very few Ecuadorian businesses will be able to make change for larger bills (\$20 bills and higher). Please bring

small denominations such as \$1, \$5, and \$10 bills. Do not bring \$50 or \$100 bills

Malawi:

In Malawi, you will use the kwacha. There are currently about 750 kwacha to the dollar (note this may change). There are several ATMs in town so be sure to have your pin number.

You will only be able to draw out kwacha from these machines. Occasionally Visa cards are acceptable in Malawi, but are not universally accepted.

Italy:

The local currency is the Euro. ATM's are widely available in all major cities, secondary towns and smaller municipalities. Rural areas may not have readily accessible ATMs and many establishments, especially in smaller locales, do not accept credit or debit cards so always keep this in mind when traveling. Visa and MasterCard are generally accepted while American Express is not very common.

Check current exchange rates:

<http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>

If using a debit and/or credit card, you should contact your bank and/or credit card companies regarding your travel plans. If you don't inform these companies that you will be away, they will often assume the card has been lost or stolen and will put an immediate hold on the card. You should also check on costs of withdrawal, as these costs vary and can sometimes be very expensive. Renewing and receiving reissued credit and debit cards while on the program will be an expensive and highly inconvenient process. Before you leave for your program, please check the expiration dates on your cards to ensure that they will not expire while you are abroad. It is also very important that you make photocopies of all your debit/credit card information and leave them with someone you trust in case your card(s) is/are lost or stolen. Also scan and e-mail yourself a copy. Having some U.S. cash for cases where ATMs are not available or not working is a good idea. Consider bringing \$100-\$300 to keep as a reserve for this purpose.

Following are suggestions for spending money during the program, including estimates for medical expenses, personal spending, and gifts. Figures are based on recent student evaluations, though individual spending habits vary widely and **these costs are averages**.

A suggested* total amount of money to budget ranges from **U.S. \$1,325 to \$2,575**. To determine where you

might fall in this range, please examine your spending habits during a typical semester at your home school and consider any exceptional expenditures you may have on the program, including travel costs for your mid-semester break or a specific personal expense. Please budget approximately:

Required Program Expenses

Visa Registration (non-US passport holders):	varies
Visa Registration (US passport holders):	75 USD
Immunization:	varies
Travel to Launch city:	varies
Phone credit, data top-up	150-250 USD
US sim card (if applicable)	50 USD
Up-front medical costs (to be reimbursed):	400 - 1000 USD

Variable Personal Out-of-Pocket Expenses

Miscellaneous personal spending (i.e. dietary restrictions, excess baggage, laundry, personal hygiene, over the counter meds)	200-250 USD
Property insurance	varies
Accident and illness insurance whilst in the US (if applicable)	varies
Mid-Semester Break	300-700 USD
Books and supplies:	50 - 100 USD
Personal Local Transportation:	100-150 USD
Estimated total:	1,325 USD+ to 2,575USD+

**Personal Spending Budget from past student suggestions*

VISITORS AND FREE TIME

SIT/IHP strongly discourages and will not provide support for any visitors to students during the term, due to the rigorous nature of the program and the disruption that such visits cause in program flow and group dynamics. Students should be sure that relatives and friends are aware of this policy and that visits are scheduled for dates after the formal conclusion of the program. Students will not be excused from program

components to attend to visitors. See the Attendance and Participation section of the [Student Handbook](#).

Please note that any visitors during the course of the program must plan their own independent accommodations; SIT Study Abroad/IHP homestay families can accommodate only their assigned student and, due to cultural and contractual understandings with SIT, should not be asked to host students' guests.

During the program, students follow an intense schedule of classes, site visits and field-based learning assignments. Free time for pursuing an independent interest or hobby during the program will be limited. Your admissions counselor can advise you about particular interests you may have. For example, if you must keep in shape for your next athletic season, or if you play a musical instrument and want to know whether to bring it, we can help you to understand your schedule and any concerns or limitations that may exist.



MID-SEMESTER BREAK

There will be a mid-semester break within Ecuador. Mid-semester break dates and other relevant details will be sent in an email from your admissions counselor. Students are responsible for making their own mid-semester break plans and covering all costs during this time. **Students are not allowed to leave the country while on break.** The break is approximately one-week; therefore, we strongly discourage visits to the Galapagos Islands. Students are responsible for following all SIT/IHP rules during the break, including the avoidance of prohibited activities.

To help plan for your break, IHP coordinators may provide contact information of local resources (e.g., travel agents, volunteer or local opportunities).

However, you are fully responsible for all logistical and financial aspects of the mid-semester break and/or independent travel, including but not limited to accommodations, meals and transportation. If you need assistance with mid-semester costs, please contact the Program Director. SIT is not responsible for supervising students during independent travel, break, or time away from the program.

SIT **does not** allow participants to travel outside of the country where the mid-semester is based; break should be used as a time for rest and relaxation. Travel outside of the country can lead to visa complications, logistical concerns for re-joining the group, and increased fatigue from cumulative travel. There are many fun mid-semester break opportunities within each region and country.

You are responsible for advising your parents/guardians about your mid-semester break plans. You are also responsible for providing program staff with your travel destination(s) and relevant contact information.

You will be given phone numbers and email addresses of the program staff in case of emergency during break. Understand that contact may not be immediate.

PACKING GUIDELINES

CLOTHING GUIDELINES

Be sure to research what kind of weather to expect in each of the cities you visit, as well as local clothing customs. www.bbc.co.uk/weather has some great country guides. You will be traveling in both urban and rural areas, and will need to dress accordingly in order to avoid offending anyone. When you arrive to each country, you will receive an explanation about how to dress appropriately (both culturally and climate-wise) for each setting.

You will also have the opportunity to purchase local clothing, which may help you to assimilate and feel more comfortable in public. In all settings, however, it is important to dress respectfully. This means no torn, dirty or even well-worn clothing (seen as disrespectful), and no hats worn indoors.

Semi-formal, professional dress will be required for visits to high-profile organizations, but one or two nice outfits should suffice. There won't be many dry cleaners and washing machines won't have options like "delicate" or "permanent press". Clothes may be washed by hand and will typically be hung out to dry. This means you will

benefit from bringing items that are durable and won't take more than an afternoon (day at most) to dry.

COMPUTERS AND OTHER ELECTRONICS

Students are expected to bring a laptop/tablet with them for academic use. Keep in mind that your device(s) will be your personal property and responsibility. Before leaving home, remember to back up your computer to the cloud or on a hard drive that you leave at home to safeguard all your data in case your computer is lost or stolen. SIT recommends that you insure your technology or other valuables for full coverage in the event of theft or loss. SIT is not responsible for any duty tax you may have to pay when you enter each country, theft, or loss.

The Food Systems program requires students to be able to submit assignments electronically as requested by faculty. We recommend that you bring technology such as laptops, netbooks, tablets, or iPads to make this easier. *Note: Since our time in Malawi includes an extended rural homestay we will prioritize the charging of phones over computers and other technology. Appropriate modifications to assignment completion and submission protocols will reflect this limited access to electricity.

In the past, students who have brought tech compatible with the software Dropbox (<https://www.dropbox.com>) have been able to most easily access digital readings.

When considering how you will use your computer or other electronic device on IHP, though, remember:

- Computers (like cell phones) are frequent targets of theft and may get stolen. Keep them safe.
- Computers can break and are frequently more difficult and expensive to repair abroad. Invest in reliable equipment and take care of it. Faculty and coordinators cannot be expected to help students with computer repair or replacement and use of your computer equipment is at your own risk.
- Devices can detract from the experience of studying abroad (just as they can detract from your experience at home). The more time students spend with their devices, the less time they spend exploring the communities and connecting with homestay families, which are the most memorable aspects of students' experience. Be thoughtful about the quality and quantity of your use of technology.
- Computers, tablets, and phone are not allowed during guest lecturers and their use can be limited on site visits.

- Wireless internet is not always available throughout the semester, including in homestays. Be prepared for much less consistent and much slower access to the internet.

- As access to technology may be limited in some local contexts, it is important to be mindful of varying cultural norms around displaying technology, using technology, and in-person communication.

- Assignments are based largely on primary research in the field and assigned articles.

Do not bring other personal valuables – such as cameras, iPods, or recording devices—unless you are willing to guard them or to lose them. Items such as audio devices and cameras are usually safe at host family homes, but you may wish to consider how such items will be protected on field trips, on weekends, and in hostels.

Please see the following website for information about electricity, voltage and electrical adapters.
<http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/>

GIFTS

As you might imagine, it is common to be prepared with a gift to offer your homestay family in gratitude for their hospitality and as a means to share a part of your culture with them. This is a complicated issue and you should not feel pressured to have a gift. A thank you note or a small printed photo album of you reflecting your life at home as a remembrance are perfect gifts.

Once you are on the program and learn more about the local culture, you will discover other ways to thank your family. Remember to bring pictures of your friends and family to share.

WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT OBTAIN IN COUNTRY

You will be able to obtain much of what you need while traveling. However, specific products may not always be found in each country, and it can be difficult to procure items during rural homestays. If there is something you absolutely cannot live without, it's a good idea to make sure you pack it.

If you take prescription medications, make sure to obtain enough for the duration of your program before leaving your home country. It can be difficult or even impossible

to obtain specific medications in other countries. If carrying prescription medication, you should carry a letter from your doctor to prevent any concerns at customs or in transit. (Please see the “General Health Tips” section in the [Safety, Security, and Health](#) pre-departure document.)

ALUMNI CONTACTS

If you have further questions, please contact your admissions counselor and/or ask an alumni contact: <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/admitted-students/contact-a-former-student/>.

LUGGAGE

Please pack lightly and include only necessary items. You should be able to carry all your luggage significant distances on your own. Try to minimize both the number of bags and weight of your bag(s) since you will likely be acquiring more belongings while abroad. You'll want to have a bag that is easy to handle, waterproof (or at least water-resistant) and durable. Plan to fit everything between a small backpack or shoulder bag for daily use and a larger pack or duffel that can be carried as a backpack) for moving sites within and between countries. Less is more.

Please check the current requirements of the Transportation Security Administration (<http://www.tsa.gov>) as well as those of the airline on which you are flying for domestic and international baggage restrictions

Recommended luggage: a medium to large sized camping-style backpack or duffel bag that can be carried as a backpack, approximately 50-70 Liters. (*Due to the travel logistics of this program, we do not recommend suitcases on wheels.*)

Advantages:

- Easy to carry in any situation (ie: up stairs, up hills, on dirt paths, etc.)
- Easy to quickly fill and/or stuff clothing items, etc. into
- Loops and straps makes it easy to adjust size and/or attach additional stuff sacks, shoes, etc. to the outside
- Allows for hands-free movement throughout airports, etc.

- Top portion may unstrap for an additional waist-pack

Carry this with:

An additional small, lightweight, compressible weekend duffel or backpack is useful for short trips. Having a small bag and/or purse for daily and going out essentials is also recommended.



PACKING LIST

GENERAL

- 7 T-shirts or modest tank tops
- 2-3 long-sleeved shirts (varying degrees of warmth)
- 2 warm sweaters, sweatshirts, or fleece for layering
- **Light, packable rain jacket (required)**
- 3 pairs of comfortable pants (that are easy to wash and air dry, jeans can take a long time to dry)
- 1 pair of non jeans and nice shirt (appropriate for dressier occasions)
- 2 pair of athletic shorts/pants for comfort
- 1 pairs of long shorts, skirts, or dresses (covering your knees and for dressier occasions)
- 10 pairs of underwear
- 5 pairs of socks
- 2 pairs of legging if desired
- Shower shoes or Flip Flops
- Comfortable, durable sandals with a back-strap
- A pair of sneakers or lightweight, comfortable multi-purpose shoes like trail-running shoes (Hiking boots are not required, note these will get very dirty)
- Hat or cap (for cold weather)
- Scarf or bandana
- Bathing suit
- Pajamas
- 1 pair thermal leggings/long underwear and shirt
- Fleece or jacket that you can layer over other tops as necessary
- Smart phone (for requirements see Contact and Communications tab: <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/why-sit/health-safety-and-support>)
- Small backpack or purse for day or overnight use
- **Head lamp style flashlight (required)**
- Watch with alarm
- Extra battery pack for charging small electronics
- Re-usable water bottle
- Sleep sack (i.e. a sheet sewn at seams to make lightweight sack). This may be of good use at a hostel or on retreats/weekends
- Travel pillow (or a pillowcase to hold a sweater for long plane and bus rides)
- FAA-approved locks for your luggage
- Electrical adaptors (see image below for examples)
- Back-up batteries/charger for electronics
- Pens/pencils, notebook

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Passport

- Yellow WHO Card (see the [Safety, Security, and Health](#) document for more information)
- Proof of Yellow Fever vaccination (may be in your WHO card)
- 2 photocopies of your passport stored separately from your actual passport
- 2 passport photos
- A driver's license or other form of identification in addition to passport
- Medical documents and photocopies of all stored separately from the originals
- [A copy of Student iSOS Insurance card](#)

HEALTH/TOILETRIES

You will be able to buy and/or restock many of these supplies while you travel. Only bring small amounts to keep your luggage a manageable size.

- Adequate supply of any medications you use regularly
- Toothbrush, toothpaste, floss
- Shampoo, conditioner, soap
- Deodorant
- Quick-dry bath towel & washcloth/bandana
- Razor, shaving cream
- Hairbands, headbands, barrettes
- Sunblock
- Mosquito repellent
- Chapstick with SPF
- Comb or brush
- Nail clippers
- Contact lenses and solution, extra pair of glasses
- Earplugs (for loud housemates)
- Q-tips
- Imodium
- Laxatives or digestive aids such as Fiber supplements
- Motion sickness remedy if needed
- Small pack of wet-wipes

These items are optional and can be purchased as needed along the way; however, it is recommended to have a few of these things on hand. Students may want to coordinate buying some of these items to share once they meet at the program launch. Note: Your Fellow will be traveling with an Emergency Medical Kit at all times, but the Fellow is not your personal medical dispensary.

- Painkillers (such as Advil or Tylenol)
- Band-Aids
- Anti-bacterial hand sanitizer gel

- Hydrocortisone cream
- Antibacterial cream
- Aloe or burn cream
- Multi-vitamins
- Cold medicine (such as NyQuil)
- Decongestant
- Allergy medicine
- Re-hydration powder
- Probiotics

Remember to place all valuable items and prescriptions in your carry-on luggage while traveling and all sharp items in your checked luggage.

OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Ziploc bags, plastic bags or compression sacks to help organize your belongings
- Reusable grocery bag
- Reusable spoon and fork
- Small flashdrive
- Small packable umbrella
- Money belt or small necktie bag to carry valuable documents
- Journal
- Sunglasses with UV protection
- Hard case for glasses so they don't get crushed
- Safety pins, rubber bands, paper clips, stapler and/or duct tape
- Pocket knife (keep in checked luggage)
- One or two books to read and then share
- Photos of your home, family, and friends (consider bringing extra photos to give away)
- Gifts for host family in first country (unique items from your hometown work great)
- List of addresses of friends and family
- Travel mug and coffee filter (strongly suggested for coffee drinkers)
- A4 Tyvek or plastic envelopes to keep papers organized
- Sewing kit
- Small Tupperware
- Stain stick
- Thank you cards for your host families (minimum 3)
- Camera, extra memory

Italy Type F



Malawi Type G

