



# COUNTRY OVERVIEW

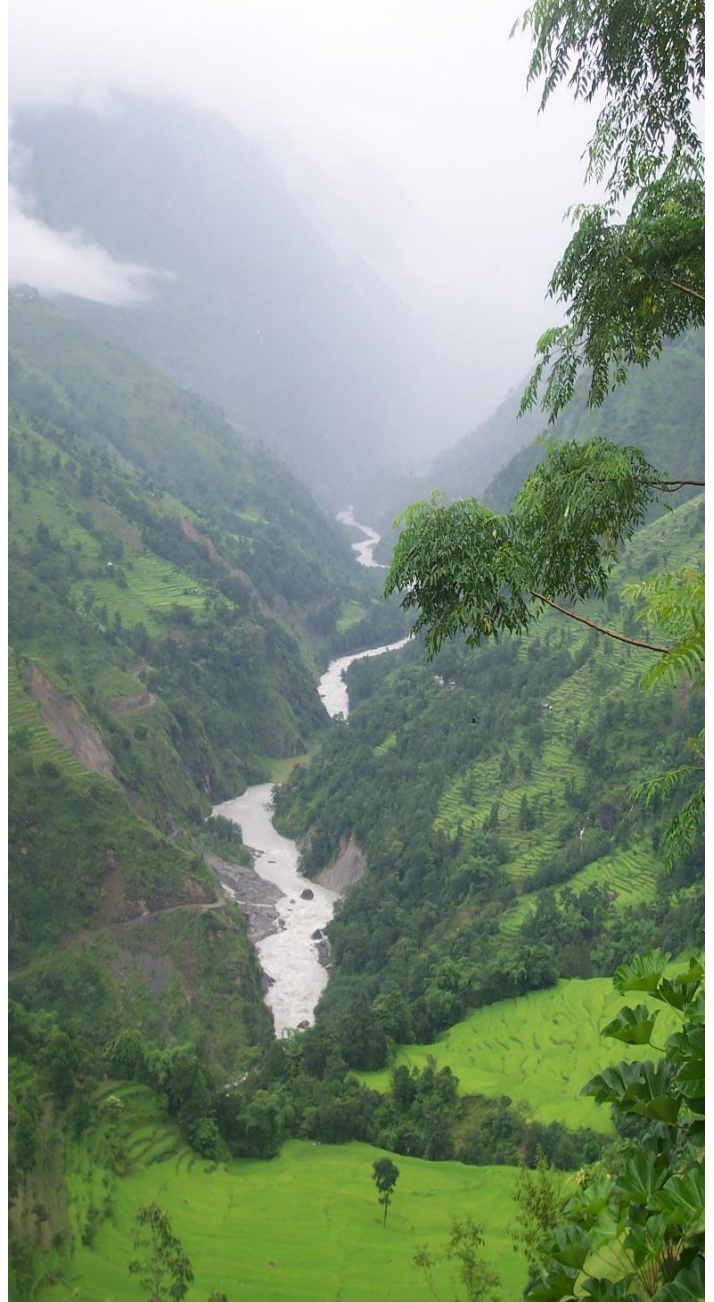
# & PACKING GUIDELINES

**Nepal: Geoscience in the Himalayas  
Summer 2024**



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# COUNTRY OVERVIEW

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Nepal, land-linked between China and India, is small in terms of square miles, but contains many of the highest mountains in the world. The geological contrasts within the country of Nepal are dramatic and unequalled: in a distance of less than 150 kilometers the mountains rise from the flat Ganges River plain near sea level to the highest point on Earth; rainfall varies from more than 5 meters per year (16 feet) to less than 30 cm (12 inches) from one side of the mountains to the other; river valleys cut down 6000 meters between adjacent peaks. The Himalayas are undergoing perpetual transformation – these changes affect and are affected by human settlements that line the valleys, top the ridges and spread across the mountainsides. This region provides a particularly powerful opportunity to studying how societal decisions affect the geohazard risk faced by residents and to analyze steps for risk mitigation that also align with sustainable development practices.



The program is based out of Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, a busy South Asian city where both modern and traditional lifestyles live side by side amidst ancient Hindu and Buddhist shrines, stupas, and temples. Much of the program will be spent in rural areas allowing for a transect of Nepal's geological

and cultural regions. After centuries of feudal rule, Nepal is emerging as a multi-party democracy grappling with the challenges of minority representation and multicultural differences.



## CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY

Climatic regions vary widely in Nepal, ranging from hot tropical jungles in the Terai to the permanent snowfields of the Himalayas. Kathmandu stands at an altitude of just less than 1350 m (4500 ft), nestled in the Kathmandu Valley; at times during excursions, students may travel to altitudes from 400-3800 meters (12,500 ft). Lower altitudes are hot and humid. Temperatures at higher altitudes can be quite cool, especially at night. You should be particularly aware of sun exposure and hydration when at high altitudes. Most homes and buildings do not have heat, and the summer monsoon means almost daily rain (mostly at night), so please plan accordingly.

Location	Height/Elevation		Average Temperature (°C)					
			Jun		Jul		Aug	
	Meter	Feet	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
Kathmandu	1333	4372	25-30	15-20	25-30	20-25	25-30	15-20
Malekhu	372	1221	30-35	20-25	30-35	25-30	30-35	20-25
Manang	3551	11644	20-25	10-15	20-25	10-15	20-25	10-15
Pokhara	810	2656	20-25	15-20	25-30	15-20	25-30	15-20



## LOCAL CUSTOMS

Generally, visitors to Nepal find Nepali people to be welcoming and flexible about differences. However, learning a bit more about local norms can help you to make deeper connections during your time in Nepal. Instead of a homestay, this program has Nepali geology majors as full participants on the courses in the program. This is a tremendous opportunity to make friends and learn about Nepal and Nepali culture, geology, and educational system. The key to having a successful experience on a program like this is compromise and adaptation. The American students will be immersed within Nepal and Nepali culture BUT within our group, Americans are the majority. In different ways you will each be living in someone else's community, and you will be partly on your home ground and partly on the home ground of another. We will go over more during the orientation, but a few Do's and Don'ts are covered here:

- Do greet people with prayer hands and “*namaste*”
- Do take shoes off at the door and leave them there
- Do walk around other people, tables, plates, books, etc. rather than step over
- Do eat and pass things with your right hand (not left)
- Do point with an open hand (not a single finger)
- Do share things, such as snacks, with others
- Do be particularly polite and respectful to people elder to you
- Don't wear revealing clothing
- Don't point the soles of your feet at anyone or at religious object when sitting on the floor

## DIET

Participating in the local food culture is a central aspect of daily life in Nepal. Participating in the local food culture is a central aspect of daily life in Nepal. You should be willing to try the local cuisine. Special or restricted diets may not be fully available. By trying to replicate your diet at home you will miss out on an important part of your experience in Nepal.

The staple of the Nepali diet that is served for most meals is *dhal bhaat*, a meal centered around rice and lentils with sides of curried vegetables, pickle,

and sometimes meat. It is quite easy to maintain a vegetarian diet in Nepal, though it is more difficult to



be vegan or to maintain a kosher diet. In urban areas, most people eat three meals a day and mealtimes are similar to those in the west, but in rural areas, there are usually only two main meals, at mid-morning and late evening, supplemented by snacks. The program will usually have three meals per day near the times most Americans would consider typical.

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. In some locations, we cannot guarantee zero exposure to certain foods or a given allergen.

## SAFETY, SECURITY, AND HEALTH

Maintaining good health is essential to having a successful study abroad experience.

SIT recommends doing your own research to stay up to date on [CDC guidelines](#). It will be critical that you educate yourself about the potential health and safety hazards that may exist in your areas of travel and make informed decisions about what preventative measures to take prior to departure. SIT encourages students to have an informed discussion with your doctor and/or a travel clinician about what vaccines and other prophylactic medication you should receive.

Consider your normal routines for maintaining your physical and mental health & wellbeing. How might your program impact your ability to continue these

routines? With this in mind, SIT strongly recommends bringing a full semester's supply of prescription medication(s). Getting a prescription filled outside of one's home country is very difficult, if not impossible. Equally challenging is receiving medication from home by mail. Therefore, students should bring an entire semester's worth of medication with them. Students are also advised to bring several extra inhalers and/or Epi-pens if prescribed.

Students should speak with their health care provider and/or a travel clinician and consult [CDC guidelines](#) regarding required and recommended immunizations and country regulations. Students participating on programs that require the yellow fever vaccine, will receive a signed and stamped "yellow card" after getting vaccinated, known as the International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (ICVP, which can be printed here). It is important to bring this card with you when traveling to the program. SIT recommends that students insert this document into their passport so that it is easily accessible when requested by immigration officials. Even if yellow fever is not a requirement for your program, it is good practice to bring a copy of your immunization record with you, including your Covid 19 immunization card(s).

If you have any questions, please reach out to the [Student Health Office](#).

While we cannot answer specific questions about what medication is and is not available locally, in general, all common medications (most antibiotics, malaria medications, etc) are available locally at reasonable prices.

Because of its topography, the Kathmandu Valley can sustain high levels of pollution, fog and smog. Students with asthma and/or allergies may find that the environment exacerbates these allergies. It is therefore recommended that you make sure to bring extra medication and talk to your doctor about self-care during the program.

Malaria does not exist in the Kathmandu Valley or other regions the program will be visiting; however, if you plan to travel to lowland regions of Nepal or South Asia after the program, you may need to consider malaria medication, which is available locally at low cost. Consult a travel medicine specialist in the U.S. for advice.

You might consider browsing the website of one of Nepal's foremost Western medical clinics, the CIWEC clinic in Kathmandu. CIWEC has been at the forefront not only of treating travel-related and tropical illness for nearly two decades, it has also been in the lead in medical research on gastro-intestinal parasites and altitude-related sickness. They have an excellent website that gives information specifically on health recommendations for Nepal: [www.ciwec-clinic.com](http://www.ciwec-clinic.com).

### ***Staying safe and healthy in Nepal***

**Drinking water:** Tap water in Nepal is NOT safe to drink untreated. All water for drinking should first be boiled, filtered, or treated with iodine, chlorine, or UV light. Commercially bottled water usually fine hygiene-wise, but excessive use of plastic bottles has led to a significant trash problem in Nepal. Please buy bottled water only when you really need to; and then check the cap seal to ensure the bottle has not been tampered with (i.e., old bottled refilled with untreated water). It is best not to drink any beverage with added ice. If you want a cold drink, buy one that has been refrigerated. This is the norm in Nepal anyhow; ice is uncommon.

**Food safety:** Pathogens which can lead to digestive upset tend to get into food through two main routes: 1) contact with untreated water and 2) lack of refrigeration. The safest way to ensure food safety is to eat hot, freshly-cooked food from reputable establishments. A number of restaurants (especially in tourist areas) offer uncooked salad ingredients but advertise "soaked in 2% iodine solution". In many cases, these are indeed soaked as advertised and are fine, but if you wish to be conservative do not eat raw foods. Similarly, meats are usually fine if cooked in major tourist restaurants (where they have refrigerators) or our chosen field stay sites (where it will be freshly killed and cooked immediately). However, again, if you wish to be conservative, stick to a vegetarian diet. Steer away from dried fish and meats. Fresh fish should be fine. As delicious as they are, be cautious of Momo (dumpling) sauces at "local" restaurants because they may be diluted with untreated water. To eat fruit, make sure that you peel it and rinse in clean water yourself.

**Hands:** Wash them regularly!

**Stay hydrated:** Drink plenty of water but do not forget that when it is hot your body needs salt too. Know your limits in hot weather and avoid heat exhaustion.

**Landslide safety:** Landslides occur in Nepal. We will take extra precautions to be safe from landslides and you will be briefed upon arrival in Kathmandu. It is important to always be aware of the hill slope area above you. While trekking, we will not travel through steep-sloped regions if it is actively raining.

**Vehicle and road safety:** Kathmandu is a large city with narrow streets and a lot of trucks, car, bike and pedestrian traffic. Traffic moves on the left-hand side of the road and drivers switch lanes more erratically than in the U.S., so students will need to be careful. Horns are used to both warn you and move you out of the way, even if there is nowhere to move to! Be especially vigilant about walking on roads, both in the city and on field trips. Do not get into “herd” mentality as expect vehicles to get out of your way.

**City smarts:** As with any other city, students should be aware of their belongings, and be sure not to put themselves in situations where they are not able to make good decisions. In general, students from past terms have said that they felt quite safe in Kathmandu and in other areas of Nepal. That said, do not go out alone at night.

**Animals:** Avoid any animal (especially dogs) acting oddly as it could have rabies. Cats and dogs are not family pets in Nepal the way they are in the U.S. Do not try to pet them. Nearly half of the tourist rabies infections come from monkey bites and popular tourist sites. Do not approach or touch monkeys! When passing a mule train in the mountains, always walk on the uphill side of the trail or you could be bumped off. It is best to move upslope and wait for the train to pass.

**Insects & leeches:** Although we will not be in malaria-infected regions, it is best to protect against insect and leech bites. Long pants and long sleeves are the most dependable ways to thwart bites. DEET can be an effective deterrent, but it is toxic, so use it sparingly and make sure to apply it away from others who might be sensitive to it. We will use mosquito coils where needed for sleeping comfort.

**Lock doors:** Be sure to lock your door whenever you leave your room when we stay at tea houses

(small trekking hotels) and hotels. Although thefts are rare, it will be stressful for you and the establishment owners if something disappears. Similarly remove valuables from first floor windowsills at night so no one can easily grab something as they walk outside the building.

## EMOTIONAL WELLBEING



Cultural adjustment, academic challenges, a full schedule of classes, travel, field-based activities, and the dynamics of your SIT group can present new challenges to maintaining a good attitude and healthy emotional state. It is important to consider coping strategies in advance. For some students, this may mean personal journaling, exercise, music, movies, leisure reading, or coffee at your favorite café. Thinking ahead and planning for the ups and downs of your time abroad will ensure that you have the tools that you need to take good care of yourself and maintain a positive outlook.

If you have used counseling services on a regular basis, SIT advises that you discuss this program with your mental health professional as early as possible prior to departure. In some cases, students have elected to maintain a phone or email relationship with a provider in the US, though the practicalities of time differences and program demands may make such an arrangement difficult to maintain on a regular basis.

Counseling and psychiatric care are not as widely available nor utilized in Nepal in the same way as in the U.S., though there is an American-trained psychiatrist on call at the CIWEC clinic in Kathmandu. Students should not plan on having regular access to local psychological services.



## ACCOMMODATIONS

During the time in Kathmandu, students will stay in a small tourist hotel near the SIT program office located in the city's Boudha neighborhood. Field accommodations will include guest houses and small hostels, called tea houses, as well as dorm-room style accommodations or tourist hotels.



## TRANSPORTATION

Many areas of Nepal still have no roads or roads that are not passable during monsoon season. While conducting field work, we will be hiking for many hours every day. You should be prepared to walk a lot, including in higher altitudes. You do not need to be an Olympic athlete, but you should be in good physical shape, able to handle rough trails, uneven terrain, and some scrambling.

For whole-group excursions within Kathmandu and other regions on the road system of Nepal, we will use hired buses, vans, or jeeps. Short flights are also a possibility. In Kathmandu, when moving about personally or in a small group you will mostly travel on foot or public transportation (local minibuses). Taxis are widely available and reasonably priced. Students should expect traffic congestion during commuting times and pollution related to the traffic in Kathmandu. The Nepal program center does not provide bikes for student use but bikes can be cheaply rented nearby. However, most students prefer to walk given the chaotic nature of the streets in Kathmandu, which are narrow and frequently unpaved.

## 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 changing program activities can complicate communication. We have a few suggestions regarding communication during the term, based upon our experience.

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, thereby avoiding frustration and making connections more meaningful. You should also consider the impact of constant communication with friends and family at home on your cultural immersion. While you are encouraged to share with those close to you and use them for support whenever necessary, it is also important to remember that you are on the program for just one term, and that you get out of the program what you put into it.

## PHONES AND E-MAIL

All students are required to have a working cell phone while on SIT Study Abroad programs. This policy is part of our commitment to student safety and will facilitate communication in case of an emergency. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they are reachable by phone at all times. Students are expected to keep the phone charged and stocked with airtime/minutes and to notify staff of, and replace, lost or stolen phones. Please note that students who do not comply with the cell phone policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

**Telephone:** Landline calls from Nepal are very expensive (\$3/minute) whereas cellular calls are quite cheap (<5¢/minute). You should bring an **unlocked** smart phone with you to Nepal. The program will issue you a local SIM card so you can use the local cell network. "Unlocked" means that your phone will accept a different SIM. Most carriers have a process for requesting a phone to be unlocked. If your phone is still being paid off, they may not allow you to unlock it. If you do not have an unlocked phone the program will issue you a simple handset cell phone to use. While you can use the local cell network to send/receive international calls and texts, please keep in mind that a functioning phone on the local network is an integral part of our safety and security procedures and students are required to recharge their phones keeping at least a

Rs. 300 balance at all times. These SIMS/phones belong to SIT and if lost, students will be required to replace.

**E-mail:** There are some Internet cafes in Kathmandu and other larger towns from which you will be able to access your home e-mail account, but connections are slow. The program site also has wireless access for students, but keep in mind that this is only during non-class business hours and bandwidth is limited.

## MAILINGS

Posted letters can be sent to the following address:

### Student Name

c/o School for  
International Training  
PO Box 23923  
Boudha  
Kathmandu  
Nepal

However, you will not be physically in Kathmandu for large stretches of the program, making the already slow USA-Nepali mail even more delayed.

Sending and receiving packages is even more challenging. Unlike receiving a package here in the US, 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 (due to customs delays) that the recipient is back in the US by the time the items are received. **For these reasons, unless it is an emergency, do not plan on sending or receiving packages.** Sending valuables is particularly discouraged. (This certainly includes laptops! For this reason, make sure you bring your laptop **with you** on the plane if you think you will want it in country). If you will be celebrating a birthday during the program, please inform parents, grandparents, significant others, and anyone else who might think of sending you packages, of the above. If a situation arises in which it is truly necessary to receive a package, work with your Academic Director or other SIT staff in Nepal to arrange for **DHL or other courier service**.

## MONEY

In addition to tuition, SIT Study Abroad program fees cover room and board throughout the program. When room and/or board are not taken with the group, students will be given a stipend to cover related expenses. The program will cover travel costs for excursions that are part of the normal program itinerary.

The local currency in Nepal is the Nepali Rupee. Nepal is generally inexpensive, although inflation rates are rising steadily. ATMs are readily available in Kathmandu and in many large towns throughout the country and can be relied upon to withdraw significant amounts of rupees (up to 25,000 rupees at a time). Although possible, it is difficult and expensive to transfer or wire funds to Nepal. It is also possible to get cash advances, in rupees, against a MasterCard or Visa credit card, but only in limited amounts. Keep in mind that debit/ATM cards will usually not work for purchases the same as a credit card would, so we recommend both. Aim to have the US\$ cash you bring to be relatively fresh and crisp bills in several denominations (\$20, \$50, \$100). If you bring travelers checks (less common now but still used) American Express appear to be the ones most easily replaced if lost or stolen. Please consider what balance of cash, traveler’s checks and credit/debit cards you will need. There is a safe in the program center to securely store your excess cash and cards.

If using a debit and/or credit card, you should contact your bank and/or credit card companies regarding your travel plans. This is very important; if you do not inform these companies that you will be away, when they see charges from another country, 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. If they will expire while you are overseas, please contact your bank and/or credit card companies for early renewal. It is also very important that you make photocopies of all your debit/credit card information



and leave them with someone you trust just in case your card(s) is/are lost or stolen.

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 **US\$600 to \$900**. To determine where you might fall in this range, please examine your spending habits during a typical summer term at your home school and consider any exceptional expenditures you may have on the program.

Common things that students spend money on are souvenirs, clothes or field items, internet café, phone calls, extra snacks, and luxury beverages. The program will provide all major meals and some group tea/coke breaks but if you like to have ready snacks at all times or multiple drinks, you will be buying some of them on your own. If you defer buying field supplies until arrival in Nepal, you will naturally need more money than someone who already has everything.

Check current exchange rates:  
<http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>



**Meal allowance:** Occasionally students will arrange their own food. At these times they will receive an appropriate allowance to cover the costs.

**Local travel:** Students are responsible to cover these expenses during personal movement around cities.

**Books & supplies:** Students are held accountable to return equipment, borrowed books, certain copied readings, equipment, and some supplies. Students are required to pay the cost of replacement for any lost or stolen SIT equipment, and grades may be withheld if there is an issue.

Please budget approximately:

Personal spending (from past student suggestions):	300 USD
Books, printing, supplies:	50 USD
Up-front medical costs:	100 USD
Potential field study project (FSP) travel expenses:	25-300 USD
Visas and entry permit:	125 USD (cash)
Estimated total:	600-900 USD

## VISITORS AND FREE TIME

**SIT strongly discourages and will not provide support for any visitors to students during the term,** SIT strongly discourages and will not provide support for any visitors to students during the term, due to the rigorous nature of the programs 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 Attendance Policy.

During the program, students follow an intense schedule of classes 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.

If a student wishes to travel independently, they must submit a request that will be reviewed by the Academic Director and the Student Health, Safety & Wellbeing Regional Manager. SIT reserves the right to deny independent travel requests.

## PACKING GUIDELINES

### 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. While we will be trekking on this program, keep in mind that this is not like backpacking in the states where you must carry food, cooking utensils and the like; while trekking can be strenuous with lots of uphill and downhill hiking, it is more a social and cultural experience of walking from village to village where we stay in tea houses. So, while you will not need technical or camping gear (although some student prefer their own sleeping bags) be prepared to carry your backpack, and pack accordingly.

Students report that a medium sized backpack (about 40 liters) is most useful during fieldwork and trekking. If you do not have a backpack already, it is not necessary to go out and buy one just for this program; adequate locally made backpacks are available for sale. While we are trekking, each student will be issued a medium-sized duffle bag into which all overnight gear must fit. Porters or vehicles will carry the overnight luggage; while students carry their day supplies such as geology equipment, extra clothes, water, first aid kit, and sometimes a packed lunch.

If carrying prescription medications, 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.)

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.

Further details regarding the current independent travel protocols can be found here:

<https://studyabroad.sit.edu/health-safety-and-well-being/risk-management/covid-19-risk-management-protocols/>

### CLOTHING GUIDELINES

Dress appropriately: although Nepalese have seen nearly all kinds of dress (or virtual undress) on foreign tourists, traditional tastes are more conservative. Show respect for local customs and aesthetics and open yourself to more positive interactions with locals by adhering to modesty standards. If you want to wear shorts or skirts, make sure they come to or below the knees. Avoid revealing halter-tops. Short-sleeved shirts are probably best although tank tops have become more common with Nepali youth. It is important to dress nicely and present yourself as reasonably neat and well-groomed. Your favorite torn and worn clothes should stay at home! Also, remember to bring at least one “nicer” outfit for special events or evenings out.

Climate will be humid and warm-to-hot in the lower altitudes but more comfortable in the evenings. At higher altitudes day temperatures will be comfortable but it can approach freezing at night. The summer is monsoon time in Nepal, but the majority of the rain falls at night.

Clothing is inexpensive in Nepal and a wide variety of trekking and local styles are available in Kathmandu. Many students pack planning to purchase some things here – but again, your shopping time will be limited.



**Shoes:** It is very important to have a comfortable pair of boots or hiking shoes. Lightweight boots or sturdy hiking shoes are perfectly fine – it is not necessary and not recommended to have heavy-duty hiking boots. Make sure the shoes fit and are



suitable for rain and a range of climates. You should also have a pair of comfortable, tough sandals. The same should be considered as for your clothes; do not bring ragged, beat up, shoes and make sure that they are comfortable as there is lots of walking in Nepal. If you have bigger than average feet, do not expect to be able to find shoes to fit you in the local market, so please plan accordingly.

## EQUIPMENT

With a few exceptions, trekking in Nepal is not like backpacking in the west: it is usually from village to village where teahouses provide food and lodging. If you plan on conducting a field study project in a remote area or doing a lot of trekking after the program, keep in mind that most equipment you would need is available for rent or purchase in Kathmandu at a variety of quality and price levels.

Students need their own reasonably sized daypacks. In the past, some students have been happy to have their own sleeping bags (rating from 10° to 30° F), whereas others have been preferred to use local blankets and skip a sleeping bag entirely (100% cleanliness not guaranteed). If you go with local blankets you could still bring a bag liner. There is no need for tents or sleeping pads. If you already have a water purification filter or UV sterilizer, it would be good to bring it along. If you do not have one, it is not necessary to buy one if you are comfortable drinking iodine- or chlorine-treated water or taking turns to use the group water filters while we are trekking. As many of us share the group filters, you may need to get up a little earlier to wait your turn. Treated water is available at our Program Center in Kathmandu and a few places on the excursion. Please do not plan to rely on bottled water as plastic litter is a troubling environmental issue.

In order to conduct geoscience fieldwork, it is essential to have a set-up that will allow for easy access to field notebook, pencils, compass, maps, etc. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways. Please refer to the final pages in the document for more details on field equipment.

## COMPUTERS AND OTHER ELECTRONICS

It is very highly recommended for you to bring a laptop computer. Internet cafes are becoming increasingly rare so finding a public computer that

you can use in Nepal will consume valuable time you could otherwise use for doing write-up. **If you bring a laptop, the computer will be your personal property and responsibility and it is recommended that you insure it. SIT is not responsible for any duty tax you may have to pay when you enter the country, theft, or loss.**

An increasing number of geoscience apps are being made for tablets. Google Earth can be a particularly powerful way to view satellite images and other apps can help with various field measurements. If you already own a tablet and want to invest in a rugged field case for it, you could consider bringing it along. Laptops will be left in Kathmandu or Pokhara but a tablet in a sturdy case could be brought on the excursion. Initial assignments will be done with pencil and paper but students have found a tablet to be useful during independent field study project fieldwork. **As with laptops, tablets are your personal property and responsibility.**

The program center provides Internet access during business hours. You will also be able to find access to the Internet/e-mail through Internet shops/cafes in Kathmandu and Pokhara. In nearly all cases Internet speed will be significantly slower than typical speeds in the USA. Printing is not available at the program center so for printing papers you should have a flash drive to take to internet cafes.

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



If you plan to bring electric equipment, check first to see if it will work on 220V. Most modern electrical equipment is able to take a range of different power systems, thus necessitating only a plug shape change, not actual power conversion. To check your equipment, look at the power adapter unit (the box somewhere along the power cord). If you can find "Input: 100-240V" it means the equipment can input Nepal's 220V as well as the 110V in the USA. You will just need to change the shape of the plug prongs by using a plug adapter. We recommend

against bringing electrical equipment requiring only 110V because that will require a power converter, which is more expensive and bulky. Plug adapters (and power converters) are available in Nepal, but they can be difficult to find so it is best to bring them from the States to save on hassle. Many Nepali receptacles will actually accommodate Asian, European, and American plug shapes but you cannot count on it all the time, particularly in older buildings.

## WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT OBTAIN IN COUNTRY

Most consumer goods are now available in Kathmandu. Imported products from Europe carry a price tag comparable to the U.S. and offer a very limited choice in brand names or varieties. Items from Nepal and other Asian countries are less expensive alternatives and are often counterfeits of international products. Therefore, although the quality may sometimes be questionable, you should be able to find some form of almost all goods.

Many of the items listed on the packing guidelines are available in Kathmandu, although they may not be exactly the kind you want, they may cost more than in the U.S., and you may spend time searching them out locally. If you are very particular about the type and quality of certain items, then plan to bring them with you.

Laundry facilities are available for a reasonable price in Kathmandu and Pokhara. Elsewhere you will have to wash all your clothes by hand yourself most, if not all, the time. The program will bring laundry soap for group use on the excursion.



## GIFTS

Many students are glad they came prepared with a few small gifts to offer Nepali friends and classmates as a means to share a part of our culture with them. Try to choose gifts that represent you or the part of the country and/or community you live in. Think about what your city, state, or local artisans produce. Draw upon your personal interests or hobbies for ideas. Gifts certainly do not need to be expensive or elaborate. Remember to bring pictures of your friends and family to share.

Bring a small pocket-sized album or make a digital album on a mobile device with photos of your family, home, neighborhood, school, holidays, etc., as these are invaluable in breaking the ice when meeting new people. When selecting photographs to share with people you meet in Nepal, you should remain aware of the Nepalese attitudes regarding dress and displays of affection between men and women. Pictures should not feature revealing or extremely untidy dress; pictures of boyfriends and girlfriends should be tasteful and somewhat conservative.

## ALUMNI CONTACTS

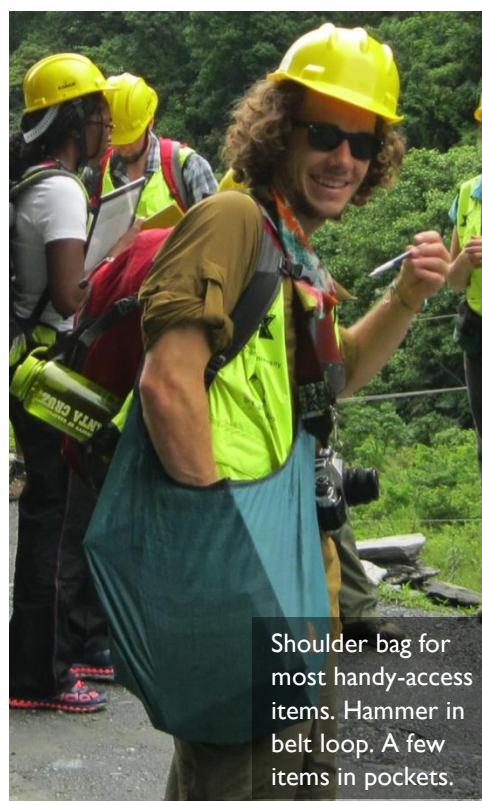
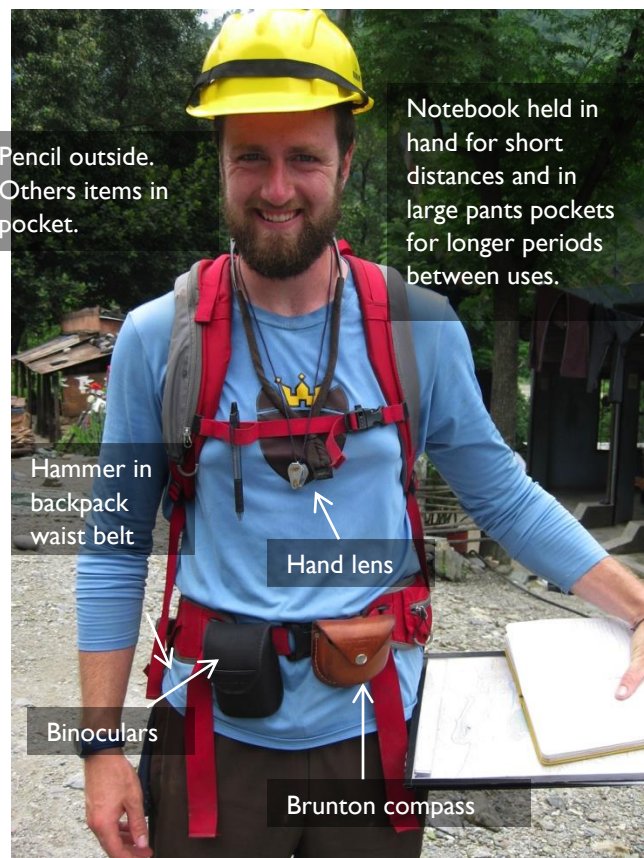
If you have further questions, please contact your admissions counselor and/or ask an alumni contact: <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/admitted-students/contact-a-former-student/>.

**Don't miss the field equipment details and suggested packing list on the following pages!**



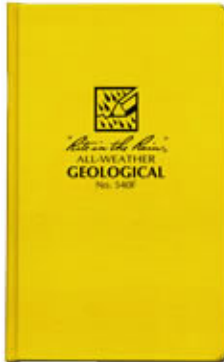
## GEOSCIENCE FIELD EQUIPMENT

In order to conduct geoscience fieldwork, it is essential to have a set-up that will allow for easy access to field notebook, pencils, compass, hammer, hand lens, acid bottle\* and maps. Here are several ways this can be accomplished. (\*Acid bottles will be available to borrow from the SIT Center in Nepal. Do not bring acid.)



## REQUIRED GEOSCIENCE EQUIPMENT

- Rite-in-Rain **Geological Format** field books (No. 540F)
- Notebook holder/pouch/pocket – many people use one that fits on a belt and has quick Velcro opening and pockets for pens/pencils but the main thing is just to have the notebook in a location that is secure but handy. A notebook holder like the one pictured here is recommended but there are other organizational options (see previous page). Notebook holders can be purchased at the SIT Center in Nepal for ~\$10.



- Mechanical pencils/leads – try out different lead hardness to see what you like; most geoscientists tend to use 2H or HB
- ≥10x hand lens & neck strap – Hasting Triplet (~\$36) is best quality because it has the least lens distortion. Do not waste your money on anything less than ~\$15.
- Survey-grade azimuth compass such as a Brunton Transit, Silva Ranger, or equivalent. Azimuth compass will have numbers 0-360°. Quadrant compasses (0-90°) do not work well. Some departments have Brunton compasses available for check out by students. If that is not an option for you and you do not want to invest in the full cost of a Brunton yourself, buy a Silva or Suunto of the style pictured below (right) and described in Chapter 2 of the required text: *Coe's Geologic Field Techniques*. **The important features are: sighting mirror, declination adjustment, clinometer, and azimuth numbering.**



Selection of colored pencils and pens (and a sharpener) – you will need to color in maps using colored pencils and ink in lines on final maps

- Plastic folder for holding papers – the ones with internal dividers are particularly helpful for organizing items such as maps and air photos
- USB flash drive

Potential online sources for geological field equipment that seem to have competitive prices

<http://ascscientific.com/>

<http://geology.com/store/>

## OPTIONAL BUT GREAT TO BRING IF YOU HAVE THEM

- Clear plastic map case (also called a map board) – Many people make these for themselves from two ~9"x12" plexiglass sheets hinged together at one end by a metal hinge or duct tape. They allow you to view and even write on your maps/air photos without completely exposing them to the elements. If you do not bring your own, you will be able to get the materials to make one from the SIT Center.
- Rock hammer – rock hammers are available for checkout from the SIT Center but if you have your own, please bring it.
- Compact binoculars – if you have a pair, bring them; they are very useful of viewing inaccessible features.
- Pack cover – you will be given a heavy plastic liner bag for your daypack but a nylon cover is also highly advised. They are available for purchase in Kathmandu if you do not already have one.
- Digital camera with a remote. Phone cameras are sufficient but, if you have a digital camera with a remote or phone-control app, that will be valuable for one of the assignments.
- Safety glasses – if your sunglasses cover your eyes well, you can use them for eye protection when using your rock hammer. If you do not bring adequately eye-protective glasses you will need to buy a pair of safety glasses from the SIT Center (~\$5).



# PACKING LIST

## GENERAL

- 3 pairs trousers (quick-dry fabrics are best; light cotton is also ok)
- Below-knees shorts/skirt (opt.)
- 3-4 work T-shirts/blouses (quick-dry fabrics highly recommended as cotton takes a long time to dry)
- Evening shirt (clean)
- Pale-color long-sleeved shirt (for sun and bugs)
- Fleece jacket or sweater (not cotton)
- Light raincoat or poncho
- Underwear
- 3-4 pairs hiking socks (for sweating in)
- Evening socks (clean to change into)
- Sun hat
- Hiking shoes/boots
- Sports sandals
- Small fast-dry towel
- Handkerchief/bandana
- Hat & gloves (high altitude evenings)
- Thin long underwear (silk or polypro, not cotton)
- One nicer outfit for formal visit or dinner out
- 1-2 other outfits for around Kathmandu/Pokhara
- Fleece vest or thin warm long-sleeved shirt (opt.)
- Ankle gaiters (there will be leeches) (opt.)

## TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Passport
- 2 passport photos for visas
- Yellow WHO Card/International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis
- Two photocopies of your passport, stored separately from your actual passport
- Photocopy of visa (if applicable)
- Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination and/or booster encouraged

## HEALTH/TOILETRIES

- An adequate supply of any **prescription** medication you are already taking and a copy of the prescription
- Extra pair of eyeglasses or contacts and plenty of cleaning solution, if used

- Iodine tablets/drops or LifeStraw or Sawyer emergency water filter (LifeStraw or Sawyer filter HIGHLY recommended [~\$20])
- Sunscreen
- Personal toiletries

**Some individual venues may still require masks for entrance. The CDC recommends a close-fitting and protective mask that is comfortable for daily use.**

## RESEARCH EQUIPMENT

- 2 Rite-in-the-Rain **Geological Format** No. 540F field books (<http://www.riteintherain.com/>)
- Notebook holder for handy access
- Mechanical pencils/leads
- Colored pencils/pens
- Survey-grade compass (Brunton Transit or Silva Ranger)
- Hand lens ( $\geq 10\times$ ) & neck strap
- Plastic folder for holding papers
- USB flash drive
- Digital camera – phone camera is sufficient but if you have a camera with a remote, that will be of value for one of the assignments (optional but nice)
- Belt or waist pack to hold field gear (such as hammer, notebook holder, compass)

## GEAR

- Day pack (not too big/fancy but not tiny)
- Pack cover (for rain protection; can be purchased locally if needed)
- Water bottles (minimum 2 liters)
- Sunglasses (or safety glasses)
- Headlamp/flashlight & batteries
- Few heavy-duty Ziploc bags

## OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS

- Visa or MasterCard credit card for emergencies
- Debit/ATM Card and cash
- Laptop

## PERSONAL FIRST AID KIT (PROGRAM STAFF WILL CARRY EXTENSIVE KIT)

- Pepto-Bismol

- Ibuprofen/aspirin
- Cough drops
- Imodium (in case of diarrhea while on a bus)
- Blister bandages, KT tape, or moleskin (for blisters)
- Band-Aids
- Topical antibiotic (ex. Neosporin)
- Tweezers
- Insect repellent (opt.)

## OPTIONAL

- Sleeping bag (10 to 30° F) or bag liner (alternatively you can use local blankets)
- Clear plastic map board
- Rock hammer
- Binoculars

- Tablet (esp. iPad) & rugged case
- Small folding umbrella (highly recommended; works for sun or rain)
- Needle/thread
- Fanny pack
- Journal/reading books
- Playing cards or other travel games
- Cord for clothes line and other uses
- Few clothespins for hanging laundry
- Family/home pictures
- Water pump filter or UV sterilizer
- Lock for your duffle bag and/or luggage
- Small recharging battery (ex. Mobili or iBeek)
- Handful of power bars or other easy snacks
- Swim suit

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

