

IHP Human Rights: Movements, Power, and Resistance: USA – Nepal – Jordan – Chile:

Country Overview & Packing Guidelines

Fall 2025

Country Overview

GENERAL INFORMATION

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 human rights and social movements.

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 human rights activists, public figures, government and organizational leaders, local academics, artists, and citizens from all walks of life who are directly involved in the topics of study.

IHP is also unique in that a **Visiting Faculty** will travel with the student group for the duration of the program. The Visiting Faculty teaches two courses over the semester and works 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

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common with many roles in IHP, faculty will assume multiple responsibilities including teacher, co-explorer, advisor, and role model. In addition to Visiting Faculty, you will also have Local Faculty members who will teach the other two courses, deepening student understanding of the local context.

Country Coordinators are educators and practitioners, responsible for the program in-country and are supported by a local team (program assistants, student support fellow, interpreters, local collaborators). Coordinators are the heart and soul of each country program, it is their networks, passion, and community connections that give shape to the field program. Time spent in each community gives 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.

The **Program Director** (PD) oversees all academic and programmatic aspects of the program. He supports faculty, and will meet students in other countries, but do not travel with the group for the duration of the program. The PD is a source of broad support for students, as well as staff. He collaborates with the faculty, coordinators, and IHP/SIT staff in all aspects of program support and is a communication conduit for all aspects of the program. The PD will be the final determinant of any academic or programmatic issues that arise in the field.

IHP is an academic program which travels, and not a traveling program with academics. Your days are scheduled, and your learning is communal as well as 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!

PROGRAM ORIENTATION INFORMATION

During the first few days of the program launch, there will be orientation sessions covering overall program policy, staff and student roles and responsibilities, health and safety guidelines, academic policies, culture shock, and community building. In addition, there will be a country-specific orientation session in each country program covering local, context-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 an intensive 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, 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.

THE PROGRAM LAUNCH

The first week of your semester will both orient you to your first country program, as well as set the tone and pace for the rest of the semester. You will have your first academic courses, hear from guest speakers and travel to different parts of the city for site visits. Be prepared to be fully on program from the first day. Because a large part of being an IHP student is participating in a unique learning community, the first few days of the semester also focus on meeting fellow students and staff, building community and understanding your role within the group.

Many alumni reflect that the beginning of the semester 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 this rich learning experience.

CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY

In New York City during late August and early September, the weather is typically warm and humid, with daytime temperatures ranging from 70°F to 85°F. Occasional heatwaves can push temperatures into the 90s°F, especially in the final days of August. Humidity levels are often high, which can make the air feel warmer and sticky, particularly in crowded urban areas. Afternoon thunderstorms are not uncommon, though they tend to pass quickly. Evenings are generally more

comfortable, with cooler breezes. Students should wear light, breathable clothing, but bring a light jacket or sweater for air-conditioned indoor spaces. Staying hydrated is essential due to the heat and humidity, and sun protection—sunscreen, hats, and sunglasses—is highly recommended for outdoor activities. The city's pace and heat can be exhausting, so pacing yourself and taking breaks in shaded or indoor areas is a good idea.



Photo: Kathmandu, Nepal

Kathmandu, Nepal

In Kathmandu, from September through early October, the monsoon season is coming to an end. Temperatures range between 60°F and 80°F, with warm days and cooler mornings and evenings. While heavy rainfall becomes less frequent during this time, occasional showers or lingering humidity may still occur, so lightweight rain gear is advisable. The skies gradually begin to clear, and visibility improves, making this a beautiful time to explore the city and surrounding areas. The altitude (4,600 feet or 1,400 meters) can still contribute to mild altitude-related fatigue, especially for those arriving from sea level. Air quality often improves after the monsoon, though dust levels can still rise in dry areas or during treks. Sunscreen remains important, as UV exposure is high due to elevation, and hydration is key both in the city and on excursions to the Terai or hill regions.

Amman, Jordan

In Amman during October and early November, the weather is mild and pleasant, with temperatures typically ranging from 55°F to 75°F. Days are warm and sunny, while mornings and evenings can be cooler, particularly in early November. Rain is still minimal at this point, though a few light showers may occur toward the end of the period. The dry air can contribute to dehydration, especially on excursions, so students should drink plenty of water. The sun remains strong, so sunscreen, hats, and sunglasses are necessary, particularly during field visits or outdoor classroom settings. Dust in the air may still be present, especially during excursions to desert or rural areas like Petra or Wadi Rum, so a scarf or mask could be useful for sensitive individuals. Layered clothing is ideal to adjust to shifting temperatures throughout the day.

Santiago, Chile

In Santiago, during November and early December, spring is in full swing. Temperatures generally range from 50°F in the early morning to 80°F in the afternoon. The weather is mostly dry and sunny, with low humidity, making it a very comfortable time of year to be outside. As temperatures can vary widely during the day, layering is important—mornings and evenings may be cool, but midday can feel quite warm. While rainfall is rare in this period, it's good to be prepared for occasional breezy days. The elevation of Santiago (around 1,700 feet or 520 meters) can enhance sun exposure, so sunscreen and hydration are important. On excursions to higher altitudes or southern regions of Chile, students may encounter cooler temperatures, strong winds, or even sudden changes in weather—so bringing a windbreaker and extra layers is advisable for those travels.

New York, USA: AVERAGE HIGH/LOW TEMPERATURES (°F)

AUG	SEPT
84/68	76/61

Kathmandu, Nepal: AVERAGE HIGH/LOW TEMPERATURES (°F)

SEPT	OCT
83/66	80/58

**Amman, Jordan: AVERAGE HIGH/LOW
TEMPERATURES (°F)**

OCT	NOV
80/60	68/50

**Santiago, Chile: AVERAGE HIGH/LOW
TEMPERATURES (°F)**

NOV	DEC
73/46	84/51

LOCAL CUSTOMS

No short text can fully or meaningfully encapsulate the norms of an entire city, let alone an entire country. The sections on local context that follow are not exhaustive, but rather a starting point for your exploration and understanding of each place.

Nepal:

Notes from Yanik Shrestha-Country Coordinator

"Namaste" is a common greeting done by putting the palms together in a prayer like gesture to greet anyone in Nepal. Do not take it seriously if any Nepali hesitates to shake hands, as this is not customary.

Use your right hand to eat and deal with food. Traditionally, Nepalis use their left-hand to wash themselves after defecating. Therefore, nothing should be accepted, and especially not offered with the left hand. It is best to give or receive something with both hands.

Once your lips have touched a food item or its container, it is considered *Jutho* (polluted) for others. Don't eat off someone else's plate or offer anyone food you have taken a bite out of.

A few Hindu temples are usually off-limits to foreigners. Don't enter them or take pictures unless given permission. Do not take leather articles inside the temple precinct as they are prohibited. Also, there will be small circular or rectangular stones or metal mandala on the ground in front of most shrines. Do not step on them.

Men should not walk around bare-chested. Shorts are acceptable, but long pants are better. Women are recommended to wear long skirts. Exposure of women's legs can bring unwanted attention, so avoid wearing shorts and short skirts.

Public display of affection between men and women is frowned upon. Kissing, cuddling, or hugging in public is discouraged.

Time in Nepal operates at a different pace. Everything is approximate. Nothing happens on time. Be patient. Anger and impatience will rarely make things better, if not worse. Also, double and triple confirm important arrangements.

When entering a house or dwelling, shoes should always be removed. Nepali's often squat when eating. Do not stand near the person who is eating, as your feet would be right next to their food. If you need to converse, it is better to sit or squat next to them.

Bargaining is very common in Nepal. You will often need to bargain while shopping or riding in cabs in Nepal.

Jordan:

Notes from Dr Majd Abu-Salem – Jordan Country Coordinator: Jordanians are generally conservative when it comes to social relations, public culture, and religion. At the same time, you will find many people, especially in urban areas, who do not follow these norms. As with other places in the world, Jordanians appreciate modest clothing and public displays of intimacy are not considered appropriate in public.

The Jordanian social fabric consists of Jordanians, Palestinians, Syrians, Iraqis, and Egyptians. This confluence of people and traditions, and varied ideas about modernity can be seen most clearly in Amman. Jordanians are hospitable, generous, appreciate cleanliness, respect, and culturally appropriate behavior. Jordanians value and appreciate education and view it as an investment.

Greeting others can be done by shaking hands, raising a hand, or nodding your head from a distance. Greetings are gendered and differ based on context. The details of the greeting are

according to cultural and gender norms: men should wait for an Arab woman to offer her hand and women should similarly wait for an Arab man to offer his hand. In some cases, when people do not know each other, they may gesture by holding their hand toward their chests. Students should keep in mind that Jordan is a safe country in the midst of a conflictual region.

There are political limits on freedom of speech, but generally a decent amount of freedom. The homestay in Amman will provide you with an excellent opportunity to discuss and learn about various topics in Jordan.

Chile:

Cultural context tips and country notes from Mabel Cabos, Chile Country Coordinator:

Chile is a long and narrow country with a diverse geography and roots. It is multicultural but since its independence from the Spanish crown (1810-1818), the Chilean State attempted to build a brand-new homogenous and monocultural State. This narrative encounters indigenous peoples and African descendants' resistance, who have been fighting for their identity and rights recognition for centuries.

The last Census in 2024 revealed that Chile has 18,480,432 inhabitants, with 12.8% identifying themselves as part of indigenous or aboriginal peoples (Mapuche, Aymara, Rapa Nui, Likan Antai, Quechua, Colla, Diaguita, Kawésqar, Yamana). The Mapuche people represent 9.9% of the total population and it is the biggest indigenous group in the country, distributed mostly in the south of Chile and in the capital, Santiago. On the other hand, according to the last report of the Immigration Department in 2021, the immigrant population is around 7% and they mostly come from Venezuela, Perú, Haiti, Colombia, and Bolivia.

As you can see, Chile is relatively diverse, but you will still find people who will tell you that Chile had no black people before the recent immigration waves or that all people in Chile are Chileans, ignoring completely the presence of indigenous peoples. This is the result of colonialism and racism present in the country but also state policies transmitted through education and media reinforcing this idea of one country-one nation.

Also, it is becoming popular to use gender neutral pronouns (in Spanish) but even people who speak English are often not familiar with English gender pronouns. Even in cases when used

in Spanish, it would be very difficult for them to use in English, because it is not their first language.

The official language in Chile is Spanish and most people living in Chile do not speak English, but they will always make an effort to understand you. Other languages that are not official but spoken are Mapudungun (Mapuche people's language), Aymara and Creole (Haitians), among others.

In terms of time, unless it is work, study, or a business meeting, it is recommended not to arrive on time. Dinners and parties often start very late at night, so be prepared to stay awake. Please be aware that in Chile, like in other parts of South America, people do not avoid physical contact. This means that they kiss each other when they say hello: women kiss each other, and men kiss women when greeting (one kiss on the right cheek) and often they will also hug. Men kissing men is also becoming popular especially among young people. The important thing is that you must greet everyone individually with a kiss or handshake. This is not mandatory for large or noisy parties or social events. However, among family and friends, kisses and hugs are still used.

LOCAL DIET

Participating in the local food culture is a central aspect of daily life in country. 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 from the program experience. Please consider the local diet seriously when selecting your program of choice. Your admissions counselor is a great resource for better understanding of the local diet. Please be aware that on this program we are able to support vegetarian, vegan, dairy-free, gluten-free, Halal, and Kosher diets.

However, please know the variety of food available in these diets may be more limited than you are used to at home.

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.

New York City:

During the Launch, you will receive a daily meal stipend for all meals that are not provided for by the program. While the hostel and classroom spaces are conveniently located near many restaurants and cafes, students often make a trip to the grocery store to purchase snacks to keep in their rooms. The Launch Coordinator will provide a guide for reasonable restaurants, small delis, and bodegas in the area.

Nepal:

The staple of the Nepali diet that is served for most meals is *daal 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.

Jordan:

Students tend to enjoy Jordanian food, and the homestay is usually able to accommodate dietary restrictions. Jordanians use a wide variety of techniques to prepare food, including baking, sautéing, grilling, and stuffed vegetables such as carrots, grape leaves, and aubergine. Meat is a very common element of Jordanian dishes, including lamb, beef, goat, and poultry. Roasting or preparing foods with special sauces is common and olive oil is used prevalently in cooking. In Amman, families are able to support vegetarian, vegan, halal and kosher diets.

Yogurt is commonly served and *jameed*, a form of dried yogurt, is unique to Jordanian cuisine and a main ingredient in *mansaf* (the national dish of Jordan) and a symbol in Jordanian culture for generosity. Another famous meat dish in Southern Jordan, especially in the Bedouin Desert area of Petra and Wadi Rum, is the *zarb* which is prepared in a submerged oven called a taboon and is considered a delicacy.

Turkish coffee and tea flavored with mint or sage are almost ubiquitous in Jordan. Arabic coffee is also usually served on more formal occasions. It is very important to accept Arabic coffee when it is offered to the guest by Jordanians, as it is a cultural symbol of hospitality and should be accepted as an act of goodwill.

Chile:

The local diet in Chile is based on bread, dairy, potatoes, rice, beans, pasta, soups, chicken, meat, vegetables, and fruit. Like in many other Latin American countries, the largest meal is usually eaten in the middle of the day. Be aware that lunch time in Chile is around 2pm and dinner time is around 8-9 pm. Keep in mind that it is not common for Chileans to have dinner, instead they have “once” which could be a cup of tea or coffee with a cheese/ham/avocado/eggs sandwich and maybe some pastry, but homestay families will provide dinner according to your dietary restrictions.

Vegetarian diet is becoming popular in Chile, so it will not be hard to find vegetarian food in supermarkets or vegetarian restaurants, especially when advance notice is given (for example for group meals). However, to find vegan food (and people that can fully understand what is veganism) is more complicated and expensive, especially in rural areas. For this reason, vegan students should consider switching to vegetarian. For those students who keep a Kosher diet, placement with Jewish homestay families might be possible, but finding Kosher food or restaurants will be more difficult.

Also consider that in Chile, like other parts of South America, it can be offensive to reject food, especially when someone cooks for you. For this reason, it is always better to discuss your dietary preferences with your homestay families in advance.

Note: if you have special dietary needs, including allergies, please inform the office of Student Health, Safety & Wellbeing prior to the start of your program (studenthealth@sit.edu). We will advise you on realistic expectations about avoiding or incorporating certain foods within the program context.

SAFETY, SECURITY, AND HEALTH

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

SIT recommends you do research prior to departure about the health, safety, and security specifics of the country(ies) you plan to visit. Consult the [U.S. Department of State](#) website and search their [Countries and Areas Archive](#) for international travel information and current travel advisories for each country. Search the Center for Disease Control [Traveler's Health](#) page to see travel health notices and vaccine requirements and recommendations for any country(ies) you plan to visit.

SIT recommends doing research ahead of time to stay up to date on 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. You should also reference the Health, Access, and Identity information on your program's [Pre departure page](#)

If you have any questions, please reach out to the [Student Health, Safety, & Wellbeing Team](#). 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 on your program's [Pre departure page](#).

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).

HOUSING

As many SIT Study Abroad 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 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 homestay coordinator will be responsible for placing students in homestays. 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.**

We seek to foster increased cross-cultural understanding in students by immersing them in local culture through daily life in a new family and community. Students are expected to assume roles as family members, respecting and following host family norms around communications, visitors, and activities of daily living.

You will be oriented as you move from place to place. 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.

CLASSROOM SPACE

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

OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

Students should expect to share a room with one or more students during orientation/launch and while on excursions.

Significant portions of your accommodation may or may not be in homestays. You will also stay in hostels, hotels, 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.**

TRANSPORTATION

Across locations, students will often use public transportation. Utilizing public transportation is a fantastic way to get to know a city. Specifics on public transportation will be discussed during the orientation upon your arrival in a country.

New York City:

In New York City you will receive weekly passes for both MTA bus and subway access for program-related travel. App based taxis like Uber and Lyft are widely available in the city. Green and yellow taxis are also available and can be hailed on the street or by smartphone apps including Curb and Arro. Biking is also a great way to get around the city and there are bike share programs available.

Nepal:

In Kathmandu, you will mostly travel on foot. App based Uber, Pathao, and other Taxis are widely available and reasonably priced. Students should expect traffic congestion during commuting times and pollution related to the traffic in Kathmandu. Most students prefer to walk given the chaotic nature of the streets in Kathmandu, which are narrow and frequently unpaved. Outside of the larger cities, there are many locations in Nepal that are only accessible on foot. To get to excursion locations, students will usually travel by chartered bus and on foot. You should be prepared to walk a lot.

Jordan:

Most people in Jordan travel by private car, so the fact that you, as SIT students, will be unable to drive will make life slightly more difficult in this car culture (but it will certainly be safer for you, as Jordan is well-known for its aggressive drivers). App based Uber, Kareem and other Taxis are available throughout the city for reasonable rates. Most SIT students love taking taxis because the exuberant and garrulous nature of Amman's taxi drivers allows for the practicing of Arabic. During excursions, the program will take buses within Jordan.

Chile:

You will use a variety of transportation during your stay in Chile, including subway, train, public buses, private buses, and shuttles.

When the program base is in Santiago, buses and the subway will be your most common form of public transportation. Here you can get around on public transport safely and efficiently with the right amount of planning and awareness. Drivers are quite respectful with pedestrians, but they sometimes are aggressive with bikers, especially bus drivers.

Santiago is flanked by the main chain of the Andes Mountain Range to the east. If you ask for directions and they use the expression "uptown" ("hacia arriba") that means toward the Andes (east and sometimes north), and "downtown" ("hacia abajo") to the opposite direction, of course (west and sometimes south).

Buses (Micros) and subway (Metro) are all part of the new "Red" transportation System. You will need a "BIP card" to use the transportation system and it will be provided upon your arrival. BIP cards can be used for both metro and buses, and the fares are integrated, which means

that no matter how many “combinations/transfers” you make with other buses or with the Metro within a period of 2 hours, you only pay one fare.

The Metro is the cheapest, fastest, and safest way to get around Santiago, but it is not open 24 hours a day and the official closing time is 11.00 PM. Some buses (or “micros”) will run all night, but for safety reasons it is better to use taxis or Uber, especially at night.

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.

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.

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 country team, attending required scheduled sessions, evening engagements, and getting oriented.

Visit our [Contact & Communication](#) page for practices on program communication, emergency communication, and home institution communication.

PHONES AND INTERNET

[Cell Phone Policy](#)

As part of SIT’s commitment to student safety and security, all students are required to have a working cell phone capable of making and receiving both local and international calls, including a data plan so that your phone is operational when you are away from wi-fi. If needed, during orientation SIT staff can assist students in purchasing a local SIM card and acquiring minutes for calls and texting. Failure to maintain a working phone capable of making and receiving calls/texts will be considered a conduct violation and a breach of our student code.

The SIT program center provides internet access during posted hours.

New York

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

Nepal:

Internet phones are available at many places in Kathmandu and are inexpensive. Students can use their unlocked phone with local SIM card to add minutes for call and access data. These phones can send/receive international calls and texts (calls to the US run Rs. 8/minute). The country team will assist all students with local SIM cards. WhatsApp is very common App to call and texting in Nepal. Be aware that internet access will be very limited during the rural excursion.

Jordan:

Recently, mobile phones have become an essential feature of social and cultural life in Jordan and rates are relatively inexpensive. The country team will assist all students with a local SIM card with access to a limited number of local calls and data, you may add more credit if needed for calls and data. You can use your phone as much or little as you like, adding minutes to your account by purchasing “scratch cards” from any mobile phone store in the country — and there seem to be thousands! It doesn’t cost you anything to receive calls, even from overseas, which makes a mobile phone the most convenient way for loved ones to stay in touch with you during your stay.

Chile:

You will be provided a Chilean sim card. With this sim card you will have access to a limited number of minutes and data, and you can top up more credit if it is needed. Although most of the homestay families in Santiago will have cellphones and maybe landlines, you will not be allowed to make direct long-distance calls from those phones. You should plan on making your long-distance calls through Zoom, Skype, or WhatsApp as all families (in Santiago) have Wi-Fi access. Internet access is also available through cafes or coffee shops. Be aware that internet access will be very limited during the southern excursion.

MAILINGS

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 that the recipient is nearly back in the US by the time the items are received. For these reasons, sending packages should be done only for emergency situations and coordinated with the Country Coordinator. Additionally, sending valuables is highly discouraged. Mailing prescription medication abroad is illegal.

For this program **DHL, FedEx, UPS services are available in country**. Despite cheaper prices, reliance on the US Postal Service is not advised due to delays and unreliability. 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.

If it is necessary for someone to send you mail then posted letters and packages should be sent to the following address:

Country, location	Services (DHL, FedEx or UPS)	Address for packages	To Whom + student name
New York	DHL and FedEx	New York is Sherwi Rigshung Lopta (41-58 73rd St, Queens, 11377	Yeshe Sherpa
Nepal	DHL	Dhokaima Café Patan Dhoka Road, Lalitpur 44700, Kathmandu, Nepal	Yanik Shrestha
Jordan	DHL	30 Blodan street, PO Box 840062, Amman 11181, Jordan	Majd Abusalem
Chile	DHL and FedEx	Román Díaz 117, oficina 207 Providencia, Santiago, Chile	Mabel Cobos

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. SIT will cover daily commuting costs, if any, and excursions that are part of the normal program itinerary.

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.

Following are suggestions for spending money during the program, including estimates for textbooks, medical expenses, personal spending, and gifts. Individual spending habits vary widely and **these costs are average**.

A suggested total amount of personal spending money to budget ranges from **US\$1,260 to US\$2,060** 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 or a specific personal expense.

Please budget approximately:

Required Program Expenses

Visa Registration (non-US passport holders):	varies
Visa Registration (US passport holders):	110 USD

Immunization:	varies
Phone credit, data top-up	50 -100 USD
US sim card (if applicable)	50 USD

Variable Personal Out-of-Pocket Expenses

Miscellaneous personal spending (i.e. dietary restrictions, excess baggage, laundry)	300 - 500 USD
Property insurance	varies
Personal Local Transportation:	150 - 250 USD
Estimated total:	1260 USD+ to 2060 USD+

Please factor in that any medical costs require you to pay up-front and file for reimbursement

Up-front medical costs (to be reimbursed):	500 - 1000 USD
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If you are concerned about paying for medical expenses, please discuss with staff to seek additional support.

*Table: Personal Spending Budget *from past student suggestions*

Please note that up-front medical costs can vary widely. Though you are completely covered by SIT's travel insurance GeoBlue, which you can read more about on our [Participant Insurance](#) page, you still may need to pay up-front for medical care and then file for reimbursement.

Nepal:

The local currency in Nepal is the Nepali Rupee. Nepal is generally inexpensive, although inflation rates are rising steadily.

Most restaurants and shops only take cash. ATMs are readily available in Kathmandu and in most large towns throughout the country and they can be relied upon to withdraw significant amounts of rupees (up to 10,000 rupees at a time).

Although possible, it is difficult and expensive to transfer or wire funds to Nepal. It is best to bring sufficient cash. It is also possible to get cash advances, in rupees, against a MasterCard or Visa, 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. Please consider what balance of cash and credit/debit cards you will need.

Jordan:

The currency in Jordan is the Jordanian dinar (1JD=1.41USD). Each dinar has 100 piasters (Arabic: girsh, plural: groosh). The dinar comes in notes of 1, 5, 10, 20, and 50 JD. The easiest way to get money in Jordan is with a bank debit card. ATMs are widely available. This method also has the advantage of giving you the wholesale exchange rate, which is slightly better than the retail rate that you'll get at currency exchange shops. Credit cards are used often in Amman, so a Visa, MasterCard, or American Express credit card can be used to make purchases around town, but mostly at the malls and major retailers. Traveler's checks can be used; however, it can be a hassle since not everyone will accept them. Most currency exchange shops will also deduct a commission. However, you may want to bring a small amount for emergencies. You should bring approximately \$100 in cash for immediate use. Though theft is generally not a problem here, you should still be careful with your money. Be sure to bring a lock for your luggage or a small lockbox for your cash and valuables.

Chile:

The local currency in Chile is the Chilean Peso (CLP\$). Bank notes come in denominations of 1000, 2000, 5000, 10,000 and 20,000 pesos. Coin values are 5, 10, 50, 100 and 500 pesos. As a recommendation, carry small bills with you. It can be difficult to change large bills in small stores or rural areas. Chile's currency has been relatively stable in recent years.

The exchange rate between the Chilean Peso and the US Dollar varies daily but is always between 750 to 850 Chilean pesos per 1 US Dollar. Some banks and casas de cambio (exchange houses) will exchange cash, usually US dollars only. Check the latter for commissions and poor rates. Paying a bill with US cash is sometimes acceptable, especially at tour agencies (check their exchange rate carefully) but it's best to pay all transactions in pesos.

Most of the shops accept international credit cards but Visa and MasterCard credit cards are the most common and they are welcome in most established businesses.

You can find ATMs almost everywhere in Chile, and they are known as Redbanc. They are the easiest and most convenient way to access funds. Transaction fees can be as high as US\$10, so withdraw large sums to rack up fewer fees. Some travelers report that they cannot use Banco del Estado. Most ATM machines have instructions in Spanish and English. Choose the option tarjeta extranjera (foreign card) before starting the transaction. Some foreign banks will reimburse ATM transaction fees; it's worth checking in advance. Also, withdrawals are limited to a sum of \$200,000 CLP.

Wire transfers should arrive in a few days. Chilean banks can give you money in US dollars on request. Western Union offices can be found throughout Chile, usually adjacent to the post office or in businesses called "Chilexpress".

Regarding tipping, it's customary to tip 10% of the bill in restaurants (the bill may include it under 'servicio'). Taxi drivers do not require tips, although you may round off the fare.

Finally, you will receive a weekly stipend in Chilean Pesos to cover the meals that are not provided by the program and extra money to top up your BIP card, if needed.

VISITORS AND FREE TIME

SIT 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 Policy](#).

If a visitor does come while a program is in progress, they must plan their own independent accommodations; SIT Study Abroad 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.

INDEPENDENT TRAVEL

Please read our full [Independent Travel](#) policy for our definition, guidelines and how to access our independent travel notification form. Please note that independent travel is only allowed during program free time and students will not be excused from program activities to travel. SIT is not responsible for any costs of student independent travel including logistics, preparations, cancelation fees, change fees, and any other costs associated with independent travel. We highly recommend you wait to book any independent travel until AFTER arriving on program and receiving the final academic schedule from your program.

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.

CODE OF CONDUCT AND POLICIES

SIT maintains a [Code of Conduct](#) and clear institutional [policies](#) regarding student behavior through a commitment to mutual learning and respect for others. Visit the policy page for detailed policies around academic integrity, alcohol and drug use, anti-harassment and non-discrimination, attendance and participation, credit hours, equal education opportunities, grading, housing, independent travel, prohibited activities, religious holiday observance, sexual harassment and misconduct, and withdrawal among others.

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. We recommend a small daypack, which will also be useful for short excursions when on the program.

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.

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 travelling 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 clothes washing 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

It is recommended that you bring a laptop computer. If you bring a laptop, the computer will be your personal property and responsibility. It is recommended that you insure your computer, smartphone, or other valuables for full coverage in the event of loss or theft (SIT insurance does not cover personal property).

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

When considering how you will use your computer or other electronic device on IHP, 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.
- Wireless internet is not always available throughout the semester, including in homestays. Be prepared for less consistent and slower access to the internet.
- Faculty members may ask that computers be turned off and kept out of the classroom during class sessions.
- For students needing more technology resources, internet cafes are easy to find, inexpensive, and can provide word processing, internet access, Skype, printing, and online photo-uploading capabilities. Additionally, the classroom spaces we utilize have internet availability most of the time.

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.

GIFTS

As you might imagine, it is best 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. We suggest one or two gifts that the whole family can enjoy. You may also wish to consider gifts for people outside your homestay family. 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. Pack a couple of small gifts for children, such as small games, bubbles, or a Frisbee. Even if your homestay family does not have small children, chances are that you will engage with children in your homestay community. 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.

Former students have recommended calendars, picture books, postcards, music, or souvenirs from your college bookstore as gifts.

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 you have questions, SIT Student Health Safety and Well-being is available to assist you in organizing what you need.

ALUMNI CONTACTS

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



Don't miss the Packing List on the next page!

Packing List

These packing guidelines are **based** on suggestions from past students and your program director.

GENERAL

- 7 T-shirts or modest tank tops
- 3 long-sleeved shirts (varying degrees of warmth)
- 2 warm sweaters/ sweatshirts, or fleeces for layering
- Light, packable rain jacket
- 3 pairs of pants (that are easy to wash and air dry)
- 1 pair of non-jeans and nice shirt for men
- 1 pair of athletic shorts/pants
- 2-3 pairs of long shorts, skirts, or dresses (covering your knees)
- 14 pairs of underwear
- 6 pairs of socks
- Shower shoes
- Comfortable, durable sandals; also consider dressier flat shoes or sandals.
- Sneakers or comfortable multi-purpose shoes suitable for hiking
- Hat or cap (for sun)
- Scarf or bandana
- Bathing suit
- Belt
- Pajamas
- 1 pair thermal leggings/long underwear and shirt
- For men: a nice shirt and tie
- For women: a modest dress or skirt/top combo
- Fleece or light-weight jacket that you can layer over other tops as necessary.
- Smart phone (for requirements see [Contact and Communications Policy](#))

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Passport
- Proof of Covid-19 vaccine and/or booster encouraged.
- Yellow WHO Card/International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis or print-out of your medical vaccinations record from your doctor.
- 2 photocopies of your passport stored separately from your actual passport.
- Photocopy of visa(s) (if applicable)

- A driver's license or other form of identification in addition to your passport
- A copy of your SIT student insurance membership card
- Medical documents and photocopies stored separately from originals.

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
- Skin Moisturizer
- Mosquito repellent
- Chapstick with SPF
- Comb or brush
- Nail clippers
- Contact lenses and solution, extra pair of glasses

The following 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 Faculty will be traveling with an Emergency Medical Kit at all times

- Imodium
- Painkillers (such as Advil or Tylenol)
- Band-Aids
- Motion sickness remedy
- Laxatives or digestive aids such as Fiber supplements
- Q-tips
- 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

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS

- Re-usable water bottle
- Ziploc bags, plastic bags, or compression sacks
- Sleep sack (e.g., a sheet sewn at seams to make lightweight sack). This is not required but may be of good use at a hostel or on retreats/weekends.
- Money belt or small necktie bag to carry valuable documents.
- Journal
- FAA-approved locks for your luggage
- 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
- Travel alarm clock or watch with alarm.
- Pocket knife (keep in checked luggage)
- Small flashlight or head lamp
- Electrical adaptors
- Charger for electronics
- Pens/pencils, notebook
- 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)
- A4 Tyvek or plastic envelopes to keep papers organized.
- Clipboard
- Sewing kit
- Small Tupperware
- Stain stick
- Backpack or purse for day or overnight use
- Thank you cards for your host families
- USB memory stick

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



Photo: Kathmandu, Nepal