

# Madagascar: Traditional Medicine and Healthcare Systems

## Country Overview & Packing Guidelines

Summer 2026

### Country Overview

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

Madagascar is a world apart, like no other place on Earth. It has a unique fauna and flora with approximately 80% of the animals and 85% of the plants being endemic. Malagasy people are quite heterogeneous. They have been categorized into 18 official ethnic groups. Although each ethnic group occupies a specific region, there has been a great deal of mixing and migration between regions. All groups speak dialects of the same language, Malagasy, which is of Austronesian origin. Each dialect is distinct, however, and the various dialects are not always mutually comprehensible. Based in the capital city of Antananarivo, (Tana, as it is usually called) our program also allows us some time in provincial areas, and thus puts you in a good position to look at the varied facets of Malagasy society and culture from different angles. It is an excellent place to spend a summer abroad.

Tana is a sprawling, labyrinthine city of more than three million people, though at times it has the feeling of being smaller. It is an interesting mix of 19th century Malagasy and more recent European influences, which are reflected in the layout, architecture, economy, attitude and atmosphere of the city. It is a beautiful city built on hills and in valleys, with distinct neighborhoods, bustling open-



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air markets, intriguing paths and endless staircases that wind their way among the hills.

Tana is still a tough city at times, as the current economic situation makes life difficult for most people. Unemployment, poverty, begging, and crime, especially petty theft, are increasingly common problems. The local program staff and I want to alert you to the risks and inconveniences inherent in urban living and international travel so that you are as well informed as possible. This advice is in no way meant to put you off or scare you but rather to put you in a flexible state of mind which will allow you to better prepare for and adapt to a new environment and a very different way of life. In spite of the challenges, the human warmth, generosity, and genuine style of the Malagasy people will more than make up for any inconveniences that you encounter.

Madagascar has three official languages, Malagasy Ofisialy, based primarily on the Merina dialect of the Central Highlands, French and English. French is widely spoken in the areas around Antananarivo and in the larger provincial towns, but is not nearly as prevalent in the rural areas. English and French will be the primary languages of instruction for our program.

Knowing even a little bit of Malagasy will help you immensely, as people tend to light up with excitement when they hear foreigners trying to speak their language. The program thus includes a basic introduction to everyday spoken Malagasy to help students better communicate during the homestay, village stays, excursions to rural areas, and smaller urban centers. The Malagasy language is unlike any other language you have likely studied. But we are confident that you will find even basic Malagasy language skills extremely helpful for making inroads into the culture, as well as making friends and contacts.

## CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY

Madagascar lies approximately 250 miles off the east coast of Africa and is south of the equator. The weather in Madagascar varies from cold (as low as 40°F) to hot, depending on location and season. In May, June, July, and August it can be quite cool in the central highlands, especially at night. Rainfall varies greatly; the average temperature and rainfall can also fluctuate from one place to another due to differences in

### Antananarivo, Madagascar: AVERAGE HIGH/LOW TEMPERATURES (°F)

MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG
72/50	68/45	65/40	70/45

elevation and temperatures. Average Antananarivo maximum temperature is around 76°F, and the minimum temperature is usually around 45°F. The maximum and minimum temperatures for the Morondava area, where the program undertakes its penultimate excursion are around 80°F and 50°F. Note that the Malagasy winter runs from May through July, which is when the Madagascar Traditional Medicine and Health Care Systems program is in session. It could also be rainy and wet at Andasibe where the program's rural stay takes place.

## LOCAL CUSTOMS

Reverence for ancestors is central to Malagasy culture, where family and community are highly valued. Conflicts are typically resolved by councils of male elders who draw on ancestral wisdom and enforce traditional taboos. While men often take the lead, women are generally expected to be more passive, particularly in rural areas. They manage household responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, and childcare. Respect for elders is crucial; one should never remain standing when they are seated and should bow and say "azafady" when passing in front of them.

Hospitality plays a vital role, with greetings typically involving a handshake and cheek kisses. Sharing food and drinks is essential, and meals often feature rice served multiple times a day, with elders being served first. When visiting a household, it's important to share any food or drinks you bring and to secure personal items that you don't wish to share. Avoid negative talk about family and friends, stepping on mats with food, or using bathroom utensils in the kitchen. Always offer food and drink when in someone's home, as refusing can be seen as impolite.

## LOCAL DIET

Participating in the local food culture is a central aspect of daily life in the 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.





Meals are eaten three times a day: generally, early in the morning, around noon, and in the evening. Meals are usually shared with family members, who consider it important to be together at mealtimes. Food is important to the Malagasy, and the staple of their diet is rice. Malagasy eat more rice per capita than any other nation in the world - nearly two pounds per person per day. It is generally served heaping on a plate or bowl with a small amount of meat, beans, or vegetables on the side. In Malagasy there are two words to describe food: vary (rice) and laoka (the sauce served with rice). You will be expected to follow the diet of your family; therefore, you will eat a lot of rice. Meat is important culturally and is eaten whenever financially possible. Lentils and beans are also frequent accompaniments. It is easier to be a vegetarian in Madagascar than vegan. If you are vegan and it is at all possible for you to change your diet to be vegetarian while you are on the program, your stay in Madagascar will be made easier.

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](mailto: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 [webpage](#).

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 [predeparture page](#).



## 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.



On this program, you will be staying in two homestays. Students are placed individually during the homestays. The first, and the longest in terms of number of nights (21 nights), is at Ivandry, a suburb of Antananarivo, the capital city. Homestays range from lower- to upper-middle income families. They may be teachers, accountants, government employees, small business owners, restaurateurs, farmers, tour guides, etc. Houses are very small by US standards: two to four rooms in which all family members

eat, sleep and live. The kitchen and toilet may be outside the main house structure. You will probably not have your own room, but you will have your own bed. Families generally communicate in their native language, Malagasy.

They expect to speak with you in French or Malagasy, though it is very possible that some of your family members will speak a bit of English (and will want to practice their English with you) while others will only speak Malagasy. There are some families who live in a more “western” fashion than others. It is important to bear in mind that all families are Malagasy and are representative of their culture. Your particular experience will depend on you and your family.

The second homestay which takes place during the fourth week of the term is in Andasibe, a town located about 100 miles center-east of the capital city. This homestay constitutes the program's village stay and lasts ten days. Conditions here are rudimentary, to say the least: the homes have electricity, however, most have no running water or flush toilets, but have pit latrines for relieving oneself. Meals will be basic and repetitive.

## OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

The accommodation during the program's evaluation week will be in a hotel on the beach at Morondava. Students will spend the last night of the program in a hotel in Antananarivo. These hotels are either two or three stars in quality.

## TRANSPORTATION

Aside from walking, public buses and taxis are the most common forms of transportation in Antananarivo and most other towns in Madagascar. Due to potentially hazardous road conditions, bicycles are not recommended. Taxi-brousse or bush taxis are the buses that serve as the main form of transportation from one city or town to another.



Madagascar Airlines also provides links between the major cities and towns. Otherwise, it should be noted that SIT's Conditions of Participation stipulate that students are not to operate any motor vehicle, nor ride motorcycles, even as a passenger. The program rents a bus that transports students from home to the university for classes and back home after classes, as well as to excursions. The program travels by plane on our penultimate excursion to Morondava and back.

## 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.

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.

Please let your friends and family know that communication to and from Madagascar can be difficult even with recent improvements in telecommunications technologies. The Madagascar program staff will contact SIT Study Abroad in Vermont upon your arrival to confirm that everyone has arrived safely. Assure your friends and family that no news is good news, and that in the event of an emergency, SIT will contact your family immediately.

Most urban areas in the country have network coverage, and many rural areas are now covered as well, although the more isolated areas remain out of reach. Calling the U.S. is still expensive, but texting is reasonable, and receiving calls and texts (from anywhere in the world) is free. There is no subscription fee or monthly charge - you simply purchase a phone and a local SIM card and buy minutes as you go. Please keep in mind time differences as you and family/friends at home make plans for communication.

Students should keep in mind that the connection is not what they will be used to in the United States, and that they will need to purchase their own credit for personal use of the internet. Many students also choose to use their smartphones for internet connectivity. It is important to bear in mind that electricity is not a 24hour a day service in Madagascar, and so bringing a high-capacity, good quality power bank for recharging phones is very strongly advised.

The SIT program center provides internet access during posted hours.

## 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. Additionally, sending valuables is highly discouraged. Mailing prescription medication abroad is illegal.

For this program, **DHL and FedEx services are available in the 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:

**Student Name**

c/o SIT

Villa Manongarivo

Lot IIK 21FP

Soavimasoandro

Antananarivo (101)

MADAGASCAR

## MONEY

The local currency is the Malagasy Ariary. Having various options for obtaining cash in local currency will provide you with greater flexibility, so we recommend bringing the funds you'll need in different forms. While credit cards are now more widely accepted than before, they cannot always be relied upon. U.S.-issued ATM and debit cards (Visa) can be used to withdraw local currency in all major cities and towns, though each transaction incurs a small service charge similar to what you would pay in the U.S. for non-affiliated ATM withdrawals. Cash is typically used for most daily transactions, and the use of checks, traveler's checks,

and credit/debit cards for direct purchases is quite rare. Please note that only a few ATMs in Madagascar accept Mastercard.

**Note: Dollar bills printed before the year 2013 (i.e. with dates from the 1990s up to 2012) ARE NOT ACCEPTED and CANNOT BE EXCHANGED FOR LOCAL CURRENCY.** If you decide to come with cash, **you must COME WITH BILLS WITH DATES FROM 2013 AND BEYOND.** Larger bills (\$100 and \$50 bills) get the best exchange rate, the smallest bills accepted for currency exchange are \$10. **DO NOT BRING Traveler’s Checks**

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.

We suggest that you budget between [US\$1,100 to \$1,200] for out-of-pocket costs not covered by the Tuition and Housing Fees. To determine where you might fall in this range, please examine your spending habits during a typical semester at your home school and consider any exceptional expenditures you may have on the program. Please carefully consider your personal spending habits when creating your out-of-pocket expense budget. Some items to consider are textbooks, Field Study Project or Internship-related expenses (if applicable) not covered by the program, interpretation services, medical expenses, personal spending, and gifts. Use the average estimates below as a guide to help you plan for out-of-pocket expenses.

<b>Personal spending (from past student suggestions):</b>	\$500 USD
<b>Books, printing, supplies:</b>	\$50 USD
<b>Up-front medical costs:</b>	\$500 USD

Internet modem/cell use:	\$100 USD
Estimated total:	\$1,150 USD

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.

### 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.

### 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

In general, you will find the Malagasy to be more formal in dress than you might be at college, and in this country, dressing appropriately is taken as a matter of respect to one's hosts. Your appearance makes a big statement about who you are and what you're doing in Madagascar and can really help or hinder your entrance into everyday Malagasy life. A sloppy appearance will make a bad impression and may even offend your host family and friends.

Past students' activities have ranged from hiking and attending weddings to interviewing important government officials in their offices. It is therefore advisable to choose clothing that can serve many purposes, is modest and neat in appearance and that travels well. As a foreigner you will stick out enough, and it's better to be on the safe side rather than calling attention to yourself further with clothing that is considered inappropriate, suggestive or simply out of the ordinary by local standards.



Most women tend to wear long pants such as jeans during this time of year. Skirts are rare, except in older women. Girls will blend in best in jeans, leggings, linen pants, and athletic pants. It is helpful to have dress clothes for certain occasions. Shorts and tank tops are not advisable in Tana, but are certainly recommended, especially for the excursions to the coastal areas, where the program will often be hiking in warmer climates or spending time at the beach. For all genders, pants of all styles and T-shirts are fine, provided they are not too tight and are free from fraying, holes and patches. Program staff and past students advise you to

pack at least some clothes that are on the "business casual" side, particularly for Tana and other cities. When you think about what shoes to bring, again be practical. Teva-style sandals are quite practical for many situations but also make sure to bring at least one pair of comfortable shoes that are versatile and can be dressed up or dressed down. As you will do some light to moderate hiking, appropriate footwear for hiking is very important. The weather in Madagascar varies from cold (as low as 40° F) to hot, depending on location and season. In June, July, August and early September it can be quite cool in the central highlands, especially at night. Night temperatures tend to drop at higher elevations, such as in Tana, Antsirabe and Andasibe. Therefore, you will need a sweater (a warm one), light coat or jacket, and waterproof rainwear. The clothes that you bring should all be washable and breathable, preferably drip-dry cotton and cotton-blends.

## EQUIPMENT

A lightweight sleeping bag can be very useful and is strongly recommended, as students have used these during rural homestays due to the colder weather conditions. A small backpack will be very handy for shorter excursions and carrying books to class in the city. Past students have found a small flashlight with plenty of extra batteries and a pocketknife to be indispensable. Plastic bags (such as Ziploc) and small plastic containers (such as Tupperware) are very useful.

## 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/>.

## 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.



Gifts are very important in Malagasy culture. Although it's not possible to know to whom you're going to be giving gifts prior to your arrival in country, it's better to bring more than less. The most important thing is that the gift comes from the US or anywhere outside of Madagascar, so just about anything goes. Also bear in mind that it's the thought that counts. For your host family, bring something that is representative of you, or the area you call home. Cassettes, T-shirts, CDs, baseball caps, books, photos of you and your family, photo books, postcards, pens (especially ball points), school supplies, key rings, toys and other small items make great gifts. It would be appreciated if you could bring recipes, especially for desserts and main dishes that don't need to be cooked in an oven, as well as songs and games to share with your host family. Your homestays in Tana generally will be in somewhat "westernized" homes with middle to upper middle-income families. Your village stay families will almost invariably live in more modest and traditional homes. However, all of the above-mentioned items are also likely to be appreciated by your host families for your village stays and field experiences. In addition, other popular items include Frisbees, balls or hacky sacks for games with children, coloring books, small toys, and bubbles. Be wary of bringing gifts that will likely awaken an appetite for consumer goods which are neither affordable nor readily available. Smaller, more practical gifts that can be shared are more appropriate for your village stays. Since all of your families will be curious about you and your family, do not forget to bring photos from home.

## WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT OBTAIN IN COUNTRY

Most manufactured goods (shampoos, cosmetics, sunscreen and hand sanitizer etc.) that you might need or want are available in Tana, but they are usually imported, which means that prices can be very high.

School supplies, such as notebooks, paper, pens, and pencils are plentiful in Tana. You can buy any new clothing you need once you are in Madagascar, but you should bring most of what you'll need with you, since prices and choices are generally better in the United States

## 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 academic director.

### CLOTHING

- 6-8 pairs of socks, including 1-2 pairs of warm socks
- 1-2 week's supply of underwear (cultural note: you will wash your own underwear by hand)
- 3-4 t-shirts (some students suggest "dry-fit" or quick-drying shirts)
- 3-4 shirts or blouses, buttoned shirts, polo, collared, synthetic or other
- 2-4 warm sweaters, light coats, fleeces, hooded sweatshirts, long-sleeved shirts
- 2 pairs of jeans
- 2-3 pairs of khakis, linen pants, leggings, yoga pants or long skirts
- 1-2 pairs of shorts
- Bathing suit—one piece
- Towel
- Rain poncho or similar waterproof (not water-resistant) garment (that can hold up to heavy rain)
- Sturdy walking shoes (a good, well worn-in pair, especially for the hikes to the rainforest and the Sacred Lake)
- Teva or Chacos-type sandals (Birkenstocks tend to mold in very wet conditions)
- 1 pair of shoes appropriate for dressier occasions (some students have also used nice sandals)
- 1 pair of comfortable sweatpants or track pants
- Day backpack or shoulder bag
- 1 nice dress outfit

### TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Passport
- Yellow WHO Card
- 2 photocopies of your passport stored separately from your actual passport
- Photocopy of visa- if applicable

## HEALTH/TOILETRIES

- First aid kit that includes items such as: pain reliever, bandages, antibiotic cream, thermometer, antidiarrheal medicine, anti-gas medicine, tweezers, moist towelettes, hand sanitizer, disinfectant, motion sickness medicine, laxatives, allergy medicines, mall sewing kit, calcium, vitamin C, insect repellent, and malaria prophylaxis
- Sunscreen - generous supply! (20+ for sensitive skin)
- An adequate supply of any medication used regularly
- An extra pair of glasses or contact lenses, if worn
- Tampons or sanitary napkins, available in Antananarivo (Tampons cost between Ar 9,000 and Ar 12,000 for a pack of 10 and 20)
- Chewable Pepto-Bismol or similar product
- Mosquito repellent

## OTHER RECOMMENDED ITEMS

- Driver's license or another form of identification
- Money belt large enough to hold a passport and money (**to be worn inside your clothes**)
- Lightweight sleeping bag (will be needed for field trips)
- Sunglasses
- Hat or cap for sun protection
- Water bottle (with carabineer)
- Portable alarm clock or watch with alarm
- Small flashlight (strong beam, light weight)/headlamp
- Miniature combination locks or small key locks
- Spare batteries for all battery-operated items
- Homestay gifts
- Photos of your family & friends & hometown
- Power adapter
- Small travel safe or lockbox to hold valuables or luggage locks
- Students are encouraged to bring a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector

## OPTIONAL

- Cliff Bars (or other energy bars)
- Used phone with removable SIM card (it may be possible to use an unlocked phone or purchase a phone in Madagascar)