SIT SCHOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAINING
STUDY ABROAD

IHP Health and Community: Globalization, Culture, and Care:
USA – India – South Africa – Argentina

Country Overview & Packing Guidelines

Spring 2027

Country Overview

GENERAL INFORMATION

IHP is a global comparative study abroad program – providing students a unique opportunity to examine timely topics across contrasting country contexts.
Students analyze and compare critical global issues and challenges under an overarching theme related to health and communities.

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

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

IHP is also unique in that a **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, attends, and participates in all components of each country program, including field excursions, guest speakers, etc. Classroom and in-country activities complement one another to create a cohesive experiential intellectual experience. As is common with many roles in IHP, Faculty will assume multiple responsibilities including teacher, co-explorer, advisor, and role model. In addition to Visiting Faculty, you will also have

Local Faculty members who will teach two courses designed to deepen 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, interpreters, local collaborators). Coordinators are the heart and soul of each country program: they take time out of their community- based work, inviting students to learn more about their passion, networks, and community, which all give shape to the field program. Time spent in each community, especially in the homestay experience, gives students the opportunity to immerse themselves in day-to-day realities as well as the traditions of each country, creating lasting programmatic aspects of the program. He supports the faculty and will meet students at different points in the semester but does not travel with the group for the duration of the program. The director is a source of broad support for students, as well as staff. He collaborates and is a communication conduit for faculty, coordinators, and IHP/SIT staff in all aspects of the program. The Director will be the final decision-maker of any academic or programmatic issues that arise in the field.

IHP is not a traveling program with academics; it is an academic program that travels. **Your workdays 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 and active curiosity.

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 normal 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 program policy, staff and student roles and responsibilities, health and safety guidelines, academic policies, culture shock, and community building. In addition, there will be country-specific orientation sessions in each country program covering local, context- specific

details. These include cultural norms, local health and safety considerations, and practicalities such as local transportation, access to ATMs, banks and local currency. The country coordination team will support students with accessing eSim or local SIM cards in each country. Students are required to maintain local and international calling capability during their tenure on the program (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's program 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 but may also be time spent exploring with your homestay families, or planning an adventure with your colleagues, preparing for next week's reading, or simply resting or journaling.

THE PROGRAM LAUNCH

The Launch is both an orientation and your first country program, setting 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 Launch also focus on meeting fellow students and staff, building community and understanding your role within the group.

Another starting activity will be a workshop on positionality among fellow students and among communities with whom we engage in the semester. The culmination of the session will be the construction of a statement on Group Norms and Conflict Resolution Strategies, that will live with us through the trip.

Please do not plan to travel away from Washington DC during the launch. You are officially on program and we have a full schedule!

CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY



In early February, Washington, D.C. is typically caught in the grips of winter, with a landscape that often reflects a serene, chilly beauty. Temperatures usually hover between 30°F (-1°C) and 45°F (7°C), creating a brisk atmosphere that can feel quite biting, especially with the wind chill. The days are short, with the sun rising late and setting early. Occasionally, the skies are overcast, while sporadic flurries of snow may dust the ground. You will need to walk half a mile to the DuPont Metro and 4 blocks from MacPherson Square Metro to the World Learning DC Office. Bring an umbrella, a puffer jacket, water-resistant shoes andlayers of clothing. Overly bulky cold weather clothing will not be needed again, so rather bring layers of thinner clothing that will be useful throughout the semester.

In February, Delhi experiences a transition from the mild chill of winter to the onset of spring. The days are generally mild and pleasant, with temperatures ranging from around 10°C (50°F) in the early mornings to about 22°C (72°F) during the day. The sun shines brightly, casting a warm glow over the city, although the evenings can still bring a slight chill. Fog is less common than in January, but early mornings may still see a lingering mist. As the month progresses, the landscape begins to bloom, with colorful flowers emerging in gardens and parks, signaling the arrival of spring. When it does rain, it is usually light and brief, often providing a refreshing contrast to the otherwise dry and pleasant weather. On our excursions to Udaipur, Jaipur and Agra, the weather will be similar.

In March, Cape Town enjoys a mild and inviting transition from the height of summer into the cooler autumn months. The days are typically warm, with temperatures averaging around 20-25°C (68-77°F), though the sun still holds a summer-like warmth, especially early in the month. There’s a gentle shift in the air, with mornings and evenings starting to feel cooler and more crisp, especially as the month progresses. The skies are often clear and bright, with occasional overcast days, but rain is still relatively rare, though it becomes more likely toward the end of the month as the city moves closer to the winter season. Winds, particularly from the south-east (the famous "Cape Doctor"), may pick up, occasionally bringing a fresh breeze that helps moderate the warmth. Overall, Cape Town in March offers a perfect blend of summer's lingering warmth and the promise of autumn's cooler, calmer days. The excursion to Zwelethemba offers slightly cooler evenings and slightly warmer days.

In April, Buenos Aires is fully immersed in autumn, and the city's weather takes on a more tranquil, temperate feel. The oppressive heat of summer is gone, replaced by a mild and comfortable warmth that makes it one of the most pleasant months of the year. Daytime temperatures typically range from 18-22°C (64-72°F), with sunny afternoons and cooler mornings and evenings. There's a crispness to the air, especially as the month progresses, with the kind of refreshing coolness that makes outdoor activities inviting.

The humidity that marked the summer months has largely dissipated, allowing the city to breathe more easily. Occasional rain showers, though still possible, are generally light and brief, adding to the autumn charm with their soft, rhythmic patter. When it does rain, it tends to bring a fresh, earthy scent to the streets, as the city's parks and trees begin to display their vibrant hues of gold, amber, and rust. The seasonal change is evident in the leafy boulevards and tree-lined avenues, which become even more picturesque as the first true signs of autumn set in. Evenings in April are cool and comfortable, with temperatures dropping to around 10-15°C (50-59°F), creating the perfect setting for a cozy dinner or a leisurely walk. The nights are clear, and the stars shine brightly over the city, giving it a romantic, almost nostalgic atmosphere. April in Buenos Aires is a month of transition, where the intensity of summer fades and the city embraces the relaxed rhythm of autumn. Excursions are all reasonably close to Buenos Aires so expect similar weather. Our final retreat will be in May, when temperatures will be slightly cooler as winter approaches.

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.

Washington, DC, USA:

We start in the US to look critically at our context before looking to more fully understand others. While we recognize that most students are familiar with US culture and norms, and many are familiar with DC, we aim to challenge common assumptions about the US and healthcare, as well as set the foundations for examining the structural as well as the inter-personal. Over the course of 8 days in DC, you will explore the diverse neighborhoods and a local Non-Profit; meet with community leaders and activists; and begin to develop your own toolbox for effecting change by learning from the successes and challenges of those you learn from

India:

Common gestures of courtesy are greatly appreciated, and most Indians will reciprocate with great warmth and hospitality. With it comes an open curiosity about personal matters. You should not be surprised if total strangers ask for details of your job, income and family circumstances or discuss politics and religion.

Respect for the foreign visitor should be reciprocated with sensitivity towards local customs and culture. In Delhi, you will find that cleanliness, modest clothing and a smile go a long way. Public displays of intimacy are not usually considered appropriate in public.

Traditionally, Indians use the right hand for giving, receiving, shaking hands, and eating, as the left is considered to be unclean since it is associated with washing after using the toilet. In much of rural India cutlery is alien at the table except for serving spoons, and at most humble restaurants you will be offered only small spoons to eat with.

South Africa:

South Africa is one of the most multicultural countries in the world; it has eleven official languages and as many different ethnic groups, particularly in urban areas. As such, it is difficult to generalize on South African etiquette and culture; however, here are a few things to keep in mind:

Be polite – greet people when you meet them. Greetings are leisurely and include time for social discussion and exchanging pleasantries. If you ask someone how they are doing, they may answer your question with a few minutes of talk. In the Salt River neighborhood of Cape Town, you will learn the social norms for greetings from your homestay families as this means a great deal to folks in this community. In Zwelethemba, your rural host community, people will appreciate it if you try to greet them in IsiXhosa, a local language.
People will appreciate your time and attention in all places.

Argentina:

Regarding etiquette and courtesy, Argentina follows the common rules of most western countries. However, there are some special details to keep in mind: in informal meetings, Argentinians greet each other with a kiss on the cheek, while in formal ones they shake hands.

It is important to always greet your homestay family and to say good morning and goodnight. "Please" and "thank you" are mandatory when requesting something and also when shopping. Alsoit is considered offensive to be barefoot in the classroom and to put legs on a chair while attending a lecture or in any other academic session. Finally, it is important to note that US ideas about personal space are more constrained compared to those in Argentina, which are quite flexible. Argentineans embrace a lot and touch each other when they want or need attention.

LOCAL DIET

Participating in the local food culture is a central aspect of daily life in country. By trying to replicate your diet at home you may miss out on an important part of your host culture. Special or restricted diets may not always be fully understood by your host family, but our staff will assist you and your families to ensure that you have food that is safe for you to eat.

SIT Study Abroad provides experiential learning opportunities where students become embedded in their host community. We can accommodate serious food allergies, but simply cannot guarantee that all dietary restrictions or non-medically mandated diets can be accommodated. That said, we want to be as inclusive and accommodating as possible and we can support vegetarian, vegan, dairy-free, gluten-free, Halal, and Kosher diets. This will mean that students with similar dietary needs are placed with the same homestay partners in each location. Due to the unique living and learning community central to all SIT programs, we cannot separate food and eating communally from the program experience. We cannot always ensure that different pots are used for different food regimens, but can assure students that pots are washed and food regimens are not mixed.

Your admissions counselor is a great resource in better understanding the local diet.

We make every effort to accommodate but please know the variety of food available in these diets will be more limited than you are used to at home.

India:

In India, food is a central aspect of family and social life. You should be willing to try the local cuisine and share in communal mealtimes. Indian cuisine is regionally varied, based on either rice or bread.

Indian food can be spicy and hot, but your hosts will prepare food to your spice tolerance when asked. While cutlery is now common in more urban areas, one is often expected to eat with the right hand, using a piece of chapatti or naan (with the left hand resting in the lap).

Meals are eaten later in the day, with lunch served between 1 and 2pm, and dinner between 9 and 11pm. Many Indian households employ a cook. Strict hindu vegetarians here will not touch meat at all, so those who would like to be sure that no unwanted meat products will be cooked using the same pot should request to be placed in a strict vegetarian family.

Many Indian families maintain a vegetarian diet for religious, rather than health reasons. For those with specific needs for additional protein or animal protein, it is advisable to bring supplements and/or snacks. Milk products such as milk, cream, yogurt, butter, ghee (clarified butter) and cheese, are in many dishes; for this reason, it will be more difficult to maintain a vegan or kosher diet. Lacto-vegetarian and halal diets are easily manageable in India.

South Africa:

Many traditional rituals involve food, and it is a sign of pride and generosity that even in homes with few resources, there is always a meal waiting for the unexpected visitor. Students generally enjoy the diet in South Africa, which may be in many ways like your own. However, it tends to include more starch and meat than you would normally be used to.

In Cape Town, you'll be able to experience a wide variety of foods. South Africa's main contribution to the world culinary repertoire is the braai, known in the U.S. as the barbeque, which is enjoyed at the first possible opportunity. You will enjoy many of these during your time

in South Africa. Students may indicate a preference to be placed in a home that practices Halaal food preparation to the country coordinator.

In Zwelethemba, your hosts will provide food items that are similar to what the locals eat, which is a more modest diet with starch staples and chicken for protein.

South Africans enjoy meat, but if you are not a meat eater, do not worry. In Cape Town, you will be able to support vegetarian and vegan diets, as well as halal and kosher diets, although not to the extent where cooking pots are exclusively dedicated to meat or vegetables..

Argentina:

The diet of Argentina is largely influenced by the Mediterranean region, both in food and schedule. Mealtimes in Argentina are generally similar to those in the United States, except dinners tend to be eaten much later in the evening (9–10 pm). The staple diet in Argentina is all types of meat, breads, pasta, sandwiches, etc. It is also a common custom to drink mate, an infusion of herbs in hot water sipped through a metal straw called a bombilla. The day begins with a light breakfast, which typically includes a cup of tea or coffee, crackers/bread butter, and marmalade. In Buenos Aires a lunch generally consists of an entrée (a type of meat, a starch option, and salad). Argentines rarely use beans in their meals and the food is not spicy at all. In rural communities, many families eat a type of stew called puchero, made up of different vegetables and meats, but the most typical food in the countryside is the asado (barbecue). At 5 pm, many families have what is called a merienda, a light meal similar to the breakfast meal. Argentine food is generally eaten with very little use of condiments.

There is a great variety of food available in Buenos Aires stores: fruit, vegetables, and meats. There are also lots of restaurants. Generally, there is one individual in the home who does most of the cooking.

Vegetarians and vegans can manage their diets in Buenos Aires, but it may require a bit more effort on their part and is subject to availability of vegetables in the market. The Argentine diet, as mentioned before, is largely centered on meat and includes many dairy products (e.g., butter, cheese, yogurt), so it will be necessary to be very clear to your hosts about your dietary preferences. Lastly, it is quite possible to keep to a kosher or halaal diet (but not always to the extent that food is certified) in Buenos Aires, and gluten-free products are readily available at many grocery stores.

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 can be difficult, but India, South Africa and Argentina will have almost all of the original or generic medicines available in the US (Bring a copy of your prescription to show a local doctor who will prescribe for you for the usual

consultation fee. Equally challenging is receiving medication from home by mail. Therefore, students should, where possible, 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. Yellow fever vaccination is not a requirement for this program, unless you have travelled through an endemic Yellow Fever Area. It is good practice to bring a copy of your immunization record with you.



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.

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 communication, 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 will be in homestays. You will also stay in hostels, hotels, and other types of lodging. The key is to be flexible.

**All students are required to stay at all program-provided accommodations throughout the course of the semester, except during times when no learning events are scheduled, provided students comply with requirements of the Independent Travel Policy.

TRANSPORTATION

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

Washington, DC, USA:

You will receive a Metro Card to use while in Washington, DC, with enough money to travel to all program-related site visits and excursions. The classroom space is walking distance from the hostel.

India

Delhi is a busy city, full of cars, buses, rickshaws, bicycles, cows, dogs, even the occasional horse, bullock, elephant, or camel. Nine million cars are registered in the city; be prepared for traffic jams. In most cases, you will travel by auto or cycle/battery rickshaw and Metro to and from the classroom each day. Taxis are also available for reasonable prices, though they are more expensive than rickshaws. All commutes are within 30 minutes of the Program Center.

South Africa

Transportation will vary depending upon location and will include buses, Ubers, and private taxis (sharing with other students is required). In Zwelethemba your classroom will be within walking distance of your homestays, and Salt River it is a 10- minute Uber trip.

Argentina:

Public transportation in Buenos Aires is very good. Participants are easily able to move throughout the city by public bus or subway. This mode of transportation is cheap and safe during the daytime. The use of taxis is also affordable and safe. Transportation on a daily basis will include public bus, subways, or walking. Specifics on public transportation in Buenos Aires are discussed in detail during your orientation upon arrival in-country. All homestays are within 30 minutes on public transport.

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. Each Program Center has wifi, but on rural excursions you may not have access unless you purchase roaming data and hotspot off your mobiles.

It's important to be clear with family and friends about your availability during the term. 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 to expect 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. All 3 countries now can provide an E-sim connection instead of sim cards. Phones must be unlocked to enable. 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. Those who can may find it useful to purchase a roaming data plan from their US carrier, and thus be able to remain connected without obtaining a local esim.

The SIT program center provides internet access during posted hours.

India:

For use in India, a phone based on GSM technology, working on a frequency GSM Band 900 to 1800 is recommended. 4G or 5G phones are needed in all 3 countries, as 3G bands are being disabled.
Telecommunications are relatively cheap in India.

South Africa:

In South Africa, local cell phone calls cost about $0.25 a minute. Data costs are significantly higher in South Africa—be prepared to adapt your data habits. Free Wi-Fi is sometimes, though not always, available at cafes and restaurants throughout Cape Town. Do not buy cheap international phone cards off the Internet – many will not work in South Africa.

Argentina:

Argentina's principal cell phone systems are CDMA and TDMA. The program will provide you with a preloaded local SIM card, which is returned at the end of program. You will then load credit onto your SIM card in order to make calls, use WhatsApp, and navigate on the internet (you must maintain a minimum credit of US $5.00).

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, 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
Washington, DC	DHL	The Rendale,1900 Connecticut Ave NW, Washington, DC 20009 United States	John McGladdery, (ONLY USE IF ESSENTIAL)
India	DHL	168 Ground Floor, Pocket-02, Jasola Vihar, New Delhi-110025 (India), Cell +91 99103 31219, India	Archna Merh
South Africa	DHL	IHP, SIT Cape Town, 18 Station Rd, Rondebosch, Cape Town 7700, South Africa	Nokubonga Ralayo
Argentina	DHL	Araoz 2838 Zip Code: C1425DGT City: CABA, Argentina	Carolina Rovetta

Additionally, sending valuables is highly discouraged. SIT does not forward student mail and cannot be responsible for lost mail. Please account for possible 2-3 weeks shipping time when deciding which address to use. An updated address list will be provided prior to the start of the program.

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.

Sending purchased items home from India, South Africa or Argentina is also quite expensive... we advise students to bring older clothes that one may discard to make room for purchases. A bargain in Delhi becomes a very expensive purchase if you have to pay excess luggage fees to South Africa, Argentina and home.

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.

The following are suggestions for spending money during the program, including estimates for 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$500 to $2,000**. 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 or a specific personal expense.
Please budget approximately:

Required Program Expenses

Visa Registration (non-US passport holders):	varies
Visa Registration (US passport holders):	40
Immunization:	varies
Phone credit, data top-up	100 USD
US sim cards (if applicable)	50 USD
Up-front medical costs (to be reimbursed):	400 - 1000 USD

Variable Personal Out-of-Pocket Expenses

Miscellaneous personal spending (i.e. dietary restrictions, excess baggage fees/second checked bag, personal hygiene, laundry, over the counter meds)	100-400 USD
Property insurance	varies
Personal Local Transportation:	100-450 USD
Estimated total:	500 USD+ to 2,000USD+

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 will usually need to pay up-front for medical care and then file for reimbursement.

India:

The local currency is the Indian Rupee. ATMs are widely available in India and are usually a reliable way to get funds in larger cities. A major credit card (AMEX, Visa) is often necessary in

emergencies and is highly recommended. You should be able to use a credit card at many upscale shops as well.

South Africa:

The local currency is the South African Rand. ATMs are widely available for withdrawal, and this is the most convenient way to get Rands. If you want to exchange currency it is advised to go to one of the commercial banks since currency exchangers charge extra fees, and it's worth knowing that commercial banks are only open on weekdays and not all branches offer foreign exchange. It is important to exercise caution when using ATMs in South Africa. Your Country Coordinator will advise you on determining the safest ATM locations.

Argentina:

Although the US dollar exchange rate has tended to be stable, we do not encourage you to bring Argentine pesos with you from the US. It is quite easy to find money exchange offices throughout the airport and cities. Most stores in Buenos Aires also accept credit cards, the most common being Visa and MasterCard. Rather bring a spare debit or credit card kept in your suitcase than bring cash as an emergency reserve. Lost cash will not be replaced by the program.

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.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON BAGGAGE

SIT strongly recommends students bring only one checked bag. SIT pays for only 1 checked bag (50 pounds) and does not cover the cost of a second checked bag. Carry-on is checked and cannot weigh more than 15 pounds. (laptops are not included in the weigh-in)

- A second checked bag is usually very expensive and costs vary by airline.
- Students are responsible for all costs associated with baggage beyond what is included for each flight.
- SIT often books group tickets and it is not always possible to pay in advance for a second bag. Pay at the airport during check-in.
- SIT vans have limited space and may have difficulty accommodating extra baggage.

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 traveling in both urban and rural areas and will need to dress accordingly to avoid offending anyone. When you arrive in 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. Clothes are relatively cheap in India, so leave some space in your bag for new acquisitions. 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. When in doubt, think to yourself, would I wear this outfit to visit my socially conservative grandmother? If the answer is no, then don't wear it!

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. **Plan to be able to go for 9 days without a laundry service. (the rural excursions are difficult times to access laundry)**

COMPUTERS AND OTHER ELECTRONICS

You must bring a laptop computer that can operate even when there is no internet connection. (Your MS Word program must be downloaded onto your computer hard-drive, not accessed via the cloud). 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. Iphones are the most stolen item, with 1 student in 10 losing or breaking their iphone every semester. If you have an older iphone no longer in use it would be an idea to bring it in case you have to revert back to it).

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

IHP Health and Community students are expected to bring a laptop on this program. You will be required to submit assignments on Canvas and will need to access Dropbox for common

readings and other student resources. Students are also welcome to bring tablets and e-readers, integrating such resources into academic activities where appropriate. Do not bring internet-dependent Chromebooks or Air books—you will not have consistent internet and those devices will not be functional.

Your laptop and any other technology you bring on the program is considered your personal property and responsibility. Before leaving home, remember to back up your computer to the cloud or on a hard drive that you leave at home to safeguard all your data in case your computer is lost or stolen. SIT is not responsible for any duty tax you may have to pay when you enter each country, theft, or loss.

When considering how you will use your computer or other electronic device on IHP, please keep in mind:

- Devices like cell phones/tablets/laptops/etc. 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.(especially Iphones and Macs) Faculty and coordinators cannot help students with computer repair or replacement; use of your computer equipment is at your own risk.
- Devices can detract from the experience of studying abroad. The more time students spend on their devices, the less time they spend exploring the communities and connecting with homestay families, which are the most memorable aspects of students' experience. Start thinking about this now and plan to be thoughtful about the quality and quantity of your use of technology.
- Fast, unlimited Wi-Fi is not always available, including in homestays. Be prepared for less consistent and slower access to the internet.
- Staff members will frequently ask that computers be turned off and kept out of the classroom during class sessions, guest lectures or site visits. Students with accommodations are always welcome to use technology as needed and appropriate.
- As access to technology may be limited in some local contexts, it is important to be mindful of varying cultural norms around displaying technology, using technology, and in-person communication.
- Do not bring other personal valuables – such as cameras or recording devices. Your cellphone will suffice.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.

IHP will loan socket adapters but not voltage adapters. **110V hairdryers and other high-current appliances will explode if plugged into 220 V sockets in India, SA or Argentina.** Please see the following website for information about electricity, voltage, and electrical adapters. https://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plug- voltage-by-country/.

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 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 academic director. Every 8 days or so you will be in a space to do laundry – at your own expense. Note you get only 1 checked bag and some airlines are strict with the amount of carryon you can take. Most students buy more clothes on the trip, so leave space.

Packing List sample:

GENERAL

- REQUIRED: Smart phone (for requirements see (Contact and Communications Policy)
- REQUIRED: FAA-approved locks for your luggage
- REQUIRED: Laptop that can operate without internet connection. (no chromebooks)
- 5 T-shirts or modest tank tops (1 or 2 quick-dry if you plan to exercise)
- 2-3 long-sleeved lightweight shirts (Good for keeping insects from biting)
- 1light sweater, sweatshirt, or cardigan for layering
- 1 light, packable rain jacket/poncho
- 5 pairs of pants (including leggings or comfortable pants for plane rides and are easy to wash or air dry)
- One outfit appropriate for dressier occasions (we suggest a combination of the following: a black skirt, dress or pants
- 1 pair of athletic shorts (with workout leggings, which are more appropriate in conservative communities)
- 1-2 pairs of long shorts or skirts (note, you will need items that cover knees and shoulders in more conservative communities)
- 7-10 pairs of underwear
- 2-4 bras including sports bras (for those who wear them)
- 8-10 pairs of socks
- Shower shoes or waterproof flipflops
- Comfortable, durable sandals (can double as shower shoes, water shoes); also consider dressier flat shoes or sandals.
- A pair of sneakers or lightweight, comfortable multi-purpose shoes like trail-running shoes
- Hat or cap (for sun)
- BEST TIP: Big light scarf (sarong) that be used as a modest skirt, mosquito wrap, headscarf, hijab, etc..
- Bathing suit
- Pajamas or a sleep shirt/pants

- Fleece or light-weight jacket that you can layer over other tops as necessary. A puffer sweater is ideal as it is light, compact and warm
- Smart phone (for requirements see Contact and Communications Policy

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Passport
- Any relevant vaccine records/documents
- A photocopy of your India Evisa
- Medical documents and photocopies of all stored separately from the originals
- A copy of your BlueCross BlueShield Global Solution student insurance membership card

HEALTH/TOILETRIES

You will be able to buy and/or restock all of these supplies while you travel. Prescription drugs, or their generics, will also be available but you will need to obtain a local prescription. Some strong methamphetamine-based anxiolytics may not be available. (Try to bring a full 4 months supply with you along with a copy of the doctor's prescription to show customs officials) Use your judgement to keep your luggage a manageable size and weight – liquids like shampoo and conditioner weigh quite a bit

- Full semester supply of ALL prescription medications you will need.
- Adequate supply of any over-the-counter medications you use regularly.
- Menstruation supplies (pads are readily available, cups and tampons will be harder to come by in India, but readily available thereafter)
- Toothbrush, toothpaste, floss
- Shampoo, conditioner (Tip: bring a small amount and buy more in-country.)
- Soap, (handwash laundry soap, just a small packet for lightweight items
- Deodorant (just 1 you can buy more)
- Quick-dry bath towel & washcloth/bandana
- Small quantities of sunblock and mosquito repellent (also available abroad)
- 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: The group will be traveling with an Emergency Medical Kit at all times.

- Imodium (Only if needed to provide relief when travelling)
- Painkillers (such as Advil or Tylenol)
- Band-Aids
- Motion sickness remedy (if afflicted)
- Laxatives or digestive aids such as Fiber supplements (if afflicted)
- Anti-bacterial hand sanitizer gel
- Hydrocortisone cream
- Antibacterial cream
- Other cream for yeast/fungal infection (clotrimazol)
- Allergy medicine (if afflicted)

OTHER SUGGESTED ITEMS (OPTIONALS)

- Ziploc bags, plastic bags or compression sacks to help organize your belongings.
- Money belt or small necktie bag to carry valuable documents
- 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
- Small flashlight or head lamp
- Electrical extension (each program will provide an adaptor but an extension with 2 or 3 more sockets is useful.
- Batteries/charger for electronics
- Pens/pencils, notebook
- Gifts for host family in first country (unique items from your hometown work great)
- List of addresses of friends and family
- Student ID (for discounts at museums and stores)
- Small backpack or purse for day or overnight use
- Thank you cards for your host families

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

