Tanzania: Wildlife Conservation and Political Ecology

Country Overview & Packing Guidelines

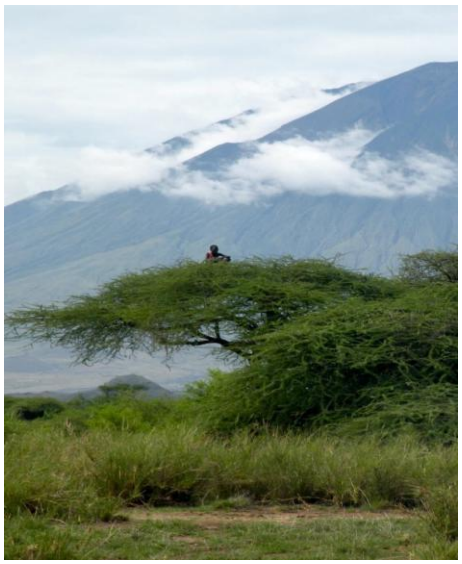
Spring 2027

Country Overview

GENERAL INFORMATION

Tanzania is in East Africa on the Indian Ocean. Its area is twice the size of California, and it contains three of Africa's best-known lakes— Victoria in the north, Tanganyika in the west, and Nyasa (or Lake Malawi) in the south. Shortly after achieving independence from Britain in the early 1960s, Tanganyika and Zanzibar merged to form the nation of Tanzania in 1964. Julius Nyerere, who became the Prime Minister, introduced Tanzania to African socialism or *Ujamaa*, which emphasized justice and equality. Currently the President is Samia Suluhu Hassan, the first female president in East Africa.

Tanzania is a beautiful and diverse country that includes the Serengeti Plains, Ngorongoro crater, the snows of Kilimanjaro, and the islands of Zanzibar. Within the Ngorongoro ecological unit is Oldupai Gorge, the site of the famous discoveries by the Leakeys of pre-Homo sapien fossils. The Ngorongoro Conservation Area also contains the immense Ngorongoro Crater, a 20- mile-wide volcanic crater, home to a large and diverse populations of wildlife and the highest density of predators in the world. In addition, there is diversity among the people with more than 120 ethnic groups, mainly of Bantu origin, each with its own language. Kiswahili, which is primarily a mix of Bantu languages and Arabic, is the official language, used for communication and for official matters. From an economic perspective, Tanzania is one of the “lower-middle income” countries in the world, by GDP per capita based on Purchasing Parity Power (PPP). The economy depends heavily on



School for International Training
1 Kipling Road, PO Box 676
Brattleboro, VT 05302-0676 USA
P: 888 272-7881
F: 802 258-3296
studyabroad@sit.edu
studyabroad.sit.edu

agriculture, which accounts for almost half of GDP, provides 85% of exports, and employs 80% of the workforce.

CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY

[Arusha]: AVERAGE HIGH/LOW TEMPERATURES (°F)				
JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
98/78	95/75	95/75	95/75	65/45
SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	
70/58	75/61	77/63	85/75	

The country experiences a unimodal pattern of precipitation in southern and western to central Tanzania, with one rainy season from November to May, and bimodal in northern and eastern Tanzania, with two rainy seasons, intense rainfall in April and May, and less intense one in October and November. The temperatures vary between 22°C and 31 °C throughout the year. At night, the temperature in Tanzania drops to between 10°C and 22°C. Randilen Wildlife Management Area and all parks (Tarangire, Mkomazi, and Serengeti National Parks) visited during the excursion are semi-arid, and they sometimes get too hot. Still, the evenings and mornings tend to be cold. The Ngorongoro Crater has a mild, temperate climate. The crater never gets hot during the day, but the rim gets cold. Mweka and Mazumbai range from 1200m to 1900m. Warm clothes for early morning game drives are recommended.

LOCAL CUSTOMS

Tanzania is a country of 120 ethnic groups and as this program stresses the importance of "place," any generalizations must be viewed in this light. The main correlations to customs that you will encounter here in Tanzania are age, sex, and religion. With age, the older generations have a level of respect that is reflected even in the greetings ("shikamoo" vs. "hujambo" or "mambo" for younger people). It is expected that you greet elders with respect and courtesy. Your gender will influence your experience in Tanzania. Most cultures here have a quasi-clear delineation of cultural spaces for men and women (e.g., in some churches men sit on one side and women on the other). It's rare to find a male in the kitchen - equally unlikely would be to see a lone woman in a bar. Tanzania has many religions but the main two are Christianity and Islam, both of which are generally very tolerant of each other. The norms for each are very different but both influence certain aspects of the program, (e.g., in Christian rural and all Muslim areas female students are expected to wear skirts (or local kangas/kikoi) and shirts that do not expose the shoulders) and men are expected to wear long pants, not shorts – this is relaxed somewhat in towns. There is not really a "list of dos and don'ts" as each place we visit is unique, from agropastoral Maasai to heavily Christianized peri-urban areas, to strictly Muslim rural areas (Mazumbai) to the westernized night clubs of Arusha. It is generally not acceptable to smell food when it is saved and receive things with a left hand. So come ready to learn, laugh at yourself and enjoy this incredible, culturally diverse country.

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.

The main staple in Tanzania is ugali, a type of stiff porridge that is eaten together with a sauce at most meals. The country has a wide variety of organic vegetables and fruits available, so following a vegetarian diet is not too difficult when traveling with the group. However, veganism is more difficult, although people do try to accommodate this as much as possible. We strive to accommodate diversity in diet including gluten free, vegan, halal and serious food allergies where possible but simply cannot ensure that all dietary restrictions or non-medically mandated diets can be accommodated. We try our level best! In general, one should remember that it is the responsibility of the student to adapt to the culture they are in and to be prepared to remain flexible in many ways, including eating habits. Students are encouraged to participate in the local food culture as a central aspect of daily life and part of experiential learning.

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 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.

Students will have an individual room in the homestay. However, some are self-contained while others share the bathroom with the family. Most of the homestays do not have Wi-Fi except for a few, often one or two, some will have a heater for hot water, fan, or AC but majority will not. Bucket showers, squat toilets.

OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

Students should expect to share a room with one or more students during orientation/launch and sometimes while on excursions. Camping is done on most of the excursions, and students will need to bring their own tents. However, when not on excursions there are other times when you will also stay at modest hotels, guest houses and/or hostels or you will be given a daily per diem and expected to find your own room and board, and transport to and from the centre. Program staff in-country will provide you with suggestions and the AD will need to approve your accommodation before you commit. This also applies to the Independent Study Project period. In the past students resided at shared apartments or stayed at a hotel or guest house. Whichever option you choose, it will be approved if it is a safe and secure place. There are places that come recommended by previous students, and these will be shared with you during the program.



TRANSPORTATION

Public transport is mostly used during the program, known as Daladala, a 16-seater minivan, but they often carry more than standard with some passengers standing in between seats. Traveling on the Daladala is not timed, so you have to wait until the Daladala is full for you to start your journey. Tanzania's transport system does not have a website or an information platform where such information can be obtained readily. You will get to learn how to maneuver and practice during the Kiswahili Language course. After the practical session of the way the Daladala operates by Kiswahili instructors, you will be expected to use the Daladala on your own. You will be responsible for your own travel and the safety of your belongings from the home base to the venues where the classes will be held. Students are not allowed to use "Piki-pikis" (sometimes called boda boda) -- our local motor bikes. Accidents on these are not covered by health insurance should you violate this rule and be involved in an accident. They can only be allowed during the ISP in remote areas where pikipiki are the possible means of transport. Program staff in collaboration with partner University go organize for it with a known owner.

Taxis are also available and always to be used at night. They are not metered, and students should agree on the amount prior to departing. You will learn the average costs for a specific distance or location. You may as well use our office driver by the name of Ibrahim with mobile no: +255762497796.

Group travel during excursions is organized by the program. You will be using “safari” cars – Land Cruisers with cut out roofs and shuttles.

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.

The SIT program center provides internet access during posted hours. The Internet is not reliable as it is in the USA. It sometimes being affected by the availability of electricity. Students are provided with monthly communication allowance to cater for internet bundles and calling minutes to be used when outside the center and while on excursion mainly for academic and communication throughout the program.

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, and 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:

Student Name
School for International Training Box 6007
Arusha, Tanzania]

Packages should be sent to the following address via ***DHL, FedEx, or UPS***:
Student Name
School for International Training Box 6007
Arusha, Tanzania

MONEY

There are several ATM machines in town – be sure to have your pin number. You will only be able to draw out shillings from these machines. All your documents and money can be stored in the SIT office in your student lockers that will be issued upon arrival in Arusha. A Visa or MasterCard credit card is very useful for emergencies, medical or otherwise. Visa is the most widely accepted in East Africa. Debit cards with the Visa or Cirrus logos work in Arusha, but you should not count on having access to these while on excursions. Not many stores accept credit cards, so you will find you need to pay with cash far more than you do in the US. Traveler's checks are no longer accepted. If you use a debit card and/or credit card, you should contact your bank and/or credit card companies regarding your travel plans **before** you leave the US. 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.

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$850 to $2200 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 meals not provided by the program, textbooks, Independent Study Project or Internship-related expenses 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.

Please budget approximately:

Personal spending (from past student suggestions):	500 USD
Books, printing, supplies:	200 USD
Up-front medical costs:	500 USD
Potential ISP travel expenses:	500 USD
Visa:	250 USD
Tanzania Health Insurance fee:	44 USD
Typical Internet café usage:	200 USD
Estimated total:	2194 USD

Please note that up-front medical costs can vary widely. Though you are completely covered by SIT's travel insurance BlueCross BlueShield, 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, even during the ISP. 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

Tanzanians dress conservatively and are often dressed in modesty. All clothing should be modest: tops should cover shoulders and waists and remember that revealing clothing and very informal clothing (such as tank tops, crop tops, exposed stomachs, sleeveless shirts, too tight or see-through, plunging lines or clothes with holes) are not acceptable. Skirts should cover knees and shorts should be to the knee. Do not wear pants or shorts in many parts of the country, although people tend to excuse foreigners, at least in urban areas! More formal occasions call for neat, dress slacks, button-up shirts (long or short sleeve), and leather dress shoes or dress sandals or flats. Although some Tanzanians consider shorts to be appropriate for schoolboys and playing sports, but not for casual wear by adults, students have found that shorts are fine for casual wear. However, we expect you to wear longs in more traditional areas. Shirts with sleeves, whether short or long, are required.

Note that depending on where you are going or what you are doing, it is expected that you dress in a culturally appropriate manner. During lectures, you will be expected to wear simple but tasteful dresses, skirts, shirts, trousers/pants and have your hair properly combed or brushed. Smart-looking casual wear is often recommended during the Independent Study Project time and site visits to places such as health centers and government offices or non- governmental

organizations. During excursions we dress a little more freely given the hardships of travel so jeans and pants below the knee are suitable. Shoes to be worn will depend on the nature of activities but in most cases, open-toe shoes are allowed. However, for official travel and site visits we recommend closed-toe shoes. Night temperatures tend to drop at higher elevations, at which the program will take some time and Ngorongoro can be very cold. Therefore, you will need a light coat or fleece, and waterproof rainwear. Plan to buy any new clothing you need once you are in Tanzania. This will be further discussed on arrival.

The clothes that you bring should all be washable and breathable, preferably dry cotton and cotton blends. Do not bring sloppy clothes or clothes with immodest pictures or write on them.

Remember that we are guests in Tanzania, and it is our responsibility to modify our dress and behavior instead of imposing our norms and habits upon Tanzanians.

EQUIPMENT

You will need a tent (make sure your seams are sealed and that they are waterproof). We spend between two to three to weeks on safari, and if your ISP requires it, you will be using your tent for another 3 weeks. If you do not bring a tent, you won't be able to join us on safaris. Also, bring a sleeping mat that will not puncture, and a sleeping bag, as you will be sleeping in places with lots of thorns. Past students have found it best to bring a backpack (internal frame—if you have it) or duffel bag (more useful than a suitcase). In addition, bring a flashlight/headlamp (strong beam, small, lightweight), binoculars (7/8/10 X 32/40/42 are good pairs to consider for field studies), medium- sized daypack, and two water bottles and calculator. If you plan to stay outside urban areas, you may bring a water purifier (hand-held water purifiers are recommended and very useful during the ISP), or iodine tablets to purify water. However, the program provides bottled water in the office, and on excursions.

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/.

To assist with the security of your computer, the program office has a safe storage place. Before you arrive in Tanzania, it is up to you to research the necessary adaptors, plugs, and wattage

variations. If you do not have a computer, you may have public access to them, but not at all times during the semester. Many students find access to computers during their Independent Study Projects via their advisors, local universities, or Internet cafes, but there is only one SIT computer for your use and ONLY during normal business hours. There are Internet Cafes in Arusha that have Word and Excel and are available for a small fee of around $1/hr.

Cameras are not required, but most students bring along cameras. These can be stored in the SIT office in a locked student locker. Other electronics, iPods, etc., are welcome on the program, but not on safari. Students can bring a digital recorder/music player for interviews, language classes, entertainment, or otherwise.

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.

The following is a list of recommended gifts from former students:

- Gifts from your home state
- Candy
- Potholders (oven mitts)
- Crayons, colored pencils, bubbles
- Soccer ball, tennis balls, jump rope
- Playing cards
- Soap
- Basic first aid supplies
- Baseball caps

- Headphones
- Nail polish
- Notebooks

WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT OBTAIN IN COUNTRY

Students who wear glasses or contact lenses may want to come prepared with an extra pair of glasses or contact lenses. If you are using contact lenses you should also bring a pair of glasses. Also, bring solution for the entire semester. The roads can be very dusty, and you may sometimes have to ride in the back of an open truck. Shampoo, soap, and laundry detergent are readily available in Tanzania. However, we suggest a small supply to get you started. Products like tampons or sanitary napkins are available in Tanzania but you should bring a supply as they are expensive and may not be the type you prefer. Many students find that purchasing clothes in-country is an easy and affordable option. Duct tape is extremely hard to find so it is useful to bring some with you.

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.

Packing List sample:

GENERAL

- 1 nice outfit suitable for a social event
- Lightweight clothes including pants, long-sleeved shirts, light T-shirts
- Underwear and socks (10-day supply)
- Warm pajamas or nightgown
- Slippers or flip flops (for use inside house. Flip flops are not recommended for use outdoors because of the cobble stone sidewalks and roads.)
- 1 pair comfortable sneakers
- 1 pair sandal
- 1 pair nice shoes
- Rain gear (waterproof jacket, poncho, or umbrella)
- 2–4 pairs pants or jeans
- 1 skirt and/or dress
- 5–6 mixed long and short-sleeved t-shirts
- 2–3 blouses or button-down shirts
- Sweater
- Jacket or fleece
- Scarf
- Bathing suit
- Optional – workout clothes

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Passport
- 2 photocopies of your passport stored separately from your actual passport
- Photocopy of visa
- 2 passport photos
- Any relevant vaccine records/documents

HEALTH/TOILETRIES

- Adequate supply of any medications you use regularly
- Small first aid kit (most supplies can be bought here)
- Extra eyeglasses and/or contact lenses
- Sunscreen (at least SPF 30)

- Sunglasses
- Wide-brimmed hat or baseball cap (for sun protection)

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS

- Medium-sized day pack (to pack clothes for 3–4 days for excursions)
- Small, quick-drying towel
- Flashlight
- Reusable water bottle
- Small luggage lock
- Laptop computer *(please ensure it)*
- Students are encouraged to bring a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector