Rwanda: Post-Genocide and Peacebuilding
Spring 2016

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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. Previous students have suggested bringing an additional smaller bag, which fits into your larger suitcase, for short excursions.

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
Rwandans pay a lot of attention to how they dress. Therefore sloppy clothes or clothes with immodest pictures or writing on them may generate unwanted attention or negative judgments towards one’s character. Revealing clothing, such as shorts or shirts with a low neckline, is inappropriate for both females and males. All clothing should be modest: shirts should cover the waist (no crop tops, sleeveless shirts, or bikinis), skirts should cover knees, and clothing should not be see-through. Flip-flops made out of rubber are for bathroom use ONLY; people don’t wear them on the street. The key guide to acceptable and appropriate dress is business casual.

Night temperatures tend to drop especially at higher elevations. Therefore, you will need a light coat or fleece, and waterproof rainwear. An umbrella is absolutely recommended!

In the village

It is not acceptable to attend lectures, meetings with government representatives, memorial sites, or...
other official functions in shorts and t-shirts. Men should pack collared shirts and slacks as well as nicer jeans. Women should bring skirts that cover the knees and blouses or other shirts that respect the guidelines above, smart casual pants and jeans are also acceptable for women. Please note that you may buy additional clothing after you arrive, but clothing may be more expensive than in the US. For shoes, you are advised to bring comfortable but nice-looking shoes since you will always have to do some walking from the bus stop to school or to your home. During the rural excursions, shoes that completely cover your feet are always recommended.

A women’s cooperative in action

Equipment
Bring one or two small combination locks for the zippers of your luggage, and a travel alarm clock. You will need a small flashlight; past students have highly recommended bringing a headlamp as your flashlight. Mosquito nets will be provided at nearly all of your accommodations, but students who plan to travel to remote locations can also get a mosquito net in Kigali for US$10-US$15. If you wish to bring a mosquito net from the US, the kind that does not have a frame is best. If you have trouble finding one, Travel Medicine, Inc. has several good models: www.travmed.com. Be advised to bring your own towel or be prepared to buy one when you arrive since homestay families and hotels used during excursions may not provide it.

Computers and Other Electronics
It is strongly recommended that you bring a laptop computer. If you bring a laptop, the computer will be your personal property and responsibility. SIT is not responsible for any duty tax you may have to pay when you enter the country, theft, or loss. Personal property and baggage insurance is included in the program fee for all study abroad program participants through SIT Study Abroad. Read the details on SIT’s personal property and baggage insurance in the full Description of Coverage on this site: http://studyabroad.sit.edu/pn/admitted-students/medical-review-process/

Word-processing and printing can also be done at local cybercafés. Some students find computers during their Independent Study Projects through their advisors, local universities, and NGO resource centers. Previous students have recommended bringing a digital recorder to use during interviews for the Independent Study Project. Make sure to also bring a large capacity flash drive for back-up and storage of data and photographs. SIT will provide you with a lockable drawer at the office where you can leave your valuables.

Be sure to come with the right adaptors: Rwanda uses Type C & J adaptor plugs. Uganda uses Type G plugs.

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 do not need a gift for each member. 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.

Be aware that families in Rwanda might have as many as six children, some might be young children and others might be teenagers. It is NOT expected that you bring a present for each single person; you might want to think of gifts that can be shared – like a soccer ball for example. Also, you will be able to buy items in Kigali.

**SIT Partnership with Rwandan School, École Amis des Enfants**

SIT works with a partner school in Kigali, through which we set up all our homestay families. Each SIT student will have a Rwandan “buddy,” who is a student at École Amis des Enfants and who will help the SIT student get accustomed to their surroundings on their first days in Kigali. The partnership between SIT and the École Amis des Enfants entails the development of a library for the Rwandan students. Therefore, we like to ask our SIT students to check at home or amongst your friends and family whether you can find books that are not being used anymore and that would be relevant for teenagers. We would be grateful if each one of you would bring one to contribute to the growing library.

**What You Can and Cannot Obtain in Country**

Personal items such as tampons, sanitary napkins, soap, body lotion, shampoo, contact solution, deodorant, and face wash are available but they may not be quite suitable to your needs and may be somewhat expensive. You may wish to bring a sufficient quantity for your entire stay or use what is locally available. Plan to bring hand-washable clothes. Bring an extra pair of your glasses or contacts lenses. Be sure to bring contact lens solution to last the semester. In addition, bring your prescription in case you need it.

Please try to produce as little trash as possible. Therefore, unwrap anything you bought new and leave the wrappers back home. Also, think about the environment in regards to your personal hygiene – for example, mosquito repellent wipes or baby wipes pollute the environment and are better left at home. **Don’t bring plastic bags as they are prohibited in Rwanda.**

If you have further questions, please contact your admissions counselor and/or ask an alumni mentor: [http://studyabroad.sit.edu/pn/admitted-students/contact-a-former-student/](http://studyabroad.sit.edu/pn/admitted-students/contact-a-former-student/).

**Don’t Miss the Packing List on the Next Page!**

These packing guidelines are based on suggestions from past students and your academic director. The clothing you bring may be adapted to your own style, within cultural norms of acceptable dress.

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

Clothing

Women
- 4-6 skirts (hemlines below the knee but not necessarily too long) and/or dresses
- 2-3 pairs of lightweight business casual pants
- 1-2 pairs of comfy pants for cold weather
- 4-6 light fabric blouses/short-sleeved shirts
- 1 pair of nice shoes
- supportive tennis shoes or sneakers (optional)
- 1 pair of comfortable sandals (not flip-flops)
- 2-3 pairs of socks
- pullover or light sweater
- light, waterproof jacket and umbrella
- one-piece bathing suit (no bikinis!)
- underwear (one or two-week supply)
- medium-weight wool/polar fleece sweater (for cool nights)
- 1 “workout” outfit (optional, could include sports bras, t-shirt/conservative shorts for jogging/sports)
- pajamas or similar sleepwear

Men
- 4-6 pairs of business casual trousers
- several collared shirts (top shirts are less commonly worn, but short sleeves are OK)
- 3-5 nice outfits (slacks, dress shirt)
- Tie (since you may be invited to attend an important event like a wedding, conference, etc.)
- Sneakers with good support
- 1 pair nice shoes
- comfortable walking sandals (not flip-flops)
- 4-6 pairs of socks
- underwear (one or two weeks’ supply)
- bathing suit
- light jacket or waterproof windbreaker
- medium-weight wool/polar fleece sweater for cool nights
- 1 “workout” outfit (could include t-shirt/conservative shorts for jogging/sports)
- pajamas or similar sleepwear

Travel Documents
- Passport
- Three passport photos

Other Important Items
- Yellow WHO Card (see the Safety, Security, and Health document for more information)
- Three photocopies of your passport stored separately from your actual passport
- Photocopy of visa (if applicable)

Health/Toiletries
- medication/prescriptions used regularly
- good quality thermometer for taking your temperature - important for those who have chronic health conditions and need to check their health status often.
- aspirin or other pain reliever, cold medication/decongestant
- anti-diarrheal medicine (e.g. Imodium)/laxatives
- eye drops and eyewash
- travel sickness medicine if you are prone to motion sickness
- sunscreen/Solarcaine spray and Aloe Vera
- band aids/antiseptic/antibacterial cream
- deodorant, soap, and shampoo (for the whole semester or bring a small quantity and plan to buy more locally)
- mosquito repellant (two bottles)
- vitamin supplements (if you take them)
- hand wipes and/or antibacterial hand wash
- malaria prophylaxis (enough for the entire semester)
- allergy medicine (bring enough since you might not find them in local pharmacies)
- dental floss
- tissue

Other Important Items
- water bottle
- student ID from your home college/university
- daypack or book/shoulder bag
- light raincoat—something that folds up small
- extra pair of glasses/contacts if you wear them
- contact solution (expensive in country)
- money belt large enough for passport and traveler’s checks
- homestay gifts (optional)

Optional
- photos of your family, friends, and small portable book about your state
- pocket sewing kit
- sunglasses, if you use them
- Ziploc bags (a few)
- camera
- small sound recorder for practicum/ISP (if you think you may want to record things)
- granola bars/energy snacks
- powdered drinking mix
- flash drive
- converters/adapters
- pens (several) and notebooks that suit your writing needs and style