



COUNTRY

OVERVIEW

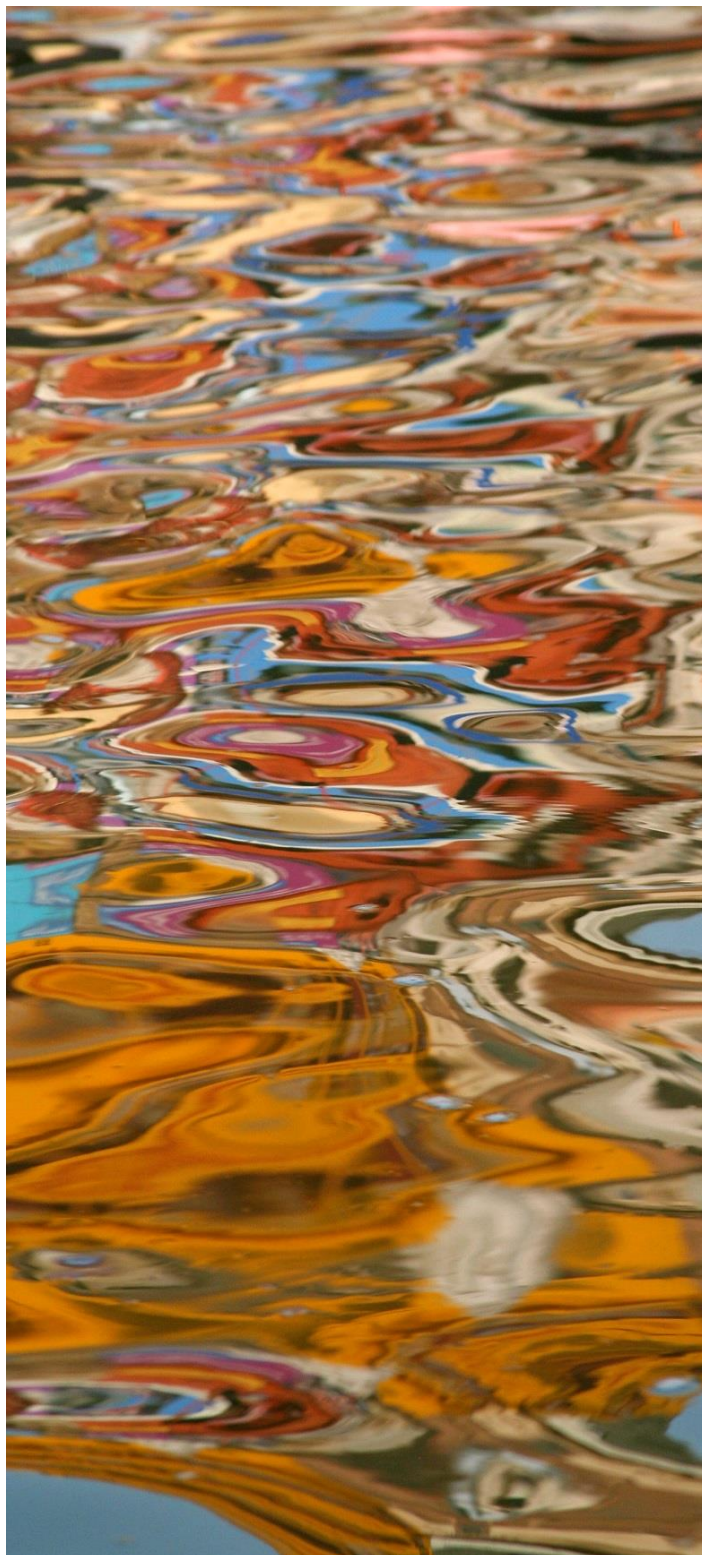
& PACKING

GUIDELINES

India: Public Health, Gender, and Community Action
Spring 2020

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COUNTRY OVERVIEW

GENERAL INFORMATION

There are few places that offer the complexity of history, geography and culture which is India. India is a large country, comprised of twenty-nine states. It includes a diversity of ethnicities, languages, and religions. The official language of India is Hindi, although sixteen other “official” languages are also recognized. Many people speak English, and most national universities conduct their classes in English.

India’s population, at over 1.34 billion, is second only to the population of The Peoples’ Republic of China. Seventy percent of Indians still live in rural areas, but large cities include Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai. The capital city of New Delhi, where our program starts, is a mega-city of 24 million people. Some areas of the country, such as the far North, are sparsely inhabited, but most of the country is densely populated with busy urban areas and densely farmed rural areas.

India is a democracy with a parliamentary system governed by a prime minister; the president holds a purely ceremonial position. Indians exercise their democratic rights with great enthusiasm: freedom of the press, speech and assembly are hallmarks of the society.

India was the birthplace of Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism, and Sikhism. It is also home to a large Muslim population, as well as small communities of Parsees (Zoroastrians), Baha’is, Jews, and Christians. By necessity, most people are tolerant of other religious traditions.



CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY

India is about half the size of the continental U.S., with widely varying terrain and climatic conditions. The climate of North India and Delhi is extreme, with painfully hot months in summer and surprisingly cold temperatures in winter. June to mid-September is the monsoon season, while November to February is the driest, coolest period; the period from April to June is the hottest.

[Delhi]: AVERAGE HIGH/LOW TEMPERATURES (°F)				
JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
70/45	75/48	88/58	97/68	110/97
SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	
105/75	93/64	84/52	73/46	

DIET

SIT Study Abroad provides experiential learning opportunities where students become embedded in their host community. As such, we strive to accommodate serious food allergies where possible but simply cannot ensure that all dietary restrictions or non-medically mandated diets can be accommodated.

Students are encouraged to participate in the local food culture as a central aspect of daily life. By trying to replicate your diet at home you may miss out on an important part of your host culture. Due to the unique living and learning community central to all SIT programs, we cannot separate food and eating communally (including with your host family) from the program experience. Please consider local diet seriously when selecting your program of choice. Your admissions counselor is a great resource in better understanding the local diet.

Indian cuisine is regionally varied, based on either rice or bread. Indian food can be spicy and hot; chilies are used liberally. While cutlery is now becoming common, one is often expected to eat with the right hand (the left hand resting in the lap). Meals are eaten later in the day, with lunch served

between 1 and 2, and dinner **between 9-10 pm!**
Many Indian households employ a cook.



When at the program center, lunch is provided by the program (our cook is excellent); breakfast and dinner are provided by the homestay while in Delhi. The meals provided by the program center are generally focused on vegetarian food, although we will include a meat dish several times a

week. Many Indian families also 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 is not possible to maintain a vegan diet. A lacto-vegetarian diet is easily manageable in India.

SAFETY, SECURITY, AND HEALTH

Maintaining good health is critical to having a successful semester. To help you do that, we have provided [Health Guidelines and Requirements](#) for your program.

It is very important that you read the Health Guidelines and Requirements document as early as possible and examine it with your medical provider. The guidelines include recommended immunizations; a suggested calendar for immunizations and other prophylaxes; and valuable information on how to avoid exposure to common carriers of disease.

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 Student Handbook](#).

While India is a generally safe country, as in crowded urban environments anywhere, you should be careful. For example: avoid going to an ATM late at night, don't take taxis alone late at night (always sit in the back of the taxi), keep your money in a safe place and don't carry large amounts of cash. Streets in all big cities in India are full of all imaginable types of traffic, animals and people-including vendors and beggars. Female students in particular may attract unwelcome attention; this topic will be addressed extensively during orientation.

Gender roles: Gender role expectations are different from the United States. Relations between the sexes are distanced and formal. To avoid sexual harassment, female students must be cognizant of modesty in both dress and behavior. Male students must be careful not to cause unintentional insult by behaving in an overly familiar manner with Indian women.

Good Manners: India is a formal hierarchical society: younger members of the society are not privileged to be casual with elders. For example: You will be expected to stand when an elder enters the room, offer a chair to an elder, express greetings first, give way in a lunch line, and open doors.

Alcohol: Students must exercise discretion if consuming alcohol, as it is in most cases culturally inappropriate. Although certain sectors of Delhi society find alcohol consumption acceptable, we expect students to follow the most conservative norms of your host culture. Failure to respect norms regarding consumption of alcohol may compromise the student's reception in Indian society, humiliate the host family, and may jeopardize SIT's standing in the community. This is especially important for female students, as the reputation of young women in India is especially vulnerable to charges of immorality regarding public alcohol consumption.

Smoking: Cigarette smoking is considered culturally inappropriate and disrespectful in the presence of elders and teachers, especially for women. Although some young Indian women do smoke in public, it is not up to us to be on the vanguard of social change! Female students who smoke should not smoke in public, as it could be embarrassing to the host family. Male students who smoke should also be aware of the sensibilities of their host families and

never smoke before elders or respected members of society.

Drugs: No drug use of any kind other than for necessary medical purposes will be tolerated. Drug use will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the program. Also, SIT Study Abroad is unable to assist any student facing legal trouble for drug use.

Cleanliness: Indians are meticulous about personal hygiene and dress and are bewildered and disgusted by the grubby "hippie" look. Cleanliness is not just the privilege of the wealthy: you will see even the poor washing under pumps. It is therefore expected that you will keep your person, hair, and clothing clean. In a hot dusty climate, it is also a necessity of personal health to wash hands, body (and especially feet) regularly with a good strong soap. Please note that dreadlocks are the prerogative of *sadhus* (i.e., holy men of India); anyone else with dreadlocks is seen as extremely disrespectful of local culture. Therefore, we must advise students with dreadlocks to change their hairstyle before coming to India.

Clothing: As you will be highly visible in the local community, strict adherence to standards of dress is expected for students, according to the guidelines outlined above. Revealing, ripped, or stained clothing is unacceptable.

Personal Relationships: Romantic relationships between students and host family members or SIT staff are strictly forbidden, as they are neither legally nor culturally acceptable. Any suggestion of such relationships or other inappropriate behavior initiated by a student is subject to the following protocol in order to protect host families and the public profile of SIT:

1. Any inappropriate behavior that embarrasses the host family will result in a three-way meeting with the host family, the student, and the Academic Director. We will attempt to resolve the problem.
2. A second incident will result in termination of the homestay relationship; the student will be expected to stay in a hotel for the remainder of the program at her or his own expense.

If a student's public conduct is suspected of consistently damaging the program's reputation and these interventions are ineffective, the student may be dismissed from the program.

The environment in Delhi is physically demanding, both in summer, when the heat, monsoon, and urban pollution will pose specific health challenges, and in winter, when fog, dust, and chilly weather will remind you how close you are to the Himalayan mountain range. High quality health services are available in Delhi, and the SIT program has relationships with excellent doctors, though most students note that the bedside manner of Indian physicians is more distant than that of U.S. physicians. We will discuss health information and important advice and precautions in detail during orientation.

During your stay in India, it will always be advisable to remain conscious of health and safety issues and be more cautious than you might be in the U.S. Luckily, Delhi does not suffer from some of the problems faced by other North Indian cities, such as acute overcrowding and lack of sanitation. Filtered or bottled water is readily available, as is hygienically prepared food. Of course, you should use basic precautions and respect program staff and homestay families' advice when purchasing food for yourself. Homestay families are accustomed to our students' needs and are able to provide appropriate food and water that students need not be concerned about eating and drinking.

Counseling and psychiatric care is not as widely available in India nor is it utilized in the same way as in the United States. Students should not plan on having regular access to local psychological services. In emergencies, students may be able to consult with a Vermont-based SIT therapist by phone or a counselor/psychiatrist in Delhi.

HOMESTAYS



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.**

On this program, you will be staying in one homestay. Unlike many people in Asia, many urban Indians speak some English. Most of our homestay families are from upper or middle-class backgrounds. They represent various religious communities of North India, including Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains. Some are “nuclear” families, living in apartments, while others are “joint” families.

As is culturally appropriate for Indian college students, you will be expected to conform to a 9:30 PM homestay curfew.

OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

You will stay at a guest house near the program center during Orientation. When the program is not in Delhi, students will stay in hotels or small guesthouses, generally two students per room. During ISP, most students live in accommodations suitable for their field work needs.

TRANSPORTATION

Delhi is a busy city, full of cars, buses, rickshaws, Metro, 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 Uber and Metro to and from the program center each day. Most students live about 20 minutes by Metro/Uber/auto rickshaw from the program center, but some may live up to 40 minutes away. Uber Taxis are also available for reasonable prices, though they are more expensive than metro .

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.

PHONES AND E-MAIL

As part of SIT’s commitment to student safety and security, all students are required to have a working smart phone capable of making and receiving both local and international calls throughout the duration of the program. For that purpose students are required to either (a) bring an open, unlocked smart phone from the U.S. to the program that is able to accept a local SIM card, and is compatible with and usable at the program location, (b) work with the academic director within the first week upon arrival in country to purchase a smart phone locally, or (c) bring a dual SIM smart phone. During orientation, with assistance from SIT Study Abroad staff, students will learn how to use their cellphone, how to purchase and use an appropriate local SIM card, and how to acquire minutes for calls and texting. SIT Study Abroad requires that each student have a local number for communication with the homestay family and program staff.

While we recognize that alternative communication methods can be free or cheaper than cell service i.e. facetime, skype, WhatsApp, etc. those do not satisfy our need for regular communication with the local program staff and partners nor do they meet our emergency communication needs. Therefore, local cellular capacity on each student’s phone is required

for the duration of the program. Full compliance with this policy is expected. Students are responsible for maintaining a minimum number of credits, keeping their phones charged and on their person at all times.

You should bring your phone unlock code with you to India. This will enable you to use the Indian SIM in your phone. When you are in the process of buying an Indian prepaid SIM card, it is critical to know that your signature on the SIM card paperwork must be identical to that which is present in your passport. **The signature in the subscription form should match the one in the passport exactly; otherwise the service will not be activated.** The Xerox copy of the front page of the passport should be submitted along with the subscription form.

The program provides a wireless internet device for emails and all academic work. Please do not expect great Internet speed especially in rural areas while on excursion.

You have chosen to experience a foreign culture as thoroughly as possible; constant telephoning, Skyping, e-mailing and /or blogging can hinder that experience. We encourage you to “unplug” and learn the slower and more meditative pleasures of journal and letter writing.

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.

For this program, **DHL 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

[c/o World Learning India
Ground floor
168, Pocket- 2
Jasola Vihar
New Delhi 110025

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. During the ISP period, students will receive a stipend for basic room and board only, based on the cost of living at the program base. **Any domestic travel, interpretation services, or supplies necessary for the ISP are the students' responsibility.** Please plan accordingly.



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. If you have a medical situation that requires an overnight visit to the clinic you must have a credit card; your program insurance will reimburse your expenses upon return home, but you must pay your bill in cash or credit card before leaving the clinic. You should be able to use a credit card at many upscale shops as well.

Check current exchange rates:

<http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>

If using a debit and/or credit card, you should contact your bank and/or credit card companies regarding your travel plans. If you don't inform these companies that you will be away, they will often assume the card has been lost or stolen and will put an immediate hold on the card. You should also check on costs of withdrawal, as these costs vary and can sometimes be very expensive. Renewing

and receiving reissued credit and debit cards while on the program will be an expensive and highly inconvenient process. Before you leave for your program, please check the expiration dates on your cards to ensure that they will not expire while you are abroad. It is also very important that you make photocopies of all your debit/credit card information and leave them with someone you trust in case your card(s) is/are lost or stolen.

Following are suggestions for spending money during the program, including estimates for textbooks, ISP-related expenses, medical expenses, personal spending, and gifts. Figures are based on recent student evaluations, though individual spending habits vary widely and **these costs are averages**.

A suggested total amount of money to budget ranges from **US \$400 to \$600**. 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, including travel costs for your planned ISP or a specific personal expense.

Please budget approximately:

Personal spending (from past student suggestions):	300 USD
Books, printing, supplies: (<small>\$60 refundable deposit for library materials</small>)	100 USD
Up-front medical costs: (<small>\$30-50 clinic visit; \$300 overnight stay; plus medications</small>)	200 USD
Potential ISP travel expenses:	Covered by ISP stipend
Bottled Water:	Provided at the program center
Typical Internet café usage:	Free at program center
Estimated total:	600 USD

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 during ISP presentations or after the formal conclusion of the program. Students will not be excused from program components to attend to visitors. See the Attendance and Participation section of the [Student Handbook](#).

Please note that any visitors during the course of the program 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 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. Please note that you will not have a long break during the program, such as Thanksgiving or Spring Break.

Students are not allowed to leave the country, except for the Thailand excursion, and may not leave the program city without the permission of the Academic Director. Further details regarding the independent travel policy can be found in the [Student Handbook](#).

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 request that you pack in a backpack; not a suitcase. You will be traveling by train and will need to move quickly up and down train station staircases and you must load your bags onto the train without any help – students in previous semesters have missed the train because of heavy or bulky luggage. Some new backpacks have a wheel option, which is convenient.

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

For many Americans, choice of dress is an expression of individuality. In India, appropriate dress is a simple way of displaying your knowledge of Indian cultural norms. Many of the homestay families are quite liberal, but we also want you to be comfortable with standards observed by the more conservative sectors of Indian society, so that you will be well received in the widest variety of social settings. However, what it means to be respectfully dressed will not be obvious to you at first! The following details will help you get started.

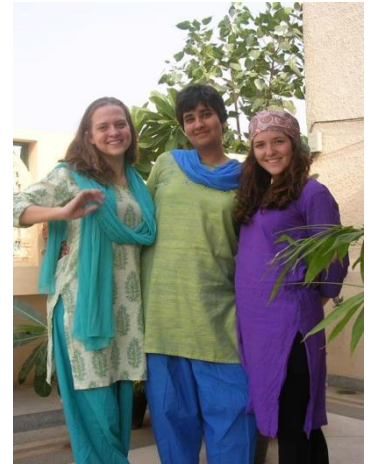
The by-word for appropriateness in India is “neat and clean” – that is, your clothing should be ironed, clean, without holes or rips, and in accordance with the guidelines below. Despite their numbers, Westerners sporting a casual hippie-look are not well regarded in India.

Guidelines for All Students:

- Styles that show the mid-riff or backside, such as low-rise pants, are not culturally sensitive.
- Shirts may be tucked in (for men), or if they are left hanging, they must be long enough to come down past your bottom (for women).
- Shorts and sleeveless tops are never appropriate for either men or women. Collared shirts are always preferred over t-shirts.
- *Bring your jeans, but make sure they are not too tight, low, ripped, ragged or full of holes. Please be sure to have neat hems on your pants. Pants should completely cover your ankles – no capri pants.*

Special Guidelines for Female Students:

- Indian clothing is world famous for its beauty: in flattering fit and exquisite fabrics. Asking you to observe the norms of Indian dress should not impose a burden on your sense of style, love of fashion or your pocketbook. While you are a participant on this program, we will insist that you meet the standards of conservative, modest dress. This is for your reputation and safety as well as for the reputation of this program and your homestay. *You do not have to wear Indian clothing; Western clothing is fine, if it meets the modesty guidelines listed below.*
- By all means, bring your jeans; many Indian college women wear jeans and a kurta/kurti



as typical on-campus attire. Jeans are fine if you wear a top long enough to cover your bottom.

- Tight or revealing clothing is seen as an explicit invitation for sexual attention. For your own protection and reputation, we will ask you to change your clothes if you wear tight jeans, tight t-shirts or other forms of revealing clothing.
- Ankle-length skirts are considered appropriate Western wear – as long as they are patterned and not transparent. Skirts with side slits are not acceptable.
- Necklines must not show bosom cleavage. All shirts must be long enough to cover the hips and amply cover your bum.
- A bra-less look is never appropriate. Low-rise jeans are not acceptable. Displaying bra straps or underwear is not appropriate.
- Jogging clothes should consist of long pants and baggy top.



Names of typical articles of clothing for women in India

EQUIPMENT

It is a good rule whenever you travel to pack all your gear inside your pack in waterproof bags. If you are bringing expensive camera gear or other equipment,

have a strategy to protect it from dust, heat and humidity.

You do not need to bring bed linens or pillows, but a small fast-drying travel towel is handy. You do not need sleeping bags, tents, or other camping equipment.

COMPUTERS AND OTHER ELECTRONICS

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 is not responsible for any duty tax you may have to pay when you enter the country, theft, or loss.

If you bring a laptop to India, please be aware that the current is 220v. AC 50 Hz, and that voltage is wildly unstable.

If you bring your laptop, please be sure to back up all of your data, and remember to do so throughout the semester, as computer crashes are frequent. You will be very busy during the first weeks of the program, so be aware that it may take you the first few days or so to set up your computer and Internet access.

*Please also note that there is not a computer tech support resource available through the program; if you run into difficulties with set up or maintenance, it is your responsibility to trouble-shoot. We cannot arrange computer repair, parts, or Internet hook-up. Please **bring all necessary adapters**, as we cannot provide you with accessories.*

Please see the following website for information about electricity, voltage and electrical adapters. <http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/>. The electrical current in India is 220v, AC 50 Hz. The plug types used are C and D.

Any electronic item you want to bring from the US must run on 220 Volts or exclusively on batteries (most camera chargers, computers, iPhones, Blackberries and iPods are dual system). Batteries are widely available and are relatively inexpensive. You can also purchase small plastic plug converters cheaply in India that will allow you to use a U.S. plug adapter. If you must bring some equipment that only

runs on 110 volts, you will need to find a voltage adapter, called a step-down transformer. These can be quite heavy, so think twice before bringing 110 Volt appliances. You may want to bring a small digital recording device for recording interviews, lectures or language classes.

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.

WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT OBTAIN IN COUNTRY

Most toiletries and health supplies such as shampoo, shower gel, soaps, band-aids, razorblades, deodorant and toothpaste are widely available. Most American over-the-counter medications are found in Indian equivalents.

Medicines not available include: Pepto Bismol; acidophilus (a probiotic that may aid in digestion).

ALUMNI CONTACTS

If you have further questions, please contact your admissions counselor and/or ask an alumni contact: <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/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.



PACKING LIST

GENERAL

- Sunglasses
- Sandals, sneakers
- Sweater (it will be cold in Winter)
- Sleepwear
- Underwear and socks

WOMEN

- Long non-transparent skirts, or long dress with short or long sleeves
- Long shirts or sleeved blouses that are adequate to cover your bum
- Full pajamas or long opaque nightie for homestay
- Modest, loosely cut jeans or pants with neat hems and no holes

MEN

- Collared shirts, polo shirts
- Khakis or clean neat jeans, with neat hems

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Passport
- Yellow WHO Card (see the [Safety, Security, and Health](#) document for more information)
- 2 photocopies of your passport stored separately from your actual passport
- Photocopy of visa
- All SIT pre-departure information and your pre-term assignments
- Photocopies of all credit cards, ATM cards, and airline tickets.

HEALTH/TOILETRIES

- An adequate supply of any medication you use regularly, including birth control
- A list of any medications you are currently taking with the generic name of each (if there is one)
- Copies of any prescription as well as a report of health issue. The doctors always ask for prior report and prescription on record.
- A small portable medical kit kept in your day pack at all times. It will be checked at Orientation for completeness, and should include:

- A small supply of your prescribed medications.
- Adhesive bandages
- antibiotic cream
- disinfectant moist wipes
- small container of bug repellent
- over-the-counter drugs as approved by your doctor:
 - minor pain medication
 - antacids
 - anti-diarrhea medication
 - electrolyte mix
 - anti-itching ointment
 - antihistamine
 - motion sickness medication
 - cold and sore throat medication
- High SPF sunscreen
- For women: Tampons and pads, if you use a brand other than OB or Stayfree.
- Small sewing kit: safety pins, extra buttons, threads and needles.

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS

- AMEX, Visa, or MasterCard for emergencies.
- ATM card, if your bank is linked to international networks such as Cirrus or Plus. Be sure you know the four-digit code for international access.
- 1-liter water bottle that won't leak.
- Small flashlight and batteries.
- Notebook and pen in order to begin taking notes right away.
- Homestay gifts
- Photos of friends/family to share with homestay family

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

OPTIONAL

- Small traveler's watercolor set
- TSA-approved luggage zipper locks.