

COUNTRY

OVERVIEW

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LA LEY



& PACKING

GUIDELINES

Argentina: Public Health in Urban Environments

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COUNTRY OVERVIEW

GENERAL INFORMATION

The first colonial landing in what we now call Argentina occurred around the beginning of the 16th century, during a voyage led by Juan Díaz de Solís, a Spanish sailor who was the first European to reach the shores of an estuary later named the Río de la Plata (River of Silver, or “River Plate” in British English).

In 1580, a small port named Buenos Aires was established by the colonial Spanish government in the southern territory of the Americas. Many years later, in 1776, this territory became the formal viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata.

In 1810, a week-long series of events called the May Revolution occurred, which ended on May 25 with the creation of the first local government: the First Assembly. Six years later, on July 9, 1816, a formal declaration of independence marked the end of Spanish rule. Argentina struggled to establish a nation-state and in 1853 finally adopted its constitution, many parts of which were based on the United States Constitution.

With immigration and investment from Europe, modern Argentina expanded greatly during a prolonged burst of economic growth. Between 1880 and 1930, Argentina was one of the world’s 10 richest countries in terms of per capita income. After a series of both radical and conservative governments, the people of Argentina elected Juan Perón as their president in 1946.

Perón initiated policies that focused on empowering the working class and building a strong welfare state. Massive income redistribution was sustained by many different sources, such as tax revenues, nationalization of industries, and the expansion of public services. Perón also strongly promoted union movements that enhanced his leadership.

After Perón was pushed into exile by the military in 1955, there were a series of military and civil governments throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Perón returned to the presidency in 1973, holding the position for just one year before his death. He was replaced by his wife at the time, Isabel Perón. On March 24, 1976, Isabel was overthrown in a military coup that led to what was to be the bloodiest period in Argentina’s history. In the last Militar and Civic Dictatorship, as many as 30,000 people were abducted and killed without trace by the military. Those 30,000 people are now referred to as “the disappeared.”

Argentina returned to democratic rule in 1983 and since then has been led by stable and democratic governments, although these governments have been weak in enhancing real political reform and social welfare. Argentina’s economy exhibited a cyclical boom-and-bust pattern, with the worst economic crisis occurring at the end of 2001, when the country collapsed economically and politically. Since 2003, the country has managed to recover rapidly. In an era when optimism coexists with social and economic tension, some unresolved social issues, such as poverty and inequality, stand out.

Argentina has a long history of immigration, originally with people coming from Spain, Italy, and other European countries, later from Syria



and Lebanon, and more recently from Eastern Europe and neighboring Latin American countries. The population is predominantly Catholic, but Argentina has the largest Jewish population in Latin America. The indigenous population is also important to consider. Now numbering less than 1 million (in a country of over 40 million), they live in the northern, northwestern, and southern regions of the country. The majority of Argentina's population lives in the urban centers of the nation.

Argentina is brimming with cultural activities. This is evident in its many festivals, expositions, cinemas, theaters, and concerts that take place throughout the major cities. For example, Buenos Aires has over 100 cinemas and 90 theaters. *Fútbol* (soccer) is the main sport in the country and is central to Argentine national identity. Other popular sports include tennis, volleyball, basketball, field hockey, and rugby.

Finally, Argentina is a federal republic consisting of 23 provinces and the autonomous capital city of Buenos Aires in southern South America, as well as other areas claimed by Argentina, including an Antarctic sector and the Malvinas Islands and several other islands of the South Atlantic.

CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY

Buenos Aires is located in central-eastern Argentina, which has a moderate climate. Summers (December to March) are quite warm, while the winter months (April to September) may be cooler. It rains in every season.

Summer temperatures (December–March) in Buenos Aires oscillate between 75–95°F and there are irregular dry periods. While it can be hot in Buenos Aires during the summer months (which is winter in North America!), there is usually a cool breeze coming off of the Río de la Plata. Winter months (June–September) are cooler, with temperatures between 45° and 60°; however, temperatures can fall below freezing.

LOCAL CUSTOMS

In general, Argentines are open-minded and engaging people and this can make your cultural immersion easier. They can start a very personal conversation right after meeting you and they may expect that you open up in the same way. They usually address things and emotions –good or bad- in a very direct way. It is common for people to make jokes about themselves and to also tease one another. As an example, they may nickname one another based on physical characteristics such as “*Cabezón*”, “*Flaco*”, or “*Gordo*” and this is not considered offensive. It is very common, especially in Buenos Aires, for people to greet by kissing on the cheek, even when meeting for the first time.

| BUENOS AIRES: AVERAGE HIGH/LOW TEMPERATURES (°F) | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY |
| 98/78 | 95/75 | 85/65 | 74/45 | 65/45 |
| SEPT | OCT | NOV | DEC | |
| 70/58 | 75/61 | 77/63 | 85/75 | |

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.

The diet of Argentina is largely influenced by the Mediterranean region, both in food and schedule. Meal times 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 various types of meat, breads, pasta, sandwiches, etc. It is also a common custom to drink *mate*, an infusion of herbs in hot water drank through a metal straw called a *bombilla*. The day begins with a light breakfast, which typically includes a cup of tea or coffee, croissants/bread, and marmalade. In Buenos Aires a lunch generally consists of an entrée (a type of meat, a starch option, and salad) and dessert.

Argentines rarely use beans in their meals. In rural communities, many families eat a type of stew called *puchero*, made up of different vegetables and meats. 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. It is always a good idea to be very honest with your host family as to what you like and dislike, as this will have an impact on the remaining weeks of your semester. Generally, there is one individual in the home who does the majority of the cooking.

Vegetarians 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, so it will be necessary to be *very* clear to your hosts about your dietary preferences. Lastly, it is quite possible to keep kosher in Buenos Aires, but this may be difficult outside the city.

Note: if you have special dietary needs, including allergies, please inform our office prior to the start of your program. 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 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, accident and illness insurance, and general program tips, please read the [Safety, Security, and Health](#) document and [Student Handbook](#).

During orientation, as well as on an ongoing basis throughout the program, safety and security guidelines and rules are fully communicated and students have a chance to internalize the information through debates and role plays.

The goal of all of the discussions is to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to take care of themselves, to make good security choices, and to minimize risk. Sessions underscore how not to appear to be an easy target for petty criminals, how to interact with people, how best to navigate the city and other program destinations safely, and other topics. This information is also reiterated through

written program materials. The program aims to minimize risk through both: (1) equipping students with the appropriate knowledge as per the above; and (2) making clear and enforcing program rules around safety and making clear the ramifications for breaching SIT rules in relation to personal student safety. **SIT does not hesitate to take disciplinary action against students who disregard rules affecting their own or others' safety.**

Buenos Aires, like any big city in the world, presents certain health and safety risks requiring individuals to take appropriate precautions. Before the excursions, students will receive additional safety and security briefings about specific local conditions.

The most common issues students have faced in the past have been robberies and pickpockets. Students who bring electronic equipment (i.e. laptops, iPods, cameras, etc.) must be conscious that these items tend to be quite expensive in Argentina, therefore conveying an image of wealth. It is crucial to be very careful about your visible use of such items while in public and even outdoor parts of your host family's home (such as a street-facing balcony).

Nightlife in Buenos Aires is very active, so there is great temptation to go out in the evenings. When returning home at night you should always travel in a minimum of pairs, if not small groups, and use registered taxis. It is **not acceptable** to return home after midnight during the week. Weekend behavior must depend upon and respect your host family norms.

Buenos Aires culture tends to be open-minded toward individuals identifying as LGBTQ, and those individuals will generally not be putting themselves at risk by being open about their identity. However, such open-mindedness cannot be guaranteed in the entirety of the Argentine population and may be much less present outside Buenos Aires. Please do not hesitate to discuss any questions about behavior or communication around sexual identity issues with your academic director.

There are high-quality medical and mental health facilities available in Argentina's urban areas. Facilities may be limited in more rural zones. The program has identified sources of medical care in all excursion destinations.



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 person 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.

In this program, you will have one main homestay. Students live with Argentine host families that come from different social and cultural backgrounds and are situated in various neighborhoods around the city. These neighborhoods include Almagro, Caballito, Monserrat, San Telmo, Palermo, Barrio Norte, Colegiales. All homestay sites have good access to ISALUD. Some host families have students attending the university.]

OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

Other accommodations will include small hotels and hostels. They are generally safe, with security boxes available, but you will want to bring a lock to protect your belongings. During the ISP portion of the program students will also be staying in homestays, unless their research takes them outside Buenos Aires. In that case, the student will have to make his/her own lodging arrangement with the program staff's assistance and approval.

TRANSPORTATION

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. During excursions, the group will primarily use private vehicles.

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 programs alone 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. Students are required to maintain a minimum amount of phone credits at all times for emergency calls. Full compliance with this policy is expected.

The program will provide you a local SIM card for your unlocked smartphone. Since you will obtain a local phone number, do not purchase an international plan for your US phone number

unless you have a dual SIM smart phone. If you do not have an unlocked smartphone, one can be purchased locally for about \$170. You can purchase calling plans, similar to a calling card, in order to regulate your cell phone expenses. Argentina's principal cell phone systems are CDMA and TDMA.

You will not be able to use most US-purchased calling cards in Argentina, and in any case calling cards in Argentina are less expensive than those from the US. Buenos Aires also has a multitude of calling agencies where you can make cheaper phone calls to the US. Email and Internet access is readily available throughout the major cities and in the SIT office, and is often quite inexpensive.

To call someone on a land line in Argentina from outside of Argentina, callers will need to dial their country's international access code, then Argentina's country code (54), then the city's area code, and finally the number itself. The area code for Buenos Aires is 11.

Students will have access to free wireless Internet at the program center (ISALUD) and may also use the program computer and printer from 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM.



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 and FedEx 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.

Posted letters and packages should be sent to the following address:

Student Name

c/o Ana Rita Díaz Muñoz / ISALUD
Venezuela 847
C1095AAQ
Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA

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.

We do not encourage you to bring Argentine pesos with you from the US. Bringing US dollars will allow you to guarantee a better exchange rate. The majority of stores in Buenos Aires also accept credit cards, the most common being Visa, MasterCard, and American Express. Most students access funds from their US bank accounts using their VISA or MasterCard debit

cards. Any debit card that is linked to the PLUS or CIRRUS networks should also work at ATMs in country.

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\$1500 to \$2000**. 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.

Check current exchange rates:

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

Please budget approximately:

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Personal spending (from past student suggestions): | \$1000 |
| Books, printing, supplies: | \$50 USD |
| Up-front medical costs: | \$200 USD |
| Bottled water: | \$50 USD |
| Cell phone costs: | \$100 USD |
| Potential ISP travel expenses: | \$200 USD |
| Visa: | \$200 USD |
| Typical Internet café usage: | \$50 USD |
| Estimated total: | \$1,830 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 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](#).

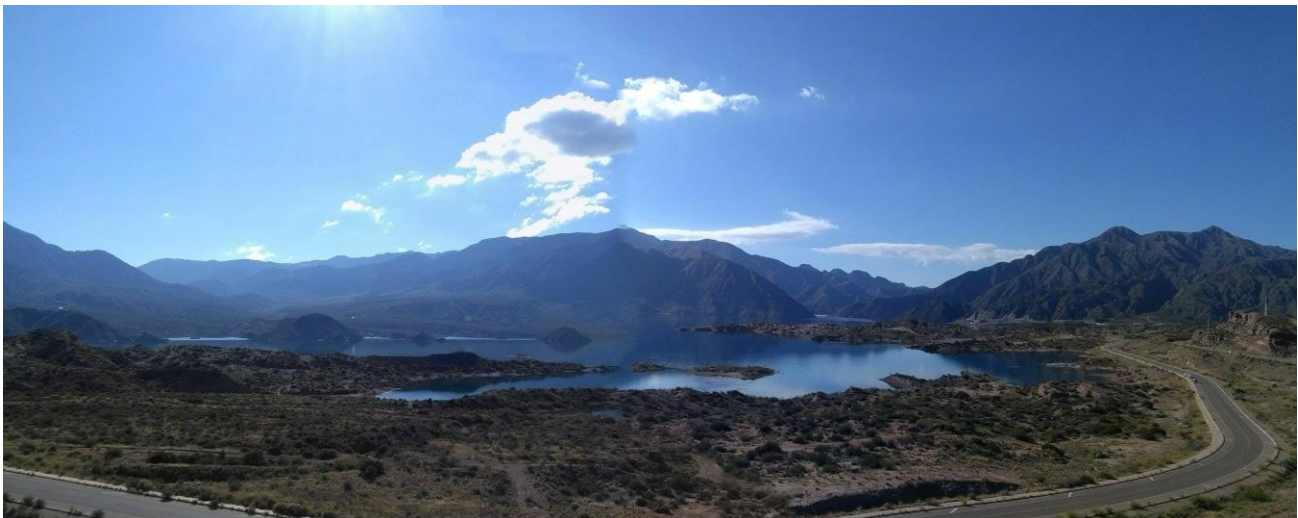
Please note that any visitors during the course of the program must plan their own independent accommodations; SIT Study Abroad homestay families can accommodate only their assigned student and, due to cultural and contractual

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 typically have four weeks to conduct research, gather and analyze data, write, and prepare for the ISP presentation. There is a lot to cover, and students find the ISP period a very busy time. For this reason, please plan to use your time wisely.

Opportunity for independent travel during the program is limited and cannot be guaranteed due to the rigorous schedule and disruption independent travel may cause to semester responsibilities. Requests to travel independently within the country will be considered on a case by case basis by 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. Usually only one carry-on is permitted on the plane; 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

While informal dress is acceptable and common in most settings, it is essential to keep a neat, clean appearance. Jeans with holes, sloppy T-shirts, and tank tops are discouraged. People in offices and health institutions are apt to be much more open and responsive if the visitor shows respect by dressing accordingly. It is not necessary to be fashionable, just neat and clean. It is very important to have at least one set of clothes for formal occasions.

It is a good idea to bring clothes for all seasons. You will need warm clothes for both the spring and the fall semester. Dressing in layers is the most sensible solution to the varied seasonal and geographic climates that you will encounter. Pack a fleece sweater, warm pants, and boots for Buenos Aires, as well as some summer clothing for a few of the excursions. Convertible

pants (with zippers that can make long pants into short pants) are very practical. For the excursions, bring clothes that are easy to wash, no iron needed, and lightweight. Some comfortable trekking shoes may be useful.

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. 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.

Former students have brought their laptops to take advantage of the easy Internet access not only in our offices but also in local cafés that are available throughout the city and at very reasonable prices. Students are required to type all of their assignments and load them in the Moodle system.

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

GIFTS



As you might imagine, it is best to be prepared with a gift to offer your homestay family in gratitude for their hospitality and as a means to

share a part of your culture with them. We suggest one or two gifts that the whole family can enjoy. You may also wish to consider gifts for people outside your homestay family. Try to choose gifts that represent you or the part of the country and/or community you live in. Think about what your city, state, or local artisans produce. Draw upon your personal interests or hobbies for ideas. Pack a couple of small gifts for children, such as small games, bubbles, or a Frisbee. Even if your homestay family does not have small children, chances are that you will engage with children in your homestay community. Once you are on the program and learn more about the local culture, you will discover other ways to thank your family. Remember to bring pictures of your friends and family to share.

WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT OBTAIN IN COUNTRY

Buenos Aires is a well-developed cosmopolitan city that has all the amenities of any large city in the United States. Therefore, it will be quite easy to find the majority of familiar products. However, please note that in order to stick to a favored brand, you might pay elevated prices due to import taxes.

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

- 6 – 7 shirts
- 2 - 3 pairs of shorts
- 2 - 4 pairs casual pants/skirts
- 2 - 4 pairs of jeans/dresses
- 1 business casual/dressy outfit (for important meetings or family events)
- Supply of cold-weather clothes (Good coat, multiple scarves, light gloves, wool socks)
- 2 - 4 sweaters or warm tops
- 2-week supply of underwear
- Socks
- Pajamas
- 1 pair walking shoes
- 1 pair sneakers
- 1 pair sandals
- Swimsuit
- Raincoat / jacket
- Flipflops
- Hat

WOMEN

- 2 - 3 dresses or skirts

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Passport
- Immunization Record or 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 (*if applicable*)
- Copy of electronic ticket
- 3 passport-sized photos to obtain visas for excursions (*non-US passport holders only*)

HEALTH/TOILETRIES

- Sunscreen (at least SPF 15)
- Sunglasses
- Adequate supply of any medications you use regularly, including birth control
- Small first aid kit with Band-Aids, hydrogen peroxide, moist towelettes, and over-the-counter drugs for minor pain, diarrhea, anti-

itching, and motion sickness, as approved by your doctor.

- Extra eyeglasses or contacts (saline solution is available but expensive)
- Tampons

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS

- An open, unlocked smart phone (see Phones section for more details)
- Spanish/English dictionary
- Flashlight/headlamp
- Homestay family gifts

- Fold-up umbrella
- Durable water bottle

OPTIONAL

- Travel guide if you plan to do post-program travel (Lonely Planet is recommended)
- Camera and film
- Voltage and plug adaptors
- College or university ID
- Waterless anti-bacterial hand soap
- Ziploc storage bags
- Dryer sheets (to keep your luggage smelling fresh)

