COUNTRY OVERVIEW & PACKING GUIDELINES

China: Health, Environment, and Traditional Chinese Medicine
Fall 2020
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China is so immense, so diverse, so populous and so economically important that it is impossible to make any generalizations or blanket statements about the country or its people. The diverse cultures within its boundaries include some of the most enduring and rich of any that exist in the world. After years of forced colonial access and plunder, followed by the occupation of much of its territory during World War II, China has rebounded phenomenally under a communist system, although now it seems so only in name. Marked by authoritarian rule and the admitted social turmoil of the disastrous Cultural Revolution, China has emerged with a rapidly evolving social system within which few starve, and where basic medical care is available to almost everyone, albeit at increasing cost to the individual. With increasing emphasis on economic reform, under which joint ventures and entrepreneurs flourish, the world now looks towards China as an emerging economic giant, waking from slumber and poised to alter the global status quo in ways that are of concern to those who have long believed they hold the reins of world power in their hands.

With these sweeping changes come new challenges and social issues. The gap between rich and poor is striking in this once purportedly classless society, and with this comes resentment. Although China is often perceived in the West as an increasingly wealthy country, sparking debate over trade imbalances and currency manipulation, the reality is that the average per capita income of the Chinese citizen is now between that of the average resident of Namibia and Turkmenistan. And these live under the shadow of an increasing class of the superrich. A marked migration from the rural areas to the cities may have dramatic repercussions for the economy. A powerful, if not dominant, player on the world stage in the 21st century, China is increasingly becoming a focal point of academic study and world attention. Whether from the viewpoint of the biologist, botanist, the environmentalist, the anthropologist, the sociologist, the historian, the ethnomusicologist, the political scientist, the economist, or the student of religions and medicines, China has the capacity to provide endless topics for study and research, including its world famous medical system, which is one of the focus of this unparalleled study abroad program.

The first part of our program orientation meetings is held in China’s capital, Beijing, and its objectives are to enrich students’ understanding of Yunnan Province’s place in China’s history and the relationship between central government policy regarding health care, environment protection and traditional Chinese medicine and the lived experiences of Yunnan’s minority groups. In Beijing, our students meet prominent academics and visit World Heritage sites, including the Great Wall and the Forbidden City, along with Tiananmen Square and other significant locales in this modern metropolis.

Yunnan Province is an exceptionally diverse land. Over the course of the semester, you will encounter rural peasants and urban academics, members of the Han majority, and many of China’s ethnic minority peoples. You will hear much about the benefits of a unique socialist system in which capitalism appears to be the driving force, and will encounter a land in which women are encouraged to play a dynamic role in society, yet seldom achieve positions of true power. You will experience urban Chinese culture as well as ethnic minority family life. You will visit the once sleepy backwater of Lijiang, now said to be China’s number one tourist destination, and experience Tibetan culture in the areas surrounding Zhongdian (Shangri-la).

As these towns become increasingly influenced by a dramatic surge in tourism, we make certain each semester to also visit locations that remain much as they have always been, and where few tourists are encountered. In these locales, the language may be difficult; educated Chinese speak Mandarin, but not very much English, although this situation is rapidly changing. More and more students speak English.
Many of Yunnan’s minority peoples have their own distinct languages and use Mandarin Chinese as a “lingua sinica.”

Kunming serves as the base for the China: Health, Environment and traditional Chinese Medicine program. At an elevation of 1,800 meters, higher than Kathmandu or Denver, Kunming is known as the “city of eternal spring.” It is the capital city of Yunnan Province, home to almost half of China’s recognized minority nationalities, although the city itself is primarily Han. While in Kunming, we will be based on the campus of the Yunnan Minzu University, formerly Yunnan Nationalities University, set up in the 1950’s to educate China’s minority peoples. This is where morning language classes, Taiji and many of our afternoon lectures will be held. Our time in Kunming will be divided between time living near the university, in order to facilitate interaction with your Chinese counterparts, and homestays with families in Kunming, which will continue for 2 weeks.

**CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY**

Southwest China is mild to chilly, with much sunshine and very little rain. Summer temperatures are moderated by altitude. However, it is important to remember that indoor heating is minimal, so from the end of November to early March interior temperatures are low. During the winter season, it can feel colder indoors than outside. Kunming is about 6500 ft. above sea level, and the program will travel to Zhongdian (Shangri-la), at an altitude of over 10,000 ft. At a high altitude, students should be careful to stay hydrated and to observe good sun protection measures, including a hat and sunscreen.

![Kunming: AVERAGE HIGH/LOW TEMPERATURES (°F)]

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>JAN</th>
<th>FEB</th>
<th>MAR</th>
<th>APR</th>
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<td>82/60</td>
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<td>SEPT</td>
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<td>82/64</td>
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**LOCAL CUSTOMS**

Follow the local custom when you go to a foreign place. Chinese proverb

Upon meeting people in China, the standard greeting is “Ni Hao!” (Nice to meet you!) and a handshake, which generally falls into the category of a limp fish—try not to squeeze too hard. The European practice of kissing someone as a greeting is considered inappropriate and much too forward.

The Western practice of addressing someone on a first name basis is too informal and inappropriate in Chinese culture. It is better to use “Mister” or “Miss” and “Uncle” or “Auntie” when referring to elder people. You can also use someone’s professional title such as “teacher”, “professor”, or “doctor” when meeting them.

When physically giving someone a gift, always give it with two hands. Also, expect the person to decline the gift three or more times as this is the polite way of accepting a gift in China.

When taking a break from eating, never plant your chopsticks in your food so they stand up. It resembles incense sticks used while praying for one’s dead ancestors—very inappropriate at the dinner table. Never agree when a Chinese person makes a self-deprecating comment. In fact, be sure to disagree wholeheartedly. In China, self-deprecating comments are expressions of modesty and indicative of a good upbringing.

**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.

China, and Yunnan Province in particular, is renowned for its cuisine, especially for its variety. Meals are rice-based, accompanied by dishes of meats, vegetables, and fish. Yunnan is famous for green vegetables and mushrooms that cannot be found in other areas of China and do not even have names in English; food in Yunnan also tends to be spicy. Large banquets are a part of Chinese life, and
generally Chinese culture focuses around plentiful food. Vegetarians and students keeping kosher or halal may encounter some minor difficulties, but these are easily overcome. Our staff will help students to learn to ask for vegetable dishes without any meat products or oil, but students will need to be flexible. Dairy products are not generally prominent in the diet. Yunnan, however, is somewhat of an exception. There is a particularly popular goat cheese dish famous in Yunnan, and milk and yogurt may be served at breakfast, but these dishes are generally easy to avoid if students have allergies.

SAFETY, SECURITY, AND HEALTH

Maintaining good health is critical to having a successful semester. To help you do that, we have provided the 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 document and Student Handbook.

Remember that while you are a student in a cultural education program in China, you are also an ambassador for your home country, home institution, and SIT Study Abroad. We ask all students to abide by all policies and guidelines in order to help maintain those important relationships as well as their own safety and wellbeing. Failure to abide by established guidelines may result in disciplinary measures. The following are safety tips for your time on the program:

China is a very welcoming and an extremely group-oriented social culture. Most social events revolve around eating with many friends and associates. Social connections and business relationships often take place around the dinner table, where business transactions are sealed and previous friendships reinforced and new ones established. Such social gatherings often involve drinking. Excessive drinking will result in immediate probation. Appropriate cultural dos and don’ts will be covered during your initial program Orientation Period.

China is generally a safe place, particularly Yunnan and Kunming, though all of the usual security guidelines should be followed. Public transportation is generally safe, convenient, and inexpensive, as long as you are mindful of your belongings. Taxis are metered and drivers are honest. You are very unlikely to be overcharged as a non-Chinese person. However, always be aware of your bags, cameras and possessions and never leave pockets of backpacks open. As everywhere, thievery does occur, but seldom in Kunming and China in comparison with many other places.

Sexual harassment is seldom encountered. Gays and lesbians are increasingly accepted in China, but overt homosexual behavior is still considered unacceptable. There are gay and lesbian establishments in China and Kunming, but discretion is advised. More on this topic will be covered in Orientation.

Please note that, in Kunming, although hospitals are of decent quality, psychiatric treatment or emotional or crisis counseling is non-existent. If you are suffering from emotional problems or your medications are not totally reliable, you might take this extremely important factor into consideration. A new and unfamiliar environment, far from home, can, on occasion, exacerbate current or dormant emotional issues. This has been proven to be a problem in the past, so you might do well to take your emotional limits into consideration.

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 the China: Health, Environment and traditional Chinese Medicine program, you will be staying in two homestays. One, of approximately two weeks duration, will be in urban Kunming near our host institution, Yunnan Minzu University. The homestay families are primarily drawn from members of the academic and related community. Most of the major college and university campuses are located near each other, usually within walking distance of our host and affiliate, Yunnan Minzu University.

The second homestay is in a rural location in the small ethnic Bai community of Shaxi. This homestay is only four or five days in duration but provides a taste of this beautiful township, now a World Monuments site, an agrarian society just on the cusp of impending tourism development. This idyllic setting, replete with cows, chickens and other domestic animals, is a perfect setting in which to observe and learn about agricultural life firsthand, and in which to contemplate the potential benefits as well as social and cultural damage that can so easily be wrought by tourism growth, a major issue facing China and Yunnan’s unique minority cultures in recent years.

Homestays are arranged as best we can to accommodate students’ needs and interests. For example, most students wish to live with families who speak little English in order to develop their Chinese language skills. Some Muslim students can, if possible, be matched with Muslim (Hui) families who may prepare halal food. Whenever possible, if a student knows what they intend to study if they choose to pursue an Independent Study Project, all attempts are made to match students with family that include a family member knowledgeable about their subject, be it environment protection, healthcare, religion, art, or a variety of other potential student interest.

**However, such homestay matches cannot be guaranteed, as our homestays are limited.** So, keep your minds open and be flexible. Still, as we get to know you, we will try our best to place you with a family suitable for you. Most homestay families have some sort of curfew, and if you will miss a dinner or be late, **inform your homestays in all cases.** You are not considered a guest, but a member of the family, with all the respect, obligations and pleasures that entails. Appropriate homestay behavior will be addressed as your homestay period in Kunming approaches.

**OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS**

Orientation will take place in Beijing and Kunming. When the group is in Beijing, students live in a centrally located hotel. While in Kunming, during the periods when students will not be staying with a homestay, they will stay at a small hotel near Yunnan Minzu University. Students live in clean rooms of two with attached bathrooms. During excursions students will stay in hotels and guesthouses in Dali, Weibaoshan, Shibaoshan, Lijiang and Zhongdian (Shangri-la).

Accommodations during the Independent Study Period are varied. For those pursuing the additional Intensive Chinese Language option or conducting internship in Kunming, students usually stay at the small hotels near the university. Some would like to locate a one-month apartment rental through airbnb or local websites. For those pursuing the traditional field-based Independent Study Project, accommodation may be in small guesthouses, with village families, or at a local NGO. There are many potential options here and we have established a
network of key contacts and advisors in the areas of Yunnan most frequently studied.

TRANSPORTATION
China has traditionally used public transportation, bicycles, motorcycles and walking as the main means of transport. Car traffic is dramatically on the rise, with more and more private cars on the roads. Student housing is usually within walking distance to lectures, so walking is generally the most common mode of transport. Some homestays may be two or three bus stops away. For long distance travel during excursions, the group generally travels by a rented bus from local educational institutes. Students fly to

PHONES AND E-MAIL
All students are required to have a working cell phone while on SIT Study Abroad programs. This policy is part of our commitment to student safety and will facilitate communication in case of an emergency. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they are reachable by phone at all times. Students are expected to keep the phone charged and stocked with airtime/minutes and to notify staff of, and replace, lost or stolen phones. Please note that students who do not comply with the cell phone policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

Students routinely purchase cheap mobile phones in Kunming for their period of stay here, both on the China: Health, Environment and Traditional Chinese Medicine program as well as for potential visits to China in the future. In some cases, Chinese SIM cards may be purchased and simply inserted into previously owned cell phones. Usually these are recharged monetarily by readily available calling cards of various denominations, available in many shops seemingly everywhere.

Having a cell phone while in China is required as it allows immediate contact with your Chinese friends and fellow students, as well as our program student services and program assistants in case of emergencies or problems encountered. If you are calling the States, China is exactly 12 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time (EST) except during US daylight savings time when it switches to 13 hours.

China has increasingly cracked down on Internet accessibility. Foreigners are often not allowed into public Internet parlors (smoky places primarily used for gaming anyway). However, numerous Chinese restaurants and western-styled cafes have Wi-Fi and sometimes even computers. Our SIT Library/Lecture room and our students’ hotel rooms are fully wireless.

In comparison to the US, Internet access is often available in very obscure places, so, although problems are bound to crop up, overall, you will usually be able to get online. Our program assistant, Zhao Jie (Charles), is a self-described tech “geek” and is able to help students obtain cell phones and with SIM cards, as well as with many computer related problems. These issues will be fully covered during Orientation. We highly advise you to notify your family immediately upon your safe arrival in China.
WeChat is the best tool to communicate with people in China, and between China and foreign countries. You are strongly encouraged to install WeChat on your cell phone. Please note that Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and many foreign websites are blocked in China. Google and gmail do not work in China, though China-based search engines are available.

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, we suggest that packages be sent to you via the DHL, UPS, FedEx or U.S. Postal Service. When given the option, it’s always a good idea to send packages certified and with a number that allows the sender to track the package.

The delivery services listed above require a phone number to mail a package internationally. As the student has a cell phone in country, please use that number.

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 SIT
Lianhua Campus (Room 606, Wudaguan Building)
Yunnan Minzu University
#134, 12.1 Street
Kunming, Yunnan 650031
China

If you can put the address in Chinese, your package would get here easier:

Student Name
中国云南省昆明市五华区一二一大街134号云南民族大学莲华校区伍达观楼606教室SIT。邮编650031

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 in China is the renminbi, or Chinese Yuan (CNY). China’s economy runs mainly on cash; for small purchases, credit cards and debit cards will not be accepted. When in larger hotels or department stores, international credit cards may be accepted; VISA and Master cards tend to be the most useful. Hospitals, post offices, and most restaurants generally do not accept credit cards. Many students have recommended bringing an ATM card for convenience; ATMs are increasingly available. However, please be sure that you have a back-up in the event that your card is lost, stolen or damaged.

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 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 $800 to $1,100. 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:

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal spending (from past student suggestions):</td>
<td>800 USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books, printing, supplies:</td>
<td>Included in program cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up-front medical costs:</td>
<td>300 USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential ISP travel expenses:</td>
<td>Only if taking flights or using interpreters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking water:</td>
<td>Included in program cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated total:</td>
<td>1100 USD</td>
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**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 on the China: Health, Environment and Traditional Chinese Medicine program may not leave China during the full duration of the program, although students may travel elsewhere prior to and after the program.

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. Please bring, at most, one medium sized backpack or wheeled suitcase, and a daypack.

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
In general, Chinese people are more formal in their attire than Americans. Their clothing is, for the most part, simple and conservative, although this is changing among young people and students. A pair of conservative slacks can be useful and jeans (neat and not torn) are acceptable. Pants should be loose and comfortable, and should be in good condition. Women may wear pants and skirts (clean and neat) for most occasions. Sloppy clothes are not appropriate.

Most clothing items can be found in China at cheap prices, though smaller sizes are more readily available than larger ones. It is best to pack as few things as possible and purchase clothing (or have it made) in China.

A cultural note regarding footwear: Chinese seldom go barefoot anywhere – not even in their own rooms. Standard flip-flops are rarely seen on the street, but sandals with straps such as Tevas are acceptable. In addition, if you have larger-sized feet (a size 8 or above for women and a size 10 or above for men), you should plan to bring all of your shoes with you, as large sizes are not easily available in China.

When visiting a temple or a monastery, people should cover their shoulders and legs.

For warmer weather, your dress should be casual and conservative. Fabrics containing some synthetic fiber make washing easier. Although laundry service is available in many places, be prepared for situations in which you will wash your own clothing by hand.

For the cool season (about mid-October to mid-April), Chinese dress in layers, using a pair of lower long underwear (thin cotton or silk). For the upper body, they usually wear an undershirt, shirt, sweater or jacket. Be sure that your outer layer of clothing is loose enough to accommodate these layers. Remember that buildings will not be heated in the winter and dressing in layers is a must. In the daytime it is usually colder inside than outside!

Due to the extraordinary access you will have to both members of the academic community, government officials, and important members of non-governmental organizations, as well as the laobaixing (local people), while on this program, students should be aware that, while extreme hairstyles and obvious body piercing do occur on the fringes of Chinese society, they may be viewed negatively by much of the general population, and may affect contacts that may be helpful during the various field-based exercises and Independent Study Project.

EQUIPMENT
You will not need to bring any highly specialized equipment for this program. Sheets and pillows will be provided. Towels in China tend to be smaller and less soft than those to which you may be accustomed; some previous students recommend...
bringing your own. Unless planning on trekking during the Yunnan Exploration project or during your Independent Study Project, you will not need a tent, sleeping bag or pad. If so, these can easily and cheaply be purchased here.

For safety, you should plan to bring small luggage locks for your luggage, and if you do plan to bring electronics, please be sure to bring an adapter and a converter.

**COMPUTERS AND OTHER ELECTRONICS**

It is highly recommended that you bring a laptop computer. If you bring a laptop, it is your personal property and responsibility. Before leaving home, remember to back up your computer to the cloud or on a hard drive that you leave at home to safeguard all your data in case your computer is lost or stolen. It is also recommended that you insure your computer, smart phone, and other valuables for full coverage in the event of loss or theft. SIT is not responsible for theft, loss, or any duty tax you may have to pay when you enter the country.

The Chinese government has strict control over the media, Internet and NGO operations in China. Participants should make sure that their computers and cell phones don’t contain anything that would be perceived as hurtful to China and should not talk about anything sensitive on any social media platform or in public. We have Internet access in our SIT library/lecture room and in our students’ hotel rooms. Please note that although foreigners are currently excluded from accessing the Internet in China’s Internet cafes, it is possible to use a personal laptop or cell phone to access wi-fi in many tea/coffee shops and other locations in cities throughout Yunnan province. We will cover computers, wi-fi, and social media use thoroughly during orientation.

For assignments, students are required to type all assignments and printers are available in printing/copying shops in cities. Typically, written assignments are simply sent via e-mail directly to the Academic Director.

Please see the following website for information about electricity, voltage and electrical adapters.

http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/.

The electricity supply for daily usage in China is 220volts and 50Hz, it is compatible with self-adaptive power adapter. The most common electric plugs in China are Type A or Type C for two pins, and Type I for three pins.

Since taking voice recordings can be quite handy in varied circumstances, we do suggest students to bring smartphones with them, which have ability to record voice memos and install WeChat which has become the most common application for daily communication in China.

Please note that many foreign websites are blocked in China due to internet control, such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Google.

**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 chocolates, children books in English, or small games. 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

Please bear in mind that almost everything except the above-mentioned items can easily be purchased more cheaply in China than in the US. For those with the cash on hand to do so, a suggestion seldom followed but often regretted is to arrive in China with not much more than an empty bag (also cheaply available in China) and then fill it with clothes, gifts and other items during your semester abroad in China. That being said, the following are recommendations from former students as to what may come in handy during your semester abroad on the China: Health, Environment and Traditional Chinese Medicine program.

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
- T-shirts—several
- Underwear—several pairs
- Long underwear—top and bottom (these are particularly useful and of high quality in China)
- Socks—several pairs
- A sweater or a fleece for layering (cheaply bought here in China)
- Swimsuit (optional)
- Coat
- Slippers and warm bathrobe (not too bulky; important when living in homestay)
- 1 pair comfortable, everyday shoes that are fairly dressy and good for walking
- 1 pair sturdy shoes (comfortable and good for walking) large sizes not available in China

WOMEN
- 1 spring/fall skirt
- 2 pair loose pants/leggings
- 2 long-sleeve blouses or shirts (comfortable to walk long distances in)
- 1 pair neat jeans

MEN
- 1 nice sweater (optional)
- 2 long-sleeved shirts
- 2 pair loose pants
- 1 pair neat jeans

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS
- Passport
- Yellow WHO Card (see the Safety, Security, and Health document for more information)
- Two photocopies of your passport, stored separately from your actual passport
- Photocopy of visa

HEALTH/TOILETRIES
- 1 bath towel, washcloth
- Adequate supply of any medication you use regularly, including birth control (drugs for use other than for medical purposes is strictly forbidden on your program and strict penalties are in effect)
- A list of any medications you are currently taking with the generic name of each (if there is one)
- 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 pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses (these are much cheaper in China, a good place to stock up.)
- Feminine hygiene products (tampons may be difficult to find in China)
- Neosporin

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS
- Camera
- Laptop computer
- Insulated water bottle (you’ll be drinking a lot of tea!)
- Luggage locks
- Travel alarm clock
- Visa or MasterCard for emergencies
- Homestay gifts
- Photos of friends/family to share with homestay family
- Unlocked Smart phone
- Facial masks
- Disinfection paper towel
- Extra pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses (these are much cheaper in China, a good place to stock up.)
- Feminine hygiene products (tampons may be difficult to find in China)
- Neosporin
- Camera
- Laptop computer
- Insulated water bottle (you’ll be drinking a lot of tea!)
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- Facial masks
- Disinfection paper towel

OPTIONAL
- Dental floss
- Deodorant
- Film (only if you want a special kind)
- Flashlight
- Toothpaste
- Hat/gloves
- Sunblock
- Sunglasses
- Swiss army knife (pack in check-in luggage only)
- Anti-malarial medicine (only necessary in case you choose to do your ISP or travel to a southern region of Yunnan, e.g. Xishuangbanna) or in Southeast Asia before or after the program

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