Mongolia and Siberia: Nomadism, Geopolitics, and the Environment
Fall 2020
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GENERAL INFORMATION
Mongolia rejoined the global scene in 1990 and started the process of dual transition to democracy and a market economy. Mongolia is focusing its efforts on developing balanced policies open to outside involvement, while maintaining strong nationalism rooted in its pastoral culture.

Among the temperate zones of the Northern Hemisphere, few nations compare to Mongolia in the size, diversity, and health of its natural ecosystems. Covering 1.564 million square kilometers, Mongolia encompasses an area larger than Britain, France, Germany and Italy combined. It is the seventh largest country in Asia and one of the largest land-locked countries in the world. With only 3 million inhabitants, its population density, 1.7 persons per square kilometer, is the lowest in Asia.

Although threatened by commercial exploitation, Mongolia still contains relatively intact examples of Asia’s deserts, steppe forests, mountains, and rare species of wild creatures and plants that inhabit them. The traditional culture of the semi-nomadic herder still thrives, as one-third of the country’s people still live a traditional nomadic lifestyle, tending nearly 50 million livestock. To consider culture within Mongolia, one must consider the natural surrounding environment. The two are interdependent, continually needing to adapt to the needs and demands of each other. The nomads’ life has changed very little since the old days, and Mongolia remains one of the last refuges of pastoral nomadism.

Mongolia used to be the second stronghold of Buddhist religion, after Tibet. However, in seven decades during the 20th Century, Buddhism was almost eradicated. The new democratic changes of 1990 allowed its peaceful revival. Now more than 140 Buddhist monasteries have been set up anew.

Under this newly found freedom of belief, other religions established themselves, including more than 30 churches and cults, mostly Christian. Another popular religion is Islam, which is practiced by a 100,000 strong Kazakh minority in the Bayan Ulgii.

CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY
Mongolia is a land of extremes. Humidity can be close to zero and the sun is intense, with over 260 sunny days a year. Temperatures often change drastically from day to night. Winters (October to April) are long and cold; sometimes it can get down to minus 40 Fahrenheit. Spring is short but there are major blizzards and dust storms, making the period from snow melting in late March to first grass in late May the least comfortable.

Summer, from mid-May to September, is usually warm with average temperatures of 64° to 78°. There are short rains in June, July and August. On some days, the temperature may go above 86° which can be difficult to handle, especially in the South Gobi region.

Summer accounts for almost 70% of the precipitation for the year, but this does not mean long periods of rainy days. Rains rarely last for more than 2-3 days. Most rain occurs in July and early August. Global warming has its effects on Mongolia: experts say that average annual temperatures have risen by 1-2 degrees Celsius, making winter milder, but with a few days of extreme cold, and summers hotter.

[Data Table]

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FEB</th>
<th>MAR</th>
<th>APR</th>
<th>MAY</th>
<th>JUNE</th>
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<td>49/21</td>
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<td>46/19</td>
<td>23/-1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

SIT Study Abroad - 3
Country Overview and Packing Guidelines 3/9/2020
Mongolia resides on a high mountainous plateau some 1,580 meters above sea level. Altai, Hangai, Hentii and Hiangan mountain ranges shield away humid, warm airflows from Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Mountains make up 42.5% of the territory. The distance from the sea, along with the considerable elevation over sea level, makes the climate very dry.

LOCAL CUSTOMS
[In general, Mongolians are very tolerant of foreigners who are not familiar with their customs. However, it is appreciated when they demonstrate their knowledge of the customs and try to follow those.]

Do's

- Always greet people saying "Sain bain uu?" (Are you well?).
- Use both hands or the right hand, to offer or to take something.
- Hold a cup by the bottom, not by the top rim.
- When giving knives or scissors, offer the handle, never the blade.
- When the host offers tea, food or dairy products you should accept it and taste (or pretend to) before placing it on the table.
- It is normal to see men or women holding hands or putting their arms around each other's shoulders. Mongolians tend to touch one another, even those whom they do not know.
- If you step on, kick or touch someone else's foot, offer them a quick handshake.

Don'ts:

- Do not step on threshold of a ger/apartment.
- Do not let your feet point in the direction of the altar (located in the northern side) when sitting in a ger.
- Stumbling at threshold while leaving a ger is bad. Come back and then properly leave the ger.
- Don't stand between the poles (uni) and don't lean on it.

- Fire is sacred, so don’t throw any trash into the ger stove.

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.

Mongolia is an essentially meat-eating society, and the diet in Mongolia can be restrictive. Boiled mutton or beef, noodles, rice and a lot of milk products are the nutritional staples of nomad life in the country. Fruits and vegetables outside of Ulaanbaatar are almost non-existent. Flexibility in one’s diet is essential for both basic food needs and cultural etiquette.

If you have not eaten red meat or milk products very often lately, we encourage you to start eating more of these, just to get your system accustomed to a diet heavy in these products. Past students have also recommended bringing dietary supplements, vitamins or other health items to supplement your diet, especially when on rural homestays.
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 document and Student Handbook.

Mongolia is a relatively safe country, though Ulaanbaatar is a big city in which you should take the same precautions that you would in any other city. In general, you should always remain careful and aware that you are in a foreign environment. The following precautions will help you stay healthy and safe throughout the semester; we will discuss these and others further in orientation.

- Do not carry large amounts of money with you. Beware of pick-pockets, especially in crowded places like markets and internet cafes and while riding public buses.
- The streetlights in Ulaanbaatar function only along the central streets, so do not walk late at night or, if you must, keep to well-lit central streets.
- Mongolian drivers are not particularly cautious, and pedestrians do not have the right-of-way as in the U.S. Make sure to look left and right, and check for an approaching car before crossing streets.
- It is advisable not to eat in small restaurants/canteens as the quality of food is not guaranteed. Also, when buying food for yourself it is better to buy from large shops or food markets where refrigeration equipment is available.
- Make a copy of your passport ID page, and the page with the visa as well as other important documents; leave one set of copies at home and carry the other with you.
- Do not leave personal belongings unattended.
- There is a lot of construction work is going on, don’t walk near those places as there is a danger of bricks and other objects falling on your head and hurting you.
- Living in UB requires a somewhat heightened sense of awareness of personal surroundings. Non-Mongolians (or at least non-Asians) are easily identifiable and typically perceived as non-local and deep-pocketed. These misplaced expressions of fear and self-dislike are not unique to UB. Non-Mongolian students occupy a place of relative privilege -- these encounters are part of breaking out of the comfort zone and need only be managed and anticipated. Take extra care around groups of young people or anywhere that usually has drunks around. Walking deliberately is advised, as opposed to slowly taking in the surroundings.
- The concept of privacy that is so much a part of U.S. culture is treated quite differently in Mongolia. A traditional nomad’s ger, for example, is one large room in which all family activities – including conversation, cooking, and sleeping – take place.

You will need to proactively create the personal space we all need for processing new information, keeping in touch with our ‘past’ life and at the same time creating a new experience in our ‘present’ life. As both individual learners and participants in a larger group, you will need to make decisions about your new environment, how you can contribute to it, how to make it work for you, how to get involved. Bring lots of patience, flexibility, respect, and especially a good sense of humor. For the life-changing experience you are about to have, you will need all of these.

There is relatively good quality medical care available only in Ulaanbaatar. Students should keep program staff apprised of their health situation so that staff can assist students in finding necessary care as quickly as possible when needed.
There are no facilities or trained staff, either program or academic, to accommodate students with disabilities. The Mongolia program involves a lot of travel to rural areas of the country in varied seasons and conditions. Those excursions and nomad camp homestays, often conducted in extreme weather and physically demanding nature, require students and staff to be physically fit and psychologically stable.

**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 two homestays. You will be staying in homestays with two types of Mongolian families: nomad and urban.

Your nomad host family will herd sheep and goats. They typically have horses to ride and cows and/or yaks to milk. They most likely will be living in their small mobile *gers* (felt covered tents). School age children will be gone to boarding school from September 1st until the end of May, so you will be left with younger and older members of the families. Nomad family homestay sites can be changed depending on the amount of precipitation and other weather conditions during the winter and spring seasons.

Your urban homestay will take place in Ulaanbaatar. The program strives to find families with high school or college-aged children. All families represent middle class families, meaning they are of medium economic means and social levels. Please remember this definition does not necessarily coincide with an American definition of middle class.

**OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS**

During your orientation, evaluation, and a short period of the Geopolitics and the Environment Seminar in Ulaanbaatar, you will stay in a small hotel and with urban host families who mostly live in Soviet-type apartments. During excursions, you will often stay in *ger* camps and small local hotels. For the ISP/Internship period, you may choose your own accommodation from a long list of possibilities that may include hotels, guesthouses, apartments, host families, etc. During the excursion to East Siberia, Russia, you will stay in small hotels and guest
houses in Ulan-Ude and Irkutsk, and villages near Lake Baikal.

TRANSPORTATION
You will take public transport or taxies while in Ulaanbaatar. During your nomad homestay, horses will probably be one of the forms of transportation for getting to nearby sites. For excursion travel, the program uses all forms of transportation, including airplanes, trains, vans, jeeps and horses. Please be prepared to take long car drives in extreme conditions on poor roads. During ISP/Internship, students often use relatively cheap long-distance public buses that could be crowded and may take up to two days to reach some remote destinations.

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 cell phone capable of making and receiving both local and international calls throughout the duration of the program. For that purpose students are required to bring a smartphone from the U.S and either a) confirm they have an open phone thus enabling you to insert a local SIM card into your U.S. phone upon arrival or b) bring along a dual SIM card smartphone. Your local SIT Study Abroad staff will assist you during orientation to purchase an appropriate local SIM card and required minimum minutes for calls and texting. The same will be done during the Russia excursion. SIT Study Abroad requires that each student has a local number for communication with the homestay family, program staff, etc.

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.

It will cost approximately 10 USD for a Mongolian SIM card and approximately 10-15USD for a Russian SIM card; this does not include calling minutes. Receiving calls, including international, is free, but making international calls will have an associated charge. Please note that it is impossible to make direct calls to the U.S. from our nomad homestay and some excursion sites. Please make plans for calls home around these travel dates.

Making phone calls from Ulaanbaatar is getting easier. Keep in mind the time difference when calling or receiving an international call; Mongolia is 13 hours ahead of EST, 12 hours ahead during Daylight Savings Time (April - October). Where excursion will take place in Siberia will be the same time zone.

As soon as you arrive in country, we will inform the SIT Study Abroad office in Brattleboro, Vermont, to let them know of your safe arrival. If your family and friends want confirmation, please have them call SIT at 1-888-272-7881 – allow enough time for us to get you settled into our lodging and then send a fax to the U.S. before calling.

E-mail: There are a great number of Internet cafes in Ulaanbaatar from which you will be able to access your home e-mail account, but connections could be slow and sometimes unreliable. In addition to the internet cafes widely available in the capital, the program office in Ulaanbaatar is equipped with WiFi. It is however unlikely that you will have consistent internet access in many other parts of the country. During the excursion to Russia Internet will be available at hotels and guest houses, but again this could be slow and sporadic. However, there are a good number of cafes and WiFi hot spots. You can buy unlimited data tariff for your mobile phone at a reasonable price.
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 UPS services are available in country. Despite cheaper prices, reliance on the US Postal Service is not advised due to delays and unreliability. When given the option, it’s always a good idea to send packages certified and with a tracking number that allows the sender to track the package.

Mail: In these days of instant communication, this mode allows you to retain your cultural immersion while still sharing your experience with your friends and family. Mail will take about two to three weeks to reach Mongolia. It is possible to receive packages in Mongolia from the United States, but service is slow. You may be required to retrieve packages from the busy Central Post Office and pay a customs tax.

If it is necessary for someone to send you mail then posted letters should be sent to the following address:

Student Name
SIT Study Abroad (Mongolia)
P.O. Box 1178, Central Post Office
Ulaanbaatar – 15160
Mongolia

[Packages should be sent to the following address via DHL or UPS:]

Student Name
Eruul Mendiin Yam 16-B-3 toot,
Bayanzurkh duureg, 16 horoo,
Dandarbaatar Street
Ulaanbaatar 13321
Mongolia
TeL 976-11-452138

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/Internship 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/Internship are the students’ responsibility. Please plan accordingly.

The national currency of Mongolia is Tögrög (MNT or Tugrug). Bank notes are issued for 20,000, 10,000, 5,000, 1000, 500, 100, 50, 20, 10, and 5 tugrug denominations.

The national currency of Russia is the Ruble (RUB). Bank notes are issued for 5000, 2000, 1000, 500, 200, 100, 50, 10 and 5 ruble denominations.

ATMs are available only in Ulaanbaatar and some aimag (province) centers in Mongolia. In Ulan-Ude and Irkutsk, Russia, ATMs are well available too. Students have not had much success cashing Traveler’s Cheques.

We strongly advise you to bring a major credit/debit card in your name if you do not already own one. It is also possible to get cash advances against a MasterCard or VISA card, but only in limited amounts with a commission up to 4%. Although it is possible, it can be expensive, depending on the amount, to transfer or wire funds to Mongolia; we do not recommend any funds transfer to Russia.

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/Internship-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 $1100 to $1400**. 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/Internship or a specific personal expense.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Cost Item</th>
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<tr>
<td>Up-front medical costs:</td>
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<td>Potential ISP travel expenses:</td>
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<td>Bottled Water:</td>
<td>20-40 USD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Typical Internet café usage:</td>
<td>40 USD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation services:</td>
<td>350 USD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Registration Fees:</td>
<td>30 USD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication costs in Russia</td>
<td>10-15 USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian visa (if obtained in Mongolia)</td>
<td>140 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 budget approximately:

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<tr>
<td>Personal spending (from past student suggestions):</td>
<td>1150 USD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Books, printing, supplies:</td>
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<td>(50 refundable deposit for library materials)</td>
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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/Internship. 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 Mongolia at any point during the semester or travel independently during the thematic and field methods courses and during the homestay immersion, except when on scheduled program excursion. Prior to ISP/Internship, each site trip must be coordinated and approved by the AD. 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. For the Mongolia program, students may need two large backpacks due to all the items they must travel with at certain times during the semester.

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

Mongolians have high standards and will expect the same from you. As you will be living with the community in both urban and rural Mongolia, it is important to dress well and present yourself as neat and well-groomed at all times. Your favorite torn and worn clothes should stay at home. Please bring a set of neat, semi-formal clothes and shoes for possible excursions to the opera, government and embassy functions as well as for the final ISP/Internship presentations.

EQUIPMENT

You will need a sleeping bag (good to -15 to -20 Fahrenheit, (but for the spring semester, it could be lighter), and a foam sleeping pad. We recommend two durable water bottles that can hold boiled water and do not leak (e.g., Nalgene).

COMPUTERS AND OTHER ELECTRONICS

It is 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.

In the program center, a computer with cable internet is available to students for emergencies only. Wireless is available at the center.
Past students used their own laptop or used computers in internet cafes that are around the city of Ulaanbaatar. If you do not bring a laptop you will be using internet cafes at around US$0.50 per hour.

Make sure that you have updated antivirus program/s on your computer. You can leave your laptop in a locker at the program center during field trips. You are required to type most of the assignments, and will have access to the office printer at the center.

Please see the following website for information about electricity, voltage and electrical adapters. [http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/](http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/). If you plan to bring electrical equipment you will need to bring a voltage adapter and plug converter. The electrical current in Mongolia is 220v, AC 50 Hz. The plug types used in Mongolia are C and D. The same standards apply to Russia during the Siberia excursion.

Bring a digital recorder/music player and batteries (can be invaluable for language classes, field work, recording interviews, music, street sounds, etc.)

**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.

Bring a small pocket-sized album with photos of your family, home, neighborhood, school, holidays, etc., as these are invaluable in breaking the ice when meeting your homestay families. When selecting photographs to share with people you meet in Mongolia, please remember that photos in which men and women are openly displaying affection for each other can often result in embarrassment and discomfort for Mongolians unaccustomed to what appears to be inappropriate public behavior. Please also remember that your hosts may want to keep some of your family photos, so bring extras.

**WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT OBTAIN IN COUNTRY**

Main brand toiletries are widely available in country. Notebooks, school supplies, and warm clothes also easily available. However, the variety of these items is limited and quality of items may not be of as high a standard as you would like.

You will be able to do laundry in Ulaanbaatar, but not during excursions to the countryside. Laundromats are all over the city of Ulaanbaatar; and some host families do laundry for their students too.

**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/](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
- 1-2 pairs of neat, loose pants or jeans
- For Spring term, 1-2 pairs of shorts
- 2 long sleeved shirts
- T-shirts
- 1 down jacket
- 1 heavy sweater, at least
- 1 pairs expedition-weight polypropylene long underwear (especially for fall semester)
- Heavy wool socks (but easily available in Mongolia)
- Sleepwear (appropriate for host stays)
- Sunglasses
- Scarf
- Bandanna
- Windbreaker
- Warm jacket (fleeces are both light and warm; also available at a lower price in Ulaanbaatar)
- Wool hat
- Gloves
- Shoes:
  - One pair of shoes for trekking. It is important to have shoes with good sturdy soles and treads and possibly ankle support
  - One pair of dress shoes or boots
  - A pair of slip-on sandals or shoes
  - A pair of rubber flip-flops is useful for the bathroom and while bathing.
- Sturdy, lightweight flashlight
- Water bottles (bring 2 one-liter bottles)
- Day pack, invaluable when trekking and riding
- Sunscreen
- Swiss army knife
- Combination padlock
- Miniature combination locks, or small key locks
- Small, battery-powered travel alarm clock
- Cassette/digital recorder and batteries (if not planning to use smartphone)
- Bug stray

WOMEN
- 1 knee-length skirt or a dress

MEN
- dress shoes

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

HEALTH/TOILETRIES
- Iodine pills or a dropper bottle for iodine solution for purifying water (4-6 weeks-worth)
- Multi-vitamins and supplements
- Adequate supply of any medications 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)
- Sufficient contact lenses, contact lens solution and/or an extra pair of glasses
- Soap/toothbrush/toothpaste
- Small first aid kit with band-aids, hydrogen peroxide, moist towelettes, and over the counter drugs for minor pain, diarrhea and/or constipation, anti-itching, colds and motion sickness, as approved by your doctor (chewable tablets when possible since water is not always available)

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS
- A few packs of hand/foot warmers (Grabber or other brands)
- Sleeping bag (good to −15 Fahrenheit for fall; can be lighter for spring), and foam pad
- Spiral notebook (small and medium sizes)
- Study journal and pens
- Towel
- Homestay gifts
- Photos of friends/family from home to share with homestay family
- Digital camera or camera, plus protective case
- Books to read
- Padlock for locker at the program center

OPTIONAL
- Moleskin
- Tape recorder and batteries (can be invaluable for field work, recording interviews, music, street sounds, etc.)
- Binoculars (for those interested in wildlife)
- Sealable plastic bags
- Empty duffel bag (for souvenirs)

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