

COUNTRY

OVERVIEW



& PACKING
GUIDELINES

Kenya: Global Health and Human Rights
Spring 2021



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COUNTRY OVERVIEW

PLEASE NOTE THAT DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, INFORMATION IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASED ON SHIFTING CONDITIONS IN THE US AND KENYA.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Kenya is a country of natural beauty and diversity: from the snowy peaks of Mount Kenya to the Indian Ocean coast and from lush green coffee and tea fields to the seemingly endless savannah - home to an amazing variety of wildlife. The people of Kenya are also diverse with more than 65 different ethnic groups and nearly 70 languages. The main ethnic groups derive from Bantu-speakers who migrated from western Africa; the Nilotic and Nilo-Hamitic peoples, who originated in Sudan; and the Afro-Asiatic group, who were mainly pastoral tribes from present-day Ethiopia and Somalia. Peoples from the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East and Europe are settled throughout Kenya, forming significant communities.

Kenya's official language is English and the national language is Kiswahili. Economically, the population is divided among rural pastoralists, farmers, urban dwelling office workers and business people. Kenya's chief industry is tourism, while its exports include coffee, tea, pyrethrum, flowers, fruits and, vegetables, including coconuts and cashews, and clothing, which is manufactured in several export-processing zones around the country.

The SIT program in Kenya makes the most of the country's demographic and geographical diversity, by introducing students to various cultural practices and ethnic groups, their unique relationships to public health and human rights, and to Kenya's natural beauty. Throughout the inland or "upcountry" areas of Kenya, the topography and physical features are diverse and striking, with extensive savannah punctuated by high mountain regions. Unlike the

ancient settlements of the coast, with trading towns dating back over 2000 years, Nairobi, Naivasha in Kenya's Rift Valley, Kisii and Kisumu on Lake Victoria are relatively recent urban areas and their more contemporary development is clearly evident in their layout and architecture. All of Kenya's cities are linguistically and ethnic diverse, representing the cultural variation of Kenya and the East African region.

CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY

Kenya lies astride the equator, but due to inland altitude and offshore coastal winds, the weather is surprisingly temperate in Nairobi and the surrounding highlands. The main rainy season is during April- May with a second, lesser, one in October and November.

Kisumu and the coastal and lake areas are, conversely, quite hot and humid most of the time. Even when the temperature is in the 80s, the humidity makes it feel much hotter.

KISUMU: AVERAGE HIGH/LOW TEMPERATURES (°F)

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
87/74	87/75	86/75	83/74	82/73
SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	
84/73	87/74	86/74	85/74	

LOCAL CUSTOMS

Local customs will be explained in greater detail during orientation and throughout the semester, but here are a few to get you started:

- In Kenya, people greet each other before beginning their conversation or request. The standard greeting is "Hujambo?" and the response is "Sijambo." It is polite to shake hands as well as to greet verbally.
- Respect is the foundation of Kenyan social interactions. Younger people are expected to

- defer to elders and women are expected to appear humble.
- Left-handedness is gaining acceptance, but it is still best to give and receive objects with the right hand.
- Though homestays have been cancelled for this semester, it is possible you may have the opportunity to share a meal with locals in Kisumu. We recommend you eat with your right hand and always wash your hands before starting.
- It is polite to try all the different foods, but you do not necessarily have to eat them if you do not like them. You can politely explain that the taste is new to you and you're not used to it yet.
- Finishing all the food on your plate is expected, we recommend that you take a little at time. Food is often shared with other relatives or neighbors and should not be wasted. However, do not be shy to ask your host for seconds where food is available.
- Always wash your own underwear.



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. Your admissions counselor is a great resource in better understanding the local diet.

The main staple in much of Kenya is ugali, a stiff porridge that is eaten, together with a sauce, at most meals. Tropical fruits and vegetables are wonderful in Kenya, so following a vegetarian diet is not too difficult. Veganism, depending on the type of vegan commitment, is difficult but can be upheld in some parts of the country. In general, students are expected to adapt to the culture they are in and to be prepared to remain flexible in many ways, including eating habits.

In parts of Kenya, including the coast, rice, fish or meat curry, green vegetables (mchicha), beans, and millet are the popular staple foods.

In Kenya, antihistamines are easily accessible throughout the country if an unforeseen need arises.

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.

The Health Guidelines and Requirements will also provide recommendations related to preventing the contraction and spread of COVID-19. Students will be provided with COVID-19 related information and requirements prior to your travel in order to provide you with the most up-to-date information. General

information about SIT's response to COVID-19 can be found on our webpage here:

<https://studyabroad.sit.edu/health-safety-and-well-being/risk-management/sit-health-and-safety-update-in-response-to-covid-19/>

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](#).

HOMESTAYS & ACCOMMODATIONS

Due to Covid-19, there will be no homestays during the Spring 2021 semester. Instead, students will be housed in single-room self-contained apartments during the program.

OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

Other accommodations during the program include hostels, guest houses, or small hotels. While working on your Independent Study Project or internship, you might stay in a guest house, hotel, or most likely, remain in your apartment in

Kisumu, but this depends on the location of your research. You must be very clear on the location of your research, particularly in relation to traveling. Some areas are out-of-bounds for ISP/internship activities, particularly due to the pandemic, and all ISP/internship sites must be approved by your academic director. SIT will not cover your traveling costs to and from the area in which you plan to conduct your research, so budget accordingly. Your academic director will give you further details during orientation.

TRANSPORTATION

In Kisumu, you will walk and in many cases we will arrange private transportation for the group. You will also likely use public transport such as taxis or minivans called "matatus" or a "tuk tuk," a three-wheeled vehicle with an enclosed area for passengers common in Kisumu. The public transport systems do not have a central governing body or a website; you can get information about schedules from guesthouses or hotels. For matatus and city buses, passengers often pay their fare or buy tickets directly from the conductors once on board. On long distance buses, you must buy your tickets from the bus company operators in advance or on the day of your departure. Drivers do not like to leave without a full load and so passengers



usually have to wait until a vehicle is full. Matatus can also often be flagged down on the side of the road by people wanting to board. It's good practice to always carry identification, especially when travelling internationally. Having a photocopy of your passport is recommended whenever you are out in Kenya.

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, (c) bring a dual SIM smart phone, or (d) bring a smart phone with an international plan. 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 local contacts 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 SIT program center provides internet access during posted hours. Skype is the verbal communication mode of choice in places where you can access the Internet. Skype calls from Kenya to the US are far cheaper than Skype calls from the US to Kenya. Webcams usually work but can weaken the signal and interfere with the connection.

Although SIT does not provide email access to students, there are an increasing number of affordable Internet cafés in Kisumu and Nairobi. Once outside these towns, however, Internet access is extremely limited.

MAILINGS

Unlike receiving a package here in the US, receiving a package at your program site is usually **expensive** and **problematic**. Customs agents must inspect all packages and you, as the recipient, are responsible for duty and storage fees. In addition, there are cases of items being lost in the mail or taking so long to reach the recipient that the recipient is nearly back in the US by the time the items are received. For these reasons, sending packages should be done only for emergency situations. Additionally, sending valuables is highly discouraged.

For this program, **DHL services are available in country.** Despite cheaper prices, reliance on

the US Postal Service is not advised due to delays and unreliability. When given the option, it's always a good idea to send packages certified and with a tracking number that allows the sender to track the package.

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

Student Name
SIT Kenya: Global Health and Human Rights
SIT Study Abroad/ World Learning,
Post Office Box 7286 – 40100
Kisumu
KENYA
[add student mobile number]

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, 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.

It is advisable to bring your funds in various forms so that if there is a problem with one option you will still have access to money. The Kenya Shilling (abbreviated KES or KShs) is the local currency. You may also be able to access your cash through ATMs (see below). Cash (particularly in US\$50 and US\$100 denominations) is easier to exchange and gets a better rate, but it cannot be replaced if lost or stolen. Smaller cash denominations fetch lower rates than the larger bills. Make sure any cash you bring is in bills issued after the year 2004, as many places in East Africa will not accept older bills. Cash is used for most daily transactions and the use of checks, traveler's checks, and credit/debit cards for direct

purchases is rare. Students will be paid their stipend through the M-Pesa money program. This means that you will need a local phone SIM card to open this account. The AD will help you to open such an account when you arrive.

Subscriber SIM Registration

The service allows users to deposit money into an account stored on their cell phones, to send balances using [PIN-secured SMS text messages](#) to other users, including sellers of goods and services, and to redeem deposits for regular money. Users are charged a small fee for sending and withdrawing money using the service.^[3] M-Pesa is a [branchless banking](#) service; M-Pesa customers can deposit and withdraw money from a network of agents that includes airtime resellers and retail outlets acting as [banking agents](#).

A credit card is very useful for emergencies, medical or otherwise. It is recommended you bring along a Visa card, which is more widely accepted at ATMs than MasterCard and other credit cards. Students have reported having the greatest success using ATMs within Kisumu and Nairobi at Barclays and Standard Chartered Banks. However, MasterCard, American Express and Visa can usually be used to obtain cash advances drawn from local banks, as well. Some students prefer ATM machines, while others prefer exchanging dollars at a bank or foreign exchange bureau. ATM funds are available only in Kenyan Shillings, though the exchange rate on ATM withdrawals is usually excellent.

If you use a local cell phone while in Kenya, you can store money on the phone and use it for most purchases and exchanges. This service, known as M-Pesa, is provided by Safaricom and Airtel. It relieves you of the need to carry around large amounts of cash and is a wonderful example of Kenyan innovation.

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.

Above 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\$1,055 to \$1,430**. 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. Check current exchange rates:

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

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](#).

Personal spending (from past student suggestions):	\$500- \$700
Books, printing, supplies:	\$100
Up-front medical costs:	\$300
Potential ISP/internship travel expenses:	\$25-200
Visa:	\$50
COVID-19 Entry Test(s) (may be required for entry; subject to change and costs may vary)	\$100-250
Typical Internet café usage:	\$100
Estimated total:	\$1,275- \$1,800

For safety reasons, some places in Kenya, such as the north and north eastern areas such as Mandera, Wajir, Garissa and coastal areas of Mombasa, Malindi, and Lamu, are currently off limits for travel and ISP/internship purposes. Additionally, students will not be permitted to conduct their ISPs/internships in other “no go” areas, including the northeast and the Dadaab refugee settlement. Students are required to choose ISP/internship sites at which they can be reached by telephone and they must be within a 24-hour journey from the program office. In addition to those listed above, several remote areas are off-limits due to security concerns.

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.

Because of the COVID-19 Global Pandemic, SIT has suspended independent travel for all Spring

2021 Programs. SIT defines “independent travel” as travel that is independently organized by a student(s) and is unrelated to program activities; and involves an overnight stay. 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. Most students find that a large internal frame backpack and a smaller daypack or duffel bag are the most convenient choices of luggage. However, you should also have a smaller bag to use for carrying your books and personal items.

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 order to be culturally appropriate and to assist with cultural immersion, SIT Kenya requires students to dress according to local norms. In most cases, this still leaves plenty of room for individual choices. This is not a policy that will enable you to “pass” as a local, but rather to ensure that you do not offend or embarrass people with whom you work or associate with. While Kenyans are in many cases aware that American standards of dress are different from Kenyan standards, it is not an excuse for setting aside Kenyan standards in favor of American ones. Kenyans find certain American dressing conventions appealing, others odd, and still others profoundly offensive or insulting. And you will not escape these judgments merely because you are American. In extreme cases, failure to abide by established program rules of

dress will result in disciplinary action. Your academic director will explain local conventions in greater detail once you are in Kenya, but for now you will need some guidelines as you pack for the trip. Please read the following paragraphs carefully and bear in mind that the guidelines were developed by SIT students.

A small part of the program takes place in Nairobi, a cosmopolitan city of three million people, some of them expatriates from Asia, Europe, North America, and other African countries. Nairobi is just over a mile above sea level. Because of its pleasant, dry climate, it hosts many international agencies, NGOs and international corporate headquarters. For this environment, your clothing should be layered. Bring clothing that is casual and comfortable, but also bring clothes that you could wear to a wedding or a job interview. Both men and women should bring a lightweight jacket or blazer which they can wear for special occasions.

Bear in mind that often people in Kisumu and Nairobi dress with more sophistication than is common in American cities. What you wear is very important, both for the sake of feeling comfortable and for the sake of cultural appropriateness. Short shorts and very tight trousers for women are not acceptable. However, depending on the situation, you may wear jeans, slacks, or even long “dress” shorts. Neatness and fashion are always important, and host families and other Kenyans affiliated with the program frequently complain that students tend to under-dress. Every semester, there are students who do not take dressing seriously, or who have not read this document carefully, and who end up regretting that the clothes they brought are not stylish enough for the cities in Kenya; think “business casual” (but not ‘coat and tie’), trendy, coordinated, and put-together.

The rest of the program takes place in conservative rural areas. While style is not so important in the village, modesty and cleanliness are even more so. You will be expected to avoid

clothing with holes, clothing with immodest pictures or writing, shorts or clothing that is revealing and very informal (such as tank tops, crop tops, halter tops, sleeveless shirts, or bikinis). Tops should cover shoulders and waists, skirts should cover the knees, clothing should not be too tight or see-through, and plunging necklines are not acceptable. Women in most areas of East Africa dress with modesty, wearing skirts well below the knee with slips (though ankle-length skirts are not a good idea either, since they tend to get dirty and frayed very quickly), blouses or t-shirts with sleeves and relatively high necklines, and sandals, sneakers, or flats. Women quite simply do not wear pants or shorts in rural or Muslim areas of the country (which are mostly near the coast).

For men, casual dress can include jeans, sneakers, and t-shirts, as long as they are clean and free of holes. More formal occasions (of which there will be several) call for neat, pressed, dark colored slacks, pressed, button-up shirts (long or short sleeve), and leather dress shoes (penny loafers or lace-ups) or dress sandals. Flamboyantly colorful, Hawaiian-style shirts or guayaberas can be worn semi-formally in Kenya, so long as they are clean and pressed, and have a collar and buttons. A variety of colorful slip-over shirts are available here. Kenyans consider shorts to be appropriate for schoolboys and playing sports, but not for casual wear by adult males. Traditional wrap-arounds called kikois are often worn on the coast instead of long pants. Shirts with sleeves, whether short or long, are required. Ties and jackets are not required but it is a good idea to have one of each.

Much of the country is known for its hot, tropical climate, though areas at higher elevations (such as Nairobi) can be surprisingly cold at night (50 degrees is not unheard of). You will certainly need a sweater and/or a light jacket, and waterproof rainwear is essential. The clothes that you bring should all be washable and breathable, preferably drip-dry cotton and cotton-blends. Polyesters and other fabrics that

do not breathe can be very uncomfortable. You will be hand washing and line drying your clothes.

Buying new, expensive clothing is not recommended. Whatever you don't pack, you can probably get in Kenya – except shoes.

Second-hand clothing (*mitumba*) is available very cheaply all over Kenya. You can usually find whatever you want within two months of the end of any season in the northern countries. Designer clothing is shockingly cheap in the *mitumba* markets.

EQUIPMENT



Mosquito nets are available in Kenya and cost about \$10 USD. But should you decide to bring one, it should be of the self-supporting variety. One recommendation is a Skeeter Defeater, though some students prefer a net that wraps around you, so you do not have to tuck in the edges. Both are available through Travel Medicine, Inc. at www.travmed.com. You only need to bring a sleeping bag if you plan to camp on your own after the program. If you plan to climb the mountains or travel through cold countries, you will need a heavier bag. These are usually available in Nairobi either retail or secondhand but there is no guarantee that you will get the bag you want, at the time you need it.

The program provides bottled water during all excursions and clean bottled water can be purchased nearly everywhere in Kenya.

However, if you wish to avoid the use of plastic water bottles for environmental reasons, you may bring a portable water filter, which can be used during excursions. The brands past students recommend are the 'system pack' which you can find at: <http://www.steripen.com> and the MSR Miniworks EX water filter which can be found at www.msrgear.com. If you purchase the SteriPEN, be certain to bring spare batteries for it because you might not be able to find replacement batteries in Kenya. You should also bring a small travel towel. If later on you need a big towel, you can buy it in any supermarket or *mitumba* markets.

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 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.

Previous students have found it very helpful to bring their laptop, but you must exercise caution in keeping it safe. Do not entrust your backpack to any stranger as this has often resulted in theft. Do not pull out your computer in public or during travel in general because this attracts pick pockets and thieves.

If you bring a laptop, the computer will be your personal property and responsibility. You will be responsible for arranging storage for your laptop in a secure place while on excursions. Past students have also brought MP3s, iPods, galaxies, and DVD players. These are often used during excursion travel. We recommend that if you do bring these electronic devices, ensure their safety as we are not in position to guarantee their safety. It is also recommended that students bring digital recorders for their language classes, ISP research, and other audio related communications. It is also highly recommended that students come prepared to buy mobile phones because those brought from

the US may not work in Kenya. Phones cost around \$50 USD.

Be sure to bring a large capacity flash drive for back-up and storage of data and photographs. For those who need it, word-processing and printing can be done at Internet cafés and other email facilities are plentiful in major cities, however, once outside these towns, Internet access is extremely limited.

Please see the following website for information about electricity, voltage and electrical adapters. <http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/>. Kenya's voltage is 240 and has the electrical outlet that uses the Type G plug adapter.

WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT OBTAIN IN COUNTRY

Items readily available in Kenya include: soap, shampoo, toothpaste, tampons, pads, moisturizers, deodorant, most prescription medications, and some familiar over-the-counter medications. However, particular brands of certain toiletries may not be available. One example is deodorant; most brands available in the US are not available here.

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 CLOTHING

- 10-day supply of dark socks and underwear (plus a few sports bras)
- At least 1 sweater, sweatshirt, or fleece (avoid white)
- Raincoat with hood or poncho
- 1 pair of flip flops
- Sneakers or lightweight, durable footwear for daily use
- Nicer shoes for more formal occasions (penny loafers or flats will do)
- Modest, one-piece bathing suit
- Canvas or other shoes to wear for swimming (or buy in country)
- Gym shorts (one pair)
- Clothing and sandals that can be worn for dressy occasions
- Pajamas or modest clothing you can sleep in while sharing a room with someone
- One pair of waterproof boots for rainy season
- 1 nice outfit for formal occasions
- 4 ordinary t-shirts (avoid white)
- At least 2 pairs of jeans or cargo pants
- At least 3 pairs of slacks, knee-length skirts (with at least 1 half-slip), or khakis, (dark colors are preferable)
- An outfit for going out in the city
- At least 3 shirts, collared, button-up, blouses, or other shirts

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Passport (valid for more than 4 months)
- Yellow WHO Card where applicable (see the Safety, Security, and Health document for more information)
- Two photocopies of your passport stored separately from your actual passport
- Photocopy of visa (if applicable)
- Copy of resume or CV for research permit
- Two passport size photos for Kenya visa
- Relevant articles or notes for ISP research (at your discretion)

HEALTH/TOILETRIES

- 15-week supply of all prescription medication plus any you need for after-program travel
- Decongestant, cold and flu medication
- Face wipes
- Saline solution for contacts (available here but expensive)
- Sun block of SPF 30 or higher (available but expensive) make sure to bring enough
- Sunburn lotion (available but expensive)- Aloe Vera is highly recommended by previous students
- USB drive
- Medicine for yeast infections, if necessary, and acidophilus
- Anti-diarrheal medication
- Thermometer
- Mosquito repellent
- Anti-itch medication (bug bites are part of life in the tropics)
- Dental floss (available but expensive)
- First aid kit
- Sunglasses
- Sun hat or bandanas (the latter are useful for trading at local markets – you may want to bring a few)
- Towel

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS

- Smaller bag or day pack for short excursions
- Combination locks for luggage
- Pocket knife with bottle opener
- Water bottle/canteen (some students choose to bring a bottle with a filtering system)
- Ziploc bags for items that may leak in your luggage, such as shampoo
- Flashlight (absolutely essential), preferably headlamp-style
- Extra camera batteries (two sets of rechargeable batteries and a charger that can take 240 volts will come in handy)
- Sleeping bag if planning to camp on your own after the program

To prevent the contraction and spread of COVID-19 students should come prepared with:

- At least 3 reusable masks* and gloves for personal protection (disposable masks will also be available)
- Hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol for use when soap and water is not readily available
- Anti-bacterial wipes or solution to wipe down high-touch surfaces, especially while traveling from the US

*Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others. Masks help reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 both by close contact and by airborne transmission. Masks must have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric. Do not wear masks intended for healthcare workers (e.g. N95 respirators) or face shields alone (evaluation of the effectiveness of face shields is ongoing but is unknown at this time).

