



COUNTRY OVERVIEW

& PACKING GUIDELINES

Samoa: Social and Environmental Change in Oceania
Fall 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COUNTRY OVERVIEW	3
GENERAL INFORMATION	3
CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY	3
DIET	4
SAFETY, SECURITY, AND HEALTH	4
HOMESTAYS	5
OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS	5
TRANSPORTATION	5
COMMUNICATION	6
PHONES AND E-MAIL	6
MAILINGS	7
MONEY	7
VISITORS AND FREE TIME	8
PACKING GUIDELINES	9
LUGGAGE	9
CLOTHING GUIDELINES	9
EQUIPMENT	10
COMPUTERS AND OTHER ELECTRONICS	10
GIFTS	11
WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT OBTAIN IN COUNTRY	11
ALUMNI CONTACTS	11
PACKING LIST	12



Please note that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, information is subject to change based on shifting conditions in the US and Samoa.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

GENERAL INFORMATION

Pacific Islanders originated in Southeast Asia and migrated eastward over thousands of years reaching Fiji, Tonga and Samoa by 1,000 B.C.

Migrations continued from Samoa to the Eastern Pacific, north to Hawai'i and finally southwest to New Zealand.



Jacob Roggewein, a Dutch explorer who first sighted the Samoan Islands in 1772, called them the Navigator Islands. Explorers were followed by beachcombers, traders, missionaries and

finally colonists. Germany ruled what was then Western Samoa until 1914, and New Zealand governed Samoa until its independence in 1962.

The country's name was changed to the Independent State of Samoa in 1997. Samoa celebrated 50 years of independence in 2012.

Samoa is a parliamentary democracy, headed by a Prime Minister elected by members of Parliament. A Head of State is the official head of government. Malieatoa Tanumalefi II, Samoa's first Head of State served as one of the world's longest serving head of states until his death in 2007. The current O le Ao o le Malo is **Va'aletoa Sualauvi II**, who was elected to a five-year term which started on 21 July 2017. Parliamentary elections are held every 5 years. The most recent election in April 2021 was historic as Samoa has its first female Prime Minister Fiame Naomi Mataafa who is the leader of the newly established FAST party.

Samoa's economy is based on agriculture. Life in rural Samoa continues to be based largely on subsistence, but efforts are being made to provide more income-generating projects at the family and village level. Remittances from abroad continue to

contribute significantly to the economy and are the major source of cash for many village families. Taro, a starchy root vegetable, continues as a main staple in the domestic economy, and fishing is a major export industry.

Tourism is rapidly becoming a mainstay of the economy and now equals remittances in terms of contributions to GDP. Samoa recently graduated from the list of Least Developed Countries and is now a mid-developing country. Development projects continue to be funded by major donors including Australia, New Zealand, Japan, China and the European Union.

CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY

Samoa, a Polynesian Island group in the Pacific, is south of the equator, about halfway between Hawai'i and New Zealand. In December 2011, Samoa changed to the western side of the International Date Line, so now operates on the same calendar as Australia and New Zealand and is one day ahead of the United States. The country consists of four inhabited islands; the larger two being Upolu and Savai'i. The islands are volcanic in origin with the most recent eruption from 1905-1911.

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

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
86/73	84/75	86/73	86/73	84/73

Temperatures range around 84-86 °F most of the year, but with climate change it feels much hotter. Humidity is often above 90%. Late evenings or early mornings in some parts of the year can be a bit chilly.

Samoa has a tropical climate that varies very little throughout the year. The seasons are wet and dry, or perhaps more accurately, rainy and less rainy. The southeast trade winds bring rain, and the northerly winds can bring cyclones, usually between December and March.

Bring a hat for the sun or an umbrella for both rain and sun. Given the high temperatures, students

should be familiar with the warning signs of dehydration and heat stroke. It is important to drink enough water every day. The tropical sun is extremely hot, and hottest from 11am – 2pm.

The weather is similar in Hawai'i, Fiji and Samoa though the nights often get a bit cooler in Hawai'i and Fiji.

DIET

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

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

The traditional Samoan diet is bland and starchy. Taro, breadfruit and green bananas are the main staples. Imported rice has also become a mainstay of the diet. Fish – both canned and fresh – and local vegetables are available. Papaya and ripe bananas are available year-round. Other fruits, including oranges, pineapples, mangoes and guava are seasonal. There are few grains, beans or sprouts, but many leafy greens.



Samoans are meat eaters. Vegetarians can be accommodated, but Samoan hosts are proud to

serve guests chicken and pork. Dairy products are available in Apia but not as readily in village situations. Food is definitely a big part of Samoan culture, so if you really want to experience the culture, leave your food preferences at home and come prepared to try some new foods.

You will be staying with local Samoan families during the village visit. Pacific fare includes starchy staples, meat or fish and some vegetables. Families in urban Apia where you will be staying for nine weeks during homestay enjoy local cuisine made from local produce. You will also be able to supplement your diet with fruits and vegetables from the local market and supermarkets that have



imported foods.

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.

SIT requires students enrolled in SIT programs to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19, including the COVID-19 booster, if eligible. Exemption requests should be directed to the Office of Student Health, Safety & Wellbeing.

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, health and personal property insurance, and general program tips, please read the [Safety, Security, and Health Student Handbook](#).

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 with young or adult 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 families for homestays. One homestay is for eight days in the rural village. The other is an urban homestay for four nights in the urban city of Suva in Fiji. The opportunities to live in these two homestay situations enables you to have a realistic view of Pacific life.

OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

For nine weeks in Apia, you will live on the University of the South Pacific Samoa campus in Alafua. This is hostel style accommodation in the lodge. You will be able to participate in student campus life and meet students from the region studying at the university. The Savaii excursion for five nights is where you will experience accommodation in open Samoan fales on the beach. In Fiji, you will stay in hotels also.

TRANSPORTATION

Getting around is easy in Samoa. Buses are not only a mode of transport but also a great venue for cultural learning. One can learn much about Samoans' sense of personal space on the colorful buses, which run only during daylight hours. Taxis are more expensive, and more precaution needs to be taken in terms of agreeing upon equitable fares and going places at night alone. During orientation, you will be informed of taxi and bus services that you can use. You will catch the bus daily to and from the National University of Samoa to your accommodation in Alafua at the USP campus. Since September 2009 Samoans drive on the left side of the road, so extra care should be taken when crossing the street.

You will travel by ferry between the islands of Samoa. The plane to Fiji is a large jet plane. At other times, you will travel in vans, trucks or private vehicles.

COMMUNICATION

While you may want to be in regular communication with friends and family from home during the term abroad, please bear in mind that different time zones, unreliable phone lines, and changing program activities can complicate communication.

It's important to be clear with family and friends about your availability during the term. Many students recommend making an appointment to call home or to receive a call. You should also consider the impact of constant communication with friends and family at home on your cultural immersion.

PHONES AND E-MAIL



As part of SIT's commitment to student safety and security, all students are required to have a working smart phone capable of making and receiving both local and international calls throughout the duration of the program. For that

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

While we recognize that alternative communication methods can be free or cheaper than cell service i.e. Facetime, Skype, WhatsApp, etc. those programs alone do not satisfy our need for regular communication with the local program staff and partners, nor do they meet our emergency communication needs. Therefore, local cellular capacity on each student's phone is required for the duration of the program. Students are required to maintain a minimum amount of phone credits at all

times for emergency calls. Full compliance with this policy is expected.

Provide program specific information and recommendations for phones, cell phones, and email. Please discuss timing, general costs, pros and cons, etc. Be sure also to outline communication at the very beginning of the program (during orientation) as well as realities regarding contacting home for safe arrival confirmation.

Time differences are a consideration when making or receiving an international call. Samoa is 17, 18 or 19 hours ahead of EST or one day ahead and five, six, or seven hours behind on the clock. Time differences are complicated by Daylight Savings time in both the US and Samoa. US Daylight Savings time runs from March to November and Samoa is on Daylight saving time from September to April.

Internet access on campus is available in the library. SIT will provide small wifi devices and data usage for academic purposes, but even then, speed and reliability are challenges in a developing country. Wireless on campus can be set up on some PCs but is very difficult with Macs. The time spent on frequent communication takes one away from the present moment and learning experiences in Samoa. It is also very important to be able to receive calls and texts in country from staff, advisors, and friends you will make. You may wish to let your family and friends know there are times you will not be available. Samoan author Sia Figiel encourages you to "own" your experiences and experience them to the fullest. The AD and many former students agree with Sia. The semester is a time to step away from your usual routine and to *live your life in the present moment*. Many former students agree that stepping outside the digital age and choosing not to share your experiences on a daily basis with the world beyond Samoa is the most rewarding way to go. The program officially begins in Hawai'i so say your goodbyes before you get on the plane, and keep phone calls to a minimum or for special occasions.

MAILINGS

Unlike receiving a package here in the US, receiving a package at your program site may require payment of custom duties. Customs agents inspect all packages and you, as the recipient, are responsible for duty and storage fees. In addition, items may sometimes be lost in the mail or take so long to reach the recipient that the semester is nearly over before the parcel arrives. 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. The US Postal system is less expensive but takes longer. It is 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 when needed should be sent to the following address:

Student Name
P.O. Box 9268
Apia,
SAMOA

Be sure that all mail comes to Independent Samoa, not American Samoa. Samoa does not have a zip code and is still listed by the US Postal System as Western Samoa

There are no street addresses in Samoa. Packages are not delivered, so please include the AD's name, Dr. Fetaomi Tapu-Qiliho and a local phone number on the parcel.

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 tala (usually marked as WST\$) is the currency for Samoa. American dollars are used in Hawaii and Fijian dollars are used in Fiji. Students may exchange U.S. currency or withdraw local currency from an ATM machine inside the international airport upon arrival and at banks, money transfers and ATMs in Apia.

ATMs in Samoa accept American credit and debit cards but most are located in the Apia area. The nearest ATM to campus is in the town of Apia which is 10 minutes away by bus. U.S. cash and/or traveler's checks may be exchanged at banks or some hotels, but they cannot be used in shops. Samoan banks have a charge of approximately US\$7.00 for debit/credit card withdrawals.

A lock for luggage or backpacks is advisable and it is wise to keep money in a locked bag. Some beach *fales* or hostels have security boxes you can use. Opening bank accounts for a short time is not feasible.

Check current exchange rates:

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

If using a debit and/or credit card, you should contact your bank and/or credit card companies regarding your travel plans. If you don't inform these companies that you will be away, they will often assume the card has been lost or stolen and will put an immediate hold on the card. You should also check on costs of withdrawal, as these costs vary and can sometimes be very expensive. Renewing and receiving reissued credit and debit cards while on the program will be an expensive and highly inconvenient process. Before you leave for your program, please check the expiration dates on your cards to ensure that they will not expire while you are abroad. It is also very important that you make photocopies of all your debit/credit card information and leave them with someone you trust in case your card(s) is/are lost or stolen.



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

A suggested total amount of money to budget ranges from **US \$600 to \$800**. To determine where you might fall in this range, please examine your spending habits during a typical semester at your home school and consider any exceptional expenditures you may have on the program, including travel costs for your planned ISP or a specific personal expense.

Please budget approximately:

Personal spending (from past student suggestions):	300 USD
Books, printing, supplies:	100 USD
Up-front medical costs: (doctor visit \$25-40, Hospital visit \$100-300)	25-300 USD
Potential ISP travel expenses: (Bus \$1-5, ferry to Savaii \$10)	100 USD
Lava Spot Usage:	5/hr. USD
COVID-19 Entry Test(s) (may be required for entry, subject to change and cost may vary)	100-250 USD
Estimated total:	600-800 USD

VISITORS AND FREE TIME

SIT strongly discourages and will not provide support for any visitors to students during the term, due to the rigorous nature of the program and the disruption that such visits cause in program flow and group dynamics. Students should be sure that relatives and friends are aware of this policy and that visits are scheduled for dates after the formal conclusion of the program. Students will not be excused from program components to attend to visitors. See the Attendance and Participation section of the [Student Handbook](#).

Please note that any visitors during the course of the program must plan their own independent accommodations; SIT Study Abroad homestay families can accommodate only their assigned student and, due to cultural and contractual understandings with SIT, should not be asked to host students' guests.

During the program, students follow an intense schedule of classes and field-based learning assignments, even during the ISP. Free time for pursuing an independent interest or hobby during the program will be limited. Your admissions counselor can advise you about particular interests you may have. For example, if you must keep in shape for your next athletic season, or if you play a musical instrument and want to know whether to bring it, we can help you to understand your schedule and any concerns or limitations that may exist. Please note that you will not have a long break during the program, such as Thanksgiving or Spring Break.

Because of the COVID-19 Global Pandemic, SIT has suspended independent travel for this program. 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.

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. The baggage allowance on Fiji Airways from Honolulu to Samoa is one bag of 23 kilos or 50 pounds; excess pounds are charged at about USD\$5 per kilo but only to 32 kilos. A second bag is expensive and probably more than you actually need. One personal item and one carry-on weighing 7 kilos (15 pounds) is allowed. Carry-on bags are weighed. Fiji Airways is quite strict so pack accordingly.

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

Contrary to the romanticized version of the Pacific Islander, Samoans are fairly conservative by Western standards; therefore, it will be important to dress both appropriately and comfortably. For female students, dresses or skirts with hems at knee-length or below are appropriate. In the village, shoulders should be covered, but in Apia and at NUS and USP, tank tops and mid-thigh shorts can be worn. Longer shorts are common and jeans or lightweight pants are appropriate for evenings, but cool nights are rare. Remember, bring sensible clothing - anything too revealing is likely to attract unwanted attention. **Short shorts or sports shorts are not appropriate.** The key is to observe what people wear and when, and dress accordingly.

Students often wear lavalava and t-shirt tops.

Lavalava (a two-yard piece of material wrapped around the hips) are worn by both men and women both at USP and in the village. They come in a variety of colors and designs and may be purchased in Apia for about US\$5-\$10. You will be given two *ie lavalava* during orientation.

Dress is important in Samoa, especially professionally, so bring a couple of outfits or dresses suitable for formal occasions, professional visits, or ISP interviews. Dress in the clubs in Apia is quite modern but former students recommend “sensible” going out clothes for the nightlife. Because of the high humidity, light cotton fabrics are best. In Samoa, the more colorful the fabric, the better.

Men usually wear knee length shorts or a *lavalava* and a short-sleeved shirt, T-shirt or tank top. Collared t-shirts or button-down shirts are appropriate for church or professional visits. Some men purchase plain-colored pocket *lavalava* for formal situations and most feel very at home in *lavalava* for casual wear. Long pants may be worn occasionally but are not a necessity.



On Sunday, most Samoans wear white. For women a light cotton dress or light-colored skirt will do. In the village, families often compete to dress you up for church as well as daily activities. Light colored dress pants and a white or light plain color short-sleeve shirt are suitable for men. If appropriate clothing can't be found or is expensive, it can be purchased in Samoa from the local thrift store which the students usually find an enticing place to expand their wardrobes.

Comfortable open shoes are best for Samoa. Slip-on loafers, Reefs, Tevas, Chacos, or rubber flip-flops are popular with most students and suitable for protection from the reef. Sneakers or sports shoes are needed for Fiji hikes which can be muddy and slippery, as well as the lava and rainforest hikes in Samoa. An extra pair of flip-flops comes in handy for personal use or can be given as a gift. If you plan on running or exercising, bring a pair of jogging shoes. Leather molds quickly, so leave it at home.

EQUIPMENT

It is always good to have an umbrella on hand, preferably the fold-up, compact kind. A raincoat or jacket is quite useful but sometimes hot. Evenings in Hawaii and Fiji can sometimes be cool, so bring a light sweater or jacket. A water bottle and a small flashlight are essentials for village stays.

Bottled water can be purchased at most shops in the Apia area. There is a water dispenser at the office and in the common room at your semester long accommodation on the USP campus. Small portable filters have been useful especially for the rural homestays but iodine tablets are rarely used by students.

All necessary bedding and a mattress and pillow will be provided. You may want to bring a mosquito net if you have one but they can also be purchased fairly cheaply in Apia. Many students do not find them necessary in and they are usually provided in the village and beach fales. Hand soap is not provided in most places so small size hand sanitizer is useful but it is also easily available.

If you plan on snorkeling, you may bring your gear or buy something in Hawaii. Such gear may be rented at some places in Samoa but may be poor quality.

Students also recommend coming with some device to record interviews during ISPs. Some students use their computers or phones, but you may want to bring a small tape recorder which are very expensive here.

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.

Students in recent semesters have strongly recommended that everyone brings a laptop. PCs are more adaptable than Macs and tablets perhaps even better. You need to be aware, however, of possible damage caused by humidity, the instability of the electrical current, and the possibility of theft. Several computers die each semester but the advantages of having a computer seem to outweigh the disadvantages, especially during ISP. Several assignments must be typed during the semester and students find doing their work journal for ISP on their computers works well. The readings for the seminars that are available on the SIT Lib Guide should also be downloaded to your computer BEFORE you come to the program. You will also need a flash drive or two to save documents and print so bring a couple along. Laptops are also useful to download photos, so remember to bring a camera docking cord and memory stick.

Computer labs are available on campus, but connections are slow and not always reliable. Both computers and hours are limited. Limited wireless connections are available on campus, but none seem to work with Macs. There are several Internet cafes in Apia and the cost is about US\$4.00 per hour. WiFi connections or Lava Spots are available in numerous places. Costs vary from about \$6 US for one hour to \$3 US for 10 hours. SIT will provide a small WiFi device for you to use data for basic academic needs.

Please see the following website for information about electricity, voltage and electrical adapters. <http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/>. The electrical current in Samoa is 230v, AC 50 Hz. Please remember this if you are planning to bring any appliances with you. Adapters and converters for chargers are available in Samoa.

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.

An assortment of small gifts such as playing cards, postcards, note cards, calendars, coloring books, play dough, crayons, paddle balls, balloons, gum, earrings, children's books, barrettes, magic markers, small cars/toys, etc. come in handy. T-shirts in varied sizes including XXL are also popular gifts. Homestay mothers would also appreciate several large skeins of bright colored yarn found at Walmart to decorate sleeping mats, and a couple of four-yard pieces of bright colored cotton or cotton-blend material for the traditional Samoan dress. Gifts that are useful are appreciated and many of these can now be purchased in Apia.

NOTE: If you are worried about weight, you can purchase kitchen ware, shampoo and soap and other items that make good gifts in Apia.

WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT OBTAIN IN COUNTRY

Most necessities can be found in Samoa, but choice may be limited. This experience is an opportunity for you to live with less, so consider what you need and what you can do without. Most toiletries, including soap, shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, and razor blades and are available in Apia, You do not need a 3-month supply of everything; however, tampons are sometimes difficult to find. Bring a favorite fiction or nonfiction book to contribute and a few others you might want to read but most of the books on the reading list are available here too.

Most students use their phones or digital camera for photos. Film, digital and disposable cameras and other electronic equipment including small tape recorders is expensive

This is an **excellent time to minimize** so pack as conservatively as you can. Review the packing list carefully. You do not need everything on the list. Students find the thrift stores fun and very handy for extra T-shirts, blouses, and dresses.

Laundry can be done on campus. Clothing can get ruined in the wash or from wear so don't bring lifetime favorites.

Laundromats are also available in the Apia area at a cost is about US\$3 per wash and US\$3-4 per dry. Laundry soap or powder is readily available.

Most types of batteries are available in Samoa, though camera batteries are limited. If you prefer a particular brand or better quality bring some along. Flash drives and other school supplies are available at SSAB or BSL but other memory cards are difficult to find.

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

- Keep in mind that Samoa is both hot and humid and you WILL sweat through all the clothes you bring. Generally speaking, bring older clothes and clothes comfortable in hot weather (breathable, light fabrics). You will also likely wear an ie lava lava (sarong) half the time so plainer tops may be ideal.
- Should have clothes for school/ every day (casual and comparable to home), clothes comfortable for hiking and outdoor activities (but use water shoes, NOT hiking boots), clothes for night activities (nothing too fancy, just nicer)
- When in doubt, use an ie lava lava.
- You will buy souvenirs and receive gifts from your homestay families so leave space in your luggage
- Also a good idea to have a bigger backpack or duffel for the Savai'i visit and village stay, something that can carry about 3-5 days worth of stuff.
- Ladies, regarding shorts, do not go out of your way to buy longer shorts that you will never wear again. In most places you can wear your normal shorts – provided they're not shorter than mid-thigh length. In places where you can't (village stay), you will be wearing an ie lava lava over the shorts.
 - sleep wear
 - Underwear (two week supply)
 - 2 Swim wear
 - 1 light jacket
 - 1 rain jacket
 - 1 Comfortable nicer shoe for church and interviews
 - A pair of water shoes that you can also hike in (chacos, tevas, keens)
 - Sneakers
 - Rubber flip flops (can be purchased locally for cheap)
 - 4-5 socks
 - Used t-shirts for everyday wear at school (do not buy new clothes for the trip)

WOMEN

- 2 nicer outfits or knee length cotton dresses for church and interviews

- 2 outfits for night time activities (nothing too fancy)
- 6 comfortable tops with sleeves or t-shirts for heat
- 5 nicer tops (at least one should have sleeves)
- 3 light pants
- 3 casual shorts (nothing above mid-thigh)
- 3 work out shorts or tights
- 1 workout legging

MEN

- 6 pairs of casual shorts/athletic shorts
- 4 short sleeved cotton shirts or collared polo shirts for interviews and church
- 1 lightweight dress pants
- 6 t-shirts

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Passport
- Yellow WHO Card (see the [Safety, Security, and Health](#) document for more information)
- Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination, and booster if eligible
- 2 photocopies of your passport stored separately from your actual passport

HEALTH/TOILETRIES

- Any medication you use regularly including birth control
- A list of any medications you are currently taking with the generic name of each (if there is one)
- Small first aid kit with band-aids; Neosporin; moist towelettes/alcohol pads; and over the counter drugs for minor pain, anti-itching, and motion sickness, as approved by your doctor.
- Earplugs to block out people and barking dogs at night (or lots of patience)
- Multi-vitamins
- Anti-diarrheal medicine and laxatives
- An extra pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses, if worn
- Contact lens cleaning solution, if used
- Q-tips
- Stridex/Clearasil facewipes (refreshing for hot, dusty, and humid environment)

- o Alcohol gel hand sanitizer

To prevent the contraction and spread of COVID-19 you should come prepared with an appropriate number of face masks* and gloves for personal protection. The CDC recommends a close-fitting and protective mask that is comfortable for daily use.

*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. Some masks and respirators offer higher levels of protection than others, and some may be harder to tolerate or wear consistently than others. It is most important to wear a well-fitting mask or respirator correctly that is comfortable for you and that provides good protection.

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS

- o Water bottle
- o Sunglasses/sunscreen/hat for sun protection
- o Aloe vera gel
- o Luggage locks for your bags while in country
- o Insect repellent with DEET of 20/30% for use on skin and 100% DEET or Permethrin for use on clothing Some available here
- o Travel alarm clock and/or watch
- o Flashlight and batteries
- o Two lightweight towels (at least one beach size) and washcloth (Available in Apia)
- o Notebooks and paper, journal and pens (these can also be purchased in Hawaii or the SSAB stationery store in Apia)
- o FLASH DRIVE to save your assignments on
- o Homestay gifts: merchandise from your school (caps are great because they fit most heads, or other things where you don't have to guess sizes), things that are unique to your home city/state (pre-packaged snacks or touristy things), small games for the kids A favorite book to contribute to the SIT library
- o **Photos of home, family and friends** to share with one another and your homestay families.

DO NOT BRING

- o Hair irons/dryers
- o Hiking boots



- o Nice jewelry (there is great jewelry at the markets)
- o New, nice clothes
- o Snorkelling gear (unless you really prefer your own, past students have donated theirs)

OPTIONAL

- o Travel guide (particularly if you plan to do post-program travel)
- o Small camera and film/batteries (*please insure valuable cameras*)
- o Pocket knife (pack in *checked* luggage!)
- o Laptop computer (*please insure it*)
- o Small waterproof bag
- o Waterproof phone case

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