



COUNTRY

OVERVIEW

& PACKING

GUIDELINES

Chile: Cultural Identity, Social Justice, and Community
Development

Spring 2024

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COUNTRY OVERVIEW

GENERAL INFORMATION

Chile has been an important political catalyst within the Americas. It is the first country in the Western hemisphere to elect a socialist president, Salvador Allende Gossens. However, this “Chilean road to socialism” was violently derailed through a military coup d’état supported by the CIA and led by General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte. During Pinochet’s first six months in office after the September 11, 1973 coup at least one thousand people were executed and twice as many were killed during the next sixteen years with many tortured, imprisoned and exiled. The iron fist of the military facilitated the implementation of the first neoliberal economic model in the world and Chile turned into a laboratory for the dogma of Milton Friedman and “the Chicago Boys”.

When Pinochet left the presidency in 1990, the nation transitioned to civilian rule after eighteen years of military dictatorship. Following a series of democratically elected leaders, Chile elected its first female president, Michelle Bachelet Jeria of the Socialist Party from 2006-2010 and again from 2014-2018. In March 2018, billionaire Sebastián Piñera Echenique assumed the presidency of the country for the second time, having served previously from 2010-2014. He is supported by the economic and social groups of the Chilean conservative right. In March 2022, the leftist leader Gabriel Boric assumed the presidency of the country, becoming the youngest president in the Chilean history and one of the youngest in the world, at 36 years old.

Often cited as a model economy or the “jaguar” of the South, Chile’s integration within the global economy has not been without painful adjustment and resistance. While per capita income has risen



over the last two decades, income disparity is one of the worst in the continent and environmental problems continue to increase due to its extractive industries. From the onset, the Mapuche Nation has led the fight against this neoliberal model that has intensified displacement and dispossession of their ancestral lands. Additionally, the student movement in 2012 began to open up new channels of political dissent and expressions against free market economics and political elites, while questioning the actual degree of democracy since civilian rule.

In October of 2019, the discontent and socio-economic polarization of the last decades culminated in the most powerful mobilizations that the country has seen since 1990 demanding that the State carry out transformations that end the great socioeconomic inequalities and access to services with improvements to the systems of pensions, health, education, among other aspects. Led by a new generation of students and instigated by an increase of the metro fares in Santiago, these mobilizations placed the political system and neoliberal model in crisis. Through these historic demonstrations Chile once again became a catalyst in the hemisphere, opening up the political landscape for a “South American spring” and questioning the ideology of neoliberalism worldwide. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic – which arrived in Chile in March 2020 – revealed, once again, the enormous inequalities and inequities that the economic model in the country has entailed.

In October 2020, an unprecedented referendum took place in which Chileans voted whether to draft a new constitution in a Constitutional Convention, which won the support of nearly 80% of voters. Convention members were elected in mid-May 2021, consisting of 155 members, elected with gender parity, and with 17 members belonging to indigenous peoples (7 Mapuche and 2 Aymara, among others).

After almost a year of intense work the Constitutional Convention delivered their proposed draft of a new constitution in July 2022, to be voted on in a final referendum. If approved, the proposed text would have replaced the 1980 Constitution, written and implemented under the dictatorship, and would enshrine a series of paradigmatic and cultural transformations, including a new model of plurinational and gender parity, more legislative

power in congress and framework of human and social rights previously left up to the free market.

However, on September 4, 2022, nearly 62% of voters chose to reject the proposed new constitution, leaving Chilean society and politics in a state of reflection and reassessment, as to how, when and under what terms replace the current constitution, which citizens voted to replace.

CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY

VALPARAÍSO, CHILE: AVERAGE HIGH/LOW TEMPERATURES (°F)

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
73/55	73/55	70/53	66/51	63/50
SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	
64/50	64/50	68/52	72/54	

Chile has a very distinct geography. Despite being one of the longest countries in the world, the nation is only 265 miles (430 km) at its widest point. The internal geography of Chile is marked by a diverse variety of landscapes, including deserts, forests, grasslands, volcanoes, lakes, the central agricultural valley, and the Andes mountains.

Valparaíso is a port city, located one hundred miles northwest of Santiago. The city was established by Spanish explorers in the sixteenth century, and, in 2003, was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Valparaíso is distinguished by its historic architecture including the famous *ascensores* (funiculars) that connect the city center to residential areas in many of its 45 hills, as well as its cobblestone streets, electric trolley buses, open air markets, and fishing villages. The city's population is approximately 320,000 and is situated only fifteen minutes away from its more "modern" sister city of Viña del Mar on Chile's central coast. This metropolitan area of nearly 1 million inhabitants is home to 13 universities and many tourist attractions.

The Valparaíso/Viña del Mar area has a Mediterranean-like climate. Summers (December to March) are virtually rainless and warm, while the winter months (April to September) are chilly and wet with variable weather. Frost and snow occasionally occur inland but are very rare on the coast. Annual temperatures range from 40 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit.

Temuco is in southern Chile, where rainfall is common year-round with changeable weather. In the Temuco area spring brings cool mornings, sunny afternoons. Arica is Chile's northernmost city, located only 18 km (11 mi) from the border with Peru. Arica has a mild, temperate climate with some of the lowest annual rainfall anywhere in the world.

LOCAL CUSTOMS

Chileans are welcoming and warm. For a foreigner it will generally be easy to establish a personal rapport with them by showing interest and being friendly. Despite that, it is necessary to take into consideration some local cultural customs that might differ from your own. For example, because of their importance in Chilean society, family, school, and work are potentially the first topics of conversation.

Here are a few cultural tips to keep in mind:

- 1- Please remember that although Chile may seem to you to be a socially conservative country, the cultural and social climate is changing even as we speak.
- 2- In spite of generational differences, there is less "political correctness" that in the US. For example, people will often call any North Americans or Europeans "gringos" but this should not be understood as an insult.
- 3- In terms of etiquette, always clearly greet people when you arrive and say goodbye when you leave. Acknowledging people this way is quite important and not doing so can be seen as an insult.
- 4- Never belch noisily or yawn without covering your mouth.
- 5- There are also differences in the boundaries between the public and the private, and personal



space. For example, unless you're in a large public event, you should greet everyone individually with a kiss or handshake. (This

custom has become somewhat less ubiquitous after the pandemic).

- 6- In addition to the previous point, if you are close to a person or family, you might be invited to do many things together, like going shopping, to the market, the movies, or even watching TV series in their personal living space. These invitations are very often friendly and should not necessarily be misconstrued as sexual advances.

Unfortunately, homophobia is still very prevalent in Chile, but with newer generations there has been an increasing acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community. It has become gradually more common to find alternative and safe spaces like cafés and bars for the queer community to meet.

Lastly, in terms of language, for many new visitors, adjusting to the local variation of Spanish can be difficult. Chileans tend to speak much faster than in neighboring countries, and often drop final syllables and 's' sounds. Additionally, certain consonants can be pronounced more softly than foreigners are accustomed to hearing.

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, particularly when on excursions.

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 local diet in Chile is based on pasta, rice, beans, stews, fish, bread, meat, vegetables, and fruit. Like in many Latin American countries, the largest meal is usually eaten in the middle of the day (*almuerzo*). Although vegetarian or gluten-free diets are less common in Chile, previous students have

not had a problem when advance notice is given, and several families are able to meet your dietary needs. For those students who maintain a kosher diet, placement with Jewish homestay families may be possible. Students often comment on the amount of bread they consume during the “*once*” (Chilean teatime) with their host families. You can be respectful and politely decline more bread, if you’re able resist it!

Note: if you have special dietary needs, including allergies, please inform our office prior to the start of your program. We will advise you on realistic expectations about avoiding or incorporating certain foods within the program context.

SAFETY, SECURITY, AND HEALTH

Maintaining good health is critical to having a successful semester. To help you do that, we have provided [Health Guidelines and Requirements](#) for your program.

It is very important that you read the Health Guidelines and Requirements document as early as possible and examine it with your medical provider. The guidelines include recommended immunizations; a suggested calendar for immunizations and other prophylaxes; and valuable information on how to avoid exposure to common carriers of disease.

SIT no longer requires vaccination to participate on programs except for locations where host country governments require it.

However, we strongly encourage students to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 per CDC recommendations. SIT continues to closely monitor COVID-19 conditions in each program location and will advise students on any location-specific COVID-19 requirements and regulations prior to and during their program.

Students are thoroughly briefed on safety considerations during in-country orientation and are updated throughout the semester if and when circumstances change. For instance, coming prepared with face masks for personal use if individual venues/location requirements deem in necessary after arrival. 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](#).

While Chile is safer than many Latin American countries, one must still take certain precautions: before departure, make two photocopies of all-important documents and credit cards; leave one copy at home and bring one along with you. Bring a money belt or some other safe means to carry your valuables. We will provide a safe place to store your documents, if you so choose, while you are in country.

Other safety and security tips that will be helpful in making your semester abroad in Chile an enjoyable and successful one:

Upon arrival at the airport, only speak with identified SIT staff and avoid engaging with the other travel vendors or taxi drivers.

At night, don't go out alone. If you are going to be out past midnight, either stay overnight where you are visiting or take a taxi home. Whenever possible, go out accompanied by others.

Moderate your alcohol intake. You are not on a US campus but in a foreign city. The vast majority of violent crime that has happened to US students took place when the students were heavily intoxicated. This type of high-risk behavior can also have consequences for your continued participation in this SIT program.

Do not carry large amounts of cash in your pockets, handbags or backpacks. If it is necessary to carry lots of cash, wear a waist pack or money belt under your clothing, separate your money into several pockets, and keep your wallet in a front pocket.

In general, Chileans go out in groups. If you agree to go out alone with someone of the opposite gender, be aware that there may be cultural assumptions inherent in the situation.

Due to heteronormative / homophobic attitudes members of the LGBTQ+ community often take extra precaution when in public; students should do so as well.

Small earthquakes, or tremors, are a common occurrence in this country. If you feel the earth move under your feet **don't panic.**

Tap water: The tap water in Chilean cities is safe and drinkable, however, the taste may not be what many are accustomed to.

In the orientation period at the beginning of the semester, we will go into more depth on all of these issues. Your homestay is also a primary resource for information.

There are very good medical services available in Valparaíso, Viña del Mar, Temuco, and Arica. The recommended emergency care center in Viña del Mar is the Clinica Reñaca, and in Valparaíso it is Clinica Redsalud Valparaíso. Our program has standing relationships with doctors and psychologists, if any services are needed during the program.

Please note that you will spend about a week in high altitude during the excursion to the north, and you may want to speak with your doctor about prescribing medication to aid with altitude sickness. We will also pace ourselves in our travel to better adjust to the altitude.

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, diverse housing, 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 three homestays.

First, you will spend seven weeks in Valparaíso or Viña del Mar. There will be one, and in some cases two, SIT students per family. There is significant diversity among our host families. Placements range from working class to upper middle class. Some houses are quite modest, and others are quite comfortable; some families will have housekeepers and others will not. However, all homestays will have indoor plumbing, hot water, and internet. Students always have their own rooms.

During the excursion to the South, you will spend about six days living in rural Mapuche homes in a small community about 15 miles from Temuco. These homes, while modest, all have basic amenities. You will have your own beds, often with your own room, and are placed two to a family. You will also spend 3 days in a small town called Putre in the far north of Chile, where you will stay with Aymara families, also in pairs or in groups of three.

During rural excursions, we recommend that you bring bottled water and be aware that access to telephones and/or internet will be limited – so planning communication with your family, friends and university in the US ahead of time is a must.

OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

Additional accommodations during excursions include brief stays in small hotels or hostals. The housing options during your Independent Study Project and Internships will be the same as the first placement in Valparaíso or Viña del Mar, unless you do research or an internship outside of the Valparaíso area. In such cases, specific arrangements will be made on a case-by-case basis.

TRANSPORTATION

You will use a variety of transportation during the semester, including planes, taxis, buses, and trains. When in Valparaíso, buses, the metro system, and taxis will be your most common form of transportation. Students typically travel 15-30 minutes between their primary homestay and classes.

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, including a data plan so that your phone is operational when you are away from wifi. If needed, during orientation SIT Study Abroad staff can assist students in purchasing a local SIM card, and how to acquire minutes for calls and texting.

The program will assist students with purchasing a local pre-paid SIM card for your unlocked smartphone. Students will be responsible for maintaining minutes on their phones; one can expect to spend about \$10-25 per month. If you do not have an unlocked smartphone, a smartphone can be purchased locally, although these could cost up to \$200 or more.

Although most of your Valparaíso/Viña del Mar families will have phones, you will not be allowed to make direct long-distance calls from those phones. Email and Internet access is also available in many local cafés and there is free Wi-Fi service in the SIT Valparaíso program center.

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.



We advise you use the following service in emergency cases.

DHL Express (Chile)
Calle Plaza Sotomayor 95
Local 12 Esquina Blanco
Valparaíso, Chile

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.

Most students access funds from their US bank accounts using their VISA or MasterCard debit cards. Any debit card that is linked to the PLUS or CIRRUS networks should also work at ATMs in country. Credit cards (VISA, American Express, MasterCard) will work in major cities. ATMs are easily accessible throughout Chile. However, even if you plan to use an ATM card you should also bring cash. Traveler's checks are not recommended because they generally have a high exchange rate and can only be changed in currency exchange businesses (*casas de cambio*) and not in banks. In case of an emergency, it is possible to get cash advances on major credit cards in Chilean banks.

The official currency of Chile is the Chilean *peso*. Students can check country currency and current exchange rates at:

<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. Keep in mind that you may not be able to use your international credit card to make online purchases for products and or services in Chile.

The 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\$1,900 to \$2,700**. 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):	\$1,200
Books, printing, supplies:	\$75
Bottled water:	\$1/bottle
Up-front medical costs:	\$50/visit
Potential ISP travel expenses:	\$100-300
In-country visa extension:	\$100
Cell phone costs:	\$120
Typical Internet café usage:	\$2/hr
COVID-19 Test(s) (may be required for entry; subject to change and costs may vary)	\$100-250
Estimated total:	\$1900-2,700 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.

Travel outside of peninsular Chile during the 15-week program (other than for medical or family emergencies or program-sponsored excursions) and/or participation in extreme or adventure sports is strictly prohibited according to the [Conditions of Participation](#), which you signed. No student will be authorized to leave peninsular Chile before the final evaluation session. Your oral ISP or internship presentation at this session is an integral part of your final ISP grade.

If a student wishes to travel independently, they must submit a request that will be reviewed by the Academic Director. SIT reserves the right to deny independent travel requests.

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. We recommend a small backpack or handbag, which will also be useful for short excursions when on the program.

If carrying prescription medications, you should carry a letter from your doctor to prevent any concerns at customs or in transit. (Please see the “General Health Tips” section in the [Safety, Security, and Health](#) pre-departure document.)

Please check the current requirements of the Transportation Security Administration (<http://www.tsa.gov>) as well as those of the airline on which you are flying for domestic and international baggage restrictions.

CLOTHING GUIDELINES

While informal dress is acceptable and common in most settings, it is essential to keep a neat, clean appearance when engaged in class and program activities. It is also very important to have at least one set of clothes for formal occasions and one set of clothes that can get dirty during community service projects. Dressing in layers is the most sensible solution to Chile’s varied seasonal and geographic climates. It can get particularly cold in our excursions, and homes in Chile do not have central heating like in the US; it is common to wear sweaters while indoors, particularly during the Chilean winter.

You will experience a change of seasons during this semester: be sure to pack accordingly. We recommend you bring clothes that can be used for both seasons.

During the longer excursion to southern Chile (Temuco and surrounding area), the weather will be variable with cool mornings and nights, and warmer afternoons, along with occasional rains. Bring a pair of sturdy shoes or hiking boots to keep your feet

warm and dry. Long-johns or nylons can also help counter the cold.

EQUIPMENT

Be sure to bring a lightweight sleeping bag, which you may need for the educational excursion and your homestays. We also recommend that you bring a small flashlight that will come in handy during this portion of the program.

COMPUTERS AND OTHER ELECTRONICS

It is strongly recommended that you bring laptop. It will be your personal property and responsibility. It is recommended that you ensure it is fully functional and that you buy insurance for all your electronics 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.

Considering that having a laptop will be very useful in general, it will be even *more so* during the first weeks of class in Valparaíso, as well as in the ISP period. **Remember to bring any necessary adapters.**

The program center has Wi-Fi but does not have computers to lend to students.

Please see the following website for information about electricity, voltage and electrical adapters. <http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/>. Electricity in Chile runs on 220-volt current and uses European (specifically Italian-style) plugs. Therefore, if you plan to bring any small appliances, be sure to take along a 110-volt and plug converter appropriate for your appliance. These can be purchased at any Radio Shack (or similar) store in the US. They are also available in Chile.

Students are encourage to bring a digital recorder for interviews, seminars and language classes.

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 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.

Former students have recommended calendars, picture books, postcards, music, or gifts from your college bookstore.

You should also bring some small gifts for your short-term host families in the excursions. Lastly, we would encourage you to a small flag or pennant from your university or college so that we can display it in our program library in Valparaíso.

WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT OBTAIN IN COUNTRY

Imported (North American) brands of toiletries, medicines, vitamins, etc., can be bought in Chile although locally made brands are often more affordable. There are also local as well as US brands of tampons available. Seeds or plants are strictly prohibited at the airport in Santiago.

ALUMNI CONTACTS

If you have further questions, please contact your admissions counselor and/or ask an alumni contact: <https://studyabroad.sit.edu/admissions-aid/application-process/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 formal outfit (business casual) and something for going out in the evenings
- T-shirts and shorts
- An outfit that can get dirty during community work
- 2–4 sweaters or warm tops
- 4-5 shirts
- 3-5 casual pants/jeans/dresses/skirts
- A light, water resistant jacket
- Underwear (10-day supply)
- Socks
- Pajamas for hot and cold weather
- Slippers and (non-bulky) bathrobe
- 1 pair of comfortable shoes
- 1 pair of sneakers
- 1 pair of heavy duty, water resistant shoes or hiking boots
- 1 pair of sandals or flipflops
- Wet weather shoes/sandals (could be one of above pairs)
- Swimsuit
- Raincoat or jacket (or shell plus fleece liner)
- 1–2 bath/beach towels
- 1 hat for protection from the sun

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Passport
- Yellow WHO Card/International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (see the [Safety, Security, and Health](#) document for more information)
- 2 photocopies of your passport stored separately from your actual passport
- Photocopy of visa (*if applicable*)
- Proof of Covid19 vaccine and/or booster encouraged COVID-19 PCR test with negative result up to 48 hours before the trip (optional, but recommended).



HEALTH/TOILETRIES

- Adequate supply of any medications you use regularly, including birth control (drug use other than for medical purposes is strictly forbidden on your program and strict penalties are in effect). If you are not able to bring an adequate supply, bring your prescription and notify SIT local staff shortly after arriving so they can help you refill your prescription before running out.
- Small first aid kit with band-aids, hydrogen peroxide, moist towelettes, and over the counter drugs for minor pain, diarrhea, anti-itching, motion sickness, altitude sickness, as approved by your doctor
- Insect repellent, especially for fleas; topical cream for flea bites
- Sunscreen (at least SPF 15)
- Extra eyeglasses or contacts
- An adequate supply of COVID 19 masks, enough for at least five days, in the event that you get sick with a respiratory infection

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS

- An open, **unlocked** smart phone (see Phones section for more details)
- Travel alarm clock
- Flashlight/headlamp
- Fold-up umbrella
- Homestay family gifts
- Laptop computer
- Voltage and plug adaptors
- Durable water bottle

OPTIONAL

- Travel guide if you plan to do post-program travel (Lonely Planet is recommended)
- College or university ID
- Waterless anti-bacterial hand soap/cleansing towelettes
- Ziploc storage bags