

# Pacific Discovery – Nepal & Tibet Semester – Packing List

## Equipment

- Duffel bag approx. 100-130L
- Daypack for trekking approx. 30-35L
- Sleeping Bag – 3-4 season
- Sleeping sheet
- Trekking Pole/s
- Water filter bottle (essential - see gear tips), and 1L Nalgene (or similar)

## Footwear

- Sturdy, comfortable (worn-in) hiking boots/shoes
- Running shoes or trail runners
- Sport sandals (Chaco, Teva etc)
- Flip flops for showering in

## Outdoor Clothing

- Rain jacket and pants (waterproof shell/unlined)
- Long pants for trekking in (not tights/leggings)
- Fleece pants
- Fleece jacket
- Down jacket
- Thermal layers – 2 x long top and 1 x pants, Capilene, Smartwool (or similar)
- Woolen hiking socks x 3
- Warm/woolen hat (ski hat)
- Fleece gloves
- Work / gardening gloves for volunteer work
- Swimsuit
- Sport shorts (quick-dry, knee length)

## Casual/Travel Clothing

- Comfortable long pants (tights/leggings okay) x 2
- Shorts or skirt x 2 (knee length or below)
- Warm light weight top x 1 (light fleece best)
- Light-weight long-sleeve shirt
- Cotton t-shirt/shirt x 4
- Light weight socks x 2
- Underwear x 7 and bras x 5, including 2-3 sports bras
- Pack-towel or lightweight towel – large enough to wrap around yourself to get changed under
- Boxers and t-shirt for sleeping in
- Sun hat/cap

## Accessories

- Stuff sacks or packing cells to pack/organize your gear
- Reusable shopping bag (eg. LOQI bag)
- Sunglasses
- Compact headlamp
- Alarm to wake you up – watch, phone etc.
- Camera and charger and memory cards (or use phone)
- One good book to share
- Something simple & fun for interacting with kids (small & light weight is key) - not something to give to kids, but to play with them eg. frisbee, bubbles etc.
- Ziploc bags for keeping things water/dust proof
- Combination padlocks for duffel bag & room

- Electrical outlet converter (can buy in-country)
- Photo album (phone or flip album of friends, family, your home life, to show your trip mates and local people you meet.
- WiFi compatible device e.g. phone (optional)
- Foam ear plugs and eye shade (optional)
- Travel pillow – compact and lightweight (optional)
- Pocket knife/multi-tool (optional)
- Light cord clothesline approx 20ft (optional)
- Universal basin/bath plug (optional)

## Paperwork & Money

- \*Passport & photocopy of same
  - \*Air tickets & photocopy of same
  - \*Travel insurance policy details
- Must also leave copy of above 3 items\* with family member for easy reference if needed
- Copies of prescription for any important medications in case these are lost or damaged during program.
  - 4 passport photos
  - Money belt/pouch to carry passport & money
  - Debit/credit/prepaid cards and some USD cash
  - Travel journal
  - Course outline, etc if taking credit

## Toiletries (compact & biodegradable)

- General toiletries (toothbrush, tooth paste, soap, small shampoo, sanitary needs etc.)
- Contact lenses and solution and/or glasses – If needed
- Sunscreen and lip balm
- Effective insect repellent
- Hand sanitizer (essential), wet wipes (optional)
- Moisturizer

## Your required personal first aid kit (should contain)

- Any prescribed medications to last duration of program (including birth control).
- 1 course of azithromycin (antibiotic for bacterial gut infection)
- Diamox/acetazolamide – To hasten altitude acclimatization
- Pepto-Bismol tablets
- Imodium/Loperamide
- Electrolyte sachets
- Band aids and blister tape/moleskin for feet
- Pain relief (Tylenol, Ibuprofen etc)
- Antihistamine (for hay fever, bites, allergies)
- Eye drops for dust/smoke irritation
- Spray or cream (for insect bites)
- Tweezers & scissors
- Antiseptic solution
- Non-adhesive dressings
- Strapping tape
- Motion sickness pills (non-drowsy)
- Throat lozenges
- Pro-biotics and cranberry supplements (optional)

# Gear Tips

Please refer to the gear list and gear tips when you are packing for the program. There's quite a lot of information here, so take your time and read through this carefully.

You don't need to go out and spend lots of money on the latest gear. In fact, it's best to bring clothing and footwear that is comfortable and worn-in. Over the course of the program, your pack and gear will get rugged use, so there is no sense in buying a whole new wardrobe just for this program.

Traveling light is the 'ideal'. Everything you bring needs to fit in your duffel and be within the 23kg, 50lbs luggage allowance. Try to bring only what is on the packing list.

**Do not bring:** hairdryer; electric razor; expensive or irreplaceable electronic items or jewelry.

**Travel light:** When you begin packing, you'll be tempted to bring more clothing than is on the clothing list because you still have room in your backpack – this is a fatal mistake! If we get one piece of advice from past participants it's consistently, "tell them to bring the absolute minimum".

## Clothing tips...

**Quick dry:** Look at all the clothing you are planning to bring and think to yourself, "How long is that going to take to dry". This goes hand in hand with traveling light.

**Cultural sensitivity:** Throughout Nepal and Tibet, people dress conservatively. In larger towns and cities people are used to international travelers, but whenever we are in rural areas and villages we expect you to wear long pants, or knee length shorts/skirt, and have your shoulders covered.

**Clothing for different situations:** In terms of choosing the clothing you bring on the program, we have outlined the main situations below that require different clothing.

Covering up on program: Nepal and Tibet are conservative countries and it is important that you bring clothing that will cover your shoulders and knees. Over the course of the program you will spend a lot of time visiting temples, at homestays, in rural villages, at school visits, on volunteer projects, traveling in Tibet etc. In these situations you need to dress respectfully and modestly.

Travelling in Tibet: Tibet is a high altitude desert. You'll want to wear shoes, long pants and long sleeve layers on top. It's warm during the day when sunny, and cold in the shade or early morning/evening. Think rugged travel clothing.

Travelling in the Terai: During the last week of the trip we'll be traveling in the lowlands of Nepal which are hot and tropical. Think light weight travel clothing.

Trekking: You will ideally wear trekking pants, or long hiking shorts, or tights and a knee length cotton skirt (this is a great option for females as a skirt gives privacy for pee stops along the trail). On top you'll wear a number of layers depending upon the weather, temperature and elevation. Quick dry exercise tops are an ideal first layer, then a long sleeve capilene or smartwool layer, then a light fleece, then a mid-weight fleece jacket and finally your rain jacket.

Volunteer Project: You'll wear conservative clothing – long pants and t-shirt/fleece. Make sure you're ok with getting paint on this clothing.

Rafting: On the river you will wear sandals, sunhat, glasses, swimsuit, and a long-sleeve capilene quick-dry top for extra insulation, and a wetsuit (provided by raft company) and sun protection.

Meditation: It would be preferable to bring some loose comfortable (but modest) yoga type pants for the Buddhist Meditation course, rather than wearing tights.

Sleeping – every night: You will be sharing accommodation with other group members over the course of the program and should bring something to sleep in, for example, a t-shirt and cotton boxers.

When you are planning clothing to bring it is good to choose clothing that will be multi-purpose and will work in multiple situations. Make sure all your tops go with all your bottoms.

**Buying clothing in Nepal:** If you don't already have a down jacket or trekking poles, these can be bought inexpensively and easily in Kathmandu. If you find you need another pair of pants, skirt, top or flip flops and are of average build, then you will also be able to get them in easily in Kathmandu. Good shoes, comfortable sports sandals, bras, women's swimsuits and clothing for larger builds can be almost impossible to buy.

**Trekking:** On the two week trekking trip, everything you don't need for this activity will be stored in Pokhara. Because you are trekking at altitude, your sleeping bag, evening clothing, books etc will be carried by porters and you will just carry your day-pack with rain jacket, warm top, camera, water bottles, snacks etc. At nights we will be staying in trekking lodges.

**Rafting:** Everything you don't need for this activity will be stored in Pokhara. On the river you will wear sandals, sunhat, glasses, swimsuit, river shorts (board-shorts) and a long-sleeve quick-dry top for sun protection. The rest of your stuff for evenings will be packed into waterproof dry bags.

### Clothing Layering

1. Layering clothing is the best way to ensure comfort in the outdoors; it allows you to make quick adjustments based on your activity and the weather.
2. Each layer has a function: the innermost layer (against your skin) manages moisture; the middle layer/s insulates you from the cold; the outer layer shields you from wind and precipitation.
3. Fabrics that either pull moisture from your skin or retain warmth when damp are effective at maintaining your body temperature.

There are three basic stages in layering: an inner, moisture-management layer, an insulating middle layer and a weatherproof outer layer. You make adjustments depending on the degree of exertion and the outside conditions. The ability to peel off layers as you heat up and add them when you cool off is the key to this system.

Moisture-management layers: Example: <http://tinyurl.com/lckwmn6>

More than any other, the moisture-management layer influences how you regulate your body temperature. Have you ever worn a cotton T-shirt under your raincoat while you hiked or walked briskly? Even though you weren't getting wet from rain, you probably felt wet and cold. Trapped inside your clothing, perspiration can leave you chilled, no matter how well your outer shell fends off rain and snow. Cotton does an effective job of retaining perspiration where it can leave you feeling chilled. Your next-to-skin layer should not be cotton. Silk, wool and synthetic wicking fabrics such as Capilene®, Polartec® PowerDry® and CoolMax® polyester work to transport perspiration from the skin. Rather than absorbing moisture, these fabrics disperse it on the outer surface, where it can evaporate. The result: You stay warmer even when you sweat.

Insulating layer/s: The insulating layer/s helps you retain heat by trapping air next to your body. Polyester fleece vests, jackets and tights are good examples of insulation suitable for outdoor activities. They not only trap air but are also made with moisture-wicking fibers. Fleece is a favorite insulation material because it's lightweight, breathable and insulates even when wet. Plus, it dries faster and has a higher warmth-to-weight ratio than wool.

Shell or outer layer: The shell layer (jacket and pants) protects you from wind, rain or snow. If wind or water is allowed to penetrate to the inner layers, you begin to cool off. Without proper ventilation, perspiration can't evaporate. Instead, it condenses on the inside of your shell. The shell layer should also be roomy enough to fit easily over other layers and not restrict your movement. Some outer shells have a layer of insulation built in, making them suitable for cold conditions, but not very good for this program as they are not as versatile for layering in a variety of temperatures and are too heavy to carry trekking. Shell jackets and pants that are too light/disposable are also not suitable because they will not last the duration of the program.



## Footwear

You will need footwear for the following situations: Trekking, rafting, volunteer work, casual and travel situations. We suggest:

**Casual / Running shoes:** Running shoes are good to bring for everything except the trekking. Bringing running shoes also means you can exercise during the trip if you are so inclined.

**Hiking Boots or Hiking Shoes:** Sturdy leather or alternative material hiking boots are recommended for the trekking trip. You are trekking for two weeks, so need to ensure these fit well and are worn-in. If you have strong ankles you could bring hiking shoes instead. The only advantage is that they take up less room in your luggage. The key thing is that your footwear for trekking has good grip and thick soles with good arch support. For this reason trainers/running shoes are not recommended. It is essential that your boots are worn-in before program start, so if new, start wearing them now (on walks, around home etc).

**River sandals:** The best river sandals stay firmly on your feet and dry quickly. We recommend Chaco's (pictured). People generally find the Z1 model much more comfortable than the Z2. Other popular brands include Teva and Keen. Note: Alternatively, you could wear running/sport shoes on the river, and flip-flops at camp (on the river), if you don't want to bring sport sandals.

Light-weight flip-flops for showering in are also a good idea.



**Pants:** Comfortable long pants - light cotton or synthetic, not jeans or cords which take too long to dry.

**Shorts:** You need to bring at least one pair of shorts. Considerations here are again 'light weight' and not too short because of cultural sensitivities. Longer soccer shorts are ideal. No heavy cargo shorts or short shorts. Guys could plan to have their hiking shorts double as a swimsuit.



**Shirts/t-shirts:** Anything goes but it's good to have at least one or two collared cotton shirts like these. Girls can wear one unbuttoned over a tank-top as an easy option for covering shoulders.



**Pack towel:** The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy will tell you that the only essential piece of equipment for travel is a towel – for drying yourself, as a skirt, picnic rug, pillow case, sun shade, tow rope....The uses are endless and they dry fast. Make sure you bring a large sized one that you can wrap around and get changed under.

**Toiletries:** Make sure your toiletries are not too bulky/heavy. You will be able to buy more as you go. Be aware that you may not be able to get the same brands as at home.

**Washing/Laundry:** You will be able to pay to get your clothes laundered when we are in cities. This usually costs around \$1 for a kilo of laundry (2lbs). You can hand-wash and dry items in your room if you bring a line and pegs. You will lament wearing the same clothes all the time but everyone else will be doing the same and it is much better if all your gear fits easily into your duffel! Once you've made a pile of everything you might bring, double check to see if you can leave anything behind...but make sure you DO bring the required gear. Honestly...everyone on our trips think they bring too much clothing.

#### **Duffel Bag:**

A duffel bag that is large enough to fit everything you need to bring including your back pack flat in the bottom. A duffel of 100-130L (6-8,000 cu) is ideal. Your duffel will be stored securely during expeditions, so you don't need to carry it further than into and out of accommodation during the program. Having shoulder straps on the duffel is handy for carrying it up and down stairs, into and out of accommodation. >

(For examples refer: <http://ow.ly/n8ma301v5Lp> and <http://ow.ly/H2Br301v5RI>)



**Daypack/small backpack:** Example: [www.rei.com/product/864677/](http://www.rei.com/product/864677/)

Similar to a backpacking pack but smaller. Must have 2 shoulder straps and have plenty of room for rain jacket, fleece, camera, sunscreen, sunglasses, water bottle, diary etc. Ideally around 30-35 litres. Straps on the sides to attach your trekking poles when you don't need them in-hand is useful.

**Trekking Poles:** You will be thankful for telescoping trekking poles when you are gasping for breath at 5000m on our trekking trip. If you have them, bring them, Or they can be bought or rented cheaply in Kathmandu.

**Sleeping sheet/liner:** Example:

[www.rei.com/product/850235/](http://www.rei.com/product/850235/)

Like a roomy sleeping bag made out of light weight cotton or silk. If you don't already own

one, you can get a single summer sheet, fold it in half and sew it into a sleeping bag shape. This will make your sleeping bag warmer. It will keep your sleeping bag cleaner. You can also use it when it's too hot for your sleeping bag; or when you may need to share a double bed with another participant of the same gender.



**Water Filter Bottle:** We ask that you buy and bring your own water filter bottle, so that you have access to safe and cheap drinking water throughout the trip. Bottled water can be purchased, but results in a lot of plastic waste, and over the course of the program, can cost up to \$200. Investing in a water filter bottle will save you money, and is great for the environment.

We recommend a Camelbak All Clear Water Purification bottle (\$79): <http://ow.ly/TRaf3005gCc>

A more expensive choice but the #1 student recommended water filter bottle from our alumni feedback.

Or, Seychelle Water Filter bottle (\$25) with advanced filter for back-country use: <http://ow.ly/UYz83005gTg>



In addition to a water filter bottle, please also bring a 1 litre Nalgene, aluminium or stainless steel water bottle that can carry hot liquids. You can use it as a hot-water-bottle during the trekking trip.

**Sleeping Bag:** You will use your sleeping bag on roughly half the nights of the trip. A compact 3-4 season sleeping bag is best.

**Your documents and how to keep them safe:** You will want to bring a money belt or neck pouch. It's a matter of individual preference which you use. Into it (inside small zip lock bags to keep everything dry) will go your passport, air tickets, travel insurance card, credit card and cash. For day to day purchases bring a small pocket size purse or wallet. Additionally have photocopies of your passport, air tickets and travel insurance policy in a zip lock bag in your duffel. Make sure you also leave a copy of these items in the care of a parent back home – if you lose anything, a copy will speed up replacement.

**WiFi/internet access:** Accommodation in Kathmandu, Lhasa and Pokhara will have free WiFi. So having a device that you can go online with is great. If you decide to bring a device you need to be careful that you don't break it over the course of the program through crushing, wetting, overheating in the sun, getting sand or dust into it. It is an inexpensive way to keep in touch with your family through Facetime, Skype or Viber. Note that the internet speed in Nepal and China is a lot slower than you are used to. In Tibet sites like Facebook are blocked by the Chinese authorities.

**Cellphones:** We recommend not attempting to use cell networks in Nepal and Tibet because of cost and little service. Bring your phone to access free WiFi in our accommodation.

International roaming: You can enquire with your provider about costs but know that it is very expensive to roam internationally in Nepal and China. For example, Verizon charges \$2-3/minute to make or receive calls and \$2/mb for data. In addition, there is very little service outside of Kathmandu, Lhasa and Pokhara.

Using a local SIM with an unlocked handset: This is very difficult to arrange in both Nepal and China.

**Electrical outlets and power adaptors:** Electrical outlets in Nepal and Tibet are a different shape to North America. You can buy an outlet adapter easily and cheaply in Kathmandu. Nepal and Tibet uses 220-240v electricity. This means that phone and digital camera rechargers, which are designed for international voltages can plug straight in with an outlet adapter but other electrical appliances like hairdryers etc that only take 110v will blow up. To check if your electrical item can be used in Nepal & Tibet, check the voltage –if it says 110v, it will blow up, if it says 100-240v, it will work fine. But don't bring a hairdryer!

**Camera:** Bring the best one you own or can afford. Bring the battery charger and a couple of spare memory cards. If photography is not a passion, you can use your phone for photos.

#### **First aid kit**

We require you to bring your own personal first aid kit on the program. Although our instructors carry group first aid kits for emergency use, for minor health complaints, your instructors will show you how to utilize what you have in your kit, to help you become more skilled at taking care of yourself in a developing world travel setting.

We ask you to bring a course of antibiotics as traveler's diarrhea is one of the more common illnesses on the program. This is caused by exposure to new bacteria, commonly from food. This condition typically fixes itself over time. However, research has shown that early treatment with antibiotics significantly reduces the duration of the illness, meaning you make the most of your program experience, and reduces the likelihood of ongoing complications. You will only take these in consultation with your instructors.

Many people take probiotics as a preventative to getting ill, however there is no solid scientific evidence that this is true. You may choose to take these as a preventative if you wish (some of our instructors do).

We suggest that female students bring cranberry supplements as a preventative to getting UTI's.

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Bring what is on the packing list and nothing else ☺. In most cases you'll only be allowed to check one bag at max 23kg for your international flights, so your luggage has to be within this.