

# Pacific Discovery – Southeast Asia Semester – Packing List

Traveling light is the 'ideal' in Asia. Everything you bring should fit into a medium sized backpack or duffel. Try to bring only what is on the list below – you will certainly collect extra clothing and mementos along your journey. When selecting clothing to bring, keep in mind that Asia has high humidity, and choose clothing that is quick dry, comfortable and versatile in all situations.

## Equipment

- Backpack for travelling, or backpacking pack, or duffel with pack harness (NOT suitcase – must be able to carry on your back short distances)
- Large daypack for day trips and overnight trips
- Sleeping sheet
- Water filter bottle (essential - see gear tips), and 1L Nalgene (or similar)

## Footwear

- Comfortable hiking or running shoes (NOT smooth-soled street shoes or heavy boots)
- Comfortable sandals (will wear these most)
- Flip-flops

## Clothing

- 2-3 x light weight long pants or leggings
- 2 x quick-dry running or hiking shorts (longer not short)
- 2 x cotton shorts or skirt (knee length or below is best)
- 1 x warm light weight top (light fleece best)
- Light weight rain jacket
- 3 x sports socks
- 1 x light weight long sleeve shirt
- 4-5 x cotton t-shirt/shirt/tank tops
- 1 x outfit for city evening wear (optional)
- Underwear x 5 and bras x 5, including 2-3 sports bras
- 2 x swimsuits
- Pack-towel or lightweight towel – large enough to wrap around yourself to get changed under
- Boxers and t-shirt for sleeping in
- Sunhat and sunglasses

## Accessories

- Stuff sacks or packing cells to pack/organize your gear inside your duffel
- Reusable shopping bag (eg. LOQI bag)
- Headlamp (compact)
- Alarm to wake you up – watch, phone etc.
- Camera and charger and memory cards (or use phone)
- One good book to share
- Ziploc bags for keeping things water/dust proof
- Combination padlocks for duffel bag
- Something simple and fun for interacting with kids (small/light weight is key) – not giveaways, but to play with eg. frisbee, bubbles etc
- Travel pillow – compact and lightweight (optional)
- Foam ear plugs and eye shade (optional)
- Photo album (on phone or flip album) of friends, family, home life, to show people you meet (optional)
- WiFi compatible device e.g. phone (optional)
- Pocket knife/multi-tool (optional)
- 10L Roll top drybag (optional)

## Paperwork etc

- \*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.
  - Something to store your money, passport etc, in eg. money belt
  - 2 x debit or credit or prepaid cards and some USD cash
  - Travel journal
  - Course outline etc (if taking academic credit)

## Toiletries (compact & biodegradable)

- General toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, small shampoo, sanitary needs etc)
- Contact lenses and solution and/or glasses – if needed
- Sunscreen and lip balm
- Effective insect repellent
- Hand sanitizer

## 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)
- Pepto-Bismol tablets
- Immodium/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)

## January-March group only, also bring

- Thermal underwear – top and long pants (Capilene, Smartwool or similar)
- Medium weight fleece (instead of lightweight)
- Wool/warm socks x 2
- Wool hat/beanie

# 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/duffel and gear will get rugged use, so there is no sense in buying a whole new wardrobe just for this program.

**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 or duffel – this is a fatal mistake! If we get one piece of advice from past participants it's consistently, "tell them not to bring extra clothing".

**Your documents and how to keep them safe:** 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, and the bulk of your 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 down the back of your pack. Make sure you also leave a copy of these items with a family member at home – having a copy will speed up replacement if necessary.

**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 Asia, 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 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 – 30% of time on program: 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 etc. In these situations, you need to dress respectfully and modestly. This means having your shoulders and knees covered. It's a good idea to have two tops and two bottoms that cover shoulders and knees so that you don't have to wear the same outfit every day. For school visits in particular guys should wear a collared shirt and full length pants, while females could wear a blouse and long skirt or long pants (but not leggings).

Adventures – 25% of time on program: For trekking, biking, kayaking, house building etc you will ideally wear quick drying hiking shorts or nylon gym/soccer shorts, or leggings/tights, a t-shirt, socks and hiking/running shoes.

Casual clothing – 40% of time on program: In larger towns and cities, and in beach areas, there are no particular clothing requirements. Therefore, you can wear whatever you are most comfortable in.

Evenings – 5% of time on program: In larger towns and cities you will have the opportunity to go out in the evening. Bring something you feel good wearing in the evenings so that you're not just wearing travel/trekking clothing. This might be a tidy shirt or dress – whatever you would go out in at home.

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/shorts.

When you are planning what 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 Asia:** If you find you need another pair of pants, skirt, shorts, top or flip flops and are of average build, then you will be able to get them in easily. Good shoes, comfortable sports sandals, bras, women's swimsuits and clothing for larger builds can be difficult to buy.



**Pants:** Bring comfortable light-weight long pants (light cotton or synthetic), not jeans or cords. Females can wear leggings/tights for casual wear, working out and trekking but must also bring some long pants for school visits and stays in rural communities.

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



**Footwear:** We recommend trail runners or hiking shoes (pictured) for the trip. These are a happy medium between hiking boots, which are heavy and bulky to carry around and (at the other end of the spectrum) smooth soled running or street shoes, which will not give you enough traction on muddy, slippery trails. Break them in before leaving for Asia, blisters can get infected easily in the tropics.

Comfortable sandals are vital. These are what you'll wear all the time except when trekking. The most important thing is that your sandals are comfortable for walking long distances. Try walking in them for an hour...any blisters? Bring some flip-flops as well as sandals. They are light and are a good back-up pair of footwear and for wearing on suspect shower floors. If you spend your summers in flip-flops, you could get away with a pair of flip-flops on the program instead of sandals. But running/sports shoes, for hiking, are essential.



**Raincoat:** This won't get a whole lot of use on the trip but is essential for our trekking trips. Think compact and lightweight.

**Shirts:** Anything goes but it's good to have at least one or two collared cotton shirts like below. We've found these to be the most comfortable things to wear in the heat. You stay cooler than in a t-shirt. Girls can wear one unbuttoned over a tank-top as an easy option for covering shoulders. A long sleeve shirt is essential for sun protection on long boat/pick-up truck/motorbike rides where we're out in the sun for long periods. Men's cotton business shirts from Goodwill are an inexpensive way to go.



## Backpack

We recommend that you bring a travel pack or backpacking pack on the program. You can use a duffel bag with pack straps but be aware that you will need to carry your luggage regularly – across borders, from transport to accommodation, and up and down lots of stairs. You can't rely on anyone else to carry your luggage. You will not use this pack for the trekking trips. It will stay behind and you will use your smaller day-pack for the trekking trips.

You need a medium sized pack eg. 4000 - 5000cu.in. You will want to buy/borrow a pack with an internal frame. Not only are internal frame packs more comfortable to carry, but they survive airlines much, much better than external.

*Here's an example of a great travel pack*

Osprey Porter 65

Volume 65L

Weight 4 lbs. 13 oz

\$150

This is a nice travel pack, with a zip away harness to reduce the risk of straps getting caught. The advantages of a pack like this over a backpacking pack is that you can lock it and it is much easier to live out of a pack like this than it is a backpacking pack because you can open it right up like a suitcase.



*If you would prefer to invest in a backpacking pack, Here's an example of a great backpacking pack...*

Osprey Xena 70 Pack

Weight 4 lbs. 12 oz

\$289 (but last year's model may be available cheaper)

Note: Men's backpack equivalent is the Osprey Aether 70

This is a great value backpack with excellent harness and a great zip under the flap on front which makes the pack very easy to load/unload.



The most important thing when selecting a pack is the **harness**. It should fit comfortably and be sized and adjusted to your body. Most manufacturers make each pack model with small, medium and large harnesses. The only way to check whether the pack fits properly is have someone in the store help you fit the pack with weight in it. **Shoulder straps** should sit comfortably on the shoulders. This is especially important if you have narrow shoulders as you will have to look for a pack that fits your shoulder width. **Hip belt** should sit comfortably on your hips - not on your waist or thighs! The **sternum strap** should be adjustable up or down and is important as it helps keep your shoulder straps sitting snugly on your shoulders and not riding out towards the edges.

Simple and light-weight is good. The more bells and whistles a pack has, the more things there are that can break and the more the pack will weigh before you put anything into it. The pack you choose, should cinch down well when it's only half full. Look for side and top compression straps.

Some packs have a single compartment while others have a zipped sleeping bag compartment at the bottom. If you are looking at a pack with a separate sleeping bag compartment, check that the divider between the compartments is removable. If it is not removable the pack will sag in that area and be less comfortable to carry, unless totally full.

**Daypack/small backpack:** Similar to a backpacking pack but smaller. Must have 2 shoulder straps and have plenty of room for our overnight trekking trips where you will carry a change of clothing for the evening, rain jacket, camera, sunscreen, sunglasses, swim-suit & sarong, water bottles, journal etc. Around 2,000cu (30-35L) is ideal.

**Sleeping sheet:** (For example refer: [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 just get an old single summer sheet, fold it in half and sew it into a sleeping bag.

**Swimsuit:** It's a good idea to bring two swimsuits as you'll be using them a lot. Guys can swim in their hiking shorts and bring another pair of board shorts for swimming.



**Pack Towel:** Pack-towels are supposedly quick-drying and compact which is why we recommend them. However, a regular light-weight beach or bath towel would be fine. Make sure your towel is large enough to wrap around so you can get changed under it. For the backpacking expeditions, you'll probably not take a towel because of weight considerations, and just drip-dry when you go swimming.

**Sleeping sheet:** (For example refer: [www.rei.com/product/850235/](http://www.rei.com/product/850235/))

Like a roomy sleeping bag made out of light weight cotton, silk, or alternative fabric. If you don't already own one, you can just get an old single summer sheet, fold it in half and sew it into a sleeping bag. >

**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 frequently 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 one backpack! 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.

**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>

**WiFi/internet access:** Most accommodation we stay in will have free WiFi. So having a device that you can go online with can be very handy. 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.

**Cellphone:** Having a phone is good from a safety perspective – you can easily contact your program instructor when you're out and about. You can setup your phone to use in Southeast Asia through your provider, or bring an unlocked handset and buy a local SIM card in each country. If you arrange a roaming plan with your provider, check the cost to make and receive calls from Southeast Asia (you don't want to return home to a \$1000 phone bill!). Alternatively, you can just plan on using it for keeping in touch via WiFi.

**Electrical outlets and power adaptors:** Electrical outlets in Southeast Asia are most commonly plug type 'A' (as shown) – same as USA. Check your device to see if you need an adapter plug to fit this kind of outlet. Southeast Asia uses 220v electricity. This means that phone, tablet and digital camera rechargers can plug straight in, but other electrical appliances, like hairdryers etc, that only take 110v will blow up. To check if your electrical item can be used in Asia, 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.

**Dry bag:** Consider bringing a small roll-top dry bag to keep your camera and other valuables dry from the rain, or when doing water activities.

### 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 females bring cranberry supplements as a preventative to getting UTI's.

An example of suitably modest clothing required during community stays.

