

# Packing List & Instructions

## MEXICO: MARINE BIOLOGY IN THE CARIBBEAN & BAJA PENINSULA

Mexico: Marine Biology in the Caribbean & Baja Peninsula is an active program where you will get to see many sides of Mexican life. Please keep in mind that Mexico will be quite warm this time of year, so be sure to bring lightweight clothing. While it is often warm during the day, the mornings and evenings can be quite cool, and it will often rain in the early evening. Quick-drying clothing will be the easiest to care for in these conditions and keep you most comfortable.

You will be responsible for carrying your own luggage. *The most important packing advice is to **pack lightly**— whether you pack in a duffel bag, a rolling suitcase, or a large backpack, you should be able to carry (not roll) your luggage up two flights of stairs and across the length of a football field.* When determining what luggage is appropriate, it is important to consider program itinerary and group activities. For more rugged programs with lots of travel and outdoor activities, a larger outdoor camping backpack may be more manageable but certainly not required.

The list on the following page has been suggested by past participants and leaders. You will have opportunities to do laundry while on program, oftentimes during your homestay. Even though your program may be three or four weeks, pack for about a week. Even though we provide a comprehensive packing list, it is good practice to research the temperature and climate of your program country before you depart. These can vary from year to year, so it is important to check current and expected conditions for your program abroad and pack accordingly.

### A Note on Dress

Remember, while traveling with The Experiment, you are an ambassador for the program and should dress appropriately for the country you will be traveling to. In general, You will want your clothes to be comfortable, compact, versatile, and quick to dry (since access to an electric dryer will likely be limited). You will not need more than one nice outfit, suitable for a religious ceremony or celebratory dinner. Shoes should be comfortable, broken in, and versatile—bring as few pairs as possible – 3 is more than enough. Layering is recommended for changing temperatures rather than bringing bulky sweaters and jackets.

### Notes from our Team

#### *Prescription Medications*

Make sure to keep any **prescription medications or vitamins in their original containers**, and bring a **sufficient amount for the entire duration of your program, plus extra** in case of travel delays. Bring a **paper copy of your prescription from your doctor** in case you lose your medication. Travel with **all essential medications in your carry-on luggage**. If you are diabetic and **traveling with syringes**, bring a **certificate or letter from your doctor**.

### *Rescue Medications*

If you use any rescue medications and or devices (i.e. medications intended for the immediate relief of serious symptoms like an EPI pen or albuterol inhaler) you must travel with **one or more backup supplies of this medication or device**. (e.g. A participant who uses an inhaler would travel with at least two inhalers, while a participant with a severe allergy might travel with several EPI pens.) Comparable therapies can be very difficult to obtain while traveling.

### *Other Medications*

While you will not need an entire pharmacy, do bring **the medication you normally use for minor ailments like body aches, upset stomach, bug bites, common cold, seasonal allergies etc**. A travel first aid kit from your local pharmacy is recommended. All medications should be in original packaging with the package insert if possible to avoid seizure at customs.

### *Toiletries and Sanitary Items*

Please bring the toiletries and sanitary items you are accustomed to using. It is recommended to bring enough feminine hygiene products for the duration of the program. It is often difficult to find the items you are used to using while abroad.

### *Corrective Lenses*

If you wear glasses or contact lenses, please bring extra pairs and extra contact cases, as these are often difficult to replace if lost. If you use contact solution to clean your lenses, bring plenty of the type you prefer as this can also be difficult to acquire abroad. Consider program itinerary and activities when choosing appropriate eyewear.

Please direct any questions or concerns to [medicalteam@experiment.org](mailto:medicalteam@experiment.org)

### **Valuables and Electronics**

The Experiment is not responsible for any items lost, misplaced or stolen. It would be best to not bring large electronics, laptops, iPads, tablets, hairdryers, or other items that you would consider expensive to replace. If you choose to bring small electronics (your digital camera or cell phone) remember to bring your own adaptor, batteries, and voltage converter (which can be obtained from a travel store or pharmacy. More info about electricity, voltage, and adapters can be found here: [www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/](http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/)).

### **Gifts**

While not required, it is nice 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. Gifts do not need to be expensive or elaborate. We suggest one or two gifts that the whole family can enjoy; you do not need a gift for each member. 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 (for example, a Vermonter could bring a small bottle of maple syrup). Postcard books and other souvenir items from your hometown are good options. Draw upon your personal interests or hobbies for ideas.

## Clothing Recommended

- 1 lightweight sweater/sweatshirt/light fleece
- 1 light rain jacket
- 1 rash guard
- 4–5 t-shirts
- 2 pairs of long shorts/skirts
- 1–2 pairs of sport shorts (quick drying)
- 1 pair of pants (e.g., jeans)
- 1 set of sleeping clothes
- 7 pairs of underwear
- 3–4 pairs of socks
- 2 swimsuits
- 1 pair of water shoes/sandals- suitable for hiking and exploring wet coastal areas (tevas, chacos, etc.) - **REQUIRED**
- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes/sneakers—make sure they are broken in! You will be walking/hiking a lot.
- 1 pair of flip-flops—shower shoes
- 1 nice outfit and pair of shoes for special occasions

## Gear Recommended

- 1 full-sized towel
- 1 set of toiletries—should be smaller than your head!
- 1 small towel—microfiber quick-drying towels are great!
- Sunglasses and hat with brim
- Money belt
- Anti-itch cream
- Travel watch with alarm—a watch is necessary since you may not be able to use your cell phone as a timekeeping tool
- Travel size detergent, biodegradable if available – laundry pods or bar laundry soap are great options
- Small notebook and pens
- Small spanish-english dictionary
- Small flashlight/headlamp and extra batteries
- Camera, charger and adapter or extra batteries
- Underwater camera
- Environmentally friendly insect repellent and hand sanitizer
- Environmentally friendly sunscreen (reef-safe if possible) and lip protection (spf 30)
- Travel-size laundry detergent for hand-washing clothes when necessary
- Plastic bags (small ziplocs and a few large garbage-size bags)—great for wet/dirty clothes and keeping clean clothes dry while traveling
- Reusable and durable water bottle (1 liter) - **REQUIRED**
- Small backpack for day trips—can be your school backpack
- School id—if you don't have one, it's okay
- A gift for your host family

- **Optional Items Recommended**
- Snorkel mask (useful if you have one)
- Rash guard for snorkeling and swimming
- Journal and pen
- Mailing addresses for friends and family to send postcards
- Printed photos of family or friends
- Small game of cards, uno, bananagrams

**DON'T FORGET YOUR PASSPORT OR RESIDENCY CARD IF APPLICABLE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

*NOTE: IF YOU ARE UNDER THE AGE OF 18, PLEASE BRING COPIES OF NOTARIZED CONSENT FORM, BIRTH CERTIFICATE AND PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S) GOVERNMENT-ISSUED ID.*

Where to start: A great place to visit for these types of travel clothes and gear is an outdoors store such as REI and EMS. These places will have waterproof, light weight, quick drying and versatile clothing options specifically made for travel and backpacking. They can also talk you through layering techniques and give you gear recommendations. These stores tend to be a little pricey so don't forget to check for second-hand outdoor gear stores locally as well!