

Packing List & Instructions

FRANCE: CULTURAL DISCOVERY

The weather in France can vary in the summer, so please be prepared for both warm, humid days as well as cold, rainy weather. It can get very chilly in the evening and very hot during the day. Versatile and layered clothing are best for this type of climate, and quick-drying materials are the easiest to care for. Please note: the French tend to dress less casually than U.S. Americans.

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. Bag must be able to fit in the overhead compartment of a train. When determining what luggage is appropriate, it is important to consider the program itinerary and group activities. Travel between cities is often by train or private bus. Whatever luggage you bring, you'll need to be able to get it on and off yourself, including up and down aisles, and into overhead storage.

The list on the following page has been suggested by past participants and leaders. You will have opportunities to do laundry while on the 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. 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.

SWIMWEAR RESTRICTIONS IN FRANCE

Most public pools in France have restrictions on swimwear, where loose-fitting swim trunks and wearing clothing over swimwear are not allowed. The rules are in place to keep swimming areas clean/hygienic and to prevent people from wearing clothing that could have been worn on the street. If you want to be able to swim in pools in France, should the chance arise, you should plan on bringing speedos, swim briefs, or tight square-leg suits for men, and one- or two-piece swimsuits without skirts or add-ons for women.

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. Please see the Health Guideline for more information.

PERSONAL FIRST AID KIT & OTHER MEDICATIONS

The group leaders will carry a first aid kit for emergencies whilst traveling with the group, but you should bring a travel personal first aid kit with medication you normally use for minor ailments like body aches, upset stomach, bug bites, common cold, seasonal allergies, bandaids and moleskin for blisters etc.

With the increasing temperatures of summer heat and traveler's diarrhea, it is important that you also bring a personal set of oral rehydration salts/electrolytes. These can be found in travel-friendly powder packets to add with water.

[Also include any program-specific recommendations and requirements from previous Experimenters, group leaders and partners]

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 confiscation at customs. Please review the Health Guidelines for more information.

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.

VALUABLES AND ELECTRONICS

The Experiment is not responsible for any items lost, misplaced or stolen. We recommend you 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: <https://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 light warm sweater/sweatshirt
- 1 light rain jacket
- 4–5 shirts
- 1–2 pairs of lightweight pants
- 1 outfit for hiking/sports activities
- 1 pair of sturdier pants (e.g., jeans)
- 2 pairs of long shorts
- 1–2 summer dresses/skirts
- 1 set of sleeping clothes
- 8 pairs of underwear
- 5–6 pairs of socks
- 1-2 nice outfits and 1 pair of shoes for special occasions
- 1 pair of comfortable, broken-in walking shoes/tennis shoes; **REQUIRED**— you will be doing a lot of walking! *You will also be required to wear closed-toed shoes while in the kitchen*
- 1 pair of comfortable sandals or 1 pair of comfortable flat shoes (also may work as your nice shoes)
- 1-2 swimsuits (speedos, swim briefs, or tight square-leg suits for men, and one- or two-piece swimsuits without skirts or add-ons for women. See note above on swimwear restrictions). Some experimenters commented that it would have been nice to have an extra swimsuit since there were lots of opportunities to go swimming
- Water shoes or sandals (that can be worn in the water) – **REQUIRED**

GEAR RECOMMENDED

- 1 reusable and durable water bottle (1 liter) – **REQUIRED**. France in the summer can get very hot, it's critical to stay hydrated.
- 1 set of toiletries—should be smaller than your head
- 1 small beach towel—microfiber and quick-dry are great
- Sunglasses and hat with brim - IMPORTANT
- Money belt
- Travel watch with alarm
- Small notebook and pens
- French-English dictionary
- Small flashlight/headlamp with extra batteries
- Camera, charger, and adapters or extra batteries
- Hand sanitizer
- Insect repellent
- Personal first aid kit (as noted above): including oral rehydration salts, Imodium / Pepto Bismol
- Sunscreen and lip protection (SPF 30)
- Small travel personal first aid kit
- Travel size detergent, biodegradable if available – Laundry pods or bar laundry soap are great options
- Stuff sacks or plastic bags—small Ziplocs and a few large garbage-size bags (great for wet/dirty clothes and keeping clean clothes dry while traveling)
- Small backpack for day trips—this can be your school backpack
- School ID—if you don't have one, it's okay
- Host family gift

IMPORTANT TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Passport, or residency card (if applicable)
- 2 photocopies of your passport stored separately from your actual passport
- Photocopy of visa (if applicable)
- COVID-19 vaccination card (digital and print)

OPTIONAL ITEMS RECOMMENDED

- Journal and pen
- Mailing addresses for friends and family to send postcards
- Printed photos of family or friends
- Small game of cards, Uno, Bananagrams

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!