

Packing List & Instructions

JAPAN: JAPANESE LANGUAGE & CULTURE

The weather in Japan is intensely hot and (at times) unbearably humid in the summer, so please pack light, breathable clothing. Heavy rains are also common, making quick-drying and waterproof clothes ideal for this climate.

Gift-giving is also very common, and we encourage you to bring little *omiyage*, or small gifts, from your hometown for your hosts, community service leaders, and new friends—small items that reflect your interests are best (e.g., souvenirs from home such as magnets, stickers, pencils, candies, etc.).

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 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 the program itinerary and group activities. Travel between cities is often by train or private bus. Whatever luggage you bring, you'll you will 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. Laundry facilities are available at the student residences you will be staying at during the program. 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. *This is especially important in Japanese culture where dressing modestly is expected, and revealing clothing is inappropriate.* 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.

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.

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 personal first aid kit with vitamins and/or medication you normally use for minor ailments like body aches, upset stomach, bug bites, common cold, seasonal allergies, Band-Aids, and moleskin for blisters etc.

With the increasing temperatures of summer heat, and potential traveler's diarrhea, it is important that you also bring a personal set of oral rehydration salts/electrolytes, found in travel-friendly powder packets to add with water. Electrolyte liquids are also commonly found in *konbini* (convenience stores) and vending machines.

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 review the Health Guidelines for more information.

Former Experimenters and group leaders also advise to bring sunscreen and bug spray.

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

YOUTH CENTER RESIDENCE HALL STAY

You will be staying in a youth center residence hall during the majority of your time on the program. Whilst bed linen (blanket, sheet, and pillow) will be provided, it is advised that you bring your own bath towel and shower shoes (see Packing List below). Shampoo and soap will be provided; however, if you require specific products, we encourage you to please pack your own.

The youth center lends out a basic hair dryer, but if you require a specific type, we encourage you to please pack your own (and any requirements needed for [voltage/electric conversion](#)).

Note that open hours for shower facilities are during the evening hours only.

HOMESTAY & SCHOOL VISIT

Please be advised that it is Japanese practice to remove your shoes when entering a home. It is Japanese family practice to wear indoor slippers in the home, and separate bathroom slippers when utilizing the bathroom.

To show cultural respect, it is expected that visitors to the high school wear clean, tidy, and nice clothing. Similarly in the home, they remove their shoes and wear indoor shoes in the classrooms. Be advised that Japanese students typically do not wear jewelry during school and chewing gum is not allowed.

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, 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 a 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/>.

CLOTHING RECOMMENDED

- 1 sweater/sweatshirt/light fleece
- 1 lightweight rain jacket
- 4–5 T-shirts (no tank tops)
- 1 pair of jeans
- 1 pair of nice lightweight, quick-drying pants
- 2 pairs of medium-length shorts
- 2 skirts medium to long length (alternative to shorts)
- 1 quick-drying dress -- medium to long length
- 1 kimono/ light jacket to put over tank tops for temple
- 1 set of sleeping clothes
- 7 pairs of underwear
- 4–5 pairs of socks
- 1 swimsuit (there is no swimming on the itinerary, but it is good to bring one just in case)
- 1 pair of comfortable sandals (Chacos, Tevas, Birkenstocks.)
- 1 pair of shower shoes for communal showers
- 1 pair of house slippers/slipper shoes
- 1 pair of comfortable, broken-in walking shoes/sneakers—make sure they are broken in!
- 1 nice outfit and pair of shoes for special occasions

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)

GEAR RECOMMENDED

- Reusable and durable water bottle (1 liter) - **REQUIRED**
- 1 set of toiletries—should be smaller than your head!
- 1-2 bath towels and 1-2 hand towels—quick-drying microfiber towels are great and useful for Onsen Visits! As noted above, towels are not provided by the hostel accommodations.
- Sunglasses and hat with brim
- Money belt
- Travel watch with alarm—a watch is necessary since you may not be able to use your cell phone as a timekeeping tool
- Small notebook and pens
- Small Japanese-English dictionary
- Small flashlight/headlamp with extra batteries
- Camera, charger and adapters or extra batteries
- Insect repellent and insect bite relief cream/lotion
- Sunscreen and lip protection (SPF 30)
- Personal first aid kit (as noted above): including oral rehydration salts, Imodium / Pepto Bismol, etc.
- At least 3 reusable masks (at least double layered) and gloves for personal protection
- Hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol for use when soap and water is not readily available
- Anti-bacterial wipes or solution to wipe down high-touch surfaces, especially while traveling
- Specialty hair products (for Students of Color)
- Travel size detergent, biodegradable if available – Laundry pods or bar laundry soap are great options
- 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—can be your school backpack
- School ID—if you don't have one, it's okay
- A gift for your host family and other small gifts—highly recommended! (Local to your hometown, card games, postcards, keychains, something you can cook with your family)

OPTIONAL ITEMS RECOMMENDED

- Journal and pen

- Mailing addresses for friends and family to send postcards
- Printed photos of family or friends
- A 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, lightweight, 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!