

Packing List & Instructions

The Experiment Costa Rica: Climate & the Environment – Spanish Language Immersion

The Experiment Costa Rica is an active program where you will have the opportunity to visit many different regions of Costa Rica. It is hot during the summers, so bring cool, lightweight clothing. Please note that it will be the rainy season during your visit, making quick-drying and waterproof clothing ideal. It is also the height of mosquito season, and the sun is hot, so bring bug repellent and sunscreen.

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. 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.

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, Band-Aids and moleskin for blisters, etc. It is the participant's responsibility to replenish their personal first aid kit and pay for any necessary personal prescriptions or medication whilst on program.

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. These can be found in travel-friendly powder packets to add with water.

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. 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/).

MOSQUITO NETS

Osa Peninsula is one of Costa Rica's densest rainforest regions, and mosquitoes are prolific year-round. Coastal and low-elevation jungle areas, like Osa, have the highest mosquito density. Previous leaders and Experimenters advise bringing a mosquito net for sleeping.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES & GEAR

As a program focused on sustainability and the environment, there are community service opportunities where participants will get their hands in the dirt, so participants should bring work gloves. Similarly, activities in the rainforest also require knee-high socks for use with rubber boots and sandals/water shoes for river activities.

GIFTS

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 warm sweater/sweatshirt (fleece/wool are best!)
- 1 lightweight sweater/sweatshirt
- 1 light rain jacket and travel/small umbrella (it will rain in Costa Rica)
- 1–2 lightweight long-sleeved shirts. Button-up shirts are also great and help with sun and bug protection
- 4–5 T-shirts (2 or 3 should be quick-drying non-cotton)
- 1–2 pairs of quick-drying hiking pants
- 4–5 pairs of shorts/skirts
- 1 pair of sleeping clothes
- 7 pairs of underwear
- 1 pair of wool socks
- 2 pairs of knee-high socks—REQUIRED for use with rubber galoshes in the rainforest
- 2 swimsuits, long sleeve sun shirts, or pants that can be worn over your swimsuit will improve sun protection
- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes/tennis shoes with traction
- 1 pair of sandals/water shoes (Chacos, Tevas, FiveFingers, etc.)—REQUIRED for river activities
- 1 nice outfit and pair of shoes for special occasions

GEAR RECOMMENDED

- 1 pair of work gloves—REQUIRED for service projects
- 1 set of toiletries—should be smaller than your head!
- 1 small quick-drying microfiber towel
- 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 Spanish-English dictionary or translator app
- Small flashlight/headlamp and extra batteries - REQUIRED
- Camera, charge, and adapter or extra batteries
- Binoculars (optional)
- Insect repellent – REQUIRED
- Mosquito net
- Mineral sunscreen and lip protection (SPF 30). Biodegradable and environment-safe sunscreen, preferred
- 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
- Reusable and durable water bottle (1 liter) – REQUIRED
- Small backpack for day trips—this can be your school backpack
- Travel lock for suitcase
- School ID—if you don't have one, it's okay
- Host family gift
- Small first aid kit including Band-Aids, Neosporin, pain relief, and rehydration salts/electrolytes
- Prescription, or other required, medications
- 2-3 reusable face masks (at least double layered) and gloves for personal protection
- Hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol for use when soap and water are not readily available
- Anti-bacterial wipes or solution to wipe down high-touch surfaces, especially while traveling

IMPORTANT TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Passport
- Residency card (if applicable)
- 2 photocopies of your passport stored separately from your actual passport (also one digital version in your e-mails or photos)
- Minor travel consent form and documentation for entry into Costa Rica
- Photocopy of visa (if applicable)

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!