

SAMPLE SUMMER PACKING LIST

****See your Volunteer Country Materials for your OFFICIAL PROJECT PACKING LIST, with specific information about the clothing and other items you should bring. ****

Essential:

- Clothing (See your Volunteer Country Materials for more specific information on what clothing and how much is appropriate for your project)
- Sleeping bag and liner or sheet (you can sew a sheet into the shape of a sleeping bag liner)
- A cot (your host family may not have a bed to provide you, so don't leave home without it.)
- A small pillow (you can make your own by stuffing a sweatshirt in your sleeping bag cover)
- Raingear (don't bother bringing an umbrella, just a lightweight shell or a poncho)
- Small flashlight with extra batteries, or a candle lantern
- 2 water bottles
- Water purification tablets (Polar Pure or Potable Agua are both good brands)
- First aid kit (see "The Volunteer's First Aid Kit" for specifics)
- Mosquito netting (check your Volunteer Country Materials to see if this applies to you)
- A day back pack or small bag for carrying stuff on short trips
- Toiletries: 1-2 rolls of toilet paper (you can buy more in your town), soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, shampoo, conditioner, razor, deodorant, hairbrush, feminine products
- Towel (one is sufficient), washcloth
- Your eyeglasses with a hard case, contact lenses and extra solution
- Your retainer or other items for taking care of your dental work in country (e.g. wax)
- Spanish-English dictionary
- Addresses of friends and family, airmail envelopes
- Pens, crayons, markers
- Spiral notebook or other paper supply
- The AMIGOS Volunteer Handbook
- The Program Guide in BOTH English and Spanish
- Volunteer Country Materials (**READ and USE as your OFFICIAL PACKING LIST!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**
This is your source for project specific info)
- Charla/Educational Materials for project specific topics from your VCMS (e.g. felt board, markers, large sheets of paper)
- Money belt that can be worn under your clothes
- Money (check your Volunteer Country Materials for how much and how to bring)
- Modest swimwear for bathing (shorts for guys, one piece suit for women)
- Bathing shoes (e.g. flip flops, Texas)
- At least one nice, professional outfit, including shoes
- Passport, and for non U.S. citizens, other documents proving you are legally in the country

Recommended:

- Wide brimmed hat (to keep the sun off your face)
- Small sewing kit (to repair any mid-summer holes), safety pins
- Plastic bags (either the plastic bags you pack your clothes in, grocery bags, or Ziploc bags)
- Duct tape (it holds the world together!)

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- Small camera with extra film and batteries (you may not have electricity to charge digital cameras)
- A watch and/or travel alarm clock
- Journal
- Luggage locks (to keep mischievous kids out of your stuff)
- Small photo album with extra pictures of yourself or your family to give away (preferably without fancy cars or houses in the background)
- Multi-purpose knife with blade and scissors (e.g. Swiss army knife or Leatherman)
- Some sort of string, rope, or clothesline
- Make-up (nice for women to have on special or professional occasions)

Optional:

- Bubbles or hand soap to make bombitas
- Flea collars to put inside an old sock and at the bottom of your sleeping bag (but not touching your skin, as they are toxic)
- Multi-vitamins
- Project specific tools (e.g. work gloves, measuring tape, or pocket level)
- Cloth laundry bag
- An international calling card that works from the country where you will be
- Map of the world to show where you live or blow up Globe beach balls
- Reading books (don't even bother taking any SAT books, AP books or the like – you didn't work this hard to study during the summer ☺)
- Deck of cards
- Frisbee, soccer ball, hacky sack
- Handy wipes (but be careful of leaving too much trash in your town)
- One pair of “walking” shorts (generally can't be worn in your town, but may be nice to have a pair for briefing, midterm, and debriefing – see your Volunteer Country Materials)

Not recommended:

- Ipod/MP3 player/Walkman (it's not culturally sensitive to wear your Walkman, and it's a technology others may not have seen; however, it can be fun to share with your host family.)
- Snacks (they may attract pests, but if you do bring them you should be willing to share)
- Sunglasses (not appropriate to wear in your town)

Just leave it at home!!! These serve to reinforce negative stereotypes about people from the USA, are insulting to your community or environmentally damaging.

- Discman, CDs, MP3 Player, Videos, DVDs
- Lots of technology (e.g. cell phone, pager, Palm Pilot)
- Fancy gifts for your host family (Try a photo of yourself or a postcard from your town instead)
- Non-biodegradable products, or products with sweet smells that may attract bugs
- Any undergarments that would embarrass you or your town if it was hanging on a line
- Any clothing that is not modest enough for the standards of your community
- Excessive cash
- Items that require electricity

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SUMMER PACKING TIPS

- **READ THE PACKING LIST IN YOUR VOLUNTEER COUNTRY MATERIALS.** This has the most specific and relevant information about what you need to bring!
- Pack lightly!! We can't stress this enough. Not only may you have to carry your bags for long distances, but also your host community is sure to notice how much stuff you've brought. This could be perceived as culturally insensitive by host community members who have fewer material goods than you have.
- Pack your bags evenly, so that if one bag is lost or stolen, you still have enough clothing and toiletries to get you through the first weeks of your summer.
- Label your luggage with your name and in-country address.
- Invest in luggage locks. Locks keep your bags from spontaneously opening during travel, and you'll appreciate being able to lock valuables away from curious children.
- We suggest packing items in plastic bags (grocery store bags work) so they will stay dry if you have walk through the rain. The plastic bags may come in handy during the summer.
- Remove packaging to save space and weight. This will also reduce the amount of trash you are bringing to your community.
- Keep in mind that you can buy most basic products (soap, shampoo, envelopes, toilet paper) in your town, or your supervisor can buy them for you. Thus, you don't necessarily need to pack enough for the whole summer.
- Please do **not** spend a lot of money on new stuff for your summer; try to borrow from others, especially from veteran AMIGOS, or look at used clothing and camping gear stores.
- You may want to wear a money belt under your clothes so that you can carry your passport, CALM card (emergency procedures specific to your host community) and money securely.

Gifts

- Appropriate gifts for your host family are a photo of yourself, your family, or a post card from your hometown. Avoid any gift of significant material value in order to be culturally sensitive.

Clothing

- You should dress nicely, as you are seen as a youth leader and public health professional and should dress accordingly. Think collared shirts, clean pants (at least one pair that isn't jeans), appropriate length skirts, undergarments (like slips and bras), and closed toed shoes. Remember that you will spend some time outside of your host community, possibly in big cities where people dress differently. Pack clothes that you would feel comfortable wearing in both situations. Don't try to make any bold fashion statements. Plain and simple clothing is preferable to flashy, loud

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clothing. It is best to wear shirts without writing or pictures on them – it just looks more professional. Guys should also avoid all-white t-shirts because they look a lot like undershirts.

- Don't forget modest undergarments. Your undergarments might be hanging up on a clothesline for your entire community to see, so be sure that what you bring won't embarrass you or your community.
- Pack clothes that you can layer in hot and cold weather. Some countries have plenty of both.
- Leave any flashy, and/or expensive jewelry at home. Subtle things like small earrings or a watch are okay.
- Women might want to pack a bit of makeup for professional or festive occasions.
- Waterproof your shoes and outerwear, because they may get wet!

Other stuff

- Use soap, shampoo, conditioner and other personal hygiene products that are made of biodegradable materials, as we want to minimize any environmental impact in your host community.
- Bubbles are highly recommended. The kids will love them. You can make bubbles or *bombitas* using hand soap.
- Pack the addresses of family and friends, along with paper and envelopes. Pack the envelopes in a plastic bag; otherwise the humidity can make them stick.