

Costa Rica Trip Student Packing Requirements and Recommendations

Mr. Willecke/Mr. Johnston

Time: Punctuality is our #1 requirement of you, no exceptions, no excuses!

- Watch: you won't have your phone, but you need to know what time it is—get a watch!
- Alarm Clock: Some rustic cabins don't do wakeup calls—get an alarm!

Medications and Hygiene: We have a medical bag for EMERGENCIES, but you should come prepared by bringing:

- Imodium: the food in Costa Rica is not usually a problem, but better safe than sorry
- Headache Pills: Ibuprofen, Aspirin—headaches happen, especially with air travel and buses
- Allergy: different continent, different plants—If you have ever had allergies, mild or sporadic, you **MUST** bring meds; choices in country are limited and you want non-drowsy versions like Claritin.
- Cough Drops
- Antibiotic: (typically, UW Travel Medicine issues this when you get your shot)
- Kleenex: keeping a small travel packet might save your life in a rural Costa Rica bathroom
- Feminine Hygiene Products: Travel can upset the system and you might not be as predictable as usual—it happens every year and it is better to be safe than sorry!
- Anti-bacterial lotion: like Purel
- Dramamine: If you are at all prone to motion sickness get some—Costa Rica's roads are famously bad!
- Malaria Pills: See Malaria section below)
- Chapstick

On Your Person at the Airport:

- Your MIHS Costa Rica shirt—you **MUST** be wearing it.
- Your GCT Carry-on Bag—all students **MUST** be using this as their carry-on.

Carry-On: Anything EXPENSIVE should be carried on, not stowed. Look here for rules on carry-on liquids

<http://www.tsa.gov/311/> Consider the following:

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|--|--|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photo ID | <input type="checkbox"/> Hat (sun) | <input type="checkbox"/> Kleenex |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cash/Money Belt | <input type="checkbox"/> Book/book light | <input type="checkbox"/> Pillow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camera/binoculars | <input type="checkbox"/> Medications | <input type="checkbox"/> Gum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ipod/headphones | <input type="checkbox"/> Snacks | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sun-glasses | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel Journal | |

Checked Luggage:

- Toiletries:** especially liquids and sprays, which are limited as carry-ons
- Swimsuit:** some of the hotels have pools and Costa Rica has world class beaches
- Clothes:** 4 or 5 days worth. Think lightweight and quick-drying—the weather will be very hot and very muggy and sometimes rainy. Bring at least one light weight long sleeved shirts and one pair of long pants for warm evening walks (mosquitoes). Bring at least one sweatshirt, etc. for high elevation temperatures.
- Sturdy shoes:** trails are muddy and sandals don't work for the Canopy Tour
- Raingear:** lightweight rain jacket with a hood (or a hat)
- Garbage bag:** for transporting wet clothes
- Sandals/flip flops:** the kind that can get wet at the beach or in a boat
- Sunscreen:** too much liquid for legal carry-on, bring high SPF, we're in the tropics!
- Mosquito Repellant:**
- Ipod speakers/deck of cards:** for downtime at the hotel

Things NOT to bring:

- Ø Travelers Checks
- Ø Cell phones—the teacher leaders and the guide will have' one—unplug and enjoy yourself! If you don't bring it, you can't lose it.
- Ø Travelers Checks
- Ø Hairdryers
- Ø Travels Checks (yes, its listed 3 times, don't bring them)

Some General Packing Tips:

Money: wear something with a zipper pocket or use a money belt. Avoid over the shoulder purses or wallets in your back pocket—every pickpocket's favorite thing! Bring American cash in \$20 bills and smaller; do bring some \$1s and \$5s. We rarely use Costa Rican Colones, so don't convert any beforehand. Do NOT bring travelers checks—yes, the banks and hotels say they take them—they lie! Counterfeiting them has become too easy. Typically students spend \$200 to \$300 for gifts and souvenirs, and extra food, drinks, etc. Costa Rica has ATMs in the cities, but we're only in the cities part of the time, so bring enough cash. (Costa Rican ATMs are on the Cirrus network, which accept most American cards, but Visa is said to be the most dependable). Some students have found taking a small calculator helpful.

Flying: It's a reasonably long flight with a layover—have your mp3 player and a good novel. Consider taking a book light if you like to read on the plane—the person next to you may not want the overhead light on for the entire flight! Airplane food sucks, especially on the airlines we have to fly to Central America—consider packing snacks. Willecke likes pop-tarts and Snickers, Johnston likes Beef Jerky. Don't forget your gum, Dramamine, etc. Buy your water after we get through security, or they will confiscate it.

Luggage: Take one piece of checked luggage; make sure it has wheels, and store a second duffle bag inside of it for souvenirs—you can check two bags on the way home. You may NOT pack 2 on the way over and please don't overweight your bag as we have to load them on and off the top of the bus. You MUST use your GCT bag for a carry-on.

Tortuguero: We will travel to Tortuguero National Park in canal boats. You may only bring 25 lbs of luggage in your carry-on bag. Tortuguero is on the Caribbean side—hot and humid—so pack accordingly (they do have a pool)! The rest of your gear will go in your full size suitcase and be checked into safe storage at the hotel.

Laundry: expect to get muddy and pack enough clothes to put a few changes in the laundry and have a few to rotate through. Quick drying is great, nylon pants are better than jeans for this. Having a plastic garbage bag for transporting wet clothes is a good idea. No laundry service is available in Tortuguero.

Down Time: a deck of cards, ipod speakers for your room, journal, book, etc.

Electrical Adaptors: Costa Rica has American electrical (110 V 60Hz 2 prong).

Photography: Many students end up taking more pictures than they expect, so buy the largest storage card your camera can use and enough of them to last the trip. Bring extra batteries. Don't leave your camera anywhere (the usual places are at restaurants and on the plane). If you are an avid photographer and will be carting some serious gear, talk to Mr. Willecke. A Nice pair of binoculars is also fun at Tortuguero, but it's also another thing to lose. Mr. Johnston and Mr. Willecke have external hard drives for storing pictures if you need to.

Internet: Internet is only available about half the time in Costa Rica, and even then it's slow or difficult to get to. You should be able to send an email home a few times during the trip, especially the last half of the trip where internet is more available.

Cell Phones: Please do not bring your cell phone—the chaperones and the guides have them, and in case of emergency or severe homesickness you will have access. Unplug and immerse yourself in your travels.

Malaria: You should bring mosquito repellent. You might also consider treating your clothes. There are currently two types of treatment. The first is the traditional military treatment that comes with a plastic bag and liquid repellent—you soak your clothes in the bag for a period of time. Mr. Johnston tried this last year and did not like the mess or the smell. The other method, which Mr. Willecke tried, was a spray on repellent where you hang the clothes in the garage and spray them down and let them hang dry. This worked well and only smelled slightly, and this was easily fixed by spraying on some Febreze before packing. Both of these treatments are available at REI. Consult US Travel Medicine for advice about Malaria; they have offices at UW and in Ffactoria.