



Packing Suggestions

The challenge in packing is to take only what you need - and nothing more! Taking two large suitcases may seem like a good idea when you're leaving your house, but remember that you will be responsible for carrying your own luggage once you are off the plane. So before you leave your house, ask yourself: "Can I carry my luggage up three flights of stairs by myself?" If the answer is "no", you probably want to consider lightening your load! And don't forget to leave a little extra room in your suitcase for all of the cool stuff you are going to buy while abroad!

Here are a few suggestions that returning study abroad students have made about what to pack and what to leave at home.

What to Pack:

- **Clothing appropriate to the colder weather** of your semester; consider packing a light jacket, pair of gloves, scarf, a few sweaters and a sweatshirt.
- **Clothes that you can layer** depending on the temperature (long sleeve shirts, cardigans, light sweaters)
- A small **umbrella** (Totes makes small umbrellas that can fit in your coat pocket or purse!) and a raincoat with a removable lining.
- Shoes: at least one pair of **dress shoes** and one pair of comfortable (broken in) **walking shoes/sneakers**.
- **Warm clothes to wear around the apartment and/or to sleep in**. Remember, due to the high cost of utilities, apartments are not heated to the levels that US residents are accustomed too. Consider packing a bathrobe, sweatpants/sweatshirt, or other warm comfortable clothes.
- **Dry cleaning is expensive** abroad, as are the (scarce) Laundromats – so keep this in mind when you're packing!
- Most programs will provide students with bath towels, but European bath towels are thinner and smaller than those we're used to. **Students may want to bring at least one of their own bath towels and a hand towel**. It is suggested to bring old/cheap towels that can be discarded at the end of the semester abroad; discarding the towels at the end of the semester will free up room in the suitcase for the new clothes and souvenirs!
- **Small backpack/bag**: It's convenient to have a small backpack/bag for weekend trips so that you won't have to take your big suitcase on a three day trip!
- A small **battery-operated alarm clock** to be used in your apartment and on weekend trips (so you don't oversleep and miss your flight!). Limit the amount of plug-in appliances you pack due to the higher voltage abroad. Consider buying some plug-in items (such as hairdryers) abroad.
- A moderately priced (in case you lose it!) **camera**. Cameras that are powered by disposable batteries are ideal because you won't have to deal with using a converter with your battery charger. Also consider bringing along **extra memory cards** to store your photos if you don't plan to download them all onto your computer (even if you download them, if your laptop is lost/stolen it would be good to have the photos saved on a memory card).
- A four-month supply of **pain relievers, vitamins and over-the-counter medicines**. Make sure to keep everything in its original, labeled container.
- A **doctor's note or prescription for all prescription drugs**. Students who need to carry medical supplies such as insulin, syringes, etc. should have their doctor write a note explaining it is necessary to travel with these supplies.
- Extra pair of **glasses** and multiple sets of **contact lenses**.
- **General toiletries** (soap, toothpaste, shampoo, shower pouf, hair care products, etc.) **and cosmetics** can be purchased abroad but if there are brands that you like to use, bring them with you as you may not find the same brands abroad.

- **School supplies:** It might be wise to pack a few notebooks, pens, 3x5 index cards or any other supplies you might need during the first few weeks of class.
- Design students may want to bring **drawing tools or supplies**. Most of these supplies can be purchased abroad, however if there is a particular tool/fabric/supply that a student likes or is used to using, they should bring it with them.
- **Guidebooks** – it'll be cheaper to buy guidebooks in the US than in your foreign country. Plus they're good reading material for the flight!
- **Copies of passport, e-tickets, credit cards, debit cards, ID, etc.** Keep the copies in a location separate from the actual cards/documents. Leave another set with someone at home as a backup.
- **Copies of any university or personal documents** you might need while abroad: Contact information for the Study Abroad Office or other PhilaU people/offices, copy of your course authorization sheets (greensheet and yellowsheet), your HTH insurance policy and card, etc.
- A **pouch or zipper portfolio** to carry your passport, credit cards and other important documents. Most travel stores sell pouches that hang around your neck or can be worn as a belt (under your clothes) so that you can securely carry your passport and documents while traveling. If a student does not wish to wear such a pouch, it is recommended that you purchase a zipper passport portfolio – a small case where you can keep your passport, flight records, credit cards, etc. It is wise to have one location (such as a secure zipper pouch/portfolio) where you keep your important documents when traveling so that you can always be aware of where your documents are.