

PACKING NOTES

I need everyone to travel light this trip. Excessive luggage is unnecessary and is much more apt to get lost enroute and cause delays and problems once you arrive. If one traveler in a group has a luggage problem it causes delays for everyone.

The airlines allow one carry-on bag no larger than 21" x 14" x 9" and a small personal item like a day pack or camera bag. I travel with a carry-on sized conversion pack (straps tuck away as needed) that has an attachable day pack. I wear my passport, bank cards, traveler's cheques, and most of my money under my clothes in a travel wallet, pack other valuable and personal items in the day pack and the clothes I'm not wearing in the main pack. I'm not a wheelie fan (a pain on cobblestones) but they can be handy in airports and are perfectly acceptable.

I usually don't feel comfortable wearing shorts in Central America unless I'm in a beachy area; locals wear skirts and long pants. Although they're socially acceptable, I avoid cotton t-shirts and jeans because they're hot, dry slowly, and are stiff when line dried. Laundry services are readily available and it's easy to rinse out a few things in a sink as needed so you don't have to pack 2 weeks worth of clothes. Comfortable walking shoes are important; be sure yours fit well and are broken in before the trip. I swear by my Keen Newport H2Os and my husband and sons love their Salomon Tech Amphibians, but tennies or leather walking shoes will work. Unless you're extending your trip to include island time or high altitude hiking, the attached list should be plenty. [Obviously guys would want to alter the list to include an additional pair or 2 of long pants and no capris, skirts, sarong, or nightgown.]

Petty theft can happen so keeping your things right with you as you travel is important. Also, don't wear flashy jewelry or expensive watches; I even leave my wedding ring at home. In all my trips I've never had anything stolen and would like to keep it that way.

For airline security reasons all liquids, gels, and aerosols in carry-on luggage must be in three-ounce or smaller containers; larger containers that are half-full or toothpaste tubes rolled up are not allowed. They must be placed in a quart-size, zip-top, clear plastic bag, one per passenger. There are a few exceptions; for more information check out www.tsa.gov/311.

Let me know if you have questions regarding luggage or clothes.

HAPPY PACKING!

PACKING LIST

- 4-5 shirts or blouses (wicking ones are nice)
 - 1 light weight long sleeved shirt
 - 1-2 pairs of light weight long pants (I like the convertible ones that zip off to become shorts)
 - 2-3 pairs of capri-length pants and/or skirts, knee length or longer
 - 1 sarong (optional - skirt, swim wrap, doubles as towel or sleeping sheet)
 - 1 light weight nightgown
 - Uns and socks for 5-6 days (wicking ones are nice)
 - 1 swimsuit
 - 1 bandana and/or 1 neck cooler
 - 1 sunhat with strap (a baseball cap will work but I like neck shade, too)
 - 1 light weight goretex rain coat (or a dime store poncho)
 - Flip flops for swimming and showers
 - Comfortable walking shoes for everything else
-
- Cash, traveler's cheques, ATM and VISA cards, passport, etc. in an under-your-clothes travel wallet
 - Toiletries and prescription meds (bring a paper prescription, too)
 - Sunblock and bug stuff (I recommend Sawyer's Controlled Release Deet Formula or Ultrathon)
 - Earplugs
 - Small medical kit and sewing kit
 - Sunglasses, spare glasses/contacts
 - Cheap watch with alarm and/or travel alarm, spare batteries
 - LCD headlamp (or a small flashlight), spare batteries
 - Camera with extra film/storage cards/batteries/recharger
 - Smallish binoculars (if you're interested in birding)
 - Journal/writing materials
 - Reading material
 - Spanish/English dictionary and other Spanish study aids
 - Small gifts for teachers, hosts, and kids (small photo books, calendars, or other items that represent your home make nice gifts for hosts and teachers; pack small finger puppets, hair trinkets, stickers for kids if you'd like)
 - Photos of family, home, pets, friends, town to share with others - great conversation starters
 - Various ziplock bags
 - Small zip ties for securing luggage zippers
 - 3-4' of duct tape wrapped around a waterproof marker
 - String and a few clothespins or 3-4 feet of braided surgical tubing - great clothesline and no pins needed (let me know if you'd like specific directions or ordering information)
 - Half a roll of t.p. removed from core and flattened
 - Water bottle to refill with purified water which will be supplied by school and host families