



u.s. international health alliance  
Tips from Those Who Have Gone Before...

- Take a change of clothes and any essential items in your carry-on – your luggage may not make it!
  - Include any personal medication – both prescription and OTC
  - If going to a malarial area, bring enough prophylaxis [larium, etc.] to last your entire trip. It may not be available in country.
  - Bring Benadryl! It's wonderful first-aid stuff, and can be very hard to find either for your own use or a patient with a reaction needing it.
- Bring pens – there is always a shortage
- Swiss Army Knife with scissors and bottle opener and some of the accessories are very handy. [Be sure it is packed in your checked baggage.]
- Bring your own stethoscope, otoscope or other portable medical equipment you usually need.
- Find a way to contact home soon after you arrive to let those at home know you arrived safely.
- Don't expect to have access to phone or email often – or sometimes at all.
- Keep a journal
- Cotton clothes or clothes specifically designed for humid tropical weather really helps. Avoid polyester blends
- Bring a book or two or three [light reading] – plan to leave them for others
- Bring a few medical books and journals to leave there since there is no Medical Library. Bring small reference books you frequently use [from Kate: like my Harriet Lane Handbook], and consider leaving that copy behind to update the local resources.
- Carry waterless soap and pocket packs of Kleenex with you at all [or most] times, especially while traveling.
- Take photos when you first arrive. Fresh eyes see things differently
- Have someone take photos of you with your patients / with other workers.
- When in doubt, ask questions.
- If you are bringing meds or supplies in for the hospital / clinic – carry a letter of donation. Generally there is no need to declare this unless your luggage is searched – if they are confiscated, don't worry; the hospital staff may be able to retrieve them later.
- Sunscreen and mosquito repellent – always a good idea.
  - You may want to treat your clothes with repellent before leaving the U.S.
  - Any lotions or deodorant are less attractive to mosquitoes if unscented
- Good traction boots or shoes – especially during the rainy season!
- Bring an umbrella – when it rains, it pours.

