

Suggested Packing List for Burkina Faso (January 2014)

PACK LIGHT and make sure to leave room for souvenirs

Don't take more than you can easily carry—only 1 backpack/suitcase

You must be able to carry your luggage for 10 blocks by yourself. Wheelie luggage may not work well on dirt roads/paths.

Don't take anything you can't wash by hand and won't dry easily

Don't take anything valuable and irreplaceable

Don't take expensive jewelry

Do take:

Light sleeping bag

Flat cotton sheet (twin or double)

Cotton towel/sarong (hotels do not provide these)

Small daypack

Toiletries and medicines:

Malaria prophylaxis (prescribed by doctor)

Any prescription medications you are taking (bring in original prescription bottle)

Toiletries (soap, shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, nail clippers, and if applicable-- contact lens supplies, female products, razors—most of this stuff can be bought in Ouaga if you forget something)

Toiletry bag

Plastic soap container

Sunscreen (high SPF)

Hand sanitizer (small travel bottles)

Mosquito repellent (should have deet, but don't want 100% deet): Spray is probably the best— works well for when dusty. Roll-on good for backs of hands after hands are washed.

Additional medicines (Tylenol, Neosporin, antihistamines, Pepto, Band aids, etc.)

Small Flashlight and batteries for it

Small Travel Alarm clock or watch with alarm

Sunglasses

Optional—Ear plugs (if you have trouble sleeping because of noise)

Optional—Wet wipes

Optional—Swiss army knife (some students thought it helpful to have, others didn't)

Optional—Gatorade packets (could be helpful if get sick)

Clothing: Think business casual

5-6 changes of clothes (light cotton is preferable--probably don't want to bring jeans because they take a long time to dry when you wash them, don't want black shirts because will absorb heat from sun; don't bring white shirts-will get very dirty)

3-4 Long pants (Dockers-type pants)/long skirts/sundresses

7-8 short sleeve polo t-shirts or buttoned down shirts (may want to change at night)

3 long-sleeve shirts (to protect against sun during day and mosquitoes at night)

1 sweatshirt/sweater
7-8 changes of underclothes—cotton underwear is preferable
1 pair of shorts for hanging out at the hotel or playing sports/running
Bandana
Hat (for sun protection)
Rubber flip-flops for showering
Two pairs of comfortable walking shoes (1 pair of sandals/Tevas/Chacos and 1 pair of sneakers)—I usually wear Chacos everyday (and some folks just wear flip-flops) but having the sneakers is good for the plane ride and if your feet get blisters due to the heat. Some students recommended bringing old sneakers that they donated at the end of the trip and others thought sneakers were not necessary.
Socks (2-3 pairs)

Miscellaneous:

Money belt
Camera
Small notebook and pens
Nalgene water bottle (wide mouth is easier to clean out)
Plug adaptors--Burkina uses the 2-pin French system. Make sure the electronics can use 220V
Games
Books to read
Snacks: Cliff bars, granola bars, dried fruit, don't bring chocolate because it melts and makes a mess (exception to this rule is M&Ms)
Make photocopy of your passport (main page with all the info) and the Burkina visa page and bring one copy with you on the trip and leave a copy with your parents

Money:

Bring your ATM card—you should have around \$200 dollars available. Plan on getting any money you need in Burkina from an ATM. It would also be a good idea, if you can, to bring some cash (\$100) in case there are problems with the local ATMs—if the ATMs are working, you do not spend the cash and you re-deposit it in your bank account when you get back home. Using the ATM is cheaper than exchanging cash (there is only a small ATM fee), but last visit there were several days when the ATMs in Ouaga did not work and if you needed money that day, it could have been a problem.

Current situation: Visa ATMs are everywhere in Ouaga, so if you can bring a Visa ATM card that will be best. There are a few Mastercard ATMs, but they are not always working.

If you have a credit card, you can bring it along in case of emergencies. You won't be able to use it in Burkina, but you might want it in the airports in Chicago/Brussels where we have long layovers. Make a photocopy of any credit card you bring and write down the 800 number to report lost cards just in case.