

## **Suggested Packing List for Benin (January 2019)**

### **PACK LIGHT and make sure to leave room for souvenirs**

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

Travel backpack: 65L is the right size. Do not need larger. Might be able to get away with 50L, but want bigger than a school daypack.

Probably don't want wheelee luggage. Going to have problems on dirt roads/villages, carrying up steps. You must be able to carry your luggage for 10 blocks by yourself.

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:**

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 Cotonou 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 (cell phone works fine)

Small Travel Alarm clock or watch with alarm (cell phone works fine)

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

6-7 short sleeve polo t-shirts or buttoned down shirts (may want to change at night)

2-3 long-sleeve shirts (to protect against sun during day and mosquitoes at night)

1 t-shirt for sleeping in

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

Swimsuit

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 wear flip-flops) but having sneakers is good for the plane ride and if your feet get blisters due to the heat. Some students brought old sneakers that they donated at the end of the trip. Others thought sneakers were not necessary.

Socks (2-3 pairs)

**Miscellaneous:**

Money belt

Cell phone/Camera

Small notebook and pens

Nalgene water bottle (wide mouth is easier to clean out)

Plug adaptors--Benin uses the 2-pin French system. Make sure the electronics can use 220V

Games

Books to read

Snacks: Cliff bars, granola bars, don't bring chocolate as it melts and makes a mess

Make photocopy of your passport (main page with all the info) bring copy with you on the trip and leave a copy with your parents

Print out the Benin e-visa—you must bring this with you

**Money:**

Bring your ATM card—make sure you have around \$200 dollars available. Plan on getting any money you need in Benin from an ATM. Using the ATM is cheaper and easier than exchanging cash (there is only a small ATM fee).

**Visa ATMs are everywhere in Cotonou, so if you can bring a Visa ATM card that will be best. As best I can tell, there was only 1 Mastercard ATMs, but it was not always working.**

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