



CROATIA FIELD GUIDE



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LIFE IN THE FIELD





The Center



Academic Foci

- The center is located on the island of Lošinj in the Croatian archipelagos of the Eastern Adriatic coast of the Mediterranean.
- The Adriatic Sea is a hotspot for biodiversity and one of the regions most affected by climate change.
- Blue World Institute, a partner of SFS, is the only non-profit dedicated to the research and conservation of marine megafauna operating in the Croatian Adriatic Sea. Their work directly contributes to the long-term viability of Croatian marine ecosystems and sustaining local livelihoods for future generations.
- Croatia is home to dolphins, sea turtles, sharks, rays, numerous species of fish, and much more!

SEMESTER: SEA TURTLES AND MARINE MAMMALS OF THE ADRIATIC

Cetacean and sea turtle biology, ecology, research and conservation methods. Veterinary investigations and diagnostics. Nature based solutions to biodiversity loss and climate change impacts. Protected areas and threatened ecosystems. Regional conservation strategies, spatial planning, and decision making.

This program combines theory learned in the classroom alongside field-based applications. Time in the classroom is structured to give students a solid understanding of environmental history, theory, and conservation techniques before deploying their knowledge or specific techniques in the field.



Setting and Facilities

A student dorm in the village of Veli Lošinj.

RURAL ← ● → URBAN

VELI LOŠINJ

5-minute walk

Population ~1,000

Bars, grocery store, artesian shops, and ATMs.
Many shops close off-season.

MALI LOŠINJ

5-minute drive

Population ~8,000

Multiple shops, banks,
pharmacies, and hospital.

ZAGREB

5-hour drive

Population ~805,000

Capital city. International
airport.

HOUSING

Five rooms, 4 people per room in twin bunk beds. Shared closet and desk. Each room has AC and a fan.

En-suite bathroom with shower (hot water) and western-style toilet.

OTHER FACILITIES

Student lounge with games.

Classroom with library. Computer lab. Small student kitchen and dining room. Open-air terrace.

One washing machine (detergent not provided) and one dryer.



Food

SFS can accommodate most dietary needs, but the variety of food may be limited due to local availability and cost. SFS cannot accommodate life-threatening gluten allergies or strict Halal or Kosher diets. Due to limited dietary variety, SFS always recommends bringing vitamins, protein bars, nuts, favorite snacks, etc.

Meals may consist of meat, fish, eggs, pasta, vegetables, and fruit. Snacks may include tea, coffee, granola bars, yogurt, fruit, and toast with jam or other spreads.



Exercise

There is a basketball court and small outdoor gym. In town, there are running and cycling routes. There is also a paid swimming pool at a nearby hotel.



Climate

December to February brings mild, rainy weather. Snowfall is rare but can happen. September to November and March to May will be mostly sunny with occasional rainstorms. Average temperatures in Veli Lošinj range from 45-75°F.



Considerations

Language: Croatian is the official language. Locals have intermediate to advanced knowledge of English.

Culture and Diversity: 92% of Croatia identifies as Croatian, 3% as Serbian, and the remaining 5% is other European immigrants and racial minorities. 87% are Christians. Croatian is a gendered language.

Physical Rigor: Students must be able to walk/stand for up to 1 hour at a time and should be comfortable being in a boat in the open ocean.

Hazards: Turtles, sharks, jellyfish, sea urchins, drowning, etc.

Travel: Students will frequently travel long distances by boat.



Money

The local currency is the Euro (EUR).

Both cash and debit/credit cards are widely accepted. All students are required to bring a credit/debit card with at least \$3,000 in funds in case of emergencies. Mastercard and Visa are the most commonly accepted cards internationally. Be sure to notify your bank that you will be traveling internationally.

There are extremely limited opportunities to exchange USD, however students will have access to ATMs in Veli Lošinj as needed. Students can also order Euros from their bank prior to program.



Electricity

The electrical voltage in Croatia is 230 (the U.S. uses 120). Check all electrical devices to see if a voltage converter is needed. Croatia uses plug type F (the U.S. uses A and B). All students should bring plug adaptors.



Internet

Wireless internet is available at the center, but it is slow and intermittent. SFS reserves the right to limit internet activities occurring on our servers including, but not limited to, streaming or downloading audio/video content (Facetime, Netflix, etc.).



Computers

Students need to bring laptops with Microsoft Office (or the ability to open Microsoft files offline) and a USB port. Electronic devices are subjected to a much harsher environment than normal. In particular, Apple products are more difficult to repair or replace locally. Please take precautions to protect your device.



Phones

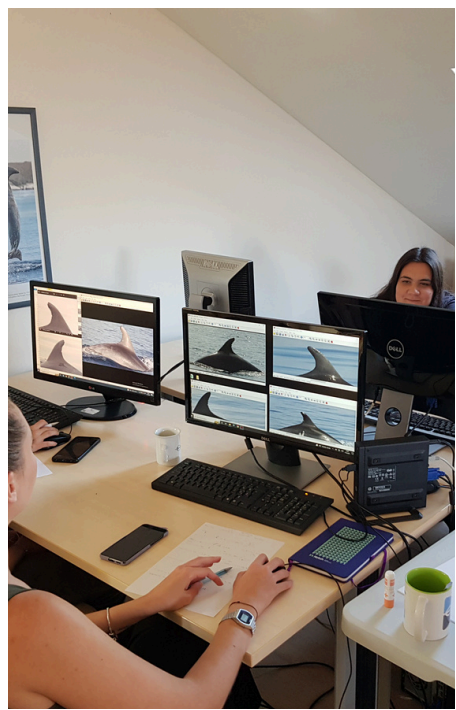
Students with unlocked phones can purchase local SIM cards for about \$6 USD per GB. Most students choose to rely solely on WIFI.



Mail

The average one-way travel time for mail from the U.S. to Croatia is 5-10 business days. Therefore, no mail can be sent during the last two weeks of programs, as students will not receive it! Mail will not be forwarded.

Address: Student Name, The School for Field Studies, Podjavori 27, 51551 Veli Lošinj, Croatia





Community Engagement

Students live at a field station, rather than a homestay, local apartment, or university dorm. This means they will not necessarily navigate the local culture, cuisine, or language every day. However, SFS believes that meaningful research is only possible with the input of local people, so community engagement varies each term to reflect the requests of our partners. Some examples of past community engagement projects at our centers include planting trees, working in community gardens, picking up trash, swim lessons, and outreach at schools.



Chores

Students are expected to take responsibility for their space during their stay. Students will help clean up after meals about once a week. Specific chore responsibilities and schedules will be shared during orientation.



Off-Campus Policies

Because center locations are often unfamiliar to students, there are off-campus policies in place to keep students safe including nightly curfew, sign-out logs, and a buddy system. Specific campus policies will be shared during orientation.



Time-off

Semester students will have a mid-semester break and weekends off.

Students are responsible for their own food and accommodations during the mid-semester break. Students are not allowed to stay at the center. See page 12 for estimated costs.



Alcohol & Substances

Consumption or possession of alcohol is prohibited on campus. Students who choose to consume alcohol, need to do so in moderation and maintain respectful behavior toward others.

Possession of marijuana and cannabis-infused products, including some cannabidiol (CBD) oils, is currently illegal under U.S. federal law. SFS does not allow possession or use of any medications or substances that are illegal in the U.S. or host country for the full duration of SFS programs including free time and weekends away. Students should discontinue the use of these products in anticipation of participating on SFS programs. Check local laws before possessing, purchasing, or using electronic cigarettes or vaping devices on program.



Sample Schedule

This is just a sample; no one week will follow this outline exactly. Students will receive program schedules after their arrival. Schedules are always subject to change based on weather, event availability, and other factors outside of SFS' control, including the day of, so students should arrive with a flexible mindset. All events apart from Free Time are mandatory.

Semester students should expect to spend more time in the classroom at the start of the semester, followed by more time spent in the field collecting data and doing independent study during the Directed Research portion of the program.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Free time at the Center/In Town (Laundry, Homework, Relaxation).	7:30-8:40am Breakfast and Morning Meeting	7:30-8:40am Breakfast and Morning Meeting	7:30-8:40am Breakfast and Morning Meeting	7:30-8:40am Breakfast and Morning Meeting	7:30-8:40am Breakfast and Morning Meeting	7:30-8:40am Breakfast and Morning Meeting
11am-12pm Brunch	9am-12:30pm Rescue and Rehabilitation: Marine Animals - Documentary	9am-12:30pm Marine Conservation Planning - Lecture	10am-12pm Croatian Language and Culture - Field Trip	9am-12:30pm Marine Conservation Planning - Lecture		8:40am-12:30pm (Optional) Community Engagement
12-6pm Free time at the Center/In Town (Laundry, Homework, Relaxation).	12:30-1:30pm Lunch	12:30-1:30pm Lunch	12:30-1:30pm Lunch	12:30-1:30pm Lunch	9am-3pm Field Trip w/ Lunch in the Field 12-1pm Lunch	12:30-1:30pm Lunch
	2-4:15pm Rescue and Rehabilitation: Marine Animals - Discussion	2-5:30pm: Marine Megafauna Ecology Field Exercise	3:30pm-6pm (Optional) Community Engagement	2-5:30pm: Marine Megafauna Ecology Field Exercise		3-6pm Free time at the Center/ In Town
4:30-6pm Free time at the Center						
6-7pm Dinner	6-7pm Dinner	6-7pm Dinner	6-7pm Dinner	6-7pm Dinner	6-7pm Dinner	6-7pm Dinner
7-10pm Free time at the Center/In Town	7-10pm Free time at the Center/In Town	7-10pm Free time at the Center/In Town	7-10pm Free time at the Center/In Town	7-10pm Free time at the Center/In Town	7pm-12am Free time at the Center/In Town	7pm-12am Free time at the Center/In Town
10pm Curfew	10pm Curfew	10pm Curfew	10pm Curfew	10pm Curfew	12am Curfew	12am Curfew

- Meals and Announcements
- Free Time
- Community Engagement
- Classroom Time
- Field Work
- Curfew



Health & Safety in the Field



24-Hour Emergency Hotline

SFS maintains a 24-hour emergency hotline. To urgently contact a student in the field, call 978.219.5113.



Health & Wellness Manager

The Student Health & Wellness Manager is a full-time primary medical responder and student support personnel on campus. They are certified in Wilderness First Response, or an equivalent certification, and trained in sexual assault first response. They also counsel students on life abroad, conduct risk assessments, attend medical appointments, and help coordinate program logistics.



Orientation

Prior to departure, SFS requires attendance at a pre-departure orientation focused on essential aspects of the program. Students must also research the inherent risks associated with traveling abroad and cultural considerations themselves. Upon arrival to campus, students receive an additional orientation about the local community and culture, center operations, and relevant risks.



Medical Care

SFS maintains a detailed risk assessment and management plan outlining risks and response protocols, including nearby medical facilities and their treatment capabilities. These plans ensure staff are always aware of the best route for appropriate medical care.

If a medical care facility visit is needed, staff will accompany the student to the appointment. There may be times when medical care access is delayed. Students are responsible for all medical costs and all incidental expenses incurred by all parties involved including transportation, accommodations, etc. This may include costs related to COVID-19 quarantining. Some medical conditions may necessitate medical withdrawal from the program. Final decisions on medical withdrawal are made by SFS.



Mental Health Support

Adjusting to new routines, relationships, and environments while away from usual support systems can be challenging. Many students also struggle with the rigorous schedule that is inherent to SFS programs. The ways students manage stress, take care of themselves, or find joy may not be available while they are abroad. There is decreased communication with home, limited privacy and alone time, and infrequent or modified opportunities for exercise.

SFS is partnered with Telus Health to provide students with access to free, mental health and wellness support by chat, phone, and video via WIFI. Students should download My Student Support Program (My SSP) in the app store or on the [My SSP website](#). My SSP is a supplemental resource, and students should work with their mental health provider to create a primary support plan. Students with regular counseling should verify that their mental health provider is available while they are abroad.



Identity

Each country is shaped by its history, and therefore attitudes towards gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and religion can differ greatly. What seems like discrimination may simply be curiosity. Additionally, most students expect differences between themselves and their host country but don't realize the most significant differences may be between themselves and their student group. Students should research how their identity might be perceived in a new context, in specific local political and societal issues, racial, ethnic, and religious composition, [LGBTQIA+ climate](#), and cultural norms and laws.

It is a privilege to study in another country and be welcomed into their community. It is not our students' place to change its culture or values. While students are learning about the country and its people, they will be ambassadors of their own country and culture. SFS campuses are permanent fixtures, and these communities are home to staff year-round. Behavior that is disrespectful, illegal, or contrary to cultural norms can degrade the relationship with the community and impede meaningful interactions.



Sexual Health & Wellness

When it comes to sexual health and wellness during the program, please consider:

- The ramifications that a short-term relationship may have on a small residential campus or within the local community.
- Access to protection, medication for sexually transmitted infections, and emergency contraception may not be available.
- The current dialogue and understanding of consent in the U.S. does not always apply in other cultures.
- If anyone feels subjected to sexual harassment, they should walk away from the situation that makes them uncomfortable without concern for being culturally inappropriate. They can report harassment or assault to any staff member.
- In the case of a sexual assault, SFS will make every effort to support students. This includes access to medical care, the option to report to local law enforcement, and identifying additional support resources. Local laws, definitions, and legal implications often differ from those in the U.S. Different laws and limited availability of resources such as rape kits can be complicating factors in responding to a report of sexual harassment or sexual assault in foreign countries.



LGBTQIA+

SFS is welcoming of all students at our centers. However, when traveling throughout the country, please be aware of the following:

- Laws and social customs may differ from one's home country, and countries that criminalize same-sex partnerships may also use the law to criminalize gender identities or expressions.
- Cultural practices may not support freedom of expression and travelers may experience discrimination and harassment.
- Some cultural practices are based on traditional gender roles and expressions. As a result, those who do not identify as they physically present may sometimes be misgendered or mispronounced.
- Some languages are gendered, resulting in a lack of terms that encompass non-binary and gender-neutral identities.
- Health services specific to transgender people may be limited or unavailable. Students may also be denied services in their affirmed gender while they are traveling abroad.
- It is not always possible to use preferred names or gender (visa paperwork, plane tickets, hotel reservations, and government sites). Gender X is not recognized worldwide, and students may need to provide binary sex information.



**PREPARING FOR
DEPARTURE**



Program Costs

The relationship SFS has with students' schools will determine the billing process. Within a week of acceptance, students or their schools will be required to pay a non-refundable deposit to reserve the spot. Afterward, we will reach out to students or their schools to collect tuition payments. Up-to-date costs and refund policies can be found [here](#).

Included in SFS program costs are program advising and orientations, tuition and research fees, airport transfers, housing, meals during program time, field excursions and cultural activities, emergency evacuation and 24/7 support, and official transcript processing.

PROGRAM	BILLING DEADLINE
Spring	November 1st
Summer 1 or 1+2	April 1st
Summer 2	May 1st
Fall	June 1st

BASIC COSTS (BILLED BY SFS)

SEMESTER

Tuition	\$22,250
Room & Board	\$7,250
BASIC PROGRAM COST	\$29,500

ADDITIONAL COSTS (ESTIMATED, ACTUAL COSTS MAY VARY)

Airfare	\$1,000
Passport	\$200
Visa fees (if applicable)	\$100
Immunizations/Medications	\$800
Personal Expenses	\$1,000
Program Breaks	\$1,000
ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL PROGRAM COSTS	\$4,100

TOTAL PROGRAM COSTS (BASIC + ADDITIONAL COSTS)

ESTIMATED TOTAL PROGRAM COST	\$33,600
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Financial Aid

All students are encouraged to apply for SFS financial aid. Financial aid applications are reviewed on a rolling basis starting in February for summer programs, April for fall programs, and September for spring programs. Early submissions are welcomed. Students who submit an SFS financial aid application by the payment deadline will be considered for our full range of aid options. Learn more [here](#).



TRAVEL



PASSPORT

Students must have a passport in hand four months prior to departure that is valid for at least 3 months after departure.



VISA

U.S. citizens do not need a visa for travel to Croatia under 90 days. Students' visa waivers will be supplemented with a Temporary Residence Permit to cover students for the remainder of their program. Upon arrival, staff will assist students with applying for Temporary Residence Permits and pay their associated costs. Students need to leave at least 30 days of their visa waiver to process their Temporary Residence Permits.

U.S. citizens traveling before and/or after the program within Croatia or other Schengen countries can do so using up to 60 days of their 90-day tourist visa waiver.

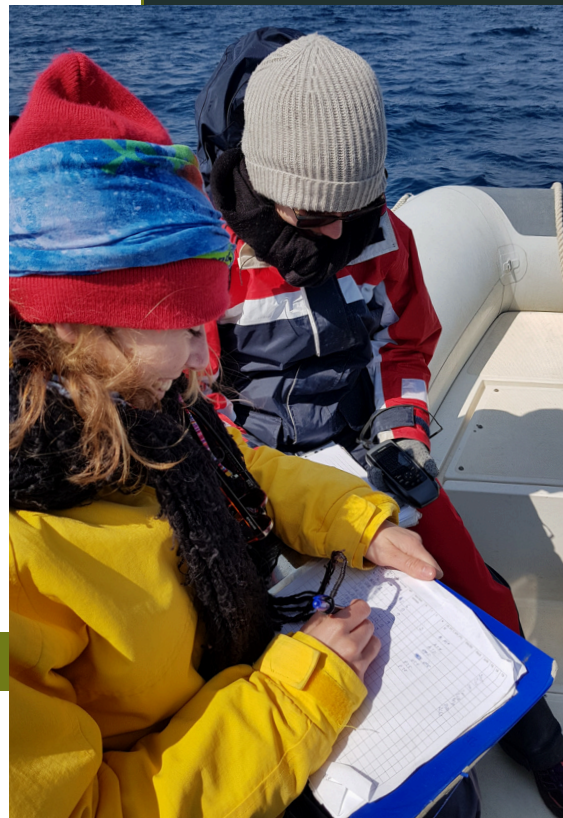
Non-U.S. citizens may require a different visa process and are responsible for applying for, obtaining, and paying for their own visa valid for the duration of their stay.

✈️ FLIGHTS

Students are responsible for the cost of flights to and from their program. Students will receive travel instructions at least 2 months prior to the start of their program. Do not book flights before receiving these instructions.

SFS staff will meet students at the airport on the date and time specified in the airport instructions and transport them to the center. Students will receive airport instructions 1-2 weeks prior to the start of their program. If students are traveling before or after the program, they are responsible for meeting the group at the airport at the designated date and time. Additionally, SFS is not responsible for transporting or storing luggage before or after the program.

SFS is not responsible for reimbursing travel expenses for programs canceled or rescheduled due to acts of war or civil unrest, strikes, weather, quarantine/epidemics/sickness, government regulations, or failure of equipment, power, or communications.





Medical Requirements



Medical Approval Process

Students are required to complete the SFS medical approval process using our HIPPA-compliant portal to inform SFS staff of their medical and mental health needs and accommodations. The review is not meant to exclude, but to inform and allow support systems to be put in place. No student may enter the field until medical approval is granted by SFS. [More information.](#)



Vaccinations & Medications

Required

- None

Recommended

- [Centers for Disease Control](#), travel clinics, or medical providers can provide further recommendations.



Insurance

Students are required to buy health insurance. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their coverage is valid in their program country(s) for the full duration of their program and covers basic medical care, including non-urgent illness or injury, laboratory tests, and pharmaceutical needs. SFS does not provide company recommendations. Keep in mind:

- Most domestic health insurance plans do not provide comprehensive coverage for out-of-country medical expenses.
- Schools may provide international health insurance or have their own insurance requirements for studying abroad.
- Most insurance companies provide coverage on a reimbursable basis. Therefore, students need to bring an emergency credit card/debit card with at least \$3,000 USD to pay for medical expenses and then request reimbursement later on.

Emergency Evacuation and Repatriation Insurance

All students are automatically enrolled in an emergency evacuation and repatriation insurance plan through American International Group, Inc. (AIG) for the duration of their program only. This plan covers the cost of transportation, accommodations, and medical care associated with medically or politically necessary evacuations (e.g., life-saving support during air evacuation). It includes up to \$350,000 for emergency medical evacuation, \$100,000 for emergency security evacuation, and \$20,000 for repatriation of remains. The coverage provided does not cover basic medical care, laboratory tests, or pharmacy needs. Students on SFS programs are required to supply their own comprehensive health insurance as outlined above.



Accommodating Disabilities

SFS works with students, schools, and physicians to determine required accommodations and whether they can be safely and reasonably maintained on program. We strive to meet students' needs, but due to the remote nature of programs, there are varying levels of accessibility. Questions regarding physical and mental health accommodations or learning accommodations can be directed to the Office of Student Affairs and the Office of Academic Affairs respectively.



PACKING GUIDE



Packing Considerations

Luggage

SFS does not have a specific policy regarding how much or what type of luggage students bring, so pack according to your needs. Bring only what can be maneuvered oneself and check with all airlines for luggage restrictions and fees.

Culture & Climate

Many students bring old clothes to wear in the field and leave behind at the end of the program. Do not bring anything that cannot be damaged!

Travelers with type 3 or type 4 curls and/or hair that is damaged easily by chlorine, sun, and saltwater may want to consider packing extra products and practicing preventative care. Quality hair care products vary greatly by region, so it is recommended you bring your preferred products with you in a quantity that will last for your entire program. Some items you may consider are coconut oil, deep conditioner, leave-in conditioner, hair masks, clarifying shampoo, a microfiber towel, a swim cap, and/or wide headbands.

While packing, consider the impact of the products brought to the program, both the ingredients and packaging. Plastic can be difficult for waste management in remote environments. Think about bringing a reusable tote, metal straw, cloth napkins, etc. We also highly encourage biodegradable soaps, shampoos, and conditioners.





Required Packing

- **Pants** Lightweight blends that dry quickly. 2+ for field work and 2+ normal/flowy pants for day-to-day.
 - **Shorts** Runners may want a few pairs of athletic shorts.
 - **T-shirts and Tank tops** Non-cotton best
 - **Long-sleeved shirts** 4+ for fieldwork .Non-cotton best
 - **Casual/nice clothes** for town. Nothing you don't want ruined.
 - **Lightweight jacket or sweatshirt and sweatpants**
 - **Waterproof jacket with a hood or Poncho** Water resistant is not sufficient.
 - **Rain pants**
 - **Underwear and Socks** including light wool or synthetic (not cotton) hiking socks.
 - **Pajamas** appropriate for shared spaces.
 - **Sun hat and sunglasses** Hat should have brim, and it is recommended to use polarized sunglasses.
 - **Bandana, buff, or scarf**
 - **Waterproof shoes**
 - **Sneakers** or other casual shoes.
 - **Sandals** with heel straps.
 - **Flip flops** for showering and beaches.
- Sheets, towels, and a pillow will be provided at the center.
- **Toiletries** Basic items can be purchased in town but plan to bring enough for at least a week. Preferably biodegradable.

- **Masks and COVID tests** Bring enough masks to last the duration of the program and home rapid tests.
 - **Record of immunizations and Health history**
 - **Personal first-aid kit** including Anti-itch creams, Neosporin, Bacitracin, Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Pepto Bismol, Band-Aids, Tape, Tweezers, Nail clippers, Antihistamines, Pro-biotics, Antidiarrheals, Vitamin C, Cold medicines, Immune boosters, Hydration salts/Liquid IV, etc.
 - **Prescriptions** Note that overseas prescriptions are not always accepted. Bring adequate supplies of prescription medications to last the duration of your program alongside doctor's prescription to avoid customs delays. Think about inhalers, allergy medication, contacts/glasses, etc.
 - **Motion sickness medication/ Dramamine/ Ginger chews** if you experience motion sickness.
 - **Period care** You can purchase basic period products in town. We encourage you to use a menstrual cup or environmentally friendly, biodegradable options.
- **Flash drives and/or External hard drive** At least 1 GB recommended.
- **Computer** that can open Microsoft Office documents offline and has a USB port.
- **Surge protector and Plug adaptors**
- **Dry bag or Waterproof daypack cover** Consider several smaller dry bags or sturdy plastic bags. Gallon-sized Ziploc bags work well.
- **Day pack** Suitable for taking gear into the field. 15-30L recommended.
- **Notebooks and Pencils** Can buy locally.
- **Water bottles** 2 bottles with at least 1L capacity each. Can buy locally.
- **Sunscreen** 1+ bottles. Reef-safe.
- **Insect Repellant** 1+ bottles.





Optional Packing

- **University ID card**
- **Hiking boots** Over-the-ankle recommended.
- **Waterproof Hat**
- **Purse/tote bag** for town.
- **Small clothing repair kit**
- **Umbrella** Can purchase in town.
- **Pocketknife** Checked luggage only.
- **Hammock**
- **Tupperware and travel mugs** for packing snacks.
- **Waterproof notebook** DuraRite, 4x6 or 4x7.
- **Journal**
- **Games, Movies, and Books**
- **Swimsuit** 2-3 sets.
- **Beach towel** Can purchase in town.
- **Snorkel kit** Can purchase in town.
- **Swimmer's ear drops**

- **Hair oil and/or detangling conditioner**
- **Tiger balm, and/or Lotion/aloe vera**
- **Earplugs and Eye mask**
- **Baby wipes and Hand sanitizer** Can purchase in town.
- **Snacks, Drink powders, and Dietary supplements**
Any favorites.
- **Camera**
- **Headphones and/or Bluetooth speaker**
- **Waterproof cases for electronics and silicone packets** (or some water-absorbing equivalent).
- **Binoculars** Preferably 8 x 40 but anything in the 6 x 30 to 10 x 40 range is fine.
- **Extra batteries and External battery packs**
- **Wristwatch** Waterproof
- **Headlamp or Flashlight**



Contact Us

Keep up with SFS Follow us on Instagram [@theSFS](#), read [news from the field](#), and find the [full list of the SFS team bios here!](#)

Questions about billing? Billing@fieldstudies.org

Deposit payments, invoices, billing deadlines, financial aid packages, and loan paperwork.

Questions about health and safety? StudentLife@fieldstudies.org

Medical paperwork, Immunizations, managing medical conditions on program, and dietary needs and preferences.

Questions about academics? Academics@fieldstudies.org

Learning accommodations, syllabi, and directed research.

Questions about admissions or enrollment? Admissions@fieldstudies.org

Which program is the best fit, application materials, and travel and visa logistics.