



PANAMA FIELD GUIDE



Table of Contents

LIFE IN THE
FIELD **3**

HEALTH &
SAFETY **9**

PROGRAM
COSTS **12**

MEDICAL
REQUIREMENTS **14**

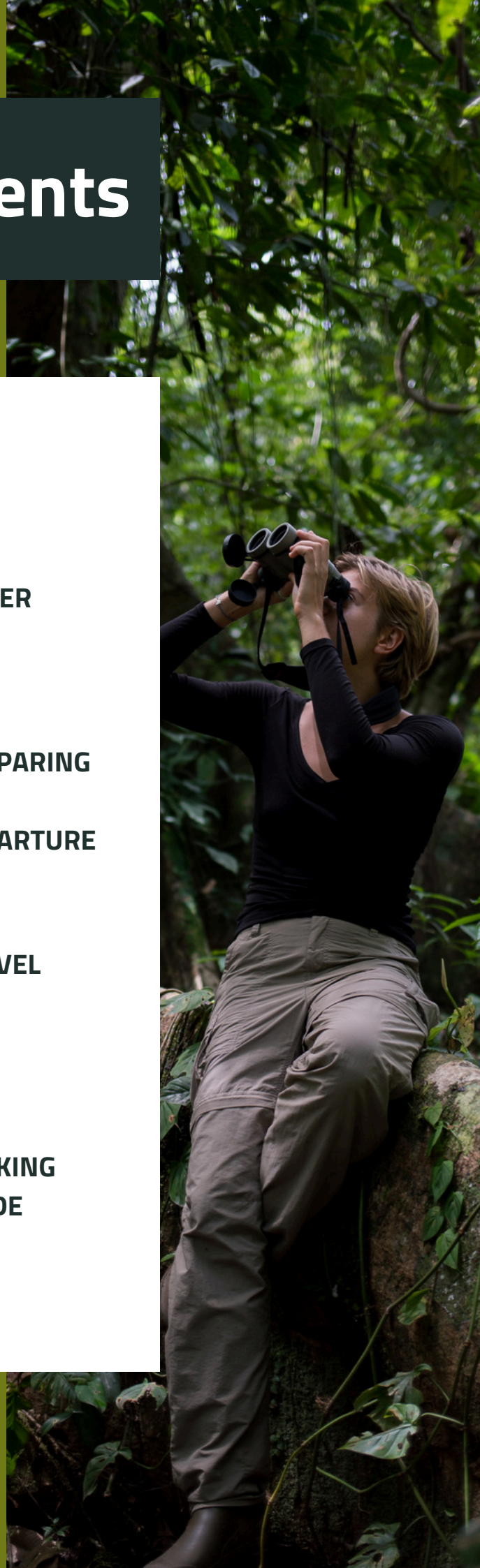
CONTACT US **18**

4 THE
CENTER

11 PREPARING
FOR
DEPARTURE

13 TRAVEL

15 PACKING
GUIDE

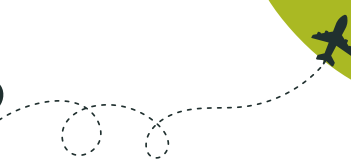




LIFE IN THE FIELD



The Center



Academic Foci

- The center is located in a Caribbean archipelago covered in mangrove forests and coral reefs.
- Panama connects North America and Central America to South America. This creates an astounding density of species and ecosystem richness that few places in the world can compete with.
- Climate change and increased tourism on the islands have led to ecosystem and natural resource degradation which in turn is threatening islanders' traditional livelihoods.
- Panama is home to sloths, dolphins, poison dart frogs, hummingbirds, howler monkeys, stingrays, and much more!

SEMESTER: TROPICAL ISLAND BIODIVERSITY STUDIES

Rainforest and marine ecology. Marine protected areas. Indigenous tourism and sustainability. Tourism impacts on ecosystems and human populations. Conservation and natural resource management. Ecosystem health assessments.

SUMMER 1: TROPICAL ISLAND ECOSYSTEMS: THE HUMAN IMPACT

Rainforest and marine ecology. Marine protected areas. Indigenous tourism and sustainability. Tourism impacts on ecosystems and human populations. Conservation and natural resource management. Ecosystem health assessments.

Each 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 former hotel in the tourist hotspot of Bocas del Toro. **RURAL** ←————→ **URBAN**

BOCAS TOWN

10-minute drive

Population ~13,000

Nearest town. Hotels, restaurants, bars, markets, a bank and ATMs.

PANAMA CITY

1-hour flight

Population ~1,940,000

Capital city. International airport and advanced medical care. The Panama Canal.

HOUSING

Six rooms, 3-5 people per room in twin bunk beds. Shared closet and storage cubbies. Each room has AC and fan.

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

OTHER FACILITIES

Student lounge with TV and games.

Lab and library space, outdoor student kitchen, open-air classroom, kitchen and dining room, and pool.

Laundry washed by staff once per week (detergent provided). A sink is available for students wanting to wash delicates or handwash their clothes more frequently.



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. Students are expected to provide their own meals on Sundays.

Meals may consist of rice, beans, vegetables, plantains, and fresh fruit. Snacks may include tea, coffee and fruit.



Exercise

At the center, there are dumbbells, yoga mats, and jump ropes. In town, there are two paid gyms.



Money

The local currency is the Panamanian Balboa (PAB) and the U.S. Dollar (USD).

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. Notify banks about international travel.

Students should bring at least \$500 USD (bills no larger than \$20 USD) with them to start (see page 12). \$160 USD of this will be used as a room/medical deposit and will be returned in full at the end of the program if there are no damages or medical visits. It is beneficial to have \$50-100 USD of this in \$1 and \$5 USD bills. Students will have access to ATMs in Bocas, but cards must have a PIN less than 4 numbers to withdraw money. ATMs on the island are frequently closed or out of money. In general, expect slightly higher costs in Panama than in the U.S.



Climate

Students will be exposed to high heat and humidity and mud and mold. "Dry" season runs January - May and August - November. Despite it being the "dry" season, rain is still extremely common.

Rainy season runs May - August and November - January. Multi-day torrential downpours are common.

Temperatures in Bocas Town range from 75-85°F with high humidity. Hurricanes are not common in the area.



Considerations

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

Culture and Diversity: 72% of the population identifies as Mixed, 12% Indigenous, 9% Black, and 7% White. 91% are Catholic. Racial features used as nicknames (Gringo, Negro, etc.) Spanish is a gendered Language, and catcalling is common.

Physical Rigor: Students will need to walk/stand for up to 3 hours at a time and be able to swim and snorkel in the open ocean.

Hazards: Snakes, spiders, scorpions, insects, bats, monkeys, jellyfish, sharks, heat and humidity, etc.

Travel: Students will frequently travel short distances by boat. No field sites are located outside of Bocas del Toro province.



Electricity

The electrical voltage in Panama is 110 (the U.S. uses 120). Students will not need a voltage converter. Panama uses plug type A (the U.S. uses A and B). All students should bring B to A plug adaptors.

There are frequent power outages. During that time, there will be no internet, hot water, air-conditioning, charging, etc.



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 do not fare well in high humidity and are more difficult to repair or replace locally. Please take precautions to protect devices.



Phones

Students are provided with local phones and/or local sim cards. Students are responsible for maintaining credit on their phone to communicate with staff and peers. Unlimited plans cost approximately ~ \$20 USD per month or students can pay for credit as needed.



Mail

No mail is permitted to be sent directly to the center. Students can choose to register with Bocas Island Express and receive mail for ~\$5 USD / lb. The average one-way travel time for mail from Miami to Panama is 3-4 business days. Therefore, no mail can be sent during the last week of programs, as students will not receive it! Mail will not be forwarded.





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 7-9 day mid-semester break and two weekends away. Summer students will have 1 weekend off to travel independently. Students are responsible for their own food and accommodations during non-program time. Students are not allowed to stay at the center during the mid-semester break. See page 12 for estimated costs.



Alcohol & Substances

Consumption or possession of alcohol is limited 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	
	8-8:30am Breakfast	8-8:30am Breakfast	8-8:30am Breakfast & Pack Lunch	8-8:30am Breakfast	8-8:30am Breakfast & Pack Lunch	8-8:30am Breakfast	
<p>Free time at the Center/ In Town (Homework, Exploring, Surfing, Diving, Hiking, Relaxation)</p> <p>At the center, students will prepare food for themselves during days off.</p>	9am-12pm Tropical Coastal Ecology- Field Work	9-10:15am Environmental Governance, Development, & Conservation - Lecture 10:30am-12:15pm Tropical Coastal Ecology - Project Proposal Writing	8:30am-6pm Field Trip w/ Lunch in the Field Field trips can be any day of the week and occasionally last multiple days.	9-10:15am Tropical Coastal Ecology - Lecture 10:30am-12:15pm Tropical Coastal Ecology - Project	9-10:15am Environmental Governance, Development, & Conservation - Lecture	9am-12pm Optional Community Engagement	
	12:30-1pm Lunch	12:30-1pm Lunch		12:30-1pm Lunch	10:30am-6pm Field Trip w/ Lunch in the Field		12:30-1pm Lunch
	1:30-3:30pm Forest Ecology & Resource Management - Lecture	1-2:30pm Free time at the Center 2:30-4:15pm Forest Ecology & Resource Management - Lecture	1-4:45pm Environmental Governance, Development, & Conservation - Guest Lecture	5-6pm Community Engagement	Field trips can be any day of the week and occasionally last multiple days.	1-6pm Free time at the Center/ In Town	
	4-5pm Cultural Competence in Conservation - Evaluation	4:30-6pm Forest Ecology & Resource Management - Documentary					
	6-6:30pm Dinner	6-6:30pm Dinner	6-6:30pm Dinner	6-6:30pm Dinner	6-6:30pm Dinner	6-6:30pm Dinner	6-6:30pm Dinner
	6:30-11pm Free time at the Center/ In Town	6:30-11pm Free time at the Center/ In Town	6:30-11pm Free time at the Center/ In Town	7-8:30pm Game night!	6:30pm-12am Free time at the Center/ In Town	6:30pm-1am Free time at the Center/ In Town	
	11pm Curfew	11pm Curfew	11pm Curfew	11pm Curfew	11pm Curfew	12am Curfew	1am 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	SUMMER 1
Tuition	\$22,000	\$5,400
Room & Board	\$5,000	\$1,650
BASIC PROGRAM COST	\$27,000	\$7,050
ADDITIONAL COSTS (ESTIMATED, ACTUAL COSTS MAY VARY)		
Airfare	\$700	\$700
Passport	\$200	\$200
Visa fees (if applicable)	N/A	N/A
Immunizations/Medications	\$800	\$800
Personal Expenses	\$2,500	\$1,400
Program Breaks	\$1,000	\$300
ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL PROGRAM COSTS	\$5,200	\$3,400
TOTAL PROGRAM COSTS (BASIC + ADDITIONAL COSTS)		
ESTIMATED TOTAL PROGRAM COST	\$32,200	\$10,450



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](#).



PASSPORT

Students must have a passport in hand four months prior to departure that is valid for at least 3 months after arrival or the entire length of stay in Panama, whichever is longer.



VISA

Students will enter Panama using a tourist visa. Students' Panamanian visas will be granted upon arrival to Panama and last for 180 days. Nothing needs to be done for the visa pre-arrival. Tourist visas are currently free to obtain, but visa costs are the responsibility of students, and prices are subject to change.

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.

If traveling before or after the program, make sure that the visa will remain valid for the entire stay.



FLIGHTS

Students are responsible for the cost of flights to and from the 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 will book and pay for flights between Bocas del Toro and Panama City. Students who will be traveling post-program need to let staff know.

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 personal needs. Bring only what can be maneuvered oneself and check with all airlines for luggage restrictions and fees. Air Panama limits each person to 50 lbs per person; most students choose to pay the correlated fees for excess baggage.



Culture & Climate

Many students bring old clothes to wear in the field and leave behind at the end of the program. Additionally, all laundry is washed together, rather than separated by color, which leads to occasional staining. Do not bring anything that cannot be damaged!

Travelers with curls or hair that is damaged easily might consider packing extra products and practicing preventative care. Hair care products vary by region, so we recommended bringing preferred products in a quantity that will last for the entire program. Some items to consider are coconut oil, deep conditioner, leave-in conditioner, hair masks, clarifying shampoo, microfiber towel, swim cap, and 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. 1-2+ for field work and 1-2+ normal/flowy pants for day-to-day.
- **Shorts** Runners may want a few pairs of athletic shorts.
- **T-shirts and Tank tops** Enough for 10 days.
- **Long-sleeved shirts** 2+ for field work. A mix of synthetic fabrics and cotton.
- **Casual/nice clothes** for town. Nothing that cannot be ruined.
- **Lightweight jacket or sweatshirt and sweatpants** for chilly days
- **Waterproof jacket with a hood or Poncho** Water resistant is not sufficient.
- **Underwear and Socks** including light wool or synthetic (not cotton) hiking socks and some knee-high socks for use with rainboots. Enough for 2 weeks.
- **Pajamas** appropriate for shared spaces.
- **Swimsuit** 3-4 sets. If applicable, at least one one-piece.
- **Sun hat and sunglasses** Hat should have brim, and it is recommended to use polarized sunglasses.
- **Bandana, buff, or scarf**
- **Sneakers** or other casual shoes.
- **Rain boots** The center has several pairs of rain boots for student use, but students with especially large or small feet should bring their own. Lightweight, shin-high boots with good tread are best.
- **Sandals** with heel straps.
- **Flip flops** for showering.

- Sheets and a pillow will be provided at the center.
- **Towels** 1 large shower towel, 1 face/hand towel, and 1 beach towel. Quick dry towels are best!
- **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** Overseas prescriptions are not always accepted. Bring adequate supplies of prescription medications to last the duration of the program alongside doctors' prescriptions to avoid customs delays. Think about inhalers, allergy medication, contacts/glasses, etc.
- **Motion sickness medication/ Dramamine/ Ginger chews**
- **Period care** Students can purchase basic period products in town. We encourage menstrual cups or environmentally friendly, biodegradable options.

- **Flash drives and/or External hard drive** At least 16 GB recommended.
- **Computer** that can open Microsoft Office documents offline and has a USB port.
- **Surge protector and Plug adaptors**
- **Wristwatch** Waterproof for snorkeling.
- **Headlamp or Flashlight** Rechargeable recommended.
- **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.
- **Sunscreen** 1+ bottles. Reef-safe.
- **Insect Repellant** 1+ bottles.
- **University ID card**
- **Dive Mask and Extra strap** Check for good fit and solid strap construction. Full-face masks and masks with prescription lenses are not recommended (use disposable contacts instead). ScubaPro, TUSA, Cressi, Mares, and Aqualung are reputable companies.
- **Snorkel** Full-sized adult snorkel.
- **Diving Booties or Wading/diving shoes** Hard or soft soled. Make sure they fit your fins.
- **Full sized Fins and Replacement straps and clips** that fit over your diving booties. Do not opt for "travel size."
- **Long-sleeved rash guard** 2+ to be used for all snorkel excursions.



Optional Packing

- **Hiking boots** Over-the-ankle recommended.
- **Rain pants**
- **Purse/tote bag** for town.
- **Small clothing repair kit**
- **Laundry bag**
- **Umbrella** can buy locally
- **Neoprene mask strap cover**
- **Additional swimwear** such as swim leggings, wetsuits, or dive skins (2-3mm).
- **Mosquito net** if traveling pre- or post-program.
- **Pocketknife** Checked luggage only.
- **Hammock**
- **Tupperware and travel mugs** for packing snacks.
- **Waterproof notebook** DuraRite, 4x6 or 4x7.
- **Journal**
- **Games, Movies, Books, and Crafts**
- **Snacks, Drink powders, and Dietary supplements**
Any favorites.

- **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.
- **Camera**
- **Headphones and/or Bluetooth speaker** Noise canceling recommended.
- **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**
- **Underwater camera** Students can borrow SFS equipment, but any damages are students' responsibility to pay for.



Contact Us

Keep up with SFS Follow us on Instagram [@theSFS/@theSFS_panama](#), 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.