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Bali Packing Blog

What to Plan For

The Balinese philosophy of life revolves around one's relationship with nature, people, and spirituality. Having the chance to learn and live by this philosophy while engaging in meaningful service was life changing. I feel fortunate to have experienced a side of Bali that tourists rarely get to see.

When thinking about packing, it is crucial to adhere to the [Packing List](#) that staff and past students have thoughtfully compiled. Read on for additional tips, tricks, and suggestions!

Why roll when you can walk?

I'm a backpacker: I can't fathom the idea of having to lift a suitcase up and down stairs or roll it over cracked pavement. A backpacking backpack/duffle and day pack are best way to go! You'll be amazed at how well a backpack distributes the weight and how easy it is to carry your belongings this way vs. pulling a suitcase, especially in Bali where there are stairs, cobble stones, pot holes and sand to maneuver through as we move among our three Home Bases.

If by the end of the program you find that you have shopped too much and need additional storage space (very likely), you can always buy a



small suitcase or bag to carry onboard with you. Or, if you like to plan ahead, pack an empty duffel or tote.

“Even with crutches... a backpack is easier to travel with than a suitcase, but fingers crossed, you don’t need to bring crutches back with you like I did!”

When packing your bag, keep it simple. You definitely won’t need a blow dryer! Blow dryers and hair straighteners actually won't work as the power source in Bali isn't strong enough to maintain the flow of energy needed for them to work properly. You'll end up putting the entire Home Base in darkness and without fans, which you can imagine can be uncomfortable in the heat and humidity! Leave your laptops and trendy outfits at home too-- it's not the time or place for them. Most days you will be getting sweaty, dirty, wet, or all of the above. I'd even go as far as suggest you pack clothing that you don't mind leaving behind! The same goes for toiletries: You will not need full size bottles of everything, and can probably get by with 3oz travel size bottles. At the end of the program you can throw out ruined clothing and donate the rest, meaning extra space in your bag for souvenirs!



Be sure to check with your airline in regard to baggage allowances and weight limitations. Most airlines will allow one carry-on bag, one personal item, and one checked bag weighing 50 lbs or less on international flights. However, please [verify this with your airline](#) before you get started, or you could be facing an extra charge at check in. Remember, in Bali we have three Home Bases. The one in Ubud has a bit of a walk involved between the road where you are dropped off with your baggage and the entry of the courtyard. The walk involves potholes, dirt and puddles. Then in Singaraja there are stairs up to the rooms and in Amed there are steep stairs (ladder like), sand and cobblestone paths to get to your beach bungalow! Go with the backpack... you'll be the envy of every student who is struggling to roll their suitcase.

Amed Beach Bungalows featured

Carry On / Day Pack: You'll want to keep your essentials near and dear! While we've had good luck in the past with luggage arriving as expected, luggage delays do happen. Be sure that you put the following in your carry on:

- GLA Contact Card
- Passport
- Wallet
- Flight Itinerary



- Phone & Charger
- Camera
- Water Bottle
- Prescriptions or other crucial medications
- PEN! You will need this when filling out your entrance forms on the plane

Imagine the worst-case scenario: Your checked bag doesn't arrive in Bali with you, and is never to be seen again. What items would you absolutely want to have with you? The answer will be different for each of us, but here are the items I wouldn't want to be caught without:



- Full change of clothes
- Swimsuit
- Medications
- Toiletries (travel size--you can see [TSA guidelines here](#))

Checked Bag: This will hold the bulk of your belongings. Clothes, any full-sized liquids (like shampoo, conditioner, etc), rain gear, water bottles, snacks, etc. As far as what type of clothing is appropriate for your program, again, the Travel Portal is going to be your best resource. You can also take a look at the [2016 Blogs](#) to get a good feel for the types of clothing that might be best. Please note that for the most part, tank tops and shorts are not encouraged--as a group, we'll want to dress in line with local customs in order to be more welcomed into the community.

If this packing configuration doesn't work for you, feel free to make substitutions. It's all about what you're comfortable traveling with. Just remember to bring only what you can maneuver yourself, and take into consideration that you will likely be bringing home souvenirs.

Other Tips:

Bali Belly: This is another term for "getting used to the local cuisine". It doesn't mean you're sick or that the food has been prepared improperly; it just means your body is adjusting to new foods and naturally-occurring bacteria. Having the following items on hand will help you get through this comfortably should you experience it:

- Imodium
- Electrolyte Tablets (e.g. [Nuun](#))

The Imodium is going to make you feel confident and comfortable with going about your day normally, without feeling like you need to be within reach of a restroom at all times. The electrolyte tablets will replace any fluids you lose through diarrhea or vomiting (for any reason, not just Bali Belly), and they're also excellent for boosting energy when dehydrated.



Two refillable water bottles: This is a GLA must. We will provide all of your drinking water, but you will need bottles to fill up. Two minimum!

Water-enhancing Powders (coffee, tea, flavoring packets, etc): To me, Emergen-C is an essential item to pack. You'll be doing a lot in a short amount of time and some additional nutrients to supplement your diet will go along way. Take one before the flight, one during the flight and one after the flight also. It helps keep airborne illnesses at bay!



Cash - You can use local ATMs with the help of your Mentors to withdraw the Indonesian Rupiah. You're going to feel like a millionaire! Don't forget to call your bank and let them know you're heading out of town!

For the Ladies: Pack a rashguard! The waves can be strong and bikinis only involve so much fabric. Pack a rashguard, there will be less risk of accidentally flashing someone when you're snorkeling or surfing!

Water Shoes: You'll definitely want these on this program! The beaches have rocks and coral and your delicate feet should be protected if you want to enjoy your time in Bali and not nurse cuts and blisters. You'll use them in Lovina, Pemuteran, Amed and white water rafting. Trust me on this one, pack them! [Chacos](#), Keens, other sturdy water-friendly sandal, or good old-fashioned [water socks](#) will all work perfectly.

Bugs & Creepy Crawlies: You're not going to need tropical strength deet in this part of the world but you will want bug spray, and lots of it. Mosquitoes bite at dawn and dusk and being prepared is the best way to protect yourself against mosquito-borne illnesses! I personally like to use natural products, and recommend DoTerra's TerraShield. It is a blend of different essential oils that repel bugs. I added it to a scented moisturiser that I used daily as well as making my own bug spray to use throughout the day. [Check out this recipe!](#) It actually smells pleasant and works! If you'd rather not DIY, just buy some bug repellent that you're familiar with.



Words of Advice: Don't sweat the small stuff! Just follow the packing list and try to bring only the necessities. Bali is perhaps the best place to practice living simply, to reevaluate what you actually need, and see how much you can actually do without.

