



Generic packing ideas and advice

Bridges to Prosperity

Updated October, 2008

(this list changes by country)	Comments
Cash and Debit Cards	You will be in countries that deal in cash, not credit. Assume that you will not be able to use your credit card at all. To avoid bringing lots of cash, bring a debit card. This can be used in most large cities to get cash. Using credit cards to get cash from teller machines will not work. DEBIT CARDS ONLY! We typically suggest that you come into the country with \$300-\$400 US dollars in your pocket, and when this is exhausted, use your debit card as needed. You should probably exchange at least \$100 at the airport upon arrival.
Beef or Turkey Jerky Harvest bars/energy bars	A terrific way to insure that you have the salt & protein needed. Also, extremely light weight. You will not be able to buy this in-country, so bring it with you.
Very salty snacks	Provides back-up salt and fat.
Bug spray	+30-100% DEET in pump spray – no aerosol cans can go on plane. Also, slow release DEET creams are great.
Thermarest pad	Get the thickest one on market or equivalent – this is your bed ...make it comfortable! Use high density blue foam pad for base, and then put Thermarest on top.
Sleeping bag & pillow case (fill with clothes to act as pillow). Also cotton sleeping liner for sleeping bag.	Light weight, for warm weather. Get lower temperature rated bags for cold climate. Error on cold side. If you are going somewhere the lows are 32degrees F, or 0 C, then consider bringing bag rated for 20 degrees F. Then, take light cover sheets (or cotton cloth liner) if it is too hot to sleep inside bag. REI sells cotton liners, or you can make one by sewing a normal sheet together at sides and end.
Family photos	You will want to bring your family photos. This is always the best way to get a conversation going, and to make fast friends. Try not to bring photos of material things, such as your house, boat, car, etc. Do bring photos of the beauty of your city and country. Per and animal photos are a big hit with children. If you are a horse person, bring those photos, of them or you riding, etc.
Camp Hygiene	One of the hardest things to do. Keep yourself, your teeth, your skin, your tent, your clothes, and everything else you have clean. Never leave your tent unzipped. Sweep off your tent porch tarp daily. Don't allow insect bites to accumulate.
Large packaged sanitary towels (like the airlines use but 5 times the size)	These allow conservation of bottled drinking water, and gives you a way to sanitize quickly. <u>These are the most highly treasured items on every trip we have been on.</u>
Water free hand soap	The kind that you can use without water.
Large sun hat.	Find out what the native do. If they use umbrellas, there is a reason!
Walkie- talkies – 1 or 2 multi-channel with belt strap	This can allow communication across the river to others working on bridge. Don't forget extra batteries.
Mosquito netting to cover with when sleeping or at work.	Buy at army surplus. We have never used these, but in jungle areas, I am sure we would.
Flashlight + one set extra batteries	If weight problem, buy battery in-country. Also, the Russian flashlights with built-in generators are good. Best flashlight to bring are hands free headlamps.
All your favorite medicine	Don't buy anything in liquid form if you can. ...pills,

<p>cabinet supplies, such as and including Tylenol, IBP, Lotrimin, Cortisone cream, eardrops, stool softener, anti-diarrheal, skin and hand creams, Dr. Scholls foot moleskin, tons of tablet form Pepto Bismal, Roloids, soar throat, Zantac, Blistex, Afrin, cold medicine, saline for dry eyes, dental floss picks, Orabase-B for interior mouth, cough med, allergy, Benedryl, 30 sun block, any personal prescription medicines, salt tablets for dehydration (see Gatorade discussion), sleeping pills, First aid kit, etc</p>	<p>cream, or small plastic bottles are best. Sleeping pills are great for camping for those that are not used to it.</p> <p>First aid kit is crucial. You will need it to patch up others. There are lots of open sores in the third world. This will break your heart. If you are the type that must help out as much as you can on medical conditions, then do some research on common ailments before you go. This requires contacting local doctors, such a Doctors without borders. Some of their volunteers might suggest some things to add to your first aid kit. http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/</p> <p>Also CDC has good drug packing list for travelers, as well as a packing list of what to take. http://www.cdc.gov/travel/destinat.htm</p>
<p>Malaria pills</p>	<p>A very complicated subject. Start with CDC site. http://www.cdc.gov/travel/destinat.htm</p> <p>There is no vaccine yet. Only drug regimens. There are four possible regimens. Print the below web page and take entire document to you doctor to discuss options if you are going to a malaria country. Each county has different regimens: http://www.traveldoctor.co.uk/malaria.htm</p>
<p>Cipro antibiotic for intestinal problems and Amoxicillin for other infections.</p>	<p>Cipro is the B2P Founders number one packing item. There is nothing worse than camping and being sick. Cipro will wipe out most symptoms in 24-36 hours. Without it, symptoms can go on for a week or more. Got Montezuma's revenge? Got food or water poisoning? Cipro is the ticket. You may be over two days away from the closest medical clinic, so bring these two antibiotics to handle emergencies. You must get prescription & advice from your personal physician. Just explain that where you are going, there will be no drug stores, and that you want Amoxicillin to act as a backstop against infection of an large open wound until you can reach a clinic. There are several ways to use Cipro. Get all the scoop from your travel doctor.</p>
<p>Passport</p>	<p>Keep photo copy in separate location other than passport. Also, leave copy of passport at home. This makes later replacement much easier.</p>
<p>Entry VISA</p>	<p>See B2P Website for State Department link</p>
<p>International certificate of Vaccination</p>	<p>Some countries still require this Yellow fever certification.</p>
<p>Vaccinations</p>	<p>Some of these need to be taken almost 2 months prior to departure – Full slate can run \$250 including Hepatitis A & B, Meningococcal, Typhoid, Rabies, etc</p>
<p>International Drivers license</p>	<p>Get at AAA if you are going to drive or rent vehicle. ³/₄ of countries in the world are signatory of bi-lateral treaty that allows for IDP use. Your IDP is not valid unless accompanied by your state or country driver's license. http://www.aaa.com/vacation/idpf.html</p>
<p>Digital Camera</p>	<p>Bring extra batteries. Bring converter if you need to charge. Remember, no electric power at bridge sites. So, charging opportunities will be rare. Digital cameras</p>

	<p>are prime target for theft. Bring disposable camera as back-up. Want to give the greatest gift for the friends you make there? Take a Polaroid and a bunch of film. Take pictures of their families, and with you. Don't forget to take pictures of yourself with your new friends. We will need this for our website.</p>
Zip lock bags	<p>Can't bring too many of these. They are great to compartmentalize food & your things in your bag and tent. Recommend 30 each for 30 day stint.</p>
Pens and paper for notes.	<p>Also, small digital recorders are good for journals. If you are going to a wet country, then find "write in the rain tablets"</p>
Leather gloves, favorites light weight tools	<p>For tools ideas, look at bridge construction sequence photos. The top candidates? Vise grips, knife, poly rope, camp saw, construction string, tape measure in meters, and duct tape! Think of tools and materials you cannot buy in-country easily.</p> <p>Keeping your hands in good health is extremely important, especially given that most volunteers are desk jockeys, and hence have few calluses. Working with cement and stone on our bridge sites, is the primary activity. Cement dries hands, and causes cracking. Take at least 5 pair of high quality leather gloves, that will work in cold or hot weather. Also, take bag balm to treat your hands at night: http://www.bagbalm.com/</p>
Good quality light weight tent, and tarp for the entrance to your tent.	<p>Stay dry! The best kind is the one with an open mosquito net top with waterproof fly that allows for great circulation. Don't recommend other that have less than 30% ventilation netting on sides and top.....they can be too hot. Tents that require no staking to set up are better. A tent with a built in waterproof floor is essential. For very wet climates, large tarps are needed to suspend above entire tent area. Our favorite tent is one that has a fly that also acts as you outside covered veranda. Then we add a tarp in front of the tent to allow for a place to take off shoes and store supplies.</p>
Clothes: (some pack much lighter than this):	<p>General advice: Use the multi-layered approach for the potential 40-50 degree swings in temperature. Bring things that stay dry, or dry quickly. 3 pair long light pants (nylon self dry are good), 2 pair shorts, or 4 long pants with zip off legs, 1 belt, 4 tee shirts, 3 long-sleeve shirts, one set of clean clothes for return airline flight, gortex rain jacket, light weight hiking shoes, 6 pair of socks including one pair for hiking that has the sliding interior layer, water shoes or sandals for around camp and bathing in river, underwear that don't chafe, very light full brimmed hat, 2 sunglasses, one fleece pull-over jacket, parka and wool hat and underwear for cooler climates like Andes, reading glasses, etc</p>
Waist or neck security pouch for money and passport	<p>They have these at luggage stores or at Wal Mart</p>
Gifts for kids; gifts for adults	<p>Useful gifts are best. Books, writing tablets, pens, pencils, tennis balls, etc. For adults, see section on camera. 3'x4' flags from your country and their country are good as well. Remember, you are an ambassador of your country. Also, flags can be used for</p>

	<p>the inauguration. You can also pull the logo off our letterhead (see the form section on our website), and put that and your country flag plus their country flag on T-shirt. http://www.flags.net/indexm.htm Our top pick? Tennis balls! They are light weight and allow for quick connect to kids.....then to their parents.</p>
<p>Toiletries: USA toilet paper-2 rolls, Kleenex, toothbrush/paste, deodorant, shaver, 2 wash towels, one drying towel, shampoo, sunblock, etc.</p>	<p>Another tip. You are camping. What are you going to use to wipe stuff off? Paper towels! A great idea if you can bring them. But if not, you will need to have extra towels, or use your dirty clothes to do so. Buy lots of paper towels when you do your food shopping in-country.</p>
<p>Baggage: Soft baggage only!</p>	<p>Your baggage may travel on the back of donkeys or mules, so hard baggage will not be practical. Duffel zipper bags or backpacks are best.</p>
<p>Music</p>	<p>For the younger set, an MP3 player for the tent. Though, it is probably not a good idea to wear in public in rural areas, when there are people around.</p>
<p>Laundry</p>	<p>You will be washing clothes in stream, or if you are lucky, you may hire a local villager to do this for you. Spoil yourself. You deserve it! This is the second most important thing to do to insure campsite happiness. The most important is hygiene. The second is closely related: Get others to help you. They live there. If you had a guest visiting you, would you want them washing clothes in your back yard with your yard hose? Do not think that asking for help on laundry or cooking is demeaning. Just do so as you would if you were staying with any other friend. And, as you would with a friend, ask if you can pay for such things.</p>
<p>Headlamp</p>	<p>This can be very handy in a tent, cooking, or for going to take a whiz at night.</p>
<p>Camp gear</p>	<p>Waist/hip water bottle, 1 qt plastic water bottle or canteen, Metal drinking cup, Plastic or Metal eating bowl, Survival knife with implements, spoon/fork/knife, those green light things you break and shake are good for lighting tent area while you dress and get your things organized, lighter, matches, string hammock for naps during mid-day break? Bring your own cooking gear and pots. Finally, a camp stove and chair. Check with airlines on what you are allowed to bring. You must be totally self sufficient. The head of a camp stove can be taken with you on the plane, but no cartridges. So, you will need to buy the cartridges in-country. GAZ and MSR compatible cartridges are typically found in the capital cities.</p>
<p>Soft back pack (school book type) with camel pack insert for water, if your trip involves a hike- in.</p>	<p>This is what you will carry with you on your back for hike into and out of river gorge. It will carry your valuables, camera, snacks, and water (camel pack) if you don't have a water fanny pack. This should never leave your side. Most volunteers suffer some form of theft. You cannot possibly be careful enough.</p>
<p>Buying additional supplies</p>	<p>The closest store may be 2 days away from the river. If you don't bring it, it will not be possible to get it</p>
<p>Emergency contact and</p>	<p>Leave with spouse or family. Also make sure you leave</p>

<p>instruction sheet and Google Earth information. Should include embassy phone number in capital city of country you are traveling to.</p>	<p>in-country B2P contact info with your family.</p>
<p>Homework</p>	<p>Know the local country history, religion, economy, culture, ethnic groups, geography, etc. A requirement for everyone</p>
<p>Food and water.</p>	<p>You will buy the food you need, when you are in-country. Prior to leaving for the bridge site, you will go shopping. You can bring food, that you think may be difficult to find, like your own special coffee. Canned meat goods are rare in most countries, such as stews. You may only find Tuna. So, bring a few if your favorite canned dinners. Drink only bottled water, unless you treat local or river water with UV. The best UV system for hikers is SteriPEN, which can be purchased at REI http://www.rei.com/ The only disadvantage to a SteriPEN that you must be treating clear water. So, take some coffee filters or other particulate filter with you to pre-treat the river or tap water.</p> <p>Also, it is a good idea to only shower with water that has been treated with Iodine or Chlorine (buy pool chlorine at Wal Mart, and take just ½ cup with you. Your shower bag of 3-4 gallons will take just ½ teaspoon of chlorine to treat. For those of you that do not want to rely solely on local foods, especially in Africa, you can purchase Military “Meals Ready Eat” or MREs at: http://www.nitro-pak.com/ But, it does not take many to use up all of your weight allowance. What do you do if you get sick on the local food or water? See Cipro comments under drug section.</p>
<p>Dehydration/Gatorade</p>	<p>You might want to bring something to mix with water, in case water has chlorine or other bad tastes. <u>We highly recommend Gatorade Instant Mix</u>, which comes in 18.4 ounce containers, that makes 2 gallons. Gatorade is also a great way to get salt and potassium to prevent dehydration during hike and work. Costco, Sams, and Price Club sell it in even larger containers. How to figure your water consumption is dependent mostly on your weight. But, here is a general rule: For hot and dry areas, figure on 4-6 liters per day with Gatorade for the average 75 kg person. Bigger folks need more. For moderately humid areas, 2-3 liters per day. Do not hike in the open sun heat between 10:00am-4:00pm. During this time, your body can loose more liquids and electrolytes than your body can absorb. In fact, you can loose 2 liters per hour, while at best, your body can only absorb about half that much. So, hike in the early morning hours and late afternoon. And while you are hiking, keep your fluids handy, so you can constantly be taking them. Over 75% of hiking rescues are to bail out hikers that were poorly informed on dehydration!</p>
<p>Bug bites & Fleas</p>	<p>OH, lovely!! Fleas can be found in hotel beds and in local homes, so come prepared. The best way is to not to sleep on top of the local hotel beds inside your own</p>

	<p>sleeping bag or sleeping blanket. Most countries also sell aerosol bug spray (try buying at gas stations!), that you can use to douse your sleeping area. You will find the smell is much better than doing otherwise. Accumulative bug bites can be a serious problem. Do not let them get out of hand. Use Deet, and treat bites right away with Cortisone. Also watch for burrowing bugs, etc. Do a full body check each night.</p>
Fun stuff	<p>Bring a bit of yourself. Kites can be a blast. Soccer ball or tennis balls for games with kids. Identifying constellations at night. Art. Music. Hobbies. Let them see who you are, after you listen and get to know who they are. Our culture does not sing much while working or around the fire. Many others do. So, take a song book of campfire songs. "<i>I have been working on the Railroad</i>" get real old after a few days. Plenty of free ones on line at scout sites like this one: http://www.macscouter.com/Songs/CampfireSongs.html Just got another fun suggestion in from a volunteer: Try the Hokie-Pokie (Put your right foot in and shake it all about...) or "Head and Shoulder-Knees & Toes". Do stupid fun stuff, like seeing if anyone can move their ears. Do the deal where you clasp your hands, invert them, and then ask the person doing so to move their fingers by pointing to them. Finally, if you want a great way to bond with the guys (or gals!), then take 20 cigars or so.</p>
The Lonely Planet guide book for the country you are traveling to http://shop.lonelyplanet.com/	<p>If you have limited language skills, then maybe bring one of those talking translators! Using language aids can open up a whole new world!</p>
Weight limits	<p>Call airlines to be sure of weight allowed. Those other than major carriers are notorious for charging weight penalties. Some even have 20 kg limit!</p>
Laptop computer	<p>This may be a good idea for those going to perform feasibility studies. But, probably not a good idea for those going to bridge sites. It will just run out of power in a few hours anyway. Remember, no electricity! Though, if you are really radical, and have a solar recharge system, a lap top can be your mobile movie theatre. After being on the bridge site for a couple of weeks, such respite can be a sanity saver. You will also have every child in the village at your campsite to watch with you. Standard laptops not recommended. You will need crushproof and water proof case, and lap top designed for field use.</p>
Sat phones and GPS unit	<p>For those with worried spouses, girl and boyfriends, parents, etc. this is the ticket. The prices have come down dramatically. B2P has one that it can loan out for a deposit. Check country for bringing them in. Not all sat phones are the same. Some have limited worldwide coverage. Make sure the one you take will work in the country you are going into. Sat phones can also be used to call B2P offices in capital city for technical assistance. If you do take a sat phone, and need to call for emergency assistance, how will you be able to describe where you are? If you are calling your embassy for an emergency evacuation (might want to program this number into phone, so it is available when</p>

	<p>you need it, then you better give them you exact GPS coordinates to be sure, that they do not come to one of the other 25 Santo Domingo villages in the country! GPS units are cheap and light. Another way to do this, is to find out your GPS coordinates before you leave. You can do this on our website, or by Google Earth. http://earth.google.com/download-earth.html</p>
Maps	<p>Take them all if you are doing a feasibility study. Topos can be hard to find. If you really want to go uptown, then take a GPS loaded with a map of the country you are going to. http://www.mapsworldwide.com/</p>
Kayak or small inflatable	<p>Can come in handy if river is larger, and it is not dry season. An alternate way to cross. But, this is needed on less than 15% of our bridge sites. Check with in-country director. Can buy them at REI at 3.5 lbs.</p>
Safety gear	<p>Helmet, gloves, and construction safety harness are required. You can substitute abicycle helmet for weight considerations, if it has equivalent safety characteristics.. http://www.majorsafety.com/miller-safety-harness.htm</p>
Solar shower & sandals	<p>They are light weight & easy to use. Fill them with water, add a chlorine tablet, and hang up. A must! http://www.nitro-pak.com/ or http://store.sundancesolar.com/index.html If you cannot find chlorine, then take a small plastic pack of pool chlorine. Be careful not to put too much in. For a 3-4 gallon solar shower bag, it only takes about ½ teaspoon of chlorine granules. For your shower, you will need sandals.</p>
Travelers Insurance	<p>Contact your insurance company to get a better idea on what type of insurance you have or don't have for this trip. Do you have medical coverage in a foreign country? How long do I have to forward in claim? Is your life insurance valid in a foreign country? Do you have travelers insurance? <u>Bridges to Prosperity carries no insurance of any kind.</u> See B2P volunteer application form for medical insurance that you can purchase for your trip, if your existing coverage is not adequate.</p>