



2015 Packing List: Tanzania

In the spirit of living counter-culturally in JVC and with the goal of living simply in solidarity, we invite you to consider the packing list here (compiled with the input of JVs in the field), through the lens of the following questions:

- How is what I am bringing demonstrative of my intention to immerse fully into the local culture and live as they live?
- How is my approach to packing reflective of a commitment to being dependent on the resources locally available to purchase?
- How might what I bring debunk or reify negative stereotypes about U.S. Americans living, traveling, or working abroad? How can I learn what those are, generally, and in my particular host country?
- How might what I bring into the JV house affect security, perceptions of security, especially knowing that it is easy to observe when new, “green” JVs are arriving, how much luggage they are bringing, etc.?
**Also please note the bag policy and packing recommendations on page 18 of your handbook*
- What items may be more advisable to purchase in-country, after receiving local perspectives on what is most culturally appropriate? *e.g. volunteers in the past who have chosen to not purchase work clothes in the U.S., rather put their stipends towards having clothes or uniforms locally made or bought, have tended to be perceived as dressing more appropriately in the local culture, often find they receive more respect (from local students, co-workers, supervisors, etc.) initially from the local community by seeking out advice and reflecting this sensitivity to culture*
- What items may I perceive as necessary, though would be a privilege to have (not because of cost but because of access)?
- How might I consider adapting certain habits rather than looking to continue them? *e.g. bringing a 2-yr supply of contact lenses and solution to circumvent that they are not available; consider adjusting to glasses all or most of the time*
- How might the choices I make in items I bring have the potential to hinder (intentionally or not) my ability to bridge the gap of power and privilege between my co-workers, local neighbors, etc. and me? *To reinforce perceptions that foreigners think local resources and resourcefulness are ‘substandard’? e.g. bringing a year’s worth of teaching supplies to be able to carry out my job well – well intentioned and a positive effort towards a strong work ethic, though also begs the question of what does that mean for co-workers who reply on what the school can provide or not provide? Their perceptions of your resources? How they might perceive your openness (or lack thereof) to learn from their resourcefulness, accept their conditions as is, be willing to sacrifice to learn new approaches to teaching and/or understand their educational systems?*

We also encourage utilizing the handbook as a tool for reflection as there are a number of sections that could be helpful in framing how you approach packing.

- Tanzania is a tropical nation: warm, sunny, and in most places, humid. There are, however, places where it is necessary to have warmer clothes for early mornings and nights.



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- Dar es Salaam is generally warmer and more humid throughout the year, whereas Dodoma is much drier and consistently cooler throughout the year. The sun is VERY strong everywhere (*jua kali!*)
- For teaching you are expected to dress professionally; i.e. the term “volunteer” refers to your pay scale and not to your level of professional responsibilities. You may have to practice your ironing skills. It is an insult to the people you work with if you dress down for work. Dress shoes or sandals for work are good, but muddy days (especially in Dar) and the dust and winds (in Dodoma) are important to consider.
- Variety in clothing is good, but not necessary. Bring VERY LITTLE white outerwear, and clothes that are easily hand-washed. Bring 2-3 pairs of skirts and tops, slacks and short sleeved dress shirts to wear to school. You may desire to have most of your clothes made by a local tailor inexpensively. (Getting clothes made by a tailor is completely optional. The cost of fabric and sewing also come from stipend money, so it is up to you if you want to have clothes made. Getting outfits made also takes usually a little over a week once you have the fabric, so don't count on wearing only traditional clothes right when you arrive.)
- Consult your community -- especially those who are teaching at your school--for more detailed suggestions.

MEN

Pants: Khaki-type, summer-weight, long pants are the best to wear when teaching or working. Earth colors are easier to keep clean but lighter colors are cooler (avoid white!). Shorts and t-shirts are OK for casual wear around the house, but long pants are the norm when you are out—nice jeans are fine.

Shirts: Short sleeve dress/polo type shirts are good for teaching. Light-weight synthetic long-sleeve shirts are good for sun protection and can be worn for school as well if they look nice. Dress shirts will be good for formal occasions (weddings, funerals, etc.). Bring 1 or 2 ties. Two long sleeve sweaters/sweatshirts should suffice for the colder occasions. You will be able to make Kitenge shirts very easily; these are good for teaching, Mass and wearing around town.

Other: In addition to dress shoes for the classroom, bring a pair of rugged shoes (Timberland type) which you don't mind getting muddy. Also bring a pair of shoes/sandals that are comfortable for walking/hiking; Tevas/Chaco sandals are very durable and have good support. If you plan to run/jog then bring a worn-in pair of trainers as well. Synthetic material underwear is a bit more expensive but they will last longer and breathe better than cotton; 10 pairs of underwear will be plenty. Consider bringing extra underwear and socks: they shred, de-thread and lose their elasticity easily because of strong detergents and the hot weather.

WOMEN

Dress: Most women wear longer skirts or dresses every day. It is good if the skirts or dresses are longer than the knees (especially when sitting) and not too tight. Pants are very infrequently worn, so don't count on wearing dress slacks very often. One good pair of dress slacks is enough. (Skirts that hit just below the knee are helpful when it is really hot out.)

Generally, women in Tanzania dress **very** fashionably for Mass, weddings, funerals, and especially for the holidays. One or two nice "dress-up" outfits (including nice shoes) are recommended. You may want to bring a nice pair or two of jeans - especially on the weekends, they are great to have. (One is enough. At least in Dar, wearing pants, especially fitted jeans is very hot and can draw unwanted attention.) Leggings are also good for wearing around the house, and for wearing under long skirts (if you are particularly sensitive to mosquito bites). Shorts are OK around the house only! In public knees should be covered – but an African wrap-around (*khanga*) is easy to acquire in-country.

Other: A good supply of cotton underwear and socks is helpful. Sturdy sneakers and 2-3 pairs of sandals are good to bring. Tevas/Chacos can be a good option (but are received differently throughout the country). Crocs or Toms are comfortable for casual wear but are not work appropriate. Mud and gravel can wreak havoc on shoes, so plan accordingly. A pair of flip flops for the shower is helpful, though they are easily purchased in-country.



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Bring a few loose-fitting t-shirts for casual wear and athletics. Dri-fit t-shirt material is easiest to hand-wash and maintain. Button down shirts that are hand-washable are also durable and a versatile option. Bring one sweatshirt/sweater for cold mornings/evenings.

Bring hair items, such as bandanas, barrettes, headbands, hairclips, brushes, combs, etc. And most importantly, don't feel as if you need to sacrifice your personal style! See what fits within what you already own.

GENERAL

A light rain jacket is very useful, and you will want an umbrella (these can be purchased cheaply in-country). A few sweaters/sweatshirts are a must for cool evenings. A hat is option if you are sensitive to the sun, but not necessary. A swimsuit is necessary for trips to the ocean (no swimming in the lake! Trust me!). Generally, bring sturdy clothes and not your favorite outfit that you'll cry over if it gets ruined. Hand washing clothes is not made for delicate things.

PERSONAL ITEMS:

- Consider bath items such as shampoo, conditioner, razor blades, baby powder or anti-fungal powder and mouthwash with fluoride in it.
- Tampons or Diva Cup (Diva Cup is recommended by almost all volunteers in-country. Check it out and see if it's an option for you!). Tampons are not readily available.
- Deodorant and dental floss are extremely expensive here, even compared to other toiletries. However, most of these toiletry items are found in Dar or Nairobi when absolutely needed and can be picked up at a vacation time.
- Contact lens solution is **not** available. Note that having it sent from the U.S. may cost over \$30 to send, and may or may not arrive in a timely fashion. Consider wearing glasses.
- Bring an ample supply of any medicines you may take.

GOOD TO HAVE:

- Insect repellent is important— mosquitoes are HUGE and persistent (OFF! Deep Woods and Avon Skin-So-Soft work well for many, but need frequent re-application).
- Aspirin, anti-bacterial soap, allergy medicine (if you are sensitive to dust), vitamins (very expensive in Tanzania and our simple diet lacks some essential nutrients)
- Sunglasses, sunscreen (especially if you have fair skin), band-aids, and skin care items.
- A weekend travel bag/backpack and a water bottle are handy.
- A USB/Flash drive is VERY handy, especially if you don't want to bring a laptop to school. Bring a few 1 or 2 GB flash drives because they tend to become infected with viruses.
- School supplies: pens (various colors, ESPECIALLY RED for marking), tape, markers, crayons, stapler, index cards, 2-3 notebooks in various sizes, Sharpie markers, scissors come in handy as a teacher. (Basic school supplies, such as pens (red and otherwise), staplers, etc.) are provided by or available at the worksites, so don't waste too much packing space on these items. At the house, we have markers, stickers, and construction paper, but if you plan on using these items a lot in the classroom you might consider bringing some more).
- Helpful would be a good Swahili-English dictionary, calculator. Alarm clock (battery type is best). Other really helpful items are: duct tape (used for so many random things!), post-it notes, and an electrical adaptor - it is a UK plug.)
- Sheets and towels. We would advise NOT to bring a regular towel as it is difficult to wash and may start to mildew. We would suggest bringing a quick drying towel, or using a *Khanga* (large piece of local cloth) - a great alternative that can be bought on arrival.
- Flashlight (small portable type - plastic better than metal, as metal rusts). A headlamp flashlight is extremely helpful - whether it be for sorting rice during a power outage or reading before bed. Headlamps are basically a necessity, especially during power outages.



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- Guitar and music or other instrument - if you play or are learning.
- Camera (be careful with expensive equipment) with enough memory (sim cards). Extra batteries or re-chargeables.

DON'T FORGET:

- PASSPORT, plus copies of the information page
- Addresses of friends, air mail envelopes - an air-tight container to carry these may help keep them from sticking.

A LITTLE ADVICE ON PACKING: Pack light. You can purchase many of these items in Tanzania. Don't bring toilet paper or your entire medicine chest. The idea is simple lifestyle! **Contact your new community for packing advice before going.** They may let you know of something needed for the house.

DODOMA SUPPLEMENT to the Packing List

Dodoma's location and climate make it different from other parts of the country. Therefore, we wanted to offer you this supplement to the general Packing List to give you more complete descriptions of what you might consider bringing.

CLOTHING:

Dodoma is definitely more temperate than other parts of the country. The rainy season stretches from November to April, and is much warmer than the rest of the year. Nevertheless, there is always little humidity and it never feels as hot as more coastal cities, such as Dar es Salaam. The sun is always strong and feels warmest in the middle of the day, so wearing layers to work/school is highly advisable. From April through to October the season is dry, and the weather becomes cold and windy in the mornings/evenings. We've found shawls, cardigans, and dressy sweaters to be handy, and can be easily shed in the middle of the day. For the home, a pair of sweatpants and one or two sweaters/sweatshirts would be great. The winds are very strong, especially in Ihumwa where St. Peter Claver is located, so make sure the skirts you bring aren't prone to blowing up in the wind. There will also be lots of writing on the blackboard, so be careful with shirts that ride up when you raise your arms. In general, avoid plunging necklines unless you wear a tank top underneath.

We will bring you into town soon after your arrival to buy khangas and kitenge. Khangas are traditional wraps that are used here for almost everything: wearing as clothing, as towels, covers on furniture, etc. Kitenge are traditional cloths that are used to make outfits. It is cheaper to have an outfit tailored to your specific measurements here than to buy regular clothes, so keep this in mind as you pack. It will cost you approximately Tshs 23,000 to make a complete outfit which comes out to about \$14 (what a bargain!). Most days of the week, we wear kitenge to school.

There are many opportunities to workout and be involved in sport, so bring comfortable exercise clothes but make sure that the pants are below the knee. Sweat pants and t-shirts are advisable – women don't wear shorts outside the house. As for shoes, go with what you're comfortable. In Dodoma, a lot of people have commented on Texas or similar sandals as being "men's shoes," so we don't wear them to work. But they are great for walking around town or for when we're on holiday. Nice sandals or flats are great for work. The dust will definitely affect your daily choices, as well as the mud during the rainy season, so plan accordingly. Rain/hiking boots are not necessary.



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Our house is particular prone to the invasion of mosquitoes (as we have a lot of trees around), so we stay covered up (leggings, long sleeves) at home, at least until getting under mosquito nets.

SCHOOL MATERIALS: At St. Peter Claver High School, we are given many of our regular supplies: chalk, exercise books (notebooks), pens, thumb tacks, paperclips, etc. Pens, though, run out all the time, and teachers buy their own. Therefore, we suggest bringing at least a couple good black or blue pens and a TON of red pens, as we use them for marking. Bring a good folder or two, or even a folio, where you can keep your teaching materials. Index cards are also handy, as well as stickers as rewards for the students.

Colored markers, crayons, and markers in general are rare and expensive, so bringing a set wouldn't hurt. Also, we use USB flash disks ALL THE TIME. We type up notes and exams for the students, so if you want to do work at home and then bring it to school, we'd suggest having at least one sturdy one (and even a back-up as they get infected with viruses all the time).

In general, our best advice is to know how best you work. Some of us need planners/calendars to stay on top of things, so bring those if you think you'll need them. Don't worry about bringing books; we have a really nice selection (at home and at St. Peter's) and what we don't have, we usually borrow from Dar's massive collection, so you'll never want for anything good to read!

We've found that having certain DVDs is helpful for teaching and coaching at our various schools, so if you have a favorite or know that you'll use one, bring it! Certain movies, shows, or cartoons make for great teaching tools, and both our worksites encourage the use of media, so don't hesitate to bring them.

Medications: Our mail is somewhat unreliable, so having your folks sending meds through the mail may take a while and may be expensive, so bring as much as you can when you come. The mosquitoes are bad here and our students and co-workers get malaria all the time, so the risk of malaria is high: strongly consider using malaria meds. Everyone occasionally gets upset stomachs or acid reflux so Pepto, diarrhea meds, and constipation meds are all good to bring. And if you suffer from seasonal allergies, it would be good to bring a decent supply of allergy meds that work well for you. Especially in Ihumwa, where there are a LOT of plants and dust, there are a lot of bad allergy days.

Household Needs: We have blackouts all the time, and so flashlights and batteries come in handy. Also a mini-sewing kit (like from the Dollar Store) comes in handy.

Personal Needs: Bring pictures of your family and friends to hang up in your room, and maybe Fun-Tac or something to put them up with. Also a bag that you can carry with you to and from school to hold books or a laptop is really helpful.

A NOTE ABOUT MAIL FROM THE U.S.: We've been lucky this year as the mail has been relatively consistent, but it fluctuates. Our parents occasionally send packages with goodies (Crystal Light, parmesan cheese), but the customs officers charge a different price every time - the charges can range between Tshs 5,000 to 50,000. Therefore, advise your family and friends not to send things that can be bought in-country, nor packages over 4 lbs. Also, tell them to list the contents of the package as being "second hand" and less than \$5. This way, the customs officer won't charge as much.