



## 2015 Packing List: Chile

**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 baggage policy on page 18 of the 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, here are a few sections that could be helpful in framing how you approach packing:**

- Pg. 24-25 (Appendix A, section B. Simple Living)
- Pg. 16-17 (5.G. Living Simply with Technology)



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### Packing List with JV input

*The JV Santiago community updated this packing list on May 26, 2014. It's important to note that Santiago, Chile is a very large urban city; therefore the reality of Chilean life in terms of work clothing, accessibility to certain products, building construction, etc. varies greatly throughout the city. The JVs are speaking from their day-to-day experiences where they live and work in Santiago. The details of this packing list might not apply to all regions of Santiago, but are the best suggestions the current JVs have for incoming JVs who will live and work in the same neighborhoods of Santiago.*

#### **GEOGRAPHY**

Chile is a country that runs about 3000 miles from north to south, approximately the distance from New York to California. The Andes Mountains form the eastern border of the country with Argentina, and the western border is the Pacific Ocean.

#### **CLIMATE**

Santiago is situated in the middle of the country and experiences all four seasons, with summer and winter being the longest and most defined. Summer generally begins in December and ends in March, and is very hot and dry. The highs in the summer get up to the 80s and 90s, and down into the 60s and 70s at night. Spring runs from March to June, and is defined by fluctuating temperatures: 40s and 50s in the morning and 70s and 80s by mid-afternoon. Winter begins in June and goes until August, and is very cold and rainy. Average daytime temperatures are between the 30s and 40s, and often drop below freezing at night. Fall begins in September and goes until November, and is defined by similar fluctuating temperatures as in spring.

The majority of buildings in Santiago are constructed out of concrete with little insulation and very open floor plans (courtyards, outdoor hallways, patios, etc are very common). Air conditioning and central heating are very uncommon in many of the places where the JVs work and live. So, the usual air conditioning system is open windows and fans, and the usual heating system consists of many layers of warm clothing and small gas stoves (the JV house has fans and stoves). It is often colder inside of schools and work buildings than outside due to the concrete construction, so it is common in the winter to wear one's heavy jacket and gloves all day. JVs should pack for all seasons, including light clothing for summer, warm and waterproof clothing for winter, and layers for all temperatures in-between.

#### **GENERAL PACKING ADVICE**

##### **Work**

People in Santiago are well dressed and workplaces have a somewhat formal atmosphere. For work, it is important to note that you are expected to dress semi-professionally. Don't be alarmed, this simply means looking put together, dressing appropriately, and making sure your clothes aren't too wrinkled. Bring nicer, yet practical clothing for the workplace. Jeans are acceptable, as long as they are appropriate (darker wash, no rips). Bring one or two nicer slacks other than jeans, a few nicer blouses/button-downs, and some formal clothing (ties, dresses, heels, etc) for nicer occasions. Footwear should be nice, appropriate, and at least semi-professional.



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Open toed/dressy sandals (not flip flops, Birkenstocks, etc.) are ok. If you work at a Fe y Alegria school or a parish, make sure to bring clothing that is appropriate for retreats and camping trips (jeans, t-shirts, sweatshirts, and sneakers that you don't mind getting dirty in).

### ***Free Time***

Outside of work, flip flops, jeans, athletic clothing, hoodies, sweatshirts, tank tops, sneakers, and tennis shoes are totally fine for casual time. Jeans, shorts and other casual clothes will come in handy outside of work.

### ***Winter***

Bring plenty of layers for the winter, such as thermal/underarmour shirts, wool sweaters, long underwear and a heavy winter jacket. It might be helpful to have both a nicer heavy jacket for work and a waterproof winter jacket for when it rains/casual time. Also, make sure to bring a good hat, scarf, & gloves. A warm, waterproof pair of boots and wool socks would be a good idea to bring, since your feet often are cold all day, especially if it rains. It would be helpful to bring a pair of fingerless gloves since you will be doing lots of daily work activities that require use of your fingers (typing on a computer, grading papers, etc). It's a good idea to bring layers as some days start cloudy and below freezing in the morning yet by the mid afternoon the sun comes out and temperatures rise to the 50s or higher. Sleeping in the winter is challenging, since there is no central heating. Bring good pajamas (fleece sweatpants, long underwear, slippers, etc) and a thermal sleeping bag (30 or 40 degree bag) is a must. The JV house has several heating blankets and hot water bottles to warm up the beds at night, and a gas heater to heat the house on very cold nights.

### ***Summer***

For the summer, the temperatures usually get into the 80s and 90s during the day, with very strong sunlight, and down into the 60s and 50s at night. Tank tops, shorts, jeans, sandals and light sweaters are normal summer wear. Bring a swim suit (for women, bikinis are ok but it is preferable to have something more covered, ie tankini or one-piece), sun screen, a baseball hat, and sunglasses.

### ***Fall and Spring***

These seasons do exist in Santiago, but due to lack of internal heating systems and insulation, these seasons feel a lot colder in general. From mid-March until mid-October, early mornings and nights are always cold, so again just keep in mind that layering is important.

### ***Rain***

Make sure to bring some waterproof clothing (rain jacket, sturdy shoes, sturdy umbrella). It doesn't rain that often in Santiago – every once and a while in the Fall, Winter, and Spring -- but when it rains it pours, which means cold feet and streets that turn into rivers.

### ***Cleaning your Clothes***

The JV house has a washing machine, so you will have regular access to this, but your clothes will be line dried. The majority of Chilean families use the washing machine/line dry method, so bring durable and easy to wash clothing.

## **MEN**

Bring nice slacks to wear to work every day (khaki pants and nice jeans – at least 2 of each). Jeans are ok to wear to work, and at schools it is typical for men to wear darker jeans. Comfortable, durable shoes for work which can be shined, sneakers for more active roles, and durable/waterproof boots or hiking shoes for winter



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(it is normal to wear hiking shoes to work in the winter). Slippers for the winter can be helpful. For the summer, flip flops are fine in casual settings. Bring at least five long-sleeve button ups for the fall/winter (April to September) and five polos for spring/summer (October to March). Wrinkle-free is the best. The JV house does have an iron, but it will save you a lot of time! Bring at least four sweaters for the winter – the sun is warm during the day, but you will usually wear a sweater and long-sleeved button down all day. Bring lots of underwear and socks! Dress socks for October-March and nicer wool socks for April to September (you will want to wear thick socks to your worksite during the fall/winter). Bring at least one darker suit or at least a sport coat that you can wear with nicer slacks. It will come in handy for more formal occasions (baptisms, first communions, graduations, etc.)

### **WOMEN**

#### ***Work***

For work setting such as Fe y Alegria and Hogar de Cristo, women dress semi-professionally, including nice jeans, slacks, blouses, sweaters, skirts, and appropriate dresses. Jeans are the most common pants worn, just make sure they are darker wash with no rips. Skinny jeans are very common, and acceptable for work, as long as they are not too tight. Leggings are also acceptable for wearing under dresses or skirts, and can come in handy for the winter. As for shirts, it is a good idea to bring things that are easy to layer – a few short sleeve and long sleeve basic shirts that can be worn under sweaters, plus 1 or 2 nicer blouses (button ups) for more professional occasions (which are very rare). Nothing should be very tight (especially for teaching in the high school). Bring a few nicer sweaters for work, and a thermal/underarmour shirt for the winter.

In other work settings (SJM), nice slacks, jeans or skirts are also acceptable. Dress while working in the office is not extremely formal and the majority of Chileans wear jeans, but it is also important to have a nicer pair of pants for different occasions or personal preference. SJM as a specific worksite includes more work in terrain, and jeans are required for these moments. Blouses and sweaters are also acceptable for both office and outside of office work.

It is important to bring at least one nice dress for special occasions, such as First Communions, baptisms, weddings, and graduations. It is also nice to have a few sundresses or casual skirts for the summer.

#### ***Shoes***

Bring a nice pair of work shoes, which are comfortable enough to stand in all day, such as comfortable flats or sturdy sandals. Sandals are ok at work as long as they aren't flip-flops. It is also helpful to have comfortable walking/tennis shoes/sneakers for activities with youth. Nicer sneakers are definitely acceptable at work, especially in a school setting. Close-toed shoes such as boots are a must for the winter. The best suggestion is that they are waterproof, warm, and durable. Make sure to bring some flip-flops for the summer to go to the pool or the beach, and also to use as shower shoes on retreats and service trips.

#### ***Hygiene***



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The majority of Chilean women care about their personal hygiene/appearance, so it's important to have this in mind. Makeup is a common standard of professionalism in the work setting, but makeup in Santiago is really expensive, so if you foresee yourself wearing makeup daily it may be helpful to bring a good supply with you. The JVC house has a Chilean hair dryer (which is necessary in the winter months) so it is not necessary to bring one with you. It might be a good idea to bring a quick dry towel with you (available at outdoor stores), as towels dry a lot more slowly in the winter. Tampons are expensive and not readily available in Santiago, so it is a good idea to bring a large supply with you. Santiago is rough on the feet (you will be walking a lot more and the sidewalks are rough), so it is a good idea to bring some sort of pedicure bar with you.

### ***Other***

Women do not typically wear athletic shorts in public, yet athletic clothing (ie track pants, running leggings, etc) in general is very normal casual wear. Nicer shorts and skirts are acceptable, just be wary that the shorter it is, the more attention you draw to yourself.

### **OTHER SUGGESTIONS (Men and Women)**

#### ***Toiletries***

- Many varieties of shampoo and conditioner are available in Santiago at affordable prices, but it is still a good idea to bring some with you
- Lotion, deodorant, razors, face wash, makeup, lip balm, and tampons are available BUT more expensive and there is sometimes little variety of options
- Contact lens solution is more expensive and less prevalent, so it's a good idea to bring a supply.
- Bring sun screen!! It's a necessity almost every day in the summer and is very expensive here.

#### ***Basic medication***

It is a good idea to bring some basic medication such as aspirin, cold medicine, and vitamins. Also, bring some bandages and Neosporin as those are expensive here. If you have prescription medicine, try to bring as much of a supply as you can. We have access to good clinics through GeoBlue, however if you take a specific medicine, it can sometimes be challenging to find its equivalent in Chilean pharmacies. If you are concerned about access to prescription medicine, it is a good idea to try and converse with GeoBlue before arrival in-country.

**\*\*Important note:** Water in all of Santiago is potable! You do not have to worry about filtering water or bringing water tablets. It is a good idea to bring a Nalgene or other reusable water bottle.

#### ***Bags***

You'll want to bring a sturdy backpack or messenger bag for school or work that is in good condition without holes, has sturdy zippers, and inside pockets for secure storage during travel to and from work. Long strapped purses that can be worn across the chest and worn in front of the body are much more secure and practical. A backpack or small duffel is also useful for short school/work retreats and other trips.

#### ***Electronics***



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- Definitely need to bring a good alarm clock and watch (we don't have cell phones to rely on!)
- It would be useful to bring a head lamp (for camping and/or power outages in Santiago)
- Bring some extra batteries if any of your electronics require them since they are expensive here, and harder to find exactly what you need.
- It is important to bring a USB flash drive for work.
- There is no need to bring an adapter as they are very cheap in Santiago and work for basic electronics such as hair straighteners and charging cameras, iPods, and computers. If you have appliances that use more voltage or are more fragile/expensive (such as electronic razors), you may want to bring a transformer (220 volt).
- It is advised to bring a laptop with you for work purposes. The majority of professional Chileans (aka the people working in schools, Hogar de Cristo, and SJM) have small netbooks, and some have larger laptops. It is almost a must for working in a school and SJM – and can be helpful if working in Hogar de Cristo or a parish (but not necessary). Keep this in mind when discerning bringing a laptop.
- A small camera can be very useful, especially when working with youth, yet it is not necessary. Smaller cameras are common in Santiago.
- iPods are not very common as many Chileans use their cell phones to listen to music, however if you have an iPod or other MP3 player, it could be a good idea to bring, as long as you are cautious and intentional with its usage.

### **Other**

- Addresses of family and friends. Mail, especially postcards and basic letters, can be sent from Santiago affordably (around a \$1.50 to send a normal-sized letter to the US)
- Sometimes we get visitors from the U.S. (family and friends, or other volunteers, etc), so it's helpful to have a supply of U.S. stamps and envelopes so you can send letters back with them
- Make sure to bring extra copies of your passport & other important documents (license, credit/debit cards, etc)
- If you like to use Ziploc bags or Post-it notes you should bring a supply because they are very useful and surprisingly expensive in Santiago
- Pictures of friends and family!!
- Any books you'd like to have with you. The JV house has a good collection, but since we are still a developing site, the collection still has room to grow!

### **FINALLY, A LITTLE PACKING ADVICE**

Try to pack light and intentionally, but also remember that Santiago experiences the extremes of all four seasons. Clothing/shoes are often more expensive in Santiago than in the US, so be prepared and pack accordingly.