



2015 Packing List: FSM – Chuuk

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 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, here are a few sections that could be helpful in framing how you approach packing:

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

These packing tips are just ideas. Use your own judgment and always remember to pack light.

- FSM is a tropical nation, and “tropical” needs little explanation. Very warm, sunny, and humid.
- Clothing in FSM is generally casual. However, long pants for men, conservatively cut skirts and dresses for women, and generally neat appearance and attire is expected for everyone so be professional in your dress for work!



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WOMEN:

- Most women wear dresses called mumus that are native to the region. Traditional skirts and mumus are already available in your communities to wear (they are not necessary for you to bring from the states).
- Generally, women in Micronesia dress conservatively at all times. The dresses are brightly colored and cover the shoulders, hips, knees and legs. Don't wear anything that is tight or short. Always cover your legs past your knees.
- Casual cotton/cotton blend skirts for daily wear.
- A pair of cotton pants might be used for traveling but pants are not really an option for women in Micronesia.
- Short-sleeved blouses for work (can be colorful or patterned)
- T-shirts for other times: weekends, sports etc.
- Tank tops for sleeping or wearing around the house.
- Mesh or athletic shorts (longer than the knee) to wear under skirts/mumus on a daily basis. The longer, bigger, and baggier the better.
- Slips to wear under skirts or muumuus on a daily basis.
- For swimming: a one-piece swim suit (wear t-shirt and shorts/skirt over swimsuit always)
- Cotton underwear and bras. Good bras are not easily found in stores.
- For shoes you will wear flip flops/zorries/sandals all the time. These are available to purchase in stores. Dressier sandals are considered stylish for special occasions.
- Sneakers for sports etc.
- Hair ties, head bands, bandannas, barrettes, brushes, combs, etc. (most women have very long hair so consider not cutting yours short before coming)

MEN:

- Khaki-type (summer-weight pants) long pants are the best to wear when teaching or working. Darker colors are easier to keep clean but lighter colors are cooler. Slacks and blue jeans are other options for dress pants.
- Shorts are good for casual wear, for after school, and around the house. Avoid shorts that go above the knees. Generally, basketball shorts are the most comfortable and most appropriate.
- T-shirts are good for everyday wear.
- Short sleeve cotton polo or Hawaiian style shirts are considered dress shirts for teaching. Hawaiian style button-up shirts are the most popular locally. These are easily available for purchase at stores.
- Cotton (100%) boxer-briefs are the best for underwear; plain boxers are NOT recommended. Underwear and socks tend to shred, de-thread and lose their elasticity easily because of strong detergents and the hot, humid weather.
- For shoes you will wear zorries / flip flops / sandals all the time. These are available to purchase in stores.
- Bring sneakers for sports etc.

WOMEN AND MEN

- Wearing white is impractical but having a few plain white shirts is good for celebrations or Spirit Teams.
- A good light rain jacket and umbrella
- A pair of sweat pants and a sweatshirt (you will get cold during your second year or on trips to other islands)
- A hat / sunglasses
- Bring good, sturdy clothes and not your favorite outfit because it may get ruined.

PERSONAL ITEMS:

- Some bath items such as shampoo, deodorant, razor blades, baby powder. Most of these items are found in Micronesia for purchase but not necessarily cheaply. Mouthwash is available but expensive (about \$10 per bottle). Don't over pack. You can purchase many of these items in Micronesia. Don't worry about bringing toilet paper!
- Tampons / Diva Cup (in Chuuk, only pads are available) for women.
- Gold Bond powder, Body Glide, and Tinactin for men. Men get athlete's foot and something they call 'gouch rash'.



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- A water bottle or two (such as Nalgene)
- Contact lens solution is not available on island.
- Bring an ample supply of any medicines you may take.
- Small mementos from home, such as photos of family and friends.

GOOD TO HAVE (but check in with community first): Vitamins, Aspirin/pain killers, Cold medicine, Neosporin, Hydrogen peroxide, Sunscreen, Band-aids, Bug spray, hydrocortisone cream, Dental floss, Chapstick, Hair products or gel, Skin care items, Hand sanitizer, and dewormer medication (albendazole or mebendazole).

OTHER ITEMS TO CONSIDER:

- School supplies: (pens in various colors, tape, magic or permanent markers, scissors, pencils, markers are expensive in FSM). Usually communities will have a pretty good supply of teaching resources (handbooks, manuals, books).
- Pocket knife / Multi-tool
- Alarm clock (battery type) / Watch
- Most communities have ample sheets and towels -- check before you pack!
- Flashlight/Headlamp (small and portable - plastic is better than metal)
- Guitar or other musical instrument (check your community to see if there are any already available)
- Laptop Computer, Flashdrive(s)! Camera (Waterproof is ideal), Ipad, Kindle, External hard drive
- Books and movies (most communities have plenty so check what is available)
- Laundry bag (not necessary at Xavier)
- A bag to carry school supplies and books in (suggested but not necessary)
- A waterproof bag / dry-bag (very useful for boat trips to other islands)

THINGS NOT TO FORGET:

- PASSPORT
- A copy of your Social Security card for registering at the bank
- Prescription medicine.
- Addresses of friends, envelopes (non-lick variety) - if you can find an air-tight container to carry these it may prevent them from sticking. (Do not bring stamps. Even though the postage system/prices are the same, stamps are different).

A LITTLE ADVICE ON PACKING: In Micronesia, people like “style” so wearing accessories, jewelry, sunglasses, hats, belts, stylish shoes or sneakers, is super cool. Also, it is important to be clean and smell good at all times so cologne, body spray, lotion, fragrant soap are good to use.

You may also want to bring a gift for your host family for the first time you visit them. This can be a memento or a special nonperishable food from your home town or your own family.

Try to pack light; lots of clothes are left behind by JVs. Contact your new community for advice before coming. They may let you know of something needed for the house.

And for almost anything ... if you pack it, be okay with it not returning back to the US (lost, ‘borrowed,’ stolen, broken, natural elements like salt water and rain).