



2015 Packing List: FSM - Pohnpei

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 rely 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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These packing tips are just ideas; use your best judgment and remember to pack light.

- FSM is a tropical nation, and “tropical” needs little explanation: Very warm, sunny, and humid. There are, in season, quite a few bugs, mostly flies and mosquitoes.
- Clothing in FSM is generally casual, though long pants or shorts for men, conservatively cut sundresses for women and generally neat appearance and attire is expected for teachers - be professional!

Here are some ideas from the volunteers who have served there:

WOMEN

- Women in Micronesia dress conservatively at all times: dresses that are bright colors but which cover the shoulders, hips and legs. Never wear anything that is tight or short. Always cover your legs past your knees. Traditional skirts are available in-country.
- Mesh or basketball shorts (that go to about your knee) to wear under skirts and muumuus on a daily basis. Bring 5 pairs. Super essential!
- Several casual cotton or cotton blend skirts that go to the knee or below. We wear local skirts and muumuu’s on normal days, but sometimes it’s nice to wear “American clothes” for a change.
- A pair of lounge pants (khaki/Capri/cotton) to wear around the apartment.
- Sundresses with a modest cut that go below the knee (think maxi-dress). These will only be worn out to dinner or on special occasions, 1 or 2 is plenty.
- Short-sleeved shirts. Target is a great place to go for these – basic v-neck short-sleeved shirts in a few different colors.
- Tank tops are okay as long as they are not tight. It is ok to wear tank tops around town on the weekends.
- For swimming: a one-piece swimsuit and a pair of board shorts to wear over them.
- A good supply of cotton underwear (LOTS of underwear!) and lots of bras (they can sometimes get mold/mildew).
- For shoes you will wear zorries/ flip flops/ sandals all the time. These are available on island. You could bring shoes in which to travel and for very special occasion, but they will not get much use.
- Bring sneakers for sports and t-shirts/sports bras if working out is part of your self-care.
- Tank tops to wear under muumuu’s. AT OLMCHS you’ll wear a muumuu to work everyday (we have a community closet filled with muumuu’s and local skirts). You’ll need to wear a tank top and basketball shorts under the muumuus everyday.

MEN

- Pants (khaki-type long pants/summer-weight pants) are fine for teaching, but recently shorts are accepted at OLM. Khaki, green, blue cargo shorts are best. Darker colors are easier to keep clean but lighter colors are cooler.
- Short sleeve polo-type shirts are good for teaching; T-shirts are ok for everyday wear.
- A couple of dress shirts (short sleeve cotton/ Hawaiian style shirts) will be good for formal occasions (weddings, funerals, etc.). You can get Hawaiian style shirts on island.
- For shoes you will wear zorries/ flip flops/ sandals all the time. These are available on island. You could bring shoes in which to travel and for very special occasions, but they will not get much use.
- Bring sneakers for sports etc.
- 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.

WOMEN AND MEN

- A good, light rain jacket is useful
- An umbrella



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- A pair of sweat pants, a sweatshirt, and one long-sleeved shirt for cooler nights or to keep the mosquitoes away (you will get cold during your second year).
- A hat.
- A pair of Chacos or Tevas (or another brand of supportive sandal) to hike in.
- Bring good, sturdy clothes and not your favorite outfit that you'll cry over if it gets ruined. Washing machines are not always available and even occasional hand washing with a washboard is not for delicate things.
- Socks are good for running or hiking, but will not be used on a daily basis.

PERSONAL ITEMS:

- Bring some bath items such as shampoo, deodorant, razor blades, but most of these items are found in Micronesia and can be purchased cheaply.
- It's hard (and expensive) to buy tampons on island. Bring a large supply, or consider buying a Diva Cup to use.
- The guys recommend Gold Bond powder, Body Glide, and Tinactin. They get athlete's foot and something they call 'gouch rash' often.
- Contact lens solution is **not** available on island. Consider switching to glasses full-time before coming.
- Bring an ample supply of any medicines you may take.
- You may want to bring vitamins. We have a good supply of Tylenol/aspirin/band-aids, etc.
- Face wash and lotion, if those are part of your skincare routine.
- Bug spray, sunscreen and sunglasses.
- Body mist/body spray. (We get so sweaty during the day that it's nice to have something that smells nice. Pohnpeian women are always very fragrant/smell good!)
- Any simple jewelry (especially earrings or necklaces) that you'd want to wear.
- A water bottle, such as Nalgene or a Hydroflask (Hydroflasks are great because they keep water cold all day and don't sweat!)
- A weekend travel bag (backpack) is handy
- A tote bag or shoulder bag for carrying teaching materials

OTHER ITEMS TO CONSIDER:

- School supplies: (pens in various colors, tape, magic markers, scissors, pencils, markers are expensive in FSM...)
- Alarm clock (battery type) and a sports watch
- Most communities have ample sheets and towels -- check before you pack!
- You should definitely bring a flashlight / headlamp / keychain light. Flashlight (small; plastic better than metal, as metal rusts in humidity. A headlamp can also be useful for grading papers during electricity shortages.)
- Guitar and music (check your community to see if there are any already available) if you play.
- Camera (be careful with expensive equipment). Extra memory cards can be helpful if you have them. If you're bringing a camera, think about bringing a waterproof one.
- Extra batteries or rechargables
- Flashdrive (to print/transfer teaching things)/External Hard Drive
- In general, you can purchase many of these regularly used items in Micronesia.

DON'T FORGET: Passport, prescription medicine, addresses of friends.

A LITTLE ADVICE ON PACKING: Pack light; there are lots of clothes left behind by volunteers. 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).