

# Packing List for Trips to Africa

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*(prepared by Michael Hsu)*

# Preamble

- This is not an official list! Repeat... this has got nothing to do with TJC, AMC or anything!
- Nor is this meant to be exhaustive - just some personal pointers after more than ten years of wandering around Africa
- Never assume anything! If you are not sure, or have any questions, ASK!!
- **In a nut shell, use your common sense (and functioning gray cells, if available)!**

# The Art of Packing Light

- Pack as light as possible - you might be on the move constantly (on foot over rough terrains, crowded public transport etc). Taking the nature of your trip into consideration...
- Bring as few items as you feel necessary / comfortable with
- Use the smallest bag possible
- Consider sharing non-personal items with others where feasible / possible
- If you (hand) wash your clothes everyday, theoretically, you only need three sets max
- A lot of items can be purchased locally (*if you are not fussy about brands / quality*)

# Can I Take These.....

- Electricity might not be available in rural areas. Only bring electrical equipments you cannot “live without”, and consider the power source (disposal batteries / rechargeable batteries / mains only)
- Leave valuable items (incl. jewelleries) at home and use a cheaper alternative instead (*e.g. wear a cheap(ish) watch, not your usual diamond-studded Cartier*)

# 1. Essential items

- Passport with valid entry visa(s) (*apply all necessary visas well ahead of time; single or multiple?*)
- Plane ticket
- Yellow fever certificate / Yellow Book
- Other essential inoculations & medical advise (consult your doctor asap)
  - US - <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx>
  - UK - <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/staying-safe/health/>

- Travel insurance certificate (or copy) (*annual insurance can work out cheaper, but check maximum days allowable per trip + coverage*)
- Bible(s) / hymnbook
- Reference material / personal notes (hardcopy) (*inkjet printouts tend to smudge when moist (sweat / rain) – laser / photocopy preferable*)
- Cash (£ and / or US\$) (*credit cards / travellers cheque not widely acceptable in Africa*)
- Mosquito net (*impregnated with permethrin*) + hanging implements (*string / hooks / tape etc*)

- Summer clothing (light coloured; long sleeves recommended) (*long skirts for sisters*)
- Light jacket / windbreaker
- Underwear
- Towel
- Cap / hat
- Head scarf (*sisters only*)
- Slippers / flip flop

- Water bottle / container (*0.5 / 0.75 / 1 litre*)
- Small shoulder bag / backpack (*for daily use when you are out and about*)
- Hand torch (& spare batteries / bulb)
- Insect repellent (DEET or natural ingredients)
- Antimalarial tablets (*consult your doctor asap – watch out for adverse side effects. “Lariam” for most people. Be prepared to pay for these on a private prescription*)



- Medication (suggestions only - take you pick)
  - whatever prescription medicine you are currently taking
  - paracetamol / ibuprofen (*or similar*)
  - antihistamine
  - diarrhoea relief
  - plasters
  - ointment for insect bites / antiseptic cream
  - pills for travel sickness / indigestion / constipation / Tiger Balm / cough medicine etc etc.....

- Rope (for drying clothes)
- Plastic mug (not glass / porcelain)
- Small plastic food container (about 0.5 l)
- Bed spread / sleeping bag liner / duvet cover
- Toiletries
  - toothbrush / toothpaste / face towel
  - shower gel / body wash / soap / shampoo

- Nail clipper / nail file
- Stationeries - pens / notebook / paper
- Contact lens solutions (*for contact lens wearers only, obviously*)
- Dry / wet / electric shaver (*brothers only*)
- Sanitary towels (*sisters only*)

## 2. Optional items

- Clothes pegs / hangers
- Scrubbing brush (*for washing clothes*)
- Suncream (*with a relatively high sun factor*)
- Sunglasses
- Body wipes / wet tissues
- Dettol (*for bathing in water of questionable quality*)
- Mirror (small)
- Comb / hair brush

- Swiss Army knife / multi-purpose tool
- Earplugs
- Antibacterial handwash (*no water required*)
- Moneybelt (*for hiding your wads of cash*)
- Kneeling pad / foam (*for prayer*)
- Neck tie (for Sabbath) (*brothers only*)
- Raincoat / small umbrella
- Alarm clock (small)
- Emergency sewing kit
- Dental floss
- Vitamins / nutritional supplement tablets

### 3. “Luxury” (non-essential) items

- Camera / video recorder (+ charger / batteries)  
*(move to first section if you are a first time visitor)*
- Toilet paper
- Cutleries
- Pillow
- Washing powder (& fabric conditioner)
- Hairdryer (what if there is no power supply?)

- Mobile phone & charger (coverage in major cities / towns and selected villages only)
  - if using own SIM card, check roaming arrangement & charges with service provider
  - if using local SIM card, make sure the phone is unlocked before your departure
- Shortwave radio (*for BBC World Service*)
- A book / MP3 player or something to keep you amused / occupied (*there will be long periods of waiting and doing nothing*)

- Food / snacks *(for the ever-hungry people):*
  - cereal bars *(without chocolate / yoghurt - it can be messy)*
  - packets *(not cups) of instant noodles (just add boiling water, no need to cook type)*
  - dry fruit *(aid your digestive system)*
- Extra pair of footwear
- Extra sets of clothing
- ***OK! Just bring any items you fancy (only one piece of advice I beg you to heed: please please please leave the kitchen sink alone)***



## 4. Regardless of the above....

- Fully utilize your remaining baggage weight allowance (check with airline, usually 20 / 23 kg) and bring as many as possible of the following:
  - old / surplus TJC English publications (*ask local church librarian, local youths etc*)
  - used RE teachers textbooks by USGA (*ask local RE coordinator*)
  - surplus English evangelistic leaflets / booklets (*ask local EPG in-charge*)
- used but usable Bibles (NKJV only) and TJC English hymn books (*ask local GA in-charge, local members etc*)