



CHILE FIELD GUIDE

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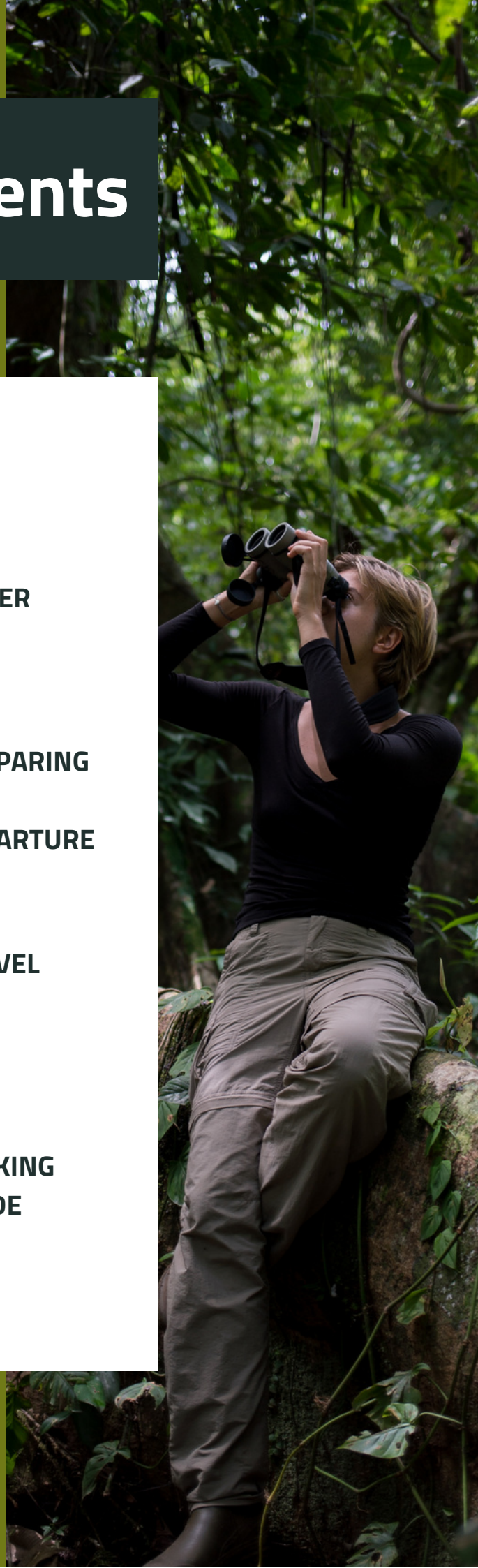
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LIFE IN THE FIELD



The Center



Academic Foci

- The center sits alongside the Cerro Dorotea peak and Señoret Channel as the gateway to Torres del Paine National Park
- Located in the ring of fire, Patagonia's stunning, snow-covered volcanic range presents an unmatched opportunity to study complex geological and seismic processes.
- The fragile ecosystem is especially vulnerable to impacts of climate change – unpredictable storms, glacial melt, shifting temperatures, fires, and droughts.
- This rugged landscape is home to penguins, foxes, sea lions, guanaco, and much more!

SEMESTER:

WILD PATAGONIA: FIRE AND ICE

Glacial and freshwater dynamics. Geology and volcanic activity. Coastal and alpine ecology. Penguin behavior. Endangered species protection. Conservation strategies and practices. National parks and protected area management.

SUMMER 1:

THE PATAGONIAN WINTER

Winter ecology. Southern Hemisphere high-latitude indigenous cultures. Socio-ecology, conservation, and globalization. Impacts of resource extraction and climate change.



Community Engagement

You will live at a field station as a cohort, rather than in a homestay, local apartment, or university dorm. This means that you will not necessarily be eating local cuisine, speaking a local language, or navigating the local culture every day. However, we fundamentally believe that meaningful research is only possible with the input of local people and in consideration of cultural history, so community engagement may vary each term to reflect the requests of our partners.



Chores

Students are expected to take responsibility for their space during their stay. Students will also help set up/clean up for meals. Specific chore responsibilities and schedules will be shared during orientation.



Climate

Fall runs from March through May. Temperatures in Puerto Natales range from 26-64°F.
Winter runs from June through August. Temperatures in Puerto Natales range from 24-48°F.
Spring runs from September to November. Temperatures in Puerto Natales range from 30-60°F.
Summer runs from December to February. Temperatures in Puerto Natales range from 39-66°F.



Identity

Every country is shaped by its history, and therefore attitudes towards gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and religion can differ greatly. Keep in mind that what seems like discrimination may simply be curiosity. Additionally, most students expect to encounter differences between themselves and their host country but don't realize the most significant differences may be between themselves and their student group. Students should research how different aspects of their identity might be perceived in a new context, in specific political and societal issues, racial, ethnic, and religious composition, LGBTQIA+ climate (Resources [1](#) and [2](#)), and cultural norms and local laws. Reflecting on one's own culture and identity before studying abroad can help students better navigate their experience abroad.

It is a privilege to study in another country and be welcomed into these communities. It is not our students' place to try and change its culture or values. While students will be learning about the country and its people, they will be ambassadors of their own country and culture. SFS campuses are permanent fixtures, and these communities are home to our staff members year-round. Behavior that is disrespectful, illegal, or contrary to cultural norms can degrade the relationship with the community and can impede meaningful interactions for peers, SFS staff members, and future students.



Setting and Facilities

A former hostel in the tourist town of Puerto Natales.

RURAL ← ● → URBAN

PUERTO NATALES	PUNTA ARENAS	SANTIAGO
5-minute walk.	3-hour drive	4-hour flight
Population ~18,500	Population ~144,000	Population ~6,900,000
Nearest town. Doctor, pharmacy, library, restaurants, shops, cafes, and bars.	Southermost city in Chile. Houses tourists on their way to Antarctica.	Capital city. Advanced medical care.
HOUSING	OTHER FACILITIES	
Eight rooms, 3-6 people per room in twin bunk beds. Shared closet, desks, and storage spaces.	Common room with TV, games, and basic kitchen supplies.	
En-suite bathroom with shower (hot water) and western-style toilet.	Classroom, kitchen, dining area, living room, staff offices, some staff housing, and two small outdoor areas.	
	Two washing machines (detergent provided). Two dryers.	



Food

SFS can accommodate most dietary needs, but the variety of food may be limited due to local availability and cost. SFS cannot accommodate strict Halal or Kosher diets. Due to limited dietary variety, SFS always recommends bringing vitamins, protein bars, nuts, favorite snacks, etc.

Meals may consist of rice, pasta, soup, salad, beans, vegetables, and a protein option (meat and non-meat). Off-center meals are meat-heavy with few vegetables. Snacks may include toast with jam or other spreads.



Exercise

The center has basic weights, yoga mats, a soccer ball and a volleyball. There is a soccer field and running/bike track in town and a paid gym with swimming lanes.



Time-off

Semester students will be given occasional weekends off and a mid-semester break. Summer students will be given 1 to 2 weekends off.

Students are responsible for their own food and accommodations during non-program time. Students are not allowed to stay at the center during weekends off or during mid-semester break. See page 11 for estimated costs.



Money

The local currency is the Chilean Peso (CLP).

Both cash and debit/credit cards are widely accepted. All students are required to bring a credit/debit card with at least \$3,000 in funds in case of emergencies. Mastercard and Visa are the most commonly accepted cards internationally. Be sure to notify your bank that you will be traveling internationally.

You should bring at least \$300 USD with you to start. Students can order CLP from their banks, exchange USD, or withdraw local currency directly from ATMs. When bringing USD to exchange, travel with bills in excellent condition (clean, unwrinkled, unmarked, with no tears). You will have access to ATMs to replenish your cash supply in Puerto Natales.



Electricity

The electrical voltage in Chile is 220 (the U.S. uses 120). Check all electrical devices to see if you need a voltage converter. Chile uses plug type C and L (the U.S. uses A and B). All students will need plug adaptors.



Internet

Wireless internet is available at the center, but it is slow and intermittent. SFS reserves the right to limit internet activities occurring on our servers including, but not limited to, streaming or downloading audio/video content (Facetime, Netflix, etc.). During most expeditions, internet will not be available.



Computers

Students need to bring laptops with Microsoft Office (or the ability to open Microsoft files offline) and a USB port. Electronic devices are subjected to a much harsher environment than normal. In particular, Apple products do not fare well in high humidity and are more difficult to repair or replace locally. Please take precautions to protect your device.



Phones

Students are provided local phones to communicate with staff and peers. If the phone is lost or damaged, students must pay a fee of \$30. Students with unlocked phones can also purchase a local sim card and phone plan for approximately ~\$10 USD per month.



Mail

No packages can be sent to the center. The average one-way travel time for letters from the U.S. to Chile is 3 weeks. Therefore, no letters can be sent during the last 3 weeks of programs, as students will not receive it! Mail will not be forwarded.

Address: Student Name, SFS Center for Climate Studies,
P. Arauco 779, Puerto Natales, Chile





Health & Safety in the Field



24-Hour Emergency Hotline

SFS maintains a 24-hour emergency hotline. If you need to urgently contact a student in the field, call 978.219.5113.



Student Health & Wellness Manager

The Student Health & Wellness Manager is a full-time primary medical responder and student support personnel on campus. They are certified in Wilderness First Response, or equivalent certification, and trained in sexual assault first response. They also counsel students on adjusting to life abroad, conduct risk assessments, and help coordinate program logistics and community outreach.



Orientation

Upon arrival to campus, students receive an orientation about the local community and culture, center operations, and relevant risks and hazards. Prior to arriving on program, students should research the inherent risks associated with traveling abroad.



Medical Care

SFS maintains a detailed risk assessment and management plan outlining risks and response protocols, including nearby medical facilities and their treatment capabilities. These plans ensure that staff are always aware of the best route for appropriate medical care.

If a visit to a medical care facility is needed, an SFS staff member will accompany the student to the appointment. Be aware that there may be times when access to medical care is delayed, such as on expedition. Students are responsible for all medical costs and all incidental expenses including transportation, accommodations, etc., incurred by all parties involved. This may include costs related to COVID-19 quarantining. Some medical emergencies or conditions may necessitate medical withdrawal from the program. Final decisions on medical withdrawal are made by SFS.



Mental Health Support

Adjusting to new routines, relationships, and cultural environments while away from your usual support systems can be challenging. The ways you manage stress, take care of yourself, or find joy may not be available to you while you are abroad. Many students also struggle with the rigorous schedule that is inherent to the nature of SFS programs. Understand that you may have decreased communication with home, limited privacy and alone time, and infrequent or modified opportunities for exercise.

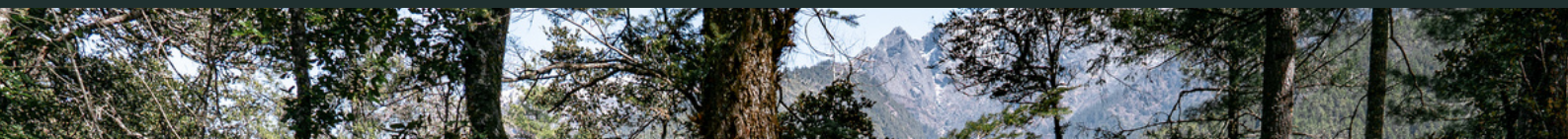
SFS is partnered with Morneau Shepell to provide students with access to free, mental health and wellness support by chat, phone, and video that can be accessed whenever connected to wifi. Students should download My Student Support Program (My SSP) in the app store or on the [My SSP website](#). My SSP is a supplemental resource, and students should work with their mental health provider to create a primary support plan. Students who undergo regular counseling should verify that their mental health provider is available while they are abroad.



Sexual Health & Wellness

When it comes to sexual health and wellness during your program, please consider:

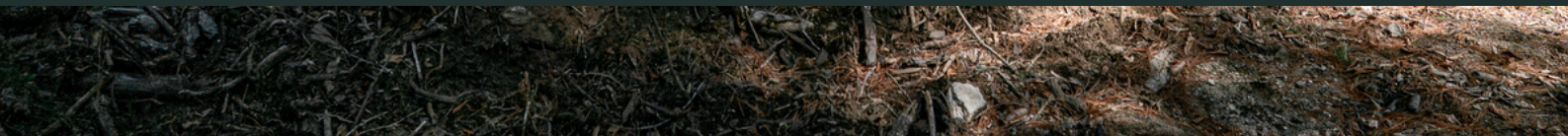
- The ramifications that a short-term relationship may have on a small residential campus or within the local community.
- Access to protection, medication for sexually transmitted infections, and emergency contraception may not be available.
- The current dialogue and understanding of consent in the U.S. does not always apply in other cultures.
- If you feel subjected to sexual harassment, you should walk away from any situation that makes you uncomfortable without concern for being culturally inappropriate. You can report harassment or assault to any SFS staff member.
- In the case of a sexual assault, SFS will make every effort to support you. This includes access to medical care, the option to report to local law enforcement, and identifying additional support resources. Local laws, definitions, and legal implications often differ from those in the U.S. Different laws and limited availability of resources such as rape kits can be complicating factors in responding to a report of sexual harassment or sexual assault in foreign countries.



LGBTQIA+

SFS is welcoming of all students at our centers. However, when traveling throughout the country, please be aware of the following:

- Laws and social customs may differ from your home country, and countries that criminalize same-sex partnerships may also use the law to criminalize gender identities and gender expressions.
- Cultural practices may not support freedom of expression and travelers may experience discrimination and harassment.
- Some cultural practices are based on traditional gender roles and gender expressions. As a result, those who do not identify as they physically present may sometimes be misgendered or misidentified.
- Some languages are gendered, resulting in a lack of terms that encompass non-binary and gender-neutral identities.
- Health services specific to transgender people may be limited or unavailable. You may also be denied services in your affirmed gender while you are traveling abroad.
- It is not always possible to use preferred names or gender identities (visa paperwork, plane tickets, hotel reservations, and government sites). Gender X is not recognized worldwide, and you may need to provide binary sex information.



Social Drinking & Drugs

There is no consumption or possession of alcohol allowed on campus. If you choose to consume alcohol on your days off in which you are off campus, please do so in moderation and maintain respectful behavior toward others.

Possession of marijuana and cannabis-infused products, including some cannabidiol (CBD) oils, is currently illegal under U.S. federal law. SFS does not allow possession or use of any drugs or medications that are illegal for the full duration of SFS programs including free time and weekends away. Check local laws before possessing, purchasing, or using electronic cigarettes or vaping devices on program.



PREPARING FOR DEPARTURE



Program Costs

The relationship SFS has with your school will determine your billing process. Within one week of acceptance, you or your school will be required to pay a non-refundable deposit to reserve your spot. Afterward, our finance department will reach out to you or your school to collect tuition payments. Up-to-date costs and refund policies can be found [here](#).

Included in SFS program costs are program advising and orientations, tuition and research fees, airport transfers, housing, meals during program time, field excursions and cultural activities, emergency evacuation and 24/7 support, and official transcript processing.

PROGRAM	BILLING DEADLINE
Spring	November 1st
Summer 1/ Combined	April 1st
Summer 2	May 1st
Fall	June 1st

BASIC COSTS (BILLED BY SFS)	SEMESTER	SUMMER 1
Tuition	\$21,050	\$6,400
Room & Board	\$7,950	\$2,500
BASIC PROGRAM COST	\$29,000	\$8,900
ADDITIONAL COSTS (ESTIMATED, ACTUAL COSTS MAY VARY)		
Airfare	\$2,000	\$2,000
Passport	\$200	\$200
Visa fees (if applicable)	N/A	N/A
Immunizations/Medications	\$800	\$800
Personal Expenses	\$1,000	\$400
Program Breaks	\$1,000	N/A
ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL PROGRAM COSTS	\$5,000	\$3,400
TOTAL PROGRAM COSTS (BASIC + ADDITIONAL COSTS)		
ESTIMATED TOTAL PROGRAM COST	\$34,000	\$12,300



Financial Aid

All students are welcome to apply for SFS financial aid. Financial aid applications are reviewed on a rolling basis starting in February for summer programs, April for fall programs, and September for spring programs. Early submissions are encouraged. Students who submit an SFS financial aid application by the payment deadline will be considered for our full range of aid options. Learn more [here](#).



TRAVEL



PASSPORT

You must have a passport in hand four months prior to departure that is valid for at least 6 months after your departure from Chile.



VISA

Students will enter Chile using a tourist visa. Students' Chilean visas will be granted upon arrival to Chile and last 90 days. Nothing needs to be done for the visa pre-arrival. Tourist visas are currently free to obtain, but visa costs are the responsibility of the student, and prices are subject to change. Staff will plan and pay for a trip to Argentina for semester students to renew students' tourist visas for the remainder of the program.

Non-U.S. citizens may require a different visa process and are responsible for applying for, obtaining, and paying for their own visa valid for the duration of their stay.

If traveling before or after the program, make sure that your visa will remain valid for the entirety of your stay.



FLIGHTS

Students are responsible for the cost of flights to and from their program. Students will receive travel instructions at least 2 months prior to the start of their program. Do not book flights before receiving these instructions.

SFS staff will meet students at the airport on the date and time specified in the airport instructions and transport them to the center. Students will receive airport instructions 1-2 weeks prior to the start of their program. If traveling before the program, you are responsible for meeting the group at the airport at the designated date and time. Additionally, SFS is not responsible for transporting or storing luggage before or after the program.

SFS is not responsible for reimbursing travel expenses for programs canceled or rescheduled due to acts of war or civil unrest, strikes, weather, quarantine/epidemics/sickness, government regulations, or failure of equipment, power, or communications.





Medical Requirements



Medical Approval Process

Students are required to complete the SFS medical approval process using our HIPPA-compliant portal to inform SFS staff of their medical and mental health needs and accommodations. The review is not meant to exclude, but to inform and allow support systems to be put in place. No student may enter the field until medical approval is granted by SFS. [More information.](#)



Vaccinations & Medications

Required

- At least 1 COVID-19 vaccine within 1 year of the program start date, but no less than 2 weeks before departure.

Recommended

- [Centers for Disease Control](#), travel clinics, or medical providers can provide further recommendations.



Accommodating Disabilities

SFS will work with students, schools, and physicians to determine the required accommodations and whether it can be safely and reasonably maintained on program. While SFS strives to meet students needs, due to the remote nature of the programs, there are varying levels of accessibility, services, and accommodations. Students with questions regarding physical or mental health accommodations should contact the Office of Student Affairs and learning accommodations should contact the Office of Academic Affairs.



Insurance

Students are required to buy health insurance. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their coverage is valid in their program country(s) for the full duration of their program and covers basic medical care, including non-urgent illness or injury, laboratory tests, and pharmaceutical needs. SFS does not provide company recommendations. Keep in mind:

- Most domestic health insurance plans do not provide comprehensive coverage for out-of-country medical expenses.
- Schools may provide international health insurance or have their own insurance requirements for studying abroad.
- Most insurance companies provide coverage on a reimbursable basis. Therefore, students need to bring a credit card to pay for medical expenses and then request reimbursement later on.

Emergency Evacuation and Repatriation Insurance

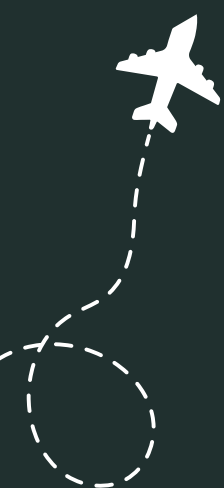
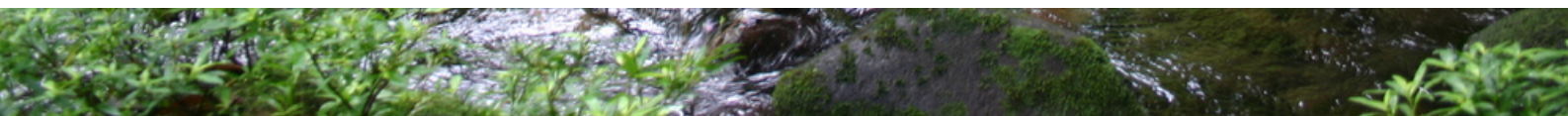
All students are automatically enrolled in an emergency evacuation and repatriation insurance plan through American International Group, Inc. (AIG) for the duration of their program only. This plan covers the cost of transportation, accommodations, and medical care associated with medically or politically necessary evacuations (e.g. life-saving support during air evacuation). It includes up to \$350,000 for emergency medical evacuation, \$100,000 for emergency security evacuation, and \$20,000 for repatriation of remains. The coverage provided does not cover basic medical care, laboratory tests, or pharmacy needs. Students on SFS programs are required to supply their own comprehensive health insurance as outlined above.



PACKING GUIDE



Packing Considerations



Luggage

SFS does not have a specific policy regarding how much or what type of luggage students bring, so pack according to your needs. Make sure you bring only what you can maneuver yourself, and check with all airlines for luggage restrictions and fees.



Culture & Climate

Many students bring old clothes to wear in the field and leave behind at the end of the program. Do not bring anything that you would not want damaged!

A minimum of 3-inch seams are required for all shorts worn in town.

As you pack, please consider the impact of the products that you bring with you to your program, both the ingredients and packaging. Plastic can be difficult for waste management in remote environments. Think about bringing a reusable tote, metal straw, cloth napkins, etc. We also highly encourage biodegradable soaps, shampoos, and conditioners.



Required Packing

- **Pants** Lightweight blends that dry quickly. 2+ for field work, 3+ jeans/leggings/normal pants for day to day, and comfy pants for around the center.
- **Waterproof rain pants**
- **Long underwear/base layers** to wear under clothes. 3+ pairs to last during excursions. Keep base layers tight-fitting to wear underneath pants/jackets.
- **T-shirts** Synthetic shirts are great for chilly nights, wet weather, and field days. Cotton shirts are nice for non-fieldwork days, but please keep them loose-fitting with no midriff exposed.
- **Long-sleeved shirts** A mix of synthetic fabrics and cotton.
- **Casual/nice clothes** for town.
- **Cozy loungewear** for around the center.
- **Insulated coat** Down or synthetic.
- **Wool sweaters or fleeces** worn near daily. Able to fit over long-sleeved layers.
- **Waterproof jacket with a hood** Water resistant is not sufficient.
- **Warm scarf, Hat, Gloves, etc.** 1 set. Past students recommend waterproof gloves.
- **Underwear** for more than one week. Past students recommend synthetic/quick-dry underwear.
- **Socks** for more than one week including 3+ pairs of light wool or synthetic (not cotton) hiking socks.
- **Pajamas** appropriate for shared spaces.
- **Sun hat and sunglasses**
- **Hiking boots** Over-the-ankle and waterproof.
- **Sneakers** or other casual shoes.
- **Rubber sandals** for showers or the center/hostel.
- **Sleeping bag** Rated for the weather during your session. Sheets, a pillow, and a blanket will be provided at the center.
- **Sleeping pad** for camping trips. Can be rented in town.
- **Towels** 1 shower towel and 1 face/hand towel for trips. Quick dry towels are best! Additional towels will be provided at the center.
- **Toiletries** Basic items can be purchased in town, but you should plan to bring enough with you for at least a week. Preferably biodegradable.



- **Masks and COVID tests** Bring enough masks to last the duration of the program and 5+ home rapid tests.
- **Record of immunizations and Health history**
- **Personal first-aid kit** including Anti-itch creams, Neosporin, Bacitracin, Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Pepto Bismol, Band-Aids, Tape, Tweezers, Nail clippers, Antihistamines, Pro-biotics, Antidiarrheals, Vitamin C, Cold medicines, Hydration salts, etc.
- **Prescriptions** Note that overseas prescriptions are not always accepted. You should bring adequate supplies of prescription medications with you to last the duration of your program alongside your doctor's prescription to avoid customs delays. Think about inhalers, allergy medication, contacts/glasses, etc.
- **Motion sickness medication/ Dramamine/ Ginger chews** if you experience motion sickness.
- **Period care** You can purchase basic period products in town. We encourage you to use a menstrual cup or environmentally friendly, biodegradable options.
- **Flash drives and/or External hard drive** At least 1 GB recommended.
- **Computer** that can open Microsoft Office documents offline and has a USB port.
- **Surge protector and Plug adaptors** Multi-outlet best for hostels.
- **Binoculars** Preferably 8 x 40 but anything in the 6 x 30 to 10 x 40 range is fine.
- **Headlamp with extra batteries** Flashlight is not a replacement but can be brought additionally.
- **Dry bags or sturdy plastic bags** Gallon-sized Ziploc bags work well.
- **Day pack with waterproof cover** Small backpack suitable for taking gear into the field. 15-30L recommended. Ideally with chest strap and hip straps.
- **Backpacking bag with waterproof cover** with hip and chest straps to hold 3-5 days' worth of supplies in the field. 35-55L recommended.
- **Water bottles/bladders** at least 2-3L capacity. Recommended 1 bottle/bladder.
- **Sunscreen** 1+ bottles. Can buy locally.
- **Tupperware and Travel mugs** for packing lunches. Can buy locally.



Optional Packing

- **Purse/tote bag** for town.
- **Small clothing repair kit**
- **Laundry bag** with your name labeled on it.
- **Swimsuit** if you want to swim in town.
- **Hand warmers**
- **Lightweight blanket** if you get cold easily.
- **Rite-in-the-Rain notebooks** No need to buy Rite-in-the-Rain pens as pencils will work!
- **Pocketknife** Checked luggage only.
- **Sleeping pad** Therma-rest or cell foam pad for camping. Only used 1 or 2 nights.
- **Trekking poles**
- **Hammock**
- **Notebooks and Pens/Pencils** if you take notes by hand. Can buy locally.

- **Umbrella**
- **Earplugs and Eye mask**
- **Baby wipes and Hand sanitizer** Can purchase in town.
- **Journal**
- **Games, Movies, and Books** Recommend to bring your Nintendo Switch controllers.
- **Snacks, Drink powders, and Dietary supplements** Any favorites.
- **Camera**
- **Voltage converter** if needed for electronics.
- **Headphones and/or Bluetooth speaker**
- **Waterproof cases for electronics and silicone packets** (or some water-absorbing equivalent).
- **Wristwatch** Preferably water resistant.
- **Extra batteries and External battery packs**



Contact Us

Keep up with SFS follow us on Instagram [@theSFS](#)/[@theSFS_chile](#), read [news from the field](#), and find the [full list of the SFS team bios here!](#)

Questions about billing? Billing@fieldstudies.org

Deposit payments, invoices, charges to your account, financial aid packages, billing deadlines, and loan paperwork.

Questions about health and safety? StudentLife@fieldstudies.org

Medical paperwork, Immunizations, managing medical conditions during your program, and dietary needs and preferences.

Questions about academics? Academics@fieldstudies.org

Learning accommodations, syllabi, and directed research.

Questions about admissions or enrollment? Admissions@fieldstudies.org

Which program is the best fit for you, application materials, travel and visa logistics, and other program-specific questions.