

BIOL 409 Tropical Ecology Field Course Equipment recommendations

Backpack to carry it all: carry all your stuff in one big backpack (with your daypack on your front). Suitcases or multiple small duffels make transportation awkward, which increases the chance of you forgetting something at a bus stop or in a taxi (we've learned the hard way), or having a bag walk away with someone else (also learned the hard way).

Money: Your bankcard will likely work at the ATMs in Cusco or Lima (notify your bank before travelling). Consider setting a PIN of only four digits as most machines only permit four-digit PIN entry. However, you should also have some Peruvian Soles on you for immediate use upon arrival. You can exchange USD to Soles easily in the Lima Airport.

Binoculars: Although they aren't mandatory, they will drastically improve your experience in the field, especially if you want to spot birds and butterflies. We may be able to provide you with a pair, so let us know if you are unable to get your own. We recommend 8x or 10x power magnification for bird observation.

Headlamp: Absolutely essential. Back-up headlamps are also a good idea. We will be doing night walks to look for nocturnal birds, herptiles, and mammals, and a powerful headlamp is very useful. Although an affordable low-output headlamp will suffice, we recommend a powerful spotlight headlamp if you are interested in spotting animals by their eye shine.

Camera: Bring something; there will be photo ops, guaranteed. But remember, it's humid and sometimes wet, so make sure you have a good plan to keep it dry. Ziplocs with silica packs do just fine).

Daypack: Sufficient size to carry water, snacks, equipment for field projects, head lamp, field notebook, and rain gear. 20-30L should be more than enough.

Rubber boots: You can find good quality boots in Cusco (cheaper than North America) but size 10 and above are difficult to find. Bring yours if you already have a pair. Consider bringing supportive insoles if you have high arches.

Hiking boots/trail runners: At high elevation (e.g., generally above 1500m), you can use hiking boots if you prefer them to rubber boots, though you should still have a pair of rubber boots just in case. In lowlands and middle elevations, rubber boots are highly recommended to keep ants out, and for easier creek crossing.

Foot powder: Keeping feet dry and fungus free is critical for your well being in the field. Anti-fungal cream is never a bad idea either, but you shouldn't worry too much for a

three-week trip. Foot powder and good wool socks should be sufficient to keep your feet happy.

Clothing: Dress like Sir David. Long sleeve shirts, and hiking pants, with a few pockets, are perfect. Bring a fleece and a few warm layers for the higher elevations. A down vest is nice for evenings in camp. The lowlands are hot, but it's still best to have long sleeves and pants for the bugs. Two pants, a few shirts, and some clothes for the city and for camp (that you'll keep clean and dry) are all you'll need. Polyester and other synthetic materials get pretty nasty in the humid lowlands. Although you've probably heard that cotton kills, it's actually better than synthetics in the warmer climates, but nothing beats wool. Nylon quick dry pants are great. Bring a few pairs of good socks. They will be wet almost all the time, but if they're good (merino wool etc), they'll do their job. You can wash clothing at all of the stations. Bring a bathing suit as well; you'll swim in the rivers. A hat is nice to keep things out of your hair, and the sun out of your eyes. A quick-dry towel is useful.

Rain gear: Waterproof jacket, rain pants, or a decent quality poncho. Ponchos can keep you and your backpack dry during downpours. We will be travelling during the dry season, but there is always a chance of showers.

Camping/Backpacking Tent (if you own one): A self-standing 2- or 3-person tent with a reliable rain fly. We will provide shelter for those of you who don't have your own tents.

Sleeping bag and thermarest: Something that will be comfortable for temperatures at Wayqecha, which can go down to about 5C and possible lower. Also something that packs down small. Consider bringing a sleeping bag liner or bed sheet for the lowlands, which are quite a bit warmer at night!

Medicine and vaccinations: If you require prescription medication, you should bring enough to last the entire trip. Also, if you are severely allergic to Hymenoptera (bees, wasps, ants) you should bring your own EpiPen, and inform us of this or any other allergy. Antibiotics and Metronidazol (for Giardia) are prescription based, so students must bring their own if they want to have them on hand. We recommend consulting a travel clinic before coming on the trip.