

Biodiversity Group Expeditions:

Mexico Project Travel Information

Important Travel Information

You will need to arrange flight to Ciudad Obregon International Airport (CEN), to arrive there on the starting day of your project, and leaving on the last day. Alternatively, if you are travelling from Tucson, AZ, you can join a carpool for \$150, based on available space. Mexican currency is the peso, and may be changed at the Mexican immigration service at the airport. A valid passport will be needed and should be applied for as soon as possible if you don't already have one. Verify that your passport is valid for the exact dates of travel.

You will need to acquire traveler's insurance. You will be required to sign an affidavit to confirm that you have purchased insurance one month prior to departure. Your traveler's insurance must have a medical evacuation clause; we recommend at least \$50,000 medical evacuation coverage. Basic insurance for travelers under age 30 can be found at www.TripPlus.com, which starts at \$25. More complete coverage can be found at www.insuremytrip.com, which is an agent site which will let you choose from many options.

What to Bring

When packing, keep in mind that you may have to walk extended distances with all of your gear. It is best if you can get all of your gear into one bag and a carry-on item. Getting all your gear into one large backpacking backpack is an excellent way to go.

You must have all items in the essential gear category. *You may not participate in this expedition without these items.*

a) Essential Basic Gear

- Lightweight Rain poncho or jacket. We may be working in the rain, and you will need to protect gear and data sheets.
- Lighting equipment: We will be doing some nighttime surveys, so bring a bright, waterproof or water-resistant headlamp (headlamps are much better than flashlights for night work). If you are buying a new one, try to get the brightest possible LED you can get. Bring a spare flashlight for emergencies, or a bright flashlight for spotlighting things out of range of your headlamp.
- Batteries: Bring enough batteries to change out your light once every day.
- Insect repellent with 30% DEET, enough to apply at least twice a day for the duration. For extra protection, you can treat your clothing with permethrin solution, which is particularly effective against ticks.
- Small backpack, big enough for your water and some field equipment, such as a clipboard, large tape measure, or animal bags.
- Drinking bottle, with at least one-liter capacity.
- Extra copies of all documents. Include a color copy of your passport and vaccinations. Keep your copies in a separate place from the originals.
- Any prescription medications. Also write down your exact prescriptions, including dosages, and keep this separate from your medications.
- Hiking boots. They must completely cover the ankles.
- A pair of rugged sandals, such as Tevas. For stream and river work, and for lounging about the camp.
- Wristwatch.

b) Camping Gear

Potable water, cots, as well as cooking and dining gear, are always provided.

- Sleeping pad (optional). A basic, lightweight foam or inflatable pad (this will provide some added comfort and insulation to the cots).
- A lightweight sleeping bag or sac.
- Pillow. Or just stuff a bag with clothes.

c) Recommended Gear

- A large backpacking backpack is the best option for toting your gear around.

Field Clothing. For tropical forest work you will need clothes that both protect you and keep you cool:

- Lightweight cotton or synthetic long pants. Shorts should be avoided to avoid insect bites and walking through thick scrub. Avoid jeans or any heavyweight fabric, as it does not dry out quickly. Cargo pants with several pockets work well.
- Lightweight cotton or synthetic shirts. But t-shirts may also be used, as long as insect repellent is judiciously applied to arms.
- A wide brimmed hat and sunglasses. We will be exposed to high intensity sun for many hours a day.
- Swimsuit. For swimming through the canyon at El Cajon—not to be missed!
- Snorkel mask and snorkel for San Carlos as well as searching for river turtles.
- A layer of warmer clothing (light jacket or fleece).
- Bandanas

Bring enough changes of clothes for about a week, and plan on using clothing (but usually not socks) for 2 or more days in a row. There will be an opportunity to do some laundry by hand.

- First Aid. We will have some of the basic first aid items available. You should consider bringing additional items as you might need them. For instance, if you are particularly accident prone, you may want extra Band-Aids. Or if you are susceptible to traveler's diarrhea you may want to bring Imodium.
- Personal Cleaning and grooming items. Be minimal, and bring biodegradable soap, such as Dr. Bronner's, which may be used for clothes washing and even tooth brushing.
- Binoculars. Particularly useful for birdwatchers, you can pick up an adequate pair of binoculars for \$40-50. However, if you are buying a high quality pair, you should look for ones that have close focusing (e.g. 2 meters) and wide aperture, for low light environments such as forest. Eagle Optics (www.eagleoptics.com) sells a great line of waterproof binoculars with high-quality optics.
- Earplugs. The living areas we stay in are not soundproof, and you may have a noisy (e.g. snoring, or crowing!) neighbor.

Bottom line: Pack as lightly as possible, use small and lightweight items, and plan on washing clothes. You will be carrying all your belongings over long distances at times. (Tip: see www.sierratradingpost.com for bargains on personal gear.)