



OCDF Academic Connections

FACT SHEET - Travel Information that is IMPORTANT to read NOW (not the day before your trip!)

Preparing for Your Trip to the United States

Visiting Your Physician

A visit to your physician should be scheduled well in advance of your trip. You will need to complete the Medical form for your application. It is important to explain to your physician that you will be traveling to the US and that several requirements for participation in the program will require his/her cooperation.

While we can not guarantee that travelers to America are completely free of risks - no travel agency or tour program operator can do that, we can advise you of reasonable precautions, create as safe an environment as is humanly possible within our span of control, and have an enjoyable time. If you are concerned, please ask your physician to prescribe *Tamiflu*.

Your Medication

Severe Allergies? If your physician prescribes an EpiPen (or two!) for severe peanut or seafood allergies please bring two (2) as the efficacy of an EpiPen is about 10 minutes. It is important that you bring two pens with you since it will often take longer than 10 minutes to get to a hospital in such an emergency.

Bring your regular prescription medication in its original bottles (you may ask your pharmacy to provide smaller bottles without the cotton).

Take written copies of all your prescriptions along on your trip to America. Make certain it is clearly readable and medicines are indicated by their pharmacological name not brand names (for example Zantac is a brand name but what is the actual pharmacological name for the medication?).

Bring enough medication for the entire program length. Also, think about conditions that you may sometimes have but don't regularly take medicine for it - allergies for example. Don't forget these medications as well!

Be sure to have the telephone number of your physician and pharmacy with you if any of your medications are essential to daily living/comfort.

Additional Medications and Items Needed

See the listing of over-the-counter medicines provided in the "**What to Pack**" section for essential items to take along.

Motion Sickness - if your child/teen is prone to motion sickness when traveling by bus, boat, or air plane it may be wise to obtain some medication for motion sickness or a patch to assist with this problem.

Allergies - if you have specific allergies and medications you are accustomed to taking for them, please bring enough for a few days if you have discomfort during the tour.

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You will need money for the following items:

- 1. Some Meals** - you will need some meal money for this program - please check your itinerary and look for "meal on your own" or "dinner on your own" or "lunch on your own" as an indication of meals you will need to purchase along the way. Meals should be relatively low cost unless you want to buy food in the airport on your arrival/departure days.
- 2. Beverages**- A bottle of coke or water is about \$1 U.S. Allow about \$1.00-\$2.00 for beverages per day for your free time. Beverages at "included" meals are also included.
- 3. Tap Water**- (readily available and an essential daily requirement to keep you healthy). Please keep in mind that drinking plenty of water is vital to your health and all tap water in the US is safe for consumption and daily use (washing, brushing teeth, etc.) OCDF will provide a water bottle for our program participants.
- 4. Laundry**- You will likely use coin-operated laundry facilities throughout the program given that you will be packing light. Therefore you should allow \$15 to \$20 for using the washing and drying machines throughout the program. Those participating in a camp program will have access to laundry facilities there.
- 5. Phone Calls Home** (see Calling Home) - you will probably want to talk with your family during the trip. Costs of calls from the U.S. to China are about \$3.00 per minute. International Calling Cards are a good option.
- 6. Shopping and buying Gifts**- This is entirely up to you and there will be a lot of shopping accessible to you throughout the program. Just remember to carefully watch the weight of our luggage.

General Packing Information and Tips

- 1. Pack small items in plastic bags.** You will always be able to use the bags once in America for money, receipts, wet clothes, candy - you name it. Take items from their bulky boxes and place the contents in zip-lock bags. The only exception is prescription medication or items where the contents would not be identifiable if they were taken from their container. When placing medicines in your zip-lock bags, cut the directions out of the box and place it in with the pills. This will save you lots of space and weight in your luggage. Buy very small sizes where possible and pack carefully - it won't really amount to much. Remember that you will use this stuff up as you go along and will end up with space for your purchases.
- 2. Don't over-pack!** This trip is not a fashion show! Follow the clothing and toiletries list very carefully. Pre-weigh your luggage before you go through the airport by standing on your bathroom scale then picking up the bag.
- 3. Place all breakable glass containers** (avoid taking if possible) and all spray containers in your check-in luggage as the security will not allow liquids in carry-on bags. Place any metal items in your check-in luggage to avoid x-ray alarms at the airport. Also any scissors or knives! **Avoid taking aerosol or pressurized containers** including butane lighters and butane curling irons.
- 4. Avoid taking electrical appliances** (see electric/electronic equipment) such as razors, irons, hair dryers, and curling irons as they are time consuming and unnecessary. US electric outlets will not be compatible with Chinese plugs. Adapter plugs of various kinds are helpful but it is best to totally avoid taking electrical products along. If you need to take medical equipment such as CPAP, be sure to bring adapter plugs or arrange with Sunny@ocdf.org for a power bus that will accommodate the plugs/outlets in the US and your Chinese plug. This is also important since outlets may not be

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nearby the bed. If your CPAP does not have 110-220V capabilities, you will need a transformer. Check the wattage rating of your CPAP machine to determine the wattage needed for the step-up transformer.

5. On items like toothpaste, shampoo, and soap it is wise to take your brand or preference although there will be many options to buy American products in the event that you run out.

Luggage Restrictions = Please TRAVEL LIGHT!!!!

The rule is: Everything you bring, you must carry!

While all airports have smart carts, there will be times when we will be handling our own luggage and carts are not free. Your one piece of luggage (check-in bag) cannot weigh over 50 lbs/22kg (depending on the airline for international flights to US you can check-in two bags).

Type and size of your one check-in bag:

Soft-sided luggage usually weighs less than hard-sided luggage BUT consider that your breakable items might need to be placed in your carry-on bag throughout the trip should you desire to take soft-sided check-in luggage on the trip. Hard-sided luggage will better protect your breakables but will weigh far more before you even pack anything in it.

Size of your bag (no matter what type of bag you select) ideally should not exceed 26" because suitcases larger than 26", when full, will weigh more than 50 lbs! Select a check-in bag that has sturdy wheels!!

Carry-on bag:

You are limited to one carry-on bag and a laptop bag. You may also take a small pocketbook or fanny pack or camera bag in addition to the carry-on bag. Your carry-on bag is limited in size to 15" (a backpack is best life on campus). You can check the size of your carry-on at your local airport. They all have those boxes by the check-in that your carry-on must fit inside of.

Please try not to bring a second suitcase (rollaway) as carry on! You do not need so much stuff for this program. Best to bring a nylon duffel for extra purchases along the way.

Locks:

Do not lock your bags for traveling to or from a US Airport.

Clothing

Due to the weight restrictions on your luggage it is essential that you select your clothing carefully.

For a summer program, light cotton or natural fiber clothing is best for a variety of reasons:

- the weather is hot and cotton clothing is cool and more absorbent.
- campus laundry machines will best be able to handle clothing that does not require special care.
- should you decide to wash your own clothes they will dry quickly.

Clothing -You should only be bringing along 6 days worth of clothing!

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Packing Check-list:

- ___ 1 Slacks or skirts (summer = chinos or khaki type pants)
- ___ 3 Walking shorts (such as khaki knee-length shorts not jogging shorts or nylon running shorts)
- ___ 4 blouses/shirts (polo style shirts or cotton knit tops are best in summer)
- ___ 6 sets underwear
- ___ 4 pair socks to wear in walking shoes/tennis shoes or hiking boots
- ___ 2 pair of stockings/pantyhose to wear with dress outfit.
- ___ 1 nightgown or PJ's or nightshirt
- ___ Athletic shoes and sports sandals for walking (not fancy). Make certain you break in these shoes and your feet BEFORE the trip!
- ___ In summer: sandals or light dress shoes (such as espadrilles) to wear with dress outfit.
- ___ Hat or sun visor.
- ___ Bathing suit
- ___ Lightweight jacket or windbreaker in summer.

Toiletries and Miscellaneous Items

While many shops will sell toiletries, it is wise to take what you will need for the trip since the brands you prefer will not likely be sold in the US and the items you desire may not be available at the time you need them.

Try using small size containers (such as two small toothpastes) so that as you finish one you have gained space in your luggage. Perhaps determine before you go just how much of an item you really consume regularly to avoid taking more of a product than is essential.

Essential Items

Packing Check-list:

- ___ Shampoo and conditioner (a combination product will save space!)
- ___ Toothbrush
- ___ Toothpaste

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___ Mouthwash or small spray breath freshener or breath mints

___ Soap

___ Deodorant

___ Lip balm or Chap Stick with SPF 35 as a sunscreen

___ Sunscreen with 35 SPF rating

___ Comb or brush

___ Plastic razors (or battery powered shavers), shaving cream/gel and lotion

___ For women - sanitary pads, mini-pads, or tampons as needed during the trip.

___ Mosquito repellent in summer

___ Vitamins - if you regularly take them

___ Prescription Medication and Items

* Your regular prescription medication in its original bottles (you may ask your pharmacy to provide smaller bottles).

* Take written copies of all your prescriptions along - make certain it is clearly readable and medicines are indicated by their pharmacological name not brand names (for example Zantac is a brand name but what is the actual medication?).

* Antibiotic for upper respiratory infections and lower intestinal tract infections. Rely on your physician to recommend the appropriate combination antibiotic for you.

___ Eye glasses (if regularly worn)

* Take a written copy of your eye glass prescription along.

* Take an extra pair of glasses along if you are unable to see without your glasses.

___ Sunglasses

* If sunglasses are prescription glasses, take a written copy of your prescription along.

___ Small folding umbrella

___ Mailing labels with the names and addresses of the people you "must" send postcards to (use peel 'n stick labels)

___ Travel journal, notepad and pens

___ Small scissors (pack in check-in bag)

___ Wallet - or zipper bag that has pockets for money and receipts

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Electric/Electronic Devices

The US does NOT use 220 Voltage! They are on 110 V and therefore the cycles/frequency (Hertz) are different. They also do not have the same plug configurations as China. Anyway, you can burn out an appliance in no time unless you are prepared AND you can waste lots of valuable time using electric/electronic devices during the trip.

One month without such conveniences will convince you that they aren't necessary anyway. Avoid taking electric devices such as hair dryers, shavers, irons, clocks, radios, computers, curling irons, etc. as they will weigh a lot in your luggage and generally require both an adapter plug and a converter/transformer (unless you have a dual voltage device).

Use alternatives like plastic razors and shaving cream, take battery powered devices, and don't worry about your hair!

Should you decide that you can't live without your electricity-driven appliances consider the space the devices take up and the weight of taking it along - and the weight of the step-up transformer! Is it really worth it? Unless you have a medical device requiring power, we suggest you leave all your electrical devices at home. Digital Cameras are 110-220v-need plug converter.

Laptop Computers and Digital Cameras

In order to be able to use your computer or connect it with a digital camera during the tour program, we suggest you bring along your regular power supply cord to the laptop as well as an Ethernet cable.

Traveling

DO NOT PACK YOUR PASSPORT IN YOUR LUGGAGE!

Carry your Passport with you at all times using a waist/neck carrier.

Arriving and Departing the United States

Flying to Chicago and Arriving at O'Hare International Airport/

Flying to Washington, D.C. and Arriving at Dulles International Airport

During your flight you will receive arrival cards and forms to complete. Keep these with your passport and airline ticket to use upon arrival.

Note: Try to use the restroom facilities on the airplane prior to arrival in Chicago as it will take up to an hour to go through immigration & customs and another hour before arrival at your hotel.

1. First you will go through Immigration.

Proceed to the Immigration lines marked for international/foreign citizens (not domestic/US citizens). Stand in line noticing the yellow lines and only proceed when called by the officer to do so. They will require you to show your entry card that you will have completed on the airplane and Passport (with Visa, in some cases). They will look your data up on the computer system to determine your entry status and will stamp your Visa in your passport with an entry stamp. They may check your finger prints as well.

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2. From this point proceed to the luggage carousel designated for your flight and pick up your bags.
3. Go through the green lane of customs and tell the customs agents that you have nothing to declare. Exit customs and look for the blue logo signs for Summer Camp (shown below).



4. Our staff will have the same OCDF sign and will be wearing OCDF logowear clothing. The sign will not have your name on it. If you can't find the guide, please stand by McDonalds and the guide will find you. Carry with you the OCDF contact numbers in case you need to call us. Do not go with persons other than an OCDF staff.
5. You will be met outside customs by OCDF staff. We will proceed to our tour bus for the ride into the city (about 45 minutes from the airports). While on the bus your greeter will provide directions about checking into the hotel, changing money, and the next day's agenda. They will provide an orientation to the city as you travel to the hotel.

A word to the wise! You are not allowed to bring food or plant products into the U.S. (exceptions are sealed packages of items like Chinese tea or candy). So, please don't pack or bring food items onto the flight to the U.S. (eat whatever snacks you have for the flight during the flight) and don't carry off the plane any uneaten food from the flight. It will not make the inspection people happy and will certainly delay you as you proceed through U.S. Customs and Agriculture Inspection.

Calling Home and Time Zones

Calling China from the US is relatively easy but it is not always cheap. You may purchase a calling card or use internet phone if you wish to reduce the calling rate. You may wish to establish with your family some target days and times that you will try to call them rather than risk them not being at home.

13 hours ahead of Midwest (Chicago) § When it's 8 p.m. on Friday night in China it is 7:00 a.m. on Friday morning Chicago § When it's 8 a.m. on Saturday morning in China it is 7:00 p.m. on Friday night in Chicago

12 hours ahead of East Coast (Washington, D.C.-Philadelphia-NYC-Maine) § When it's 8 p.m. on Friday night in China it is 8:00 a.m. on Friday morning in the eastern United States § When it's 8 a.m. on Saturday morning in China it is 8:00 p.m. on Friday night in Washington, D.C. (etc.).

Family may also wish to call you although the rates are higher from China to the U.S. than calling China from the U.S.

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When dialing from the U.S. use 011 86 before the regular Chinese telephone number. Hong Kong is 011 862.

Healthcare and Other Emergencies

Healthcare is available throughout America and Western-style medical practices are prevalent. It will be rare to find a supplier or practitioner of Traditional Chinese Medicines. In case of an emergency you would be taken to the closest medical facility for treatment. You would be accompanied by the group leader and/or our OCDF staff/guide.

Insurance

It is wise for travelers from China to avail themselves PRIOR to the travel program of an insurance policy that includes medical evacuation services, trip interruption and trip cancellation insurance. Determine with your regular medical insurance provider the extent to which they will cover you during your trip abroad.

Insurance Provider for OCDF: We will arrange IMG insurance for those without Global Insurance coverage.

Emergency Telephone Numbers in the United States

Police 911

Chinese Consulate in Chicago: 100 W Erie St, Chicago, IL 60654
(312) 803-0095

Chinese Consulate in Washington, D.C.: 2300 Connecticut Ave NW, Washington, DC 20008-1799
(202) 328-2500

Illinois State University on-campus housing will have 24-hour security personnel.

Health Information / Sanitation and Hygiene

Keeping healthy in the USA is easy if you take care when eating, don't drink unsafe water, drink plenty of safe fluids, frequently visit the restroom, get lots of rest, keep your hands clean, and have a positive attitude about the new experiences. All bathrooms will have Western, sit-down toilets and toilet paper. It is expected that toilet paper will be flushed and not thrown into the wastebasket.

How to Apply for the U.S. Visa

Please follow the following steps to apply for a non-immigrant visa at the US Embassy Beijing:

1. Make an Appointment for the Interview and Appointment Wait Times

To make an appointment, buy a pre-paid PIN card from [China CITIC Bank](#) or visit the [Visa Information Call Center website](#) to purchase a PIN number online. PIN cards cost 54 RMB for 12 minutes of phone time or 36 RMB for 8 minutes. Unused minutes may be used later or transferred to another party.

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Once you have a prepaid card, call the Visa Information Call Center to make an interview appointment or ask specific questions about the visa process. Please ensure that you know the following information: applicant's full name, passport number, ID number, contact information, purpose of travel, place of residence, whether s/he was refused before, etc.

All long distance charges are the sole responsibility of the caller, and all calls are generally answered in less than 30 seconds

Call Center Numbers:

Within China: 4008-872-333

(021) 3881-4611 (Shanghai local number)

Outside of China: (86-21) 3881-4611

Hours: Monday-Friday from 7:00 AM -7:00 PM

Saturday from 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Pre-recorded visa information is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

2. Pay the Application Fee

The current U.S. non-immigrant visa application fee is \$131.00 (RMB 904). All applicants applying for nonimmigrant visas in China must pay the non-refundable application fee of RMB 904.00 (effective Thursday, July 24, 2008) at designated branches of [China CITIC Bank](#). Both copies of the CITIC Bank fee receipt must be included with all visa applications. Please note that the application fee is non-refundable regardless of whether or not a visa is issued.

3. Prepare an Appropriate Photo

Composition Checklist (6 Steps to a Successful Photo)

- a. Frame subject with full face, front view, eyes open
- b. Photo must represent full head from top of hair to bottom of chin
- c. Center head within frame
- d. Photograph subject against plain white or off-white background
- e. Position subject and lighting so there are no distracting shadows on the face or background
- f. Encourage subject to have a natural expression

4. Fill in the Online Visa Application Form (DS-160)

You may access the online application at <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>

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5. Gather the Required Documents

Please bring the following documents with you to the interview:

- a. The DS-160 application form confirmation page, with the telecodes for your name handwritten on the form (to find the appropriate telecodes, please visit <http://www.bioinfo.tsinghua.edu.cn/~zhengjsh/cgi-bin/getCode.cgi>). You must also handwrite your name, home address, company name and company address in Hanzi on your form.
- b. One photograph: Two inch square (51mm x 51mm) color photograph, less than 6 months old, against a white background, full frontal view
- c. The application fee bank receipt, glued or taped onto the bottom of DS-160 form confirmation page
- d. A passport valid for at least six months beyond the intended stay in the United States
- e. Passports containing all previous U.S. visas, even if expired
- f. Suggested supporting documents, such as a resume in English

6. Appear for the Interview

See http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/niv_appointmentday.html for interview day tips

7. Arrange for Visa/Passport Return through China Post

If your visa application was approved after the interview, your visa will be placed in your passport and your passport will be mailed to you within 5 working days. Alternatively, pick up is available 2-3 working days after the interview date from the China Post Office located in the Chaoyang Government Visa Service Center near the entrance to the Visa Section of the Embassy. Special circumstances, such as the need for administrative processing, incomplete applications, and/or fraud investigations may influence the processing of individual cases and delay visa issuance.

The Average Visa Processing Wait Time is the number of working days it takes after a consular officer approves a visa for the passport and visa to be returned to the applicant. **Please note: Processing wait time DOES NOT include the time required for administrative processing. These procedures require additional time. When administrative processing is required, the timing will vary based on individual circumstances of each case. The current average administrative processing wait time is 3-4 weeks.**

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