

Planning and Packing Checklist

Required - Before you Go

- Ensure passport or visa is current. (Passport must not expire for six months from your return and has three blank pages. Visa may be required for non-US Citizens either to Botswana or a transit visa for going through South Africa.)
- Book your flight. Remember you will need to submit either boarding passes or a credit card statement for reimbursement.
- Send your exact travel itinerary to Nikki Jones (jonesn@botswana-upenn.co.bw) and Heather Calvert (hcalvert@mail.med.upenn.edu) and your Penn-based supervisor at least six weeks ahead of your arrival to secure an airport pick-up.
- Get immunizations and medications: Hep A and B, Typhoid, update Tdap, Malaria prophylaxis (if traveling north of Gaborone) and other medications (see Handbook).
- Get tuberculin skin test. (Remember to repeat test eight weeks after returning.)
- Register your travel plans online with the Department of State: <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/> and with Penn's Global Activities Registry: <http://www.upenn.edu/globalactivities/index.html>
- Read the Botswana-UPenn Partnership Handbook.

Optional - For the Super Organized

- Enroll in frequent flyer mileage program.
- Complete your taxes if you will be away over the deadline.
- Fill out an absentee voter form if you will be out of town at election time.
- Print address labels for people to whom you wish to send postcards.
- Establish a Skype account (It's free.)
- Purchase or borrow "Botswana Culture Smart" by Mike Main. No other local guidebooks are necessary because the BUP Housing in Botswana has plenty.
- Purchase travelers' insurance for your stuff. (You don't need medical evacuation insurance because this comes from International SOS.)
- Record the serial number for any electronics you are taking with you, along with your credit cards and email the information to yourself. Scan a copy of your passport and email this to yourself.

Final Arrangements

- Arrange for pet, plant, or house sitter.
- Put hold on newspapers and mail. Arrange for pickup of packages left at door.
- Pay bills. If you'll be gone for an extended period of time, arrange for a friend or relative to pay the bills.
- Leave emergency contact info and itinerary with relative or friend. Verify available spending limits on credit cards and notify the issuer that you will be in Botswana so they don't place a freeze on your account.

Day Prior to Departure

- Set timers for lights.
- Water plants.
- Wash dishes.
- Give or throw away perishables from refrigerator.
- Empty trash.

- Update voice mail and e-mail auto-reply message.
- Record / memorize PIN codes to credit cards.
- Install or recharge batteries.

Day of Departure

- Lock all windows and doors.
- Adjust thermostat.
- Remove unnecessary cards from wallet (library, video rental, punch cards, extra credit cards).
- Check in for flight via Web.
- Power-off computer and other sensitive electronic equipment.
- Ensure luggage has current ID tags.

Packing

Important personal possessions, necessities, and all valuables should be carried on the plane. These include money, documentation, electronic items, and prescription drugs. Do not check anything that you absolutely cannot do without or that is of value. There is a high likelihood of bags getting delayed/lost or items being stolen from suitcases when traveling through Johannesburg. Make sure that these items are in your carry-on bag. You may want to pack some underwear and a few essential items in your carry on to get you through a day or two if your luggage is delayed.

The allowance on your international flights is two pieces of checked luggage, and one carry-on. Each checked bag may not exceed 50 pounds. Air transfers in Southern Africa have a luggage restriction of 44 pounds maximum per person.

Documents (Pack in carry-on luggage.)

- Passport & visa
- Airline ticket and/or itinerary
- Emergency phone numbers
- The Botswana-UPenn Partnership Handbook
- Copy of your passport and other important documents, kept in a separate place than your passport, or scan a copy and email it to yourself.
- Copies of prescriptions
- Medical insurance information
- Driver's license
- Cash (US dollars)
- Credit/ATM cards (It is advisable to bring some cash as well along with bank contact numbers in case you need to report a missing card.)

Extra Documents for Residents and Physicians Working at PMH (Pack in carry-on luggage.)

- Completed Botswana Health Professions Council Application Form
- 4 x Passport Photos
- Notarized copy of passport
- Notarized copy of medical school diploma (NOTE: If your diploma is written in Latin, it should be translated to English and then notarized.)
- Notarized copy of your state license
- Copy of your resume / CV

Electrical Items (Pack in carry-on luggage.)

- Laptop, power cord, and laptop lock (The flats have computers but if you need to work, you may find this useful. If you will mostly be in the clinics, you might want to leave your computer behind.)

- Camera / camera batteries / charger / extra memory / film / camera bag.
- CD or MP3 player / extra batteries and/or charger / headphones
- Cell phone / cell phone charger

Personal Health & Medical Supplies (Pack in carry-on luggage.)

- Prescription medicines, if required. Bring enough for your whole stay.
- Over-the-counter medications (antihistamine, antacid, anti-inflammatory, travel sickness, cold & flu, headache, indigestion, diarrhea)
- Prescription glasses / contact lenses / lens case / lens cleaner / saline

Personal Effects / Hygiene (Pack in checked luggage.)

All basic toiletry items are available in Botswana, so you if you forget something, you can easily purchase it there. Remember that all liquids, gels and aerosols must be in three-ounce or smaller containers and placed in a single, quart-size, zip-top, clear plastic bag to be carried on the plane. Larger amounts can be checked.

- Toilet/Dop bag
- Razor / electric shaver / shaving cream
- Toothbrush / toothpaste / floss
- Deodorant
- Soap
- Shampoo / Conditioner Comb / hair brush
- Fingernail clippers
- Moisturizer
- Cosmetics
- Tampons / pads
- Sunscreen and lip balm (minimum SPF 15)
- Hand sanitizer, such as Purell (several small bottles)
- Vitamins

Recommended Clothing (Pack in checked luggage.)

Light colored clothing and light material is recommended for the Botswana summer months (November – March) as it gets very hot and buildings don't usually have any heating or cooling. If you are traveling during the Botswana winter (May – September) know that it can get chilly at night. Pack accordingly.

Your clothes will take a beating. Don't bring anything to wear on a daily basis that you don't want to get damaged or stained. That said, people dress up to go out and there are often chances for social events so you may want to have a nice outfit to wear. Business people dress professionally (suits, ties, skirts) so plan accordingly if you will have business meetings in Botswana.

- Socks
- Underwear
- Dress slacks and khaki trousers (jeans are not appropriate at work)
- Dresses or skirts (knee length or longer for work, no denim)
- Lightweight cotton dress shirts (T-shirts are not appropriate at work)
- Jeans (for weekends, travel, or after-work wear)
- Shorts (Note that Tswana men do not normally wear shorts.)
- T-shirts or sport shirts
- Pajamas / sleepwear (appropriate to wear around people you don't know)
- Exercise clothing
- Something nice to wear to fancy dinner / clubbing clothes
- Comfortable dress shoes or loafers (tennis shoes or sandals are not appropriate at work)
- Casual shoes / running shoes or light to medium hiking boots, suitably broken in

- Flip-flops / sandals
- Bandannas, large handkerchiefs or scarves
- Brimmed hat (There are about 365 days of sunshine in Botswana.)
- Sunglasses
- Belt
- Umbrella (only during the rainy season October - December)
- Extra luggage space for purchases (or you can leave behind some clothing to make room)

Extra Clothing for Cold Weather

Only necessary if you go during the Botswana winter (April – September). Note that many work buildings do not have heat and it gets quite cold at night. You will want to layer if you go camping or go on game drives.

- Sweatshirt, sweater or fleece (It can get cold!)
- Raincoat / windbreaker
- Thermal underwear
- Gloves or mittens
- Scarf
- Knitted (woolen) cap
- Housecoat / robe

Extra Items for those Working in the Hospital

If you are working in the hospitals, your clothes may be casual but neat. Some of the male physicians do wear a tie, most do not. Two white coats

- Penn name badge
- Stethoscope
- Pocket flashlight / penlight
- Portable ophthalmoscope (handy but not necessary)
- Fanny pack to carry essentials while working in the hospital
- Hand sanitizer (a small pocket size one and a bigger refill bottle)
- Suture removal scissors (1-2 pairs you'll end up cleaning and re-using them)
- N95 masks (3-6 masks that reflect the correct size from a recent fit test.)

Extra Miscellaneous Items

None of the items below are mandatory, but may make your trip more comfortable.

- Travel neck pillow
- Ear plugs
- Pens / notebooks / journal
- Magazines / a novel that can be swapped, shared or given away. (This is a good time to read something by Unity Dow to learn something about Botswana.)
- Alarm clock / watch with alarm / or cell phone with alarm.)
- USB Flash drive / thumb drive

Extra Items If you Plan to Travel Outside of Gaborone

Travelling means that you will no longer have the guidance of BUP staff and easy access to medical care in Gaborone. You will need to be equipped to travel and deal with situations on your own.

The thing to remember when choosing luggage is mobility. You will probably be moving between several different modes of transport (airplanes, cars, light aircraft, trucks) so plan accordingly. Suitcases with wheels don't work very well in the African bush but they are adequate if you don't mind carrying them.

Only soft bags are accepted on air charter flights within Botswana if you are traveling outside of Gaborone. Soft "squashable" luggage (duffel, fabric or canvas) is essential. No hard suitcases can be transported as they physically cannot fit into the aircraft. The maximum dimensions of the soft bags should be as follows: 32 inches long x 14 inches wide.

- Large duffel bag to carry everything
- Day pack (i.e. small backpack)
- Money belt
- Sleeping bag (good to about 0C, waterproof stuff sack to cover)
- Sheet / pillowcase / camping pillow
- Bath towel and face cloth (quick-dry is best)
- Toilet paper (1 roll – easily bought in Bots)
- Disposable towelettes / wet wipes / hand sanitizer
- Insect repellent (minimum 30% DEET) (Mosquitoes are less bothersome than in North America, but potentially more dangerous. Covering up in the evening is imperative during the rainy season and when traveling outside of Gaborone.)
- Malaria prophylaxis pills (for anyone traveling north of Gaborone)
- General antibiotic (such as Cipro)
- Syringes (in case you need injections, you will have a clean needle only needed outside of Botswana)
- Thermometer
- Re-hydration salts
- Water bottle and water purification tablets or water purifying filter
- First aid items: Band-aids, antibiotic ointment, alcohol swabs, moleskin
- Safety pins, scissors, tweezers, needle
- Pocket knife (Swiss Army / Leatherman). (Note - These cannot be checked in carry-on bags and they are often stolen from checked bags.)
- Flashlight / headlamp, extra batteries
- Small unbreakable mirror
- Small compass
- Lighter / waterproof matches
- String/rope (washing line, tying sleeping bag)
- Plastic zipper storage bags
- Plastic bags to separate dirty clothes from clean / hold muddy shoes
- 10 passport-size photos (to be used for various permits, visas, and ID cards; also helpful for obtaining visas if you plan to travel outside Botswana.)
- Plug adaptor (for UK plugs, if you bring electronic equipment).
- Guide books / phrasebook for countries outside of Botswana

Extra Items for Safari and Game Viewing

- Binoculars
- Long-sleeved shirts, slacks and socks to protect you from insect bites and sunburn. Note that bright colors and white are NOT advised while on safari as they tend to attract flies and mosquitoes. Camouflage clothes are often illegal.
- Good quality sunglasses – preferably polarized. Tinted fashion glasses are not good in strong light.
- Safari hat with a brim (should be light colored, breathable, waterproof, and provide complete shade to face and ears)
- Comfortable hiking/walking shoes or light hiking boots instead of sandals to protect from thorns and mosquitoes.
- If you wear contact lenses, you should take a pair of glasses in case you get irritation from the dust.
- Small bean bag to substitute a tripod
- Waterproof/dustproof bags/cover for your cameras.