2005 PREPARING FOR YOUR SEMESTER IN EQUATORIAL GUINEA (EG)

Equatorial Guinea in West Africa is bordered by Gabon, Cameroon and the Gulf of Guinea. The country also comprises the island of Bioko, formerly Fernando Poo, 34km (21 miles) off the coast of Cameroon, and the small offshore islands of Corisco, Great Elobey, Small Elobey and Annobón (formerly Pagalu). The mainland province, Río Muni, is mainly forest, with plantations on the coastal plain and some mountains. Bioko rises steeply to two main peaks in the north and south. The southern area is rugged and inaccessible. The beaches around the islands are extremely beautiful. Equatorial Guinea is a country of luscious vegetation and much beautiful scenery, including tropical forests and volcanoes. The capital, Malabo, is a rather rundown but attractive town, with pleasant Spanish colonial architecture, a striking volcanic setting and a lively market. Most restaurants serve Spanish or continental cuisine. Pizza Place, the principal expatriate restaurant for all other nationalities, is distinctly American and authentic African restaurants also exist (see below).

Passport/Visa

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PASSPORTS: Passport valid for a minimum of six months required by all.

See the Consular Information sheet for more details on entry/exit requirements. The Embassy of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea is located at: 2020 16 th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009, telephone (202) 518-5700, fax (202) 518-5252.

Health:

Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov for more details. Click on Destinations, and then click on Africa, Central.

CDC recommends the following vaccines (as appropriate for age):

See your doctor at least 4–6 weeks before your trip to allow time for shots to take effect.

- [Hepatitis A](https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/vaccines.htm) or immune globulin (IG).
- [Hepatitis B](https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/vaccines.htm), if you might be exposed to blood (for example, health-care workers), have sexual contact with the local population, stay longer than 6 months, or be exposed through medical treatment. **A good idea.**
- [Meningococcal (meningitis)](https://www.cdc.gov/travel/vaccines/vaccines-for-travel/meningitis.html), if you plan to visit Central African Republic, Chad, and Sudan from December through June. **Also a good idea.**
- [Yellow fever](https://www.cdc.gov/yellowfever/), if you plan to travel anywhere outside cities. **A requirement.**
- [Rabies](https://www.cdc.gov/travel/vaccines/vaccines-for-travel/rabies.html), if you might be exposed to wild or domestic animals through your work or recreation. We do not expect to be exposed to either wild or domestic animals, but many people prefer the **added security.**
- [Typhoid](https://www.cdc.gov/travel/vaccines/vaccines-for-travel/typhoid.html), particularly if you are visiting developing countries in this region. E.G. is definitely a developing country and so this is **highly recommended.**
• As needed, booster doses for tetanus-diphtheria, measles, and a one-time dose of polio vaccine for adults. Hepatitis B vaccine is now recommended for all infants and for children ages 11–12 years who did not receive the series as infants.

• Malaria is a preventable infection that can be fatal if left untreated. Prevent infection by taking prescription antimalarial drugs and protecting yourself against mosquito bites. Travelers to Central Africa should take one of the following antimalarial drugs: doxycycline or Malarone™.

Health and Accident Insurance: Arcadia University enrolls all participants in a health and accident insurance plan. This plan is offered through CISI (Cultural Insurance Services International) and underwritten by Virginia Surety Company Inc. The plan is effective throughout the duration of your program. The maximum medical expenses of the policy for accident or sickness are $200,000 with no deductible. For additional information on this policy, please contact:

    Cultural Insurance Services International
    River Plaza
    9 West Broad Street
    Stamford, CT 06902-3788
    Tel. (800) 303-8120
    Fax (203) 399-5596

Travel - International

AIR: Both Iberia (IB) and Spanair operate direct flights from Madrid to Malabo twice a week. Swissair operates two flights a week to Malabo from Zurich. Other airlines connecting Equatorial Guinea to other African countries include Air Afrique, Air Gabon, Cameroon Airlines and Nigeria Airways. Service to other African countries is notoriously unreliable.

Approximate flight times: From Malabo to Madrid is 8 hours 40 minutes.

International airports: There are international airports at Malabo (SSG) (Santa Isabel) 5km (3.1 miles) from the city center, and Bata 6km (3.7 miles) from the city center. All flights from Europe come into Malabo.

Departure tax: There is a departure tax of $20.00.

SEA: The main ports are Malabo and Bata. Passenger services operate to Douala (Cameroon).

ROAD: Roads link Equatorial Guinea (Rio Muni) with Cameroon and Gabon (bush taxis are available), although road surfaces are not always good. Most travelers enter from Douala in Cameroon.

Travel - Internal

AIR: Ecuato Guineane de Aviación operates flights between Malabo and Bata every day except Monday, and it is advisable to book in advance. Note: It is reported that maintenance procedures used on internal flights are not always properly observed.

SEA: There is a ferry between Malabo, Bata and Douala. The trip takes about 12 hours. There are four classes of fare.

ROAD: Not all roads are paved. On Bioko, the north is generally better served with tarred roads. Bush taxis connect Malabo with the island's two other main towns, Luba and Riaba, and can be hired hourly or daily. There are no car rental facilities. In Rio Muni, a minibus service (normally three a day) is available from Bato to Mbini (1 hour), to Acalayong (6 hours) and to Ebebiyin (8-10 hours during the dry season).

Money

Currency: CFA (Communauté Financière Africaine) Franc (written F.cfa or CFAfr, and pronounced “say-fah”) is the common currency of a number of countries in the region. Notes are in denominations of CFAfr 10,000, 5000, 1000 and 500. Coins are in denominations of CFAfr500, 100, 50, 25, 10 and 5. Equatorial Guinea is part of the French Monetary Area. Only currency issued by the Banque des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale (Bank of Central African States) is
valid; currency issued by the Banque des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (Bank of West African States) is not. The CFA Franc is tied to the Euro. Many establishments also take dollars, although the exchange rate varies. Money changed into F.Cfa. cannot be changed back into other currencies at banks, even in Equatorial Guinea.

**Currency exchange:** Foreign currencies are best exchanged at banks. We have found that a Cameroon-based bank in Malabo, CCEI Bank, has good rates and the best service. CCEI Bank is also reliable on wire transfers, so that money can be sent directly from the United States. Wire transfer costs vary, depending on your US bank, but average approximately $15.00. You will be invited to establish a bank account at CCEI Bank upon arrival in Malabo. You should bring approximately $200 US dollars to deposit in this account. Your family can wire transfer additional money directly to this account. Keep in mind that you should only deposit money that will be spent during your time in Equatorial Guinea. The cost to convert excess money in your CCEI account back to US dollars is very expensive.

**Credit & debit cards:** Credit cards are not used in Equatorial Guinea. The only exception we know of is the Swiss Airline office in Malabo, which will take American Express for air tickets.

**Traveler’s cheques:** Travelers cheques are generally not recommended. The cost of cashing a travelers cheque at a bank is excessive; no businesses will accept travelers cheques.

**Exchange rate indicators:** The current exchange rate is 1 US dollar = 543.50 CFA

**Currency restrictions:** The import of local and foreign currency is unrestricted provided declared on arrival. The export of local currency is limited to CFAfr 50,000 (approximately $90). The export of foreign currency is limited to the amount declared on arrival. It is worth remembering that CFA Franc notes cannot easily be exchanged outside the CFA Franc area.

**Social Profile**
There is a six-hour time difference between Equatorial Guinea and the east coast of the United States.

**Food & Drink:** There are few restaurants in Equatorial Guinea and those that exist are mainly restricted to Malabo and Bata and do not necessarily open every day. In Malabo, the most elegant restaurants are Bahia, Club Nautico, and The Spanish Cultural Center. Good African style restaurants include Guy Guy and 4 Aces. The classic expatriate restaurant is Pizza Place. Restaurants are expensive, especially if they cater to the expatriate crowd. Beer is inexpensive, but often limited to “33” (big) and Heinekens (regular-size).

**Shopping:** Shopping hours: Mon-Sat 0800-1300 and 1600-1900.

**Social Conventions:** Since the discovery of oil offshore from Bioko Island, Americans have become common in the capital city. Fortunately, Americans seem to be well liked by local people. Spaniards (recall that Equatorial Guinea was a Spanish colony until 1968) are sometimes treated with suspicion. A knowledge of Spanish is useful.

**Photography:** A permit is required. Care should be taken when choosing subjects. Photographing the presidential palace, airports, harbors and other sensitive areas should be avoided.

**Tipping:** Unless service charges are added to bills, it is common to tip 10 to 15 per cent.

**Electricity:** 220/240 volts AC. Electricity is not reliable, and there are frequent power outages.

**Mail:** Service to the US takes up to three weeks. Mail coming from the US should be addressed to “Equatorial Guinea, Central Africa” so it doesn’t go to some other part of the world, and should also include the notation “Via Madrid, Spain” to get it aimed in the right direction.

**Climate**
The climate is tropical year round. Rainfall is heavy for most of the year, decreasing slightly in most areas between
December and February. **Required clothing:** Lightweight cottons, Coolmax, and other lightweight fabrics. Protection against rain is necessary. See enclosed “What to Pack” brochure for more details.

**Public Holidays**

**Other Helpful Travel Links**

U.S. Department of State:

- [Background Note: Equatorial Guinea](#)
- [Consular Information Sheet](#)

6/23/05
Immunization Cost Estimates
Semester in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea
Universidad Nacional De Guinea Ecuatorial (UNGE)

You should begin the immunization process now by contacting your primary care doctor. They can advise you on immunization centers in your area. Depending on your type of insurance coverage, some shots may be covered. See your doctor at least 4–6 weeks before your trip to allow time for shots to take effect.

Below are sample costs from a center near Arcadia University.

Associates in Infectious Diseases
1235 Old York Road # 220,
Abington, PA 19001
Phone:(215) 886-8075

- Hepatitis A - $80
- Hepatitis B - 3rd $95 = $285 series of three now, one month later, 6 months later
- Meningitis - $85
- Yellow Fever - $100
- Typhoid - $70 (oral) $75 (injection)
- Tetanus-Diphtheria - $40
- Measles boosters - $35
- Polio - $50

There is an office visit charge of $60 for one person, or $35 each for two or three people.

As stated previously, the CDC recommends the following when studying in Central Africa:

- Hepatitis A or immune globulin (IG).
- Hepatitis B, if you might be exposed to blood (for example, health-care workers), have sexual contact with the local population, stay longer than 6 months, or be exposed through medical treatment. A good idea.
- Meningococcal (meningitis), if you plan to visit Central African Republic, Chad, and Sudan from December through June. Also a good idea.
- Yellow fever, if you plan to travel anywhere outside cities. A requirement.
- Typhoid, particularly if you are visiting developing countries in this region. E.G. is definitely a developing country and so this is highly recommended.
- As needed, booster doses for tetanus-diphtheria, measles, and a one-time dose of polio vaccine for adults. Hepatitis B vaccine is now recommended for all infants and for children ages 11–12 years who did not receive the series as infants.
- Malaria is a preventable infection that can be fatal if left untreated. Prevent infection by taking prescription antimalarial drugs and protecting yourself against mosquito bites. Travelers to Central Africa should take one of the following antimalarial drugs: doxycycline or Malarone™.

6/23/05
2005 What to Pack

There is no such thing as taking too little, although it’s hard for us to convince students that this is true. Just ask someone who has studied abroad before, and you'll probably be advised to leave as much as you can at home. It will be there when you get back. Let practicality be your guide for packing.

Packing for Malabo: If you plan carefully so that all articles of clothing mix and match, you can create plenty of different outfits from a minimum number of items. Choose clothes that are good for layering and drip-dry easily. Keep in mind that the very best protection against mosquitoes and the diseases they carry (malaria and dengue fever) is long-sleeve shirts and pants. This includes sleeping clothes as well.

Women, in particular, dress with a European fashion sense in Malabo. Modesty is a good rule of thumb when thinking about what to pack. Leave your small tank tops at home.

Packing for Field Study Trips: You will be spending at least 4 weeks or more living in tents in remote areas on the island. There is a list below of the field clothing and gear you will need. Also consult the Caldera expedition packing list on the BBPP website (www.bioko.org) since you will be in the same general area.

Packing for December in Glenside: Also remember that you will be spending a week in Glenside, PA, at the end of the program. You should pack clothing appropriate for December weather. These items can be left in Glenside in order to save precious luggage space.

- Jeans - 2 pairs
- Cotton T-shirts
- Button down shirts- bring a few for layering
- A Dress Outfit - For meeting persons of authority. Shirt and tie with khakis for men. Dress or skirt/blouse for women
- Umbrella - not needed but nice for Malabo
- Bathing Suit
- School Bag - can be the same as field back pack, but you may want a separate one
- Hat - baseball cap for city
- Sun Screen - good idea
- Laptop Computer/Ether net Cord - needed to connect to the internet at UNGE from the student house
- Clothing for bars and discotheques
- Toiletries - soap, shampoo, razors, tooth paste and tooth brush, wash cloth, loofa, Q-tips, cotton balls, combs, brushes, feminine hygiene products for women
- Sun Glasses - you will want these in Malabo and for field trips
- Multivitamins - a really good idea for personal health
- Pain Killers - Advil or Tylenol
- One set of twin sheets and two towels that you can leave behind when you depart
- Light-weight sleeping clothes to protect skin from mosquitoes
- Note books - for class
- Textbooks and Bioko Handbook- purchased in Glenside for courses
- Camera

Field Study Trip Equipment:

Most field trips are to lowland rain forest sites, but two trips can involve surprisingly cold conditions. The village of Moka gets quite cool (40 – 50 F) at night, so plan a series of layers (sleeping bag, waterproof poncho or shell, shirt, pants) that you can put together to stay warm. If you manage to get to the top of Pico Basile, you will find temperatures in the 40’s F, even in the daytime, with a chilling wind. You’ll need your shell and plenty of layers to be comfortable enough to enjoy the altitude.
• Food - when packing your bag for the field study trips include some quick sources of energy like hard candies, granola bars, or peanut butter from the States
• Everything must be drab colors, greens browns blacks or dark blues
• Hiking Boots with Gaiters or rubber boots (“Wellingtons”) if you have sturdy feet. Rubber boots protect from ants and water
• Socks – 2 pairs of liner socks, 2 pairs of wool socks or other quick drying socks. Camp socks and sleep socks
• Field Pants - something which dries quickly and is durable, camp pants light fast drying
• Sandals - something that straps on tightly and is water resistant, such as Tevas
• Underwear - 3 pairs quick drying
• Belt - not leather
• Shirts - 2 long sleeved shirts light quick drying, cotton t-shirt, 2 sports bras(women)
• Hat - baseball cap or something wide brimmed and fast drying
• Bandanas - several, dark colors
• Pocket Knife or leatherman – with useful attachments. Pack this in your checked luggage
• Binoculars - water proof (These are essential if you plan to see any wildlife)
• Water bottle - very durable
• Back Pack - something light but has a lot of volume, and an accessible place for a water bottle
• Digital Watch - reliable and water resistant
• Poncho or Rain Coat - durable and light weight
• Carabineer
• Camp towel - must be durable and easy to wash/dry
• Sleeping bag - light fast drying if possible
• Thera Rest - something just big enough for your back, light and easy to carry
• Flash Light (headlamp) - head set flash lights are best
• Batteries - you cannot find reliable batteries in the markets of Malabo (to fit your headlamp; run your camera)
• All electronic recording equipment is optional but provides more credibility to your sightings.
  o Camera - digital is best with large optical zoom but not too heavy
  o Audio Recorder - light with great recording range
  o Video Camera - can be good for recording primate movements
• Dry Sack - for water sensitive items
• Camp Soap - needed for bathing and washing clothing and equipment. Cannot be purchased in the markets of Malabo
• Hair Conditioner - for persons with long hair, the spray kind is best
• Basic Toiletry Items - such as toe nail clippers, combs, tooth brush and tooth paste
• Zip Lock Bags - next best thing to dry sacks and will be needed for some items
• Cortisone cream - a requirement for all skin irritations
• Duct Tape - can be purchased in Malabo’s central market but is difficult to find and very expensive
• Iodine Tablets/Water Filter - tablets are effective but take a long time to use, leave yellow stains and taste bad. Filters are more expensive, but do not stain or taste bad. However, filters can fail and iodine tablets don’t fail. It comes down to personal preference
• Desiccant - needed for water sensitive items
• Insect repellant- deet is most effective but destroys plastics
• First Aide Kit
• Field Note Book - the program will provide some but better ones can be purchased, something like a tiny 3 ring binder with a plastic cover is best. It is possible to buy waterproof spiral bound pads (3.5 x 5”) from a site on the Internet. They are terrific
• Field Pen/Pencil - practical and water resistant fast drying ink