



THE BAOBAB CENTER PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION 2011-2012

WHAT IS THE BAOBAB CENTER?

We at Africa Consultants International (ACI) are pleased to be your hosts in Senegal. Our Baobab Training and Resource Center will be the headquarters for your study abroad experience. Located in the residential neighborhood of SICAP Baobab, about a half hour from downtown Dakar, the Baobab Center has been the point of contact for numerous high schools, colleges and universities that have chosen Dakar as a study abroad destination for over twenty years. According to the specific needs of each institution, the Baobab Center offers a range of services essential to the success of these programs. By providing logistical support, housing and homestay experiences, geographical and cultural orientations and language instruction, we offer students a panoramic introduction to Senegalese society, allowing you to gain independence quickly in your academic study, research and projects. In addition, the Baobab Center houses the off-campus academic portion of many study abroad programs, taught by some of Dakar's leading university professors.

GETTING READY

You are now preparing for your experience in Senegal, and you probably have a million questions about what awaits you when you arrive and how to prepare yourself for the journey. The skill of coping with future uncertainty will serve you well in Africa, where things do not always work according to plan. Here are some helpful tips to know before you depart that will make your experience more enjoyable and safe.

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B.P. 5270 Dakar-Fann
Tel: (221) 33.825.36.37

Fax: (221) 33.824.07.41
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Site Web: www.acibaobab.org

ACI Santé / ACI Health

Villa 4346 Amitié 3
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COMMUNICATION WITH HOME

It is important to tell your family that communication with Senegal can often be difficult, due to power outages, saturated phone lines and the time difference. Ask them to be patient if they have difficulty reaching you, and not to assume too quickly that anything might be wrong.

Receiving Mail from Home. People can send you correspondence using the following Baobab Center post office box address:

YOUR NAME
s/c ACI Baobab Center
B.P. 5270
Dakar – Fann
SENEGAL

Mail generally takes 10 days to 2 weeks to arrive from the U.S. so if you are on a short program (2 or 3 weeks) you might not be here long enough to receive any mail. Make sure to tell your friends and family to mark your letters "Air Mail," as surface mail can take up to 6 weeks. We pick up mail at the post office and bring it to the Baobab Center on a regular basis.

The US Postal Service sends packages to Senegal. However, the postal service in Senegal will charge you to receive a package. You will receive a ticket in the mail inviting you to pick up your package at the post office, but they do not tell you what is in it or how much you will have to pay. You should also be prepared to wait in long lines and move from window to window! Most packages cost between \$2 and \$3 to receive. Depending on the contents of the package (listed on the customs slip) the package may have to go through customs, where it is opened and inspected, and sometimes costs more to receive. Your family and friends should refrain from sending very valuable items through regular mail as packages can be damaged or even opened, and sometimes things disappear. In many cases valuable items are slapped with a high duty tax.

If you must receive an important package, express mail companies such as FEDEX, DHL and UPS all service Senegal. Although such services may be very expensive, delivery usually takes 3-6 days. They deliver directly to the Baobab Center, so the sender should use the street address and the phone number:

YOUR NAME
ACI Baobab Center
509 SICAP Baobabs
Dakar, Senegal
Tel: (221) 33.825.36.37

Sending Mail. To send letters through regular mail (sometimes slow but fairly reliable), you can simply go to the nearest post office to have your letters weighed and stamped. Letters have been known to take a couple of weeks to arrive in the States, although sometimes they arrive sooner. ACI also tries to send letters from time to time with travelers. In case you want to wait for someone to carry the letters to the US to mail them, you may use American stamps and leave the mail in a box at the Baobab Center. We cannot guarantee when it will depart, however.

Phone. Phone calls from the United States to Senegal are rather expensive, although there are some long-distance plans and phone cards that can provide a special deal for international calls, or for your host family's particular phone number. Prepaid phone cards are readily available in many gas stations or convenience stores in the States as well as online (try www.nobel.com and www.stsprepaid.com). (A note of caution about prepaid phone cards: while a better option than making a direct call, you may find that the line is not always clear or that the estimated call time is not accurate.)

Your host family will have a phone where you can receive calls. However, you will become very familiar with the private phone centers on nearly every corner called *Cabines Téléphoniques* or *Télécentres* where you can call home and pay the attendant after you finish. International phone rates from Senegal have recently been lowered, making it cheaper to call long-distance from Senegal than to Senegal. The current rate is between \$.50 and \$1 per minute.

The phone numbers at the Baobab Center are (221) 33.825.36.37, and (221) 33.825.49.72. You can give these numbers to your family **for emergency use only**. We have a 24-hour guard service at the office.

Fax. Again, if urgent or related to your college or university program, you can receive faxes at the Baobab Center. Our fax number is (221) 33.824.07.41. Otherwise, you can send faxes from a *cabine téléphonique*, and even arrange to receive faxes at some of them.

Computer Services/Internet/E-mail. There are a number of reliable cyber cafes with high-speed Internet connections, word processing and printer services in Dakar and larger towns, including those within walking distance of the Baobab Center, the university and many homestay families. You can use a PC with a moderately fast modem to access the web, including any web-mail account you may have, such as Hotmail and Yahoo, usually for less than 500 cfa (\$1.20) per hour. In addition, the Baobab Center has a WIFI service available to those with laptop computers in our main building.

Skype/Netphone Services. With the arrival of high-speed Internet in Senegal, many students now keep in touch with home via web-based calling services. *Skype* and *Microsoft Messenger* seem to be the most popular. Like normal phone calls, rates from Senegal to the US are less expensive than if you call from the United States to Senegal. Current rates with *Skype* are approximately 2 cents a minute if calling the US. Former program participants suggest bringing a headset from the United States.

MONEY ISSUES

Access to cash: When you first arrive, it is a good idea to carry some cash with you. Some programs include arrival stipends for participants, in which case, students will be provided with a small amount of CFA currency to cover basic needs until you can change your money at a bank. Some individuals choose to use traveler's checks, although not all banks accept them and they often require the original receipt of purchase which shows the name of the selling bank, the amount of traveler's checks purchased and the buyer's signature. You will need to go to a larger bank branch in downtown Dakar in order to exchange traveler's checks.

There are many ATM machines in Dakar (and even in smaller Senegalese towns!) where you can withdraw CFA directly from your U.S. bank account. Machines are located at the airport and various bank branches around town, including a few locations very close to our center. You can therefore keep most of your spending money in your bank at home, and withdraw cash when you need it. Make sure you have a clean debit card from your bank account with the VISA or MasterCard symbol on it and an envelope to keep it clean. You may want to arrange your banking in the US so that you have access to the Plus system as well as the Cirrus system; there are certain machines which only accept cards on one or the other and you might find either ATM out of order.

Find out if your bank has a website where you can check your balance, and learn how to access it before you leave. These sites are also handy for paying any bills that you may be responsible for while you're abroad. Also, keep a record of your bank's dial-in number in case you need to do any banking over the phone.

Credit cards: It is a good idea to bring a credit card. While few vendors and services in Senegal take credit cards, they are accepted at the local medical laboratory, a few health clinics, by airline companies as well as at some restaurants and stores. You might also want to find your credit card's website and familiarize yourself with it before leaving so you can track the transactions. In case of emergency, you may also want to know the pin number required to obtain a cash advance.

Handling money: While violent crime is still relatively rare in Dakar, petty theft and pick-pocketing are common. It is recommended to bring a good money belt, preferably the kind that go around the waist and can be tucked into your pants. The kinds that go around the neck are more visible, and you may get your neck hurt if anyone tries to snatch it.

When you first arrive, the airport can be a confusing and disorienting place. Protect your valuables by keeping the bulk of your money, identification, ATM and credit cards, etc., next to your body and out of sight. Once you get through immigration, do the same with your passport. When walking around Dakar, especially in crowded areas like the markets, keep only a small amount of cash in your pocket, and keep any valuables in your money belt or in an inside or buttoned breast pocket.

Money in Senegalese society is generally kept out of sight, and is discretely handled. When in Senegal, avoid taking a lot of money out in front of people, including your host family. You will only need small amounts of money on a daily basis and you may have difficulty using large bills for small purchases.

Sending money: If your family must send you money, Western Union has proven to be the safest method. They have several offices throughout Dakar. The surcharge is usually either about \$30 or a hefty percentage. Various types of checks are difficult to cash and take lots of time to process. And of course, no one should send cash through the mail. As ATM machines are also very common, you could ask that money be deposited in your account at home and then withdraw the funds from a machine in Dakar.

PAPERS AND DOCUMENTS

Make two photocopies of all your important documents, including your passport, immunization card, plane tickets, driver's license, medical insurance information, and traveler's check receipts. Give one copy to your family before you leave to keep in case of emergencies, preferably in a well-marked envelope or folder. Keep the other set in your carry-on luggage. When you arrive, the Baobab Center will photocopy your passport with your arrival stamp and have the copy notarized at the police station for a small fee. You can use the copy for most purposes except at the bank, US Embassy, or national borders.

When you get your immunization shots, make sure to get a yellow immunization booklet (also called the World Health Organization-WHO card) from your doctor that lists all your inoculations. You may need to present this along with your passport at border crossings. You must prove that you have been immunized against Yellow Fever to enter Senegal. You should also ask your pharmacist in the US for photocopies of the prescriptions for any medicine you are bringing. You may be asked for them at customs and prescriptions are necessary if you need to obtain more supplies while you are here.

Before you come, have a few extra passport-size photos taken. You will need them for library and university identity cards as well as for visas if you plan travel to other countries.

You have probably already been informed that an American citizen does not need a visa for Senegal for a stay of up to 3 months. If your program lasts over 3 months, your sending institution will help you secure a student visa. Your resident director or ACI can help locally in exceptional cases. Holders of passports from other countries should check with the Senegalese representation in the country of residence concerning visa regulations.

The Baobab Center strongly recommends that U.S. citizens register themselves with the American Embassy even prior to their arrival in Senegal. This process is very simple and can be done online at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/> It is strongly encouraged that citizens of other countries register with their embassy or consulate, if present in Dakar.

MEDICAL ISSUES

Immunizations: You should see a doctor before you leave and you may want to see a travel health specialist. Be aware that some immunizations may require multiple injections spread out over time, so try to see your doctor three months before your departure. You can inform yourself about health threats and recommended immunizations at the Center for Disease Control web site (www.cdc.gov). Your sending institution may also be able to provide you with information.

Malaria: One of the most prevalent risks to your health in Senegal is malaria, which is contracted through the bite of a particular mosquito that usually bites between dusk and dawn. While you should consult your health care provider for his or her advice, many American doctors recommend the anti-malarial Mefloquine (brand name Lariam) as a preventative measure against malaria. This is to date the most effective protection against the strain of malaria most prevalent in West Africa, *plasmodium falciparum*. Mefloquine has some side effects to be aware of, particularly psychological. Alternatives include Malarone and the locally available Doxycycline and Savarine (chloroquine plus proguanil). Should you need to buy additional prophylaxis in country, they are available over the counter at local pharmacies. Mefloquine is the most plentiful and costs approximately \$10 for a four week supply. Malarone is much more expensive and only a few pharmacies carry it. You can read about the various options on the CDC web page (www.cdc.gov/travel/malariadrugs.htm). You can consult the doctor here for confirmation of your choice and other information you should need on the different drugs available.

You should further protect yourself from malaria by avoiding contact with mosquitoes, especially at night. There are a lot of mosquitoes during the rainy season (June – October). Bring a good mosquito repellent, either in drops, lotion or spray, with a good DEET percentage. Bring light-weight clothing that covers your whole body to wear when you go out at night. You may want to buy some Permethrin spray for your clothes for use during high mosquito exposure.

A good mosquito net is also highly recommended by many doctors. Outdoor stores probably have good nets, already impregnated with Permethrin. Make sure they will cover your entire bed to the floor and not just your body. You may also want to wait until you know what your bedroom situation in Senegal will be like, in which case you can buy mosquito nets here for as little as \$15 per net. Such nets are high quality and are subsidized by development projects, including by those funded by USAID.

Water: Dakar water is treated with chlorine and is clean when it leaves the treatment plant. However, the distribution system is not without faults and thus prone to contamination. Your body will also take time to build up immunity to new bacteria that appear not to bother Senegalese people as much as foreigners, but which may cause you intestinal trouble. It is therefore a good idea to treat your water before drinking it, either by boiling, filtering or adding iodine tablets or bleach.

You can buy a good filter pump at a camping or outdoors supply store in the US for between \$60 and \$110. Some brands to look for are Katadyn, and Nikken the latter of which carries a very good bottle that you can put water in and drink immediately (try Nikken.com to find a distributor near you). Some filters screw directly on to a bottle, in which case you'll want to bring one or two bottles as well.

Iodine tablets should be available in the same section of the store as the filters. Iodine has an awful taste, so you might consider buying the two-stage tablets, the first of which purifies the water with iodine, and the second of which neutralizes the iodine flavor. Another trick is to use iodine to kill water-borne viruses and then run the treated water through one of the above-mentioned filters to remove the iodine color and taste. Make sure you do not have an allergy to iodine before using it. Bleach can be purchased in any local shop, and can be used to purify water in cases where the above options are not available. Putting a few drops in a bottle of water and letting it stand for a few minutes will suffice.

Another option is to rely on bottled water which is widely available in Senegal, and costs about 1 US dollar for a 1.5 liter bottle. Remember to verify that the tab on the bottle cover has not been broken before drinking. Bottled soft drinks are also safe to drink. Filtered water is also available during the day at the Baobab Center.

Reliable Medical Attention: The Baobab Center works with a number of health professionals who are familiar with the common health challenges and preoccupations of Western visitors. Many of these practitioners speak some English. We would be happy to provide you with more information upon request. Unlike the United States, it is important to remember that the patient is required to pay cash at the time of the consultation. Many insurance companies will provide reimbursement once having received the necessary paperwork.

Insurance: ACI requires that all participants carry insurance that covers emergency evacuation. There are a variety of choices for such insurance; inquire with your program for suggestions. Generally, you must pay in cash up front for services received at a doctor's office or hospital in Senegal. Your insurance company should reimburse you if you keep all your receipts and records. Please note that it is the student's responsibility to be familiar with his or her coverage plan before arrival.

Food & Nutrition: The general diet is a light breakfast of coffee and/or milk with bread; a filling lunch (the main meal) usually one of a variety of dishes of rice, root and fresh vegetables, and fish (near the coast), lamb, beef or chicken cooked in vegetable, peanut or palm oil; and a lighter dinner of grilled meat and fresh or cooked vegetables. While vegetarian students may face particular challenges in host families where meals are taken communally, students rarely have a problem finding plenty of sources of vegetables and protein. There are plenty of choices for snacks including fresh fruit, peanuts, yogurt, and sweets.

PACKING

There are two basic rules of packing: 1) You will bring things you do not need, and 2) You will not bring things that you do need. That said, here are some suggestions and considerations in packing. Bringing all of these items could make for a cumbersome trip, but this will give you an idea of things to consider. Many of these items can be found in Dakar if you need them.

MEDICAL SUPPLIES TO BRING

Many, if not most, medical supplies are available in Senegal, particularly those marked with an asterisk (*). They are often French brands and may not be familiar to Americans. You may wish to buy or make yourself a compact first aid kit to bring along. Here are some suggested items:

- [] ***Anti-fungal cream**, such as Clotrimazole, for foot fungus, rashes and other skin problems that may arise.
- [] **Anti-biotic ointment**, such as Neosporin or Bacitracin.
- [] ***Band-aids**. It's a good idea to bring a few.
- [] ***Cotton pads or balls**. They take up a lot of space and are available locally, so just bring a few for emergencies and skin care.
- [] ***Aspirin or another pain killer**. Tylenol is available here under the European name of *paracetamol* and comes in an effervescent tablet or a pill. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatories, such as Advil (*ibuprofen*) are also available in Senegal, as is Aspirin. Still, you may want to bring some for times when you can't get to the pharmacy. *Naproxen sodium* (Aleve) is available in double strength by prescription.
- [] ***An anti-histamine** for allergies and colds. If you are taking Claritin 10 mg or Zyrtec they are available here for about \$12.00 for 15 days. Believe it or not, the common cold is prevalent in Africa, especially during the hot season. TheraFlu Cold has come in handy in the past. If you have a tendency toward sinus problems you may want to bring a decongestant such as Sudafed, though it is available here as well.
- [] **Throat lozenges and cough suppressants** will also be helpful during dusty periods. They are available here but are not the same quality as American brands.
- [] ***Iodine, rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide** (available here under name of *eau d'oxygène*), for cleaning wounds. A small bottle will do.
- [] **Sun screen** (recommended for light and dark complexions). You can buy good (and expensive) 15-30 SPF here, though without PABA.
- [] ***Pepto-Bismol, Imodium or something else to treat diarrhea**. Your doctor might also suggest you take along an antibiotic for intestinal problems. Cipro (500 mg) is a good antibiotic to have on hand for bacterial diarrhea. However, you can find most products in Senegal, and you should always get a thorough diagnosis before taking anything.
- [] **Anti-bacterial sanitizer** (i.e. Purel, Dial Gel, etc.). A small bottle should suffice to carry with you for times when clean water and soap is not available, such as when you have greeted a crowd of people and then sit down to eat. Note: Soap and water is always the best way to clean your hands. You can buy antibacterial bar soap here at every corner store.
- [] **Anti-itch cream with hydrocortisone**. Insects are a nuisance, and you will be glad you brought something.
- [] **Moist towelettes**. Dakar can be hot, sticky and dusty, and these are handy to have along. Wet Wipes are also a good way to clean your hands in a pinch.
- [] **Powdered Gatorade or other mixes for re-hydration**. Dehydration is common, and you'll be glad you brought it. This is vitally important during the hot summer months (July – September).
- [] **A good multi-vitamin**. Senegalese in general do not eat as many fresh vegetables as you may be used to, and it's helpful to make sure you get your essential vitamins. The easiest

absorbed are the “whole food” supplements that contain multiple fruits and vegetables that carry all the vitamins you need. These are very good if you are eating with a local family. You can buy them at any natural foods-type grocery store.

- [] ***Vitamin C.** This is also available locally. It is effective at early stages of a cold. Emergen-C packets by Alacer sold at most health food and vitamin stores offer a good way to supplement your nutrition while abroad.
- [] ***Nail clippers.** Remember to pack these in your checked luggage or they will be confiscated at the airport.
- [] **Prescription medicine.** A reminder -- if there is any medicine that you must take, or any product that you depend on in your day-to-day life, don't assume you will find it here. If your medicine will not expire during your stay make sure to bring enough for the entire time as it may be difficult to have it sent to you. This includes birth control pills, as you can't rely on their availability when you need them.

Feminine Needs: Tampons and pads are available here (and very expensive!), but it is unclear if they are all-cotton, so the risk of Toxic Shock is higher than with your time-tested brand. Some past students have suggested buying reusable *Glad Rags*, available at natural foods stores and co-ops. There also exists a rubber tampon substitute called *The Keeper* (very popular with Peace Corps Volunteers), available online at www.keeper.com. You may also find it handy to bring Acidophilus and an over-the-counter yeast infection treatment (like Monistat, Gyne-Lotrimin, or Fem-Stat) if you are prone to such infections. Yeast infection products are expensive in Senegal and may come in handy, especially if you take Doxycycline as an anti-malarial, which suppresses your body's natural bacteria. High humidity and the use of water for cleansing provide ideal conditions for yeast growth.

Health Readings: Where There Is No Doctor: A Village Healthcare Handbook (by David Werner et al.) This book is available in French in Dakar, but if you prefer your medical information in English, you might want to take a copy with you. There are English copies of this book available for perusal in the Study Abroad office at the Baobab Center. Another book popular with many travelers is Staying Healthy in Africa, Asia, and Latin America by Dirk G. Schroeder.

APPROPRIATE CLOTHES

In Senegal dressing nicely is considered a form of respect toward those around you and in consequence, the Senegalese generally dress very nicely when they leave the house, whether to go to work or to socialize. They especially dress up to go out at night, so no matter what you wear to a concert or club, you will most likely feel underdressed. Many students are surprised to see that fashion trends in Senegal follow those in Europe and America. While some Senegalese young women may rarely wear clothing above the knee, tight fitting clothing is commonplace.

For men, a few long-sleeve button-down shirts, some khakis or cotton/linen slacks will do. Women can get by with some nice slacks or skirts, a few blouses, and one nice dress for going out. Although Dakar is a fairly modern city, women may feel more comfortable in skirts and pants that cover the knee. A lot of students find their footwear to be overly casual (i.e. Texas), so plan on bringing at least one pair of dressier shoes – even dressy flip flops will do. More casual clothing, such as shorts and T-shirts, is worn at home and to the beach. In traditional settings outside of Dakar, women are discouraged from wearing pants or revealing dresses, and men should avoid wearing shorts. Ultimately, the degree to which you wish to assimilate is your own choice.

When choosing what to bring, bear in mind that all clothes will be washed by hand, with soap and usually a small amount of color-safe bleach that can deteriorate delicate fabrics. Also, all clothing must be ironed (including socks and underwear) to kill the eggs of a certain fly that

spawns in wet laundry. Some students have suggested bringing enough underwear for two weeks to allow time for washing and ironing. In most cases, particularly for women, although domestic help often takes care of laundry you will be expected to wash your own underwear. Dry cleaning exists in Dakar, but is very expensive.

A note on exercise clothing: Running and other forms of exercise are very common among young Senegalese as well as students at the Baobab Center. Many students feel comfortable exercising in conservative running shorts or exercise pants and t-shirts. It is probably a good idea to avoid going shirtless.

OTHER SMALL ITEMS TO BRING

Flashlight: Power outages are common in Senegal and there are many poorly lit areas even when the power is on. A small metal Maglight that runs on AA batteries is highly recommended, and they make great gifts when you leave. You might want a headlamp also (these come in really handy when reading at night!). Plenty of cheap, low-quality flashlights are also available in Senegal.

Power Adapter: In Senegal electricity runs on 220 volts, as opposed to the U.S. which runs on 110 volts. You can get a 110/220 converter at most electronic and travel stores for under \$30. They are available in Senegal, but the quality is questionable. Most kits include several plug adapters. You can recognize the prongs used in Senegal by their two round pegs, a bit farther apart than the flat U.S. prongs. They are the same as the French plugs. You should check your appliances before coming to see if a converter will be necessary. Many laptops and digital cameras, for example, can operate in both 110 and 220 volt systems. This information is normally indicated on the power source. If this is the case, the only element you will then need is a prong adapter, which are inexpensive and locally available in many shops and hardware stores.

Computing Needs: ACI has recently acquired Wi-Fi for Baobab Center's two buildings, so please feel free to bring your laptop with you. However, be aware that in the past, laptops have been targeted by petty thieves. If you are able to insure your laptop for damage or lost while overseas please do so. A USB Flash Drive will also prove useful for storing information and backing up your documents.

Condoms: No matter what your intentions are about your sexuality before arriving in Senegal, you cannot predict how you will feel once you get here and start feeling at home. It is important for you to know that if you decide to be sexually active while in Senegal, good quality condoms are available in Dakar. You can now find them on the check out counters of most supermarkets and 7-11 type stores as well as at pharmacies. Among local brands that meet U.S. standards are *Protec* condoms. They are cheap (about 25 cents for three), and are subsidized by USAID.

Though the HIV infection rate in Senegal is relatively low (most statistics show a prevalence rate of approximately 0.07% - according to the most recent *Enquête démographique de santé* – for more information see the CNLS website at www.cnls-senegal.org), it is prudent to use condoms if you decide to have penetrative sex in order to prevent HIV infection and other sexually transmitted infections including syphilis, gonorrhea, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. Do not underestimate the value of condoms, and if you do not bring any with you, be sure to buy them here.

Compact Windbreaker, Jacket or Sweater: The hot season lasts from June until October, but Dakar can be rather chilly at night during December and January (lower 60s and breezy). So it's a good idea to bring a light jacket or windbreaker, or a long-sleeved shirt, along for those occasions when you are out at night.

Comfortable Flip Flops: These are very necessary around the house, especially in the shower and the toilet. They are widely available everywhere in Senegal, but you might want to bring some good quality ones to get started.

Camping Knife: You may find it handy to have a multi-purpose Swiss Army or Leatherman-type knife along for odd tasks. Tools are hard to find in Dakar and especially in outer regions. Make sure to stow anything that could be considered a weapon in your CHECKED LUGGAGE, not in your carry-on. **If found in your carry-on it will be permanently confiscated.**

Towel: You may want to bring the quality of towel you enjoy, as your family will be unlikely to have a towel for you. Very thick towels dry slowly and can mildew during the rainy season. Towels are widely available in Dakar, although not necessarily the kind you want.

Sheets: Some students suggest bringing a set of twin-sized sheets. They may come in handy in your host family's house, where there may only be one set for you. Be mindful that we often can not know the exact accommodation that you will have in your host family until after your arrival.

Hat and sunglasses: The sun is bright and powerful in this part of the world. Those prone to sunburn will find that a hat with a visor can help keep the sun off your forehead and out of your eyes. Bring some sunglasses that you like to wear, but which you can bear to lose or give away. In fact, bring two pair if you can. You can buy these items locally, too.

Books: Bring one or two books by your favorite author. English books can be difficult to come by although the Baobab Center has an informal library of books that former students have donated which we think you will find useful.

Bathroom needs: Toilet paper is available in Senegal at many corner stores, but be aware that most families do not use it. Senegalese prefer to rinse themselves with water, as is the practice in many developing countries. You may want to bring a little bit with you to have available on the trip or for the first day or two. Students have also found the small travel packages of Kleenexes (known here as *mouchoirs*) valuable for the bathroom and for general use. They are widely available throughout the city.

Gifts: It is a nice gesture to bring some small gifts to give to your host family when you arrive. Items that can be shared are best (i.e. soccer ball, games, playing cards, skin lotions, body splash, *eau de toilette* or cologne for men, colorful books about your home state, small photo albums, crayons for kids, edible items from your region etc.), as you may not know the exact number of people in the family and their ages. You should also bring pictures of your family and life in the U.S. to share with Senegalese family and friends, who will share theirs with you. As a cultural note, it is also customary to bring gifts to your family when returning from a trip. These gifts in Wolof are called *sorice* (pronounced so-reach-ay). If you will not be living in a host family, you may want to bring some items that signify your origins to give to close friends or colleagues.

WHAT NOT TO BRING

The general rule is: Don't bring anything valuable or anything irreplaceable. Expensive jewelry and electronics should be left at home. Please understand that ACI cannot be responsible for any loss or damage to personal property. For information on Senegalese customs, visit the U.S. State Department's website at travel.state.gov.

HOW TO PACK – MINIMIZING EFFECTS OF DREADED LOSS OF LUGGAGE OR THEFT

While it is rare that luggage is lost, it does happen. Here are a few packing tricks that will minimize the negative effects of lost bags:

- Carry-on what you cannot replace as well as a change of clothes: The rule of thumb is to pack what you cannot live without or replace in your carry-on. You should pack all your necessary medication, valuables (CDs, camera, jewelry, etc.), sentimental items (photos, journal, address book, etc.) in your carry-on bag. Include a change of clothes just in case. If you are planning on giving a course during your stay, try to carry on as much of your course materials as possible. Another possibility is to distribute course materials to students in advance to pack in their respective carry-on bags. **A NOTE OF CAUTION:** As airplane regulations have recently changed, be very cautious about packing any liquid/gel/paste item in your carry-on bag. Check with your airport for more information.
- Separate items if packing two check-in bags: If you are already planning on bringing two bags, separate your similar items between the two. For example, put one bathing suit or half of your underwear in each bag. This way, if one bag is lost, you will still have a good variety of items with you.
- Roll clothing to conserve space: Believe it or not, rolling clothing is an excellent way to conserve space as well as to avoid wrinkles!

WEB SITES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON SENEGAL

GENERAL INFORMATION ON SENEGAL:

- *Government of Senegal* (www.primature.sn) — This official site has tourist information, basic facts about Senegal, speeches by the President, meteorological information, etc.
- *Au Sénégal* (www.ausenegal.com) — A slick site devoted to tourism and travel in Senegal. There is a lot of useful information here about Dakar (hotels, travel agents, etc.) as well as about other towns and regions. The site also features good coverage of art and culture.
- *Senegal Online* (www.senegal-online.com) — A useful site with news as well as information on history, tourism, geography, hotels, restaurants, the economy, national parks and wildlife, and regions and towns. There is also a nice collection of maps, and photo galleries.
- *Seneweb* (www.seneweb.com) — “The Senegalese portal.”
- *Portail Sentoo* (www.sentoo.sn) — News and information about Senegal, with good cultural listings and a Google-based search engine.

STUDYING IN SENEGAL:

- *Africa Consultants International* (www.acibaobab.org) — Find out more about your future headquarters in Dakar, including information on language programs and teachers.
- *Université Cheikh Anta Diop* (www.ucad.sn) — Useful for a cybertour of the University (may not always work), and for the extensive list of references to other sites in Senegal.
- *WARC: West African Research Center* (www.warc-croa.org) — A research library and information center supported by the West African Research Association, a network of Senegalese and American researchers. Also holds conferences and provides space for several American Study Abroad programs.

HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION:

- *CDC: Travelers' Health Website* (www.cdc.gov/travel/index) — Health information furnished by the Centers for Disease Control for travelers to specific destinations, including West Africa. Find out about diseases you may encounter as well as precautions to take. This site also has information on the CDC's recommended vaccinations for travel to West Africa.
- *Prescription Drugs for Preventing Malaria* (www.cdc.gov/travel/malariadrugs.htm) — Get information on the different anti-malarials available (including directions for use, side effects, and warnings), as well as tips on avoiding and diagnosing malarial infections. As they

recommend on the site, though, please consult your health care provider to find out which anti-malarial is right for you.

- *Consular Sheet on Senegal (travel.state.gov)* — The U.S. State Department's official information on Senegal including general demographic and geographic information, health and safety issues, and travel and customs information. The website also posts State Department Worldwide and local Public Announcements and Travel Warnings.

SENEGALESE MEDIA:

- *Sud Quotidien (www.sudonline.sn)* — First non-government daily newspaper in Senegal, available six days a week online. Reading this newspaper is an excellent way to improve your language skills and learn about current developments in Senegal. *Sud* has very good culture coverage, plus frequent supplements on Senegalese history, environmental issues, urban planning, etc. You can (in theory) listen to Sud-FM radio over the Internet at this same site.
- *Wal Fadjri (www.walf.sn)* — Another of the now-numerous non-official daily newspapers in Senegal, updated with daily news and features. Their radio station (Walf-FM) is also streamed and can be accessed from this site, also in theory.
- *Le Soleil (www.lesoleil.sn)* — This is the online version of the official government newspaper. Good for glowing appraisals of the government's stances and projects.
- *Agence de Presse Sénégalaise (www.aps.sn)* — The official government news agency.

AFRICAN NEWS SERVICE SITES:

- *Pana: Pan-African News Service (www.panapress.com)* — African news in French and English, updated daily.
- *AllAfrica (www.allafrica.com)* — News about Senegal and other African countries in English and French.
- *AfricaOnline (www.africaonline.com)* — An predominantly English website focused mostly on Anglophone Africa, but with some news coverage of Senegal.
- *Jeune Afrique (www.jeuneafrique.com)* — The Internet version of the popular French language magazine, with good coverage of Senegal and Francophone Africa.
- *Afrique Index (www.afriqueindex.com)* — A directory of African websites with some news coverage in French.

SAMPLE OF NGOS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN SENEGAL:

- *ENDA-TM: Environnement et Développement du Tiers Monde (www.enda.sn)* — A major international development agency headquartered in Dakar, Enda's website has information on its activities and on other organizations it works with in the area.
- *Tostan (www.tostan.org)* — This organization works in literacy and post-literacy programs and village development activities, and is one of the leaders in raising awareness of Female Genital Cutting practices in rural Senegal.
- *RADDHO (www.raddho.africa-web.org)* — Senegalese law center with the mission of promoting and protecting human rights, democracy and peace.
- *CRESP (www.cresp.sn)* — This NGO started by Cornell University associates now runs independently and works in a variety of development areas.
- *Peace Corps Senegal (usembassy.state.gov/dakar/wwwwhpcen.html)* — The Peace Corps has been present in Senegal since 1963 and their website, hosted by the US Embassy in Dakar, offers numerous resources for Americans living in Senegal and West Africa.

WOLOF LANGUAGE RESOURCES:

- *Gambia Language Resources: Wolof dictionary and grammar manual* (www.africanculture.dk/gambia/langabot.htm)—The 74-page Wolof-English dictionary listed on this site, produced by the Peace Corps in Gambia, looks extremely useful in spite of certain differences between Gambian Wolof and Senegalese Wolof. You could print it out and take it to Senegal. The grammar manual was also produced by Peace Corps Gambia, and may be useful in your study of the language.
- *Annotated Guide to Learning the Wolof Language* (www.bcconline.org/wolof/Language/Wolof%20Language%20Guide.htm and www.bcconline.org/wolof/Languages/resources.htm) — A comprehensive website produced by an Australian missionary, with sections on Wolof grammar, phonology, and resources for language learning. The site also has pages devoted to other aspects of Wolof society, including music and religion, although with a decidedly evangelical slant.

ARTS AND CULTURE:

- *Artisans and Arts from Africa* (www.taftaf.com)—Features works of art from a wide range of artists, including some from Senegal.

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