

Preparing for a Mission Trip

-Info for your team-

When packing for a mission trip, there are a few things to keep in mind. Each person is allowed to have one checked and one carry-on piece of luggage (Our second checked bag will be used for tools and supplies). Maximum weight for each piece is 50 lbs as of March 2005, however check with your airline and ask them because many times when traveling overseas they allow 70 lbs. Pack light. Roll your clothes. Leave room for souvenirs. Use luggage with wheels. Leave jewelry and other valuables at home. Take one form of picture I.D. and one charge card and leave the rest at home. Since the terrorist attacks on 9/11/01, airlines have established strict guidelines on the items it allowed to be carried on its flights. A good rule is to put any sharp objects in your checked baggage. This includes razors, knitting needles, scissors, nail clippers with files, etc. Don't take many clothes; bring versatile, hard to wrinkle clothing. Make sure each outfit fits very well. Take clothes you feel good in and look good in, as you will be wearing them over and over. Take durable shoes that will handle water and rain. Shoes worn on the work site may get ruined. Pack clothes by folding them in thirds, and do not pack things too tightly. You will want to leave room for souvenirs. Label your luggage with your name and address as well as the colored tape. People in many other countries are not as wealthy as Americans and are prone to take things. Guard your possessions carefully. Plan to take cash, not traveler's checks.

In Your Carry-On..(suggestions).

Tickets
Immunization Record
Camera/Film (do not check film)
Medications (original container)
Entertainment for Flight (books, magazines, etc.)
Medicine for Headache, stomach, etc.
Extra Copies of Itinerary/ Passport /Tickets Journal
Hand Sanitizer or Wipes

Passport
Emergency Phone Numbers
Pen and Paper
Bible
Snacks, Candy, Gum (may go in check)
Insurance and Medical Alert Cards
Sunglasses

In Your Check-In..(suggestions).

Personal Toiletries and Hygiene Items
Sunscreen
Extra Glasses/Contact Lens Supplies
Host Gifts (inexpensive items to leave with new friends)
Woolite/Shout Wipes
Plastic Bag for Dirty Clothing
Poncho
Swim Trunks
Small Hand Held Recorder (to record thoughts & music)
Small Packs of Tissue
Toilet Paper
Sleeping Bag or Sheets and cover for a bunk
Spending money (\$50-\$150)

battery Alarm Clock
Clothing For All Occasions
Flashlight
Sleepwear
Comfortable Shoes
Extra Batteries
Flip Flops (For Use in Shower)
Jacket or Sweater
Small Sewing Kit
Chap Stick
Pillow and pillowcase

Towel and washcloth

A servant spirit!

**Suggested items for added comfort: flashlight, batteries, bug spray, sunscreen, wet wipes, rain poncho, camera and film, small first aid kit, Tylenol or Advil, Immodium, kleenex, goodies to munch.

Another tip...

Either pack a change of clothes in your carry on or put a few items of clothing in another persons bag and allow them to do the same with you. This way, if your luggage gets lost, you still have a couple of outfits to wear.

Please remember that you will be in a different culture. Men need to wear long pants and a collared shirt for all church services. Ladies are expected to wear long dresses or knee length skirts. Shorts (skirt-shorts) are not acceptable for church services, but acceptable for work projects.

Also you should leave things like hair dryers, irons, cell phones, etc... at home. The electricity in Honduras frequently has drops and surges that may short out your electrical devices. It is suggested that you carry only battery-operated devices.

You will not have access to phones or internet so please - please advice family, that “no news is good news”! In the event of an emergency we will be able to make contact or in the event of an emergency at home your family can contact the ministry at its email address treeoflifeministries@hotmail.com.

When traveling on an overseas mission trip. There are a few things you may want to remember.

1. Before leaving home, be sure your camera works.
2. Go to bed a little earlier (or later) each night for about a week before you leave. This will help your body adjust to the new time zone.
3. Eat a good, nutritious meal the day before, and of your flight.
4. Put address labels inside all of your luggage.
5. Educate yourself about the country you are visiting.
6. Protect your passport at all times. Keep it, along with your tickets and picture I.D., readily accessible at all times.
7. Check to see if there are any immunizations recommended for your destination. (Shots for Hepatitis A, B, tetanus, and pills for malaria)
8. Do not let airport personnel or local residents carry your luggage unless you are prepared to tip them.
9. Never leave your luggage unattended or touch an unattended bag.
10. Be considerate of fellow travelers on your flight and flight personnel.
11. Do not carry any sharp or pointed items in your carry on luggage. Put in your checked bags instead.
12. Drink lots of water on your flight to avoid swelling and dehydration.
13. Expect the unexpected. Remain open-minded. Be flexible. Have fun!
14. Record your journey. Keep a journal. Label pictures so you can remember what they are.
15. Don't over pack.

16. Don't go to sleep until bedtime once you arrive. This will help with "jet lag".
17. Pray often!
18. When on the plane, keep those items you will need on the flight in a separate bag and close to you. Keep unneeded items in overhead bin and out of your way.
19. Make 2 copies of all documents and leave one copy with family and one give to your team leader.

Bathroom Surprise

Volunteers should always be ready to encounter different toilet facilities. In some areas, there will be no toilets like we are accustomed to here in the United States. You may be faced with a simple hole in the ground or a facility with no toilet seat. In addition, many toilet facilities in other countries are not constructed to handle tissue or other paper products. You may have to put tissue in trashcans or other containers. While at the school you will have to face some privacy issues, as the bathroom door is a shower curtain and the showers are in the room. There are male and female residences they are not co-ed.

What To Expect From Customs

... and what not to expect

Before landing, you will be handed a customs declaration card for the country you are entering. Most questions are self-explanatory, however, there are a few you may have questions about. You will be asked to fill in your airline or flight number. For that, simply look on your itinerary or your boarding pass, to find that number. Another question you may wonder about will be one asking the purpose of your trip. You will most likely be given a choice to check either "business" or "personal". Please check the box marked "personal". You will also be asked on the back of the form, especially on the U.S. Customs form, to report any purchases you made abroad and are bringing back into the U.S. However, if your purchases and gifts do not total more than \$400, you do not have to list them individually. Just write the total amount (estimate, if not known exactly), in the appropriate place on the back of the form. It is a good idea, just in the rare case, to keep your receipts from the souvenirs you purchase and keep them with you. It is suggested that you do not carry a lot of extra cash with you. If you have any questions ask your team leader.

No-No Souvenirs

Fresh fruit, meat, plants in soil, and many other agricultural products from abroad are prohibited from entering the U.S. In addition, many items made from endangered animals and plants are also prohibited. This list may also include many antiques, glazed ceramics, and wildlife souvenirs.

Other Tips and Hints

1. Expect the unexpected.
2. The climate will be different, the food will be different, and the living accommodations will be different. There may be many "differences" so set your mind before you go and learn to adjust.
3. Expect to be a little homesick. Take a little memento from home to help you through.

4. Schedules may be drastically different. If an event is set for 10:00 am, it may not start until 11:30 am. Be flexible and patient!
5. Sleep may be difficult at first.

Traveling after 9/11...

Whether we want to talk about it or not, since 9/11/01, terrorism is something we have to deal with. Although you have a greater chance of being mugged in Atlanta than you do of being a victim of terrorism, it doesn't hurt to know some tips on how to handle or avoid situations that increase your vulnerability.

Terrorist acts are random and unpredictable for the most part, so foolproof protection is unlikely, however, avoiding travel to unsafe areas is your number one protection. If told not to venture out alone or to a particular area of the place you are visiting, then do not do so. Listen to those who know the area. Most governments do an excellent job protecting their borders, citizens, and visitors from terrorists.

Second, be aware of what you discuss with strangers or what may be overheard by others.

Third, avoid a vivid display of American patriotism while traveling abroad. For example, do not wear shirts, hats, etc... with the American flag.

Fourth, keep an eye out for abandoned packages or briefcases while in the airport. Report them to airport personnel.

Fifth, avoid places in certain areas of high risk where Americans and Westerners are known to congregate.

Finally, Americans are known for being a loud and boisterous people. Do not cause a scene where you stand out in a crowd. Just play it smart, trust God, and have fun serving Him. Remember, you are being prayed for all the time.

Staying Healthy On The Mission Field

Tips on how to stay fit while serving on short term mission teams.

Being sick can ruin a trip; however, knowing a few basic rules can help prevent many types of sickness.

Missioners must remember that infectious diseases, often carried by parasites in food and water, are common in rural areas overseas. However, there are certain health precautions one can observe, while at the same time, not offending the nationals. These may not apply to every trip or to every country, therefore, always check with the host missionary or liaison when in doubt. And by the way, ENJOY!!!!

1. Do not overeat.
2. Do not eat from street vendors or in sidewalk shops.
3. Be sure foods are fully cooked and served hot when appropriate.
4. Peel all fruits.
5. Drinks and ice should be made from only purified or bottled water.
6. Wash your hands thoroughly and often with hand disinfectant.
7. Keep your fingers out of your eyes, mouth, and nose.
8. Use only safe water for brushing your teeth.

9. Don't lick stamps.
10. Don't use tap water on contacts or for shaving.
11. Wear sunscreen.
12. Wear insect repellent that contains DEET.
13. Work in clothing that heat is not such a factor.
14. Take Pepto Bismol or a like medicine following most meals.
15. Be careful when working construction.
16. Drink lots of water.
17. Keep fingernails short or at least wear gloves.
18. Avoid going barefoot as much as possible.
19. Keep cuts and scratches treated and covered.
20. Don't nap under a coconut tree.

Ten Mission Trip Commandments

- I. You shall refrain from expecting to find things as they are at home, for you have left your home to find different things.
- II. You shall not take anything too seriously. Accepting things as they are paves the way for a good mission trip.
- III. You shall not let other group members get on your nerves. You raised good money and set aside this time. So, enjoy yourself.
- IV. You shall not forget that you represent your home country, the missionary and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- V. You shall not be overly worried. The person who worries has no pleasures. Few things people worry about are ever fatal.
- VI. Remember your passport (or other identification document) so that you know where it is at all times. A person without documents is a person without a country.
- VII. Blessed is the person who says "thank you" in any language. This is worth more than tips.
- VIII. When in Honduras, do as the Hondurans do. If in difficulty, use common sense and your native friendliness.
- IX. Do not judge all Hondurans by the one person with whom you have had trouble.
- X. Remember, you are a guest in Honduras. He who treats his host with respect shall be treated as an honored guest.

The Golden Rule Of Mission Travel

BE FLEXIBLE. ADAPT. GLORIFY GOD. HAVE FUN. MAKE FRIENDS.

Learning to be flexible to a host of differences is the key to having a positive mission experience. People in other countries are not Americans and therefore, do not do things like Americans. So relax. Let Go and let God!