

Some Travel Advice for ALL Travelers

GENERAL EXPENSES

Airfare (averages for budgeting purposes ...)

- Round-trip flights to Central America cost about \$650.
- Round-trip flights to South America cost about \$1,200.
- Round-trip flights to South Africa cost about \$2,000.
- Round-trip flights to Jerusalem vary widely between \$1,000 and \$2,000.

*Keep in mind that airfare can vary significantly with group packages, current economic conditions, and time of year.

Project fees should be considered as a group, but in many cases groups may choose to divide the responsibility for raising the funds across the team. For example, a project might cost \$2500 for supplies and 10 people are planning to go. The group may decide that each person is responsible for raising \$250 toward the project cost. Groups will undoubtedly work together on fundraising, but this breakdown will give them some barometer of what to expect from each other in terms of participation in those fundraising efforts.

Groups should plan on \$45 to \$65 per volunteer per day to cover your local transportation, meals, lodging, and water. When figuring transportation other than airfare, remember that you need to get to and from the airport. You may have local support for transportation, but be mindful of the potential expense if you do not.

ERD recommends about \$150 per volunteer in additional spending money while in country. Also, keep in mind that many countries have a passport tax (for US passport holders) payable upon entering the country and \$20 - \$30 upon exiting the country. It is recommended that group leaders determine the specifics of any passport tax and exit fees and hold sufficient funds to cover the exit of all volunteers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Travel insurance is highly recommended, since most U.S. health insurance plans will not cover treatment abroad or medical evacuation. Coverage can cost as little as \$6/day and typically includes a death and dismemberment benefit, luggage loss protection, the cost of a ticket if someone has to drop out due to an emergency, and most importantly, medical evacuation to your home country in the case of an emergency. There are a number of carriers for travel insurance. Your travel agent may have a recommended carrier. In most cases, AIG Travel Guard will be your best bet [www.travelguard.com]. You may also want to try www.insuremytrip.com on the internet.

Leaders should determine the appropriate currency for a group's destination. It is recommended that volunteers carry small denominations (\$20 or less). Large bills can be an invitation for theft and merchants are often suspicious of large bills and/or do not have

sufficient change. Besides all of the safety types of issues, from a practical perspective it can be difficult for merchants to make change.

You are encouraged to accept the hospitality of your hosts and sample the cuisine of the region. Note, however, that in certain circumstances and regions you need to be wise while being a good guest. Be careful of fresh foods that you are unsure about their origin or whether or not they are clean. Many people traveling in the countryside of poorer nations tend to carry pepto bismol tablets and acidophilus supplements. Both can help limit any stomach upset and can be used as a prophylactic (e.g. 1 pepto tablet per day; 1 acidophilus caplet before each meal).

One of the key contributors of stomach upset is water. In most instances, you will be provided with purified water which you should consume regularly to prevent dehydration. In many cases, it will be recommended that you purified water to brush your teeth as well. It is often a good idea to carry a bottle of tablets (Potable Aqua) for making water drinkable. It's not the best tasting, but beats the stomachache that follows a drink of problem water.

You are advised to carry **a copy of** your passport. Passport theft is a danger. Report a lost or stolen passport immediately. Many groups find it helpful to have a leader be responsible for copies of everyone's passport. It's also recommended that you leave a copy of your passport with someone at home in the U.S.

In recent years, people have taken to carrying hand sanitizer (ex. Purell). It's a good idea to have a bottle in your bag. However, it's also important to keep in mind that you are a guest. Not only is it unnecessary to use it every time you shake a hand, but it is extremely rude and often perceived as offensive. Be discreet. After a visit, you might use it in your vehicle when you're leaving. You may use it routinely before a meal. But **DON'T** get out your bottle and use it after you've passed the peace at church.

Yes, you will need immunizations. It is recommended that you review the advice of the Center for Disease Control (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>). Depending on your physician's advice and health insurance, immunizations and medications may cost up to \$300. Be aware that many immunizations require time, so **DO NOT** wait until the week before your trip to schedule your appointment with your primary care physician. Consider seeking immunizations three to six months prior to your departure.

PACKING

NOTE: CLOTHES SHOULD BE COOL AND LOOSE FITTING

There are cultural considerations related to dress. In many countries, for example, it is not acceptable to wear shorts or sleeveless tops except for specific times such as recreating. Also, be aware that in many countries, women wearing shorts or tight-fitting and/or revealing clothing in public might be considered disrespectful and/or receive unwanted attention. (*Clergy might want to review "Advice for Clergy" as they consider whether or not to pack clericals and vestments.)

Suggested packing list for a typical trip:

Boots or sneakers (that are sturdy and water repellent)
Work gloves
Light pants for evening wear.
T-shirts/long sleeve shirts
Lightweight skirt or sundresses for evening wear.
Tank tops (beware that the sun in the tropics is very intense. Use lots of sunscreen).
Sweat socks
Underwear
Bathing suit
Hat with broad brim. (Baseball caps do not protect your ears and neck)
Sweat band/bandana
Rain suit/Poncho
Water bottle (Plastic disposable water bottles available at stores)
Sun Glasses with UV protection (Tropical sunshine can injure your eyes)
Medications (with copy of prescriptions)
Imodium AD/Pepto Bismol/active culture Acidophilus/Cipro (pill form)
Alcohol wipes
Liquid hand wash with disinfectant
Sunscreen SPF 35
Bug repellent with at least 33% DEET (remember, mosquitoes carry diseases)
Band Aids (continued on reverse)
Bacitracin/Neosporin or other antibiotic ointment
Small flashlight with extra batteries
Shower shoes (e.g. flip flops)
Camera & film & spare batteries (film is expensive)
Regular toiletries (including a small roll of TP and a pack of tissue)
Bar soap
Tylenol/Aspirin

*Keep in mind that hemispheres are reversed seasonally. It may be summer in Boston, but that doesn't mean it won't be cold in a South American country, especially if you're in the mountains. Be sure and check with your host before finalizing your packing list.