

VIDA

General Service/Construction Team Trip Preparation Guidelines

We aim to support other international nonprofits in their commitment to the communities they work in as well as provide support to remote and isolated communities. Join us for a hands-on experience of a lifetime as we join hands with communities across Central America.

It is required to bring the following items:

Sunscreen
Bug repellent
Battery operated alarm clock
Rain poncho
4 work tops
4 work pants
Towel
Day Backpack
Flashlight and batteries
Luggage locks
Personal products (shampoo, conditioner, soap, razors)

It is highly recommended to pack the following items:

Minimum of \$400 for meals and souvenirs
Aloe Vera (for sunburn relief)
Hat
Sunglasses
Flip-flops for shower/beach
Minimum of 2 sets of clothes for an evening out/shoes
4 pairs of shorts/ lightweight pants/skirts
4 shirts
1 lightweight jacket/sweater
Swimming suit
Tennis shoes/tivas
Hair dryers, hair straightener, curling iron (Optional)

Camera with extra batteries or battery charger (too expensive to buy in C.A.)
Prescription glasses (difficult to wear only contact lenses throughout trip)
Antibacterial hand gel
Journal and pens
Spanish phrase book or dictionary
AT&T phone card
1 roll of toilet paper
Sheets
Travel pillow
Mosquito netting (There are many bugs, insects, and spiders in C.A.)
Work boots

A generous supply of over the counter or prescription medicine you are currently taking. Motion sickness medications as needed as items may not be readily available here in Central America.

Packing: Please pack your clothing in large Ziploc bags as it may become wet during travel.

Luggage: One suitcase with wheels, duffel bag, or large backpack is allowed for personal use. Another bag is allowed if it is used for donations.

You must be able to carry your own luggage.

Please do not bring:

Cell phones
MP3 Player
Laptops
Expensive jewelry
Anything of sentimental value

****Items are often misplaced, lost, and occasionally stolen.**

Suggestions for a successful adventure:

Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months after your return date. Review the expiration date!

The State Department has been experiencing high volume recently; therefore the passport processing process has been 3-4 months.

United States and Canadian citizens do not need a visa to enter any country in Central America. Citizens of other countries should check for visa requirements with the respective country's consulate in your country.

Bring a money belt or something similar.

Bring U.S. dollars in small bills (\$1 - \$20 bills); bills of \$50 and \$100 are more difficult to cash.

Do not exchange money before leaving the U.S.A./Canada/European Union or at the airport upon arrival. There will be an opportunity to exchange money after arrival.

You will need to pay \$30 for a departure tax at the airport.

Bring a well recognized credit card such as VISA for an emergency health situation, etc.

Make a copy of your credit card and keep it safe.

Make a copy of your passport (photo page) and keep it safe.

Bring traveler's checks as a back up plan; typically they are difficult to cash.

Leave a copy of your passport (photo page), copy of your credit card, VIDA trip itinerary, and VIDA contact information for a loved one.

Drinking alcohol and smoking are only permitted at designated times/areas per discretion of staff. These guidelines will be reviewed at orientation.

1. No drinking at orphanages, animal sanctuaries, retreat centers or on the bus at any time.
2. Smoking is permitted outside field clinics in designated areas. No smoking on the bus at any time.
3. No illegal substances will be permitted at any time during the trip.

Your safety is of the utmost importance to us that is why evening outings will be supervised by VIDA staff.

Central America is generally hot, humid, and rainy (depending on the season) although our trips may include mountainous regions with colder weather, therefore we recommend that you follow the packing guidelines we have compiled.

VIDA creates these humanitarian trips to be eye opening and mind enriching experiences, therefore your accommodations will be basic and most trips will include homestays with a local family. There will be no hair dryers, shampoo, internet, etc at most of the hotels.

The group will be working and touring in many different areas throughout the trip therefore we will be changing hotels frequently. Participants need to be responsible for their own belongings.

We will work hard and play hard as well. Your clothing may become stained or ruined.

The sun is very strong near the equator and precautions should be taken to avoid sunburn especially those participants in the veterinary/construction programs.

Immunizations are important and should be current prior to travel.

(Costa Rica, Panamá, and Nicaragua)

Hepatitis B vaccine

Flu vaccine (optional)

Standard up-to-date USA/EU vaccinations (including tetanus)

Tetanus