

Cuban Mission Trip information and Guidelines

1. Foods

Cuban food is delicious and it is simple. During your stay you will have the opportunity to experience home cooking in the Guest House where you will be staying. On several occasions we will be having meals in Cuban restaurants. The menu is simple, depending on what is available to be purchased by our cook in the Guest House. Principal meats will be chicken, pork, and fish. Black beans and rice are staples at most meals. Fresh fruit and eggs for breakfast. In restaurants, menus may list items that may not be currently available.

2. Allergies

- a. Bring your own medicines for potential allergic reactions.
- b. Gluten free foods should not be expected.

3. Medical Care

As part of your traveling package, medical coverage is provided by two means. You will be covered by standard traveler's medical insurance that would include evacuation insurance in that event. Your US medical insurance is not recognized in Cuba. As part of your airline ticket, the government of Cuba charges a nominal fee for all foreigners entering Cuba to cover fully any medical issue during your stay in Cuba.

4. Water

Because of the hot weather most of the time in Cuba, it is essential that you remain well hydrated. Drink only bottled water that is purchased. The bottled water with unbroken sealed caps is unsafe. When you brush your teeth, use bottled water to rinse out and to rinse your toothbrush. In some restaurants, sometimes juices are mixed with local water. If you have any doubts about juices, ask one of your translators. Bottled water is covered by your travel package. Individual bottles are given to you as well as two liter bottles to be kept in your room to refill your individual bottles daily.

5. Transportation

Our local transportation is in the form of a van suited for the size of the group. Our driver will be with our group for the entire week.

6. Flexibility

If this is your first mission trip outside the US, you will soon understand the need to be flexible. We are in another culture that perhaps has norms uncommon to Americans. We are guests in their country. We are used to "American time", but we are visiting where things operate on "Cuban time." Not bad or good, just different. Plans can change without much or any notice. Circumstances may become beyond our control. Exercise Grace and patience.

7. Proper Dress

Men – walking shorts, slacks, blue jeans, button or pullover shirts. In public shirts with collars. T-shirts, flip-flops okay at Guest House. For safety, tennis or walking shoes when out.

Women – walking shorts, slacks, modest tops, dresses or skirts/blouse. Comfortable

8. Weather

Because of where we are in the Caribbean, the weather will be pleasantly warm to hot, we recommend the use of a good sunscreen. This depends on your traveling month. Hurricane season is June – November (October is worst). Unpredictability of the weather could affect whether a trip could be interrupted or cancelled. Dry season is November – April. Rainy season is May – October.

9. Customs and Immigration

Your US passport has to be valid to a date at least six months beyond your travel dates. Because religious visas have to be applied for 3 months prior to departure, not having a valid passport in hand or having an expiring passport will prohibit your participation. You will be allowed to carry in only two checked suit cases weighing no more than 40 pounds each. Upon arrival in Cuba, do not be surprised if a Customs officer asks for you to open your luggage for inspection. Your team leader will help you with this. Each team member will be carrying a letter from a Cuban church being visited, stating that items you may be carrying are for part of your mission trip.

10. Other personal items to bring include:

- a. Washcloth – while Cuban accommodations include towels they seldom include personal washcloths.
- b. Personal water bottle.
- c. Sunscreen
- d. Personal size hand sanitizers.
- e. A roll or two of toilet tissue. Also, a package of moist handi-wipes.
- f. If you are able, bring a personal size prescription of antibiotic Cipro and Penicillin or Amoxicillin. Cipro is always handy if you have a G-I upset. At the end of trip these can be left, with our medical ministry partner Bread of Life.