



Frequently Asked Questions Dominican Republic

Where will our group be staying?

Most groups will stay in a local mission house with pure H₂O, bunk beds and showers. You will not need to bring bedding. Men and women will be staying in separate rooms. When possible, we will arrange for married couples and families to have their own rooms, but there is no guarantee for this as it depends upon space/room availability. There is no Wi-Fi at the mission house, however there is public Wi-Fi available not far from the house. The mission house is very safe. Please be advised that there is no air-conditioning in the mission house.

What is the food like?

Dominican food is not very much different than American food. We supply two meals a day (usually breakfast and then lunch or dinner). Dominican food is very similar but more natural and fresh than American food. Meals are often cooked with fresh vegetables. Some of the meals provided include: chicken and rice, beef & potatoes, etc. Your third meal is eaten at a local restaurant. COI staff will help you choose from a variety of local eating facilities and in most cases we will accompany you and assist in ordering. In case you would like to eat out one or two nights there are different places for eating: Pizza and sandwich place, Mexican food place, McDonalds, Empanada place, fried chicken place etc. Approximate cost for the evening meal is \$6-\$12 per person.

What kind of ministry will we be doing?

The answer to this question depends in part on what ministries your team leader presents to us for your group to be involved in. Typical outreaches include children's centers, schools and orphanages, construction, street evangelism, medical ministry, prison/detention center, hospitals, work projects, sports ministries, VBS and other children's ministry, ministry to the poor, etc.

What will our group do in the evenings?

Previous groups have gone to churches to share with their youth, and participate in the praise and worship services there. Also, devotionals can be scheduled for the evenings (lead by COI or your leaders) and you may wish to have time to rest, explore, have fun and relax.

Which language is spoken in the Dominican Republic?

Spanish is spoken in the Dominican Republic. COI provides interpreters during your outreach.

What about the water?

We will supply pure drinking water for you, which will come from bottled water bought at a store. Tap water is not recommended to drink. Water served in a restaurant is filtered or bottled and is safe to drink. There are also many small stores available to purchase personal bottled water if desired.

What is the weather like?

Highs are in the 80s while lows are in the 70s year round in San Pedro, the city where we stay and work.

What about money?

The Dominican currency is called the "Peso Dominicano". Daily exchange rates are available on the internet at: www.xe.com. We will help you exchange money when you arrive in the country. Each person should be able to cover his/her expenses with \$10-\$20 per day. This covers the one meal they are responsible for and a snack. In addition your group will be given time to do shopping for local souvenirs, etc. The amount of money for this depends upon each person's preference. *Please remember there is an \$10.00 tourist card that each person must purchase upon arrival into the country and possibly a \$10.00 fee upon departure.*

What about bugs?

Dominican is home to a variety of wonderful crawly creatures. We do our best to keep them out of the living quarters so there's a good chance you might not meet any of these "native Dominicans." Mosquitoes can be bothersome and therefore it is recommended that each team member bring a can of repellent.

Is there a time difference?

The Dominican Republic is -4 GMT. This means that it is one hour ahead of Eastern Standard Time. The Dominican Republic does not currently observe daylight savings time; this means that during the summer the time in the Dominican Republic is the same as Eastern Standard Time.

Are there any extra things we should bring?

Included in this packet is a suggested packing list. Also you will need to bring any necessary items for the ministry that you are doing such as small toys, puppets, stickers, balloons, clown make-up, music or costumes for dramas, etc. We will provide sound equipment and we also have a few other items such as a puppet stage.

Is there medical care available?

There are a few different clinics within close proximity to the housing facility. We also have contacts with doctors who will offer on-site care when necessary.

Please take the time to read the insurance information included in this packet.

How safe is it?

We have not had any security problems with our groups. San Pedro is not considered a dangerous city but like any other city crime does exist. Therefore we recommend taking certain precautions to avoid any problem. Team members are advised not to be out alone after dark. Extra money and passports can be stored in your suitcase or in your room. And anything of significant value that isn't necessary for the trip should be left at home.

Will we be able to make and receive phone calls?

There are pay phones available for use near the facility. It is recommended that you buy AT&T or MCI calling cards at stores in San Pedro. It is important that you have the access number specific to the country when using calling cards. You may also call collect. If someone from the states needs to reach someone from the group, an emergency number will be provided. This number is for EMERGENCIES ONLY. The COI headquarters in Florida may be called anytime during the business week with a message for your group.

How will most people we come in contact with perceive Christians?

Most Dominicans openly receive Christians. They are in general a very open and "warm" people. Most are also interested in God and will be open to talking about God. There are a number of Christians and churches in the community so most people will know about God, however they still need to enter into a relationship with Him.

What are the requirements for entering and exiting the Dominican Republic?

The U.S. Embassy in Dominican Republic recommends that all visitors obtain a passport before entering the country. Because of new US government passport requirements, airlines flying into Dominican usually require passports, no matter the Dominican's government requirement. COI strongly recommends that group members NOT travel to and from Dominican Republic with a certified birth certificate.

Travelers under the age of 18 are required to have a notarized consent from their parents, or legal guardian, indicating permission for the minor to travel into Dominican Republic. COI will provide you with a "Consent to Travel" form.

Visas are not required for US citizens. If you are NOT a citizen of the US, it is YOUR responsibility to check with the nearest embassy or consulate for visa requirements.

Dominican Republic requires all visitors to purchase a \$10.00 tourist card upon entering the country and possibly a \$10.00 tax upon departure. No traveler's checks accepted! These fees are additional to the price per person owed to COI and are not payable to COI.

No immunizations are required for entrance to the Dominican Republic, but we suggest you have a current tetanus shot (within last 5-10 years) and that all your childhood immunizations are current. If you have further questions,

please check with your personal physician.

Many mission organizations have been taking short-term mission groups to the Dominican Republic for many years without health problems - but it is wisdom to follow recommended suggestions from health experts. For more information, check the center for disease control web site at www.cdc.gov and select *traveler's health*. Information may be requested directly from CDC by calling 1-888-232-3299.