

# While You Are There

## Food Guidelines

Unless you are in a very developed nation, and your team leader says that it is okay, DO NOT drink local water or eat anything that may have come into contact with the water.

### Don't

- Brush your teeth with tap water
- Eat street food of any kind (it's NOT worth the risk of getting sick)
- Eat ANY fruits and vegetables that may have been washed with tap water
- Drink anything with ice or non-bottled water served at restaurants
- Get shower water in your mouth or eyes
- Put your hands in your mouth or eyes

### Do

- Use bottled water to brush your teeth
- Only drink beverages that you open yourself
- Only eat fruit that you peel yourself
- Eat fruits and vegetables that are served hot (have been boiled)
- Wipe off the top off cans with a wet wipe
- Wash your hands often or use sanitizer
- Try new foods
- Pack snacks
- Bring a water bottle & make sure you stay hydrated

## Travel Documents

Lock up your passport in the hotel safe (or keep it hidden in your luggage in your room). Carry your color copy with you daily.

## Cell Phones

If you don't have good international coverage you can keep your phone on "airplane" mode. This will let you use wifi but block all data, calls and texts that may come through (and that you would be charged for).

## **Journal & Process**

It is very important that you take time to journal and process what you are experiencing during your trip. You may think, “I will never forget this” only to look back a few days later and discover you only vaguely remember. Take time during your trip to write, type, draw, or do whatever you need to do to own the experience that you are having.

- Get a special journal just for the trip or bring a computer/i-pad if you prefer typing (some people like to journal on their phones)
- Write down prophetic words (Record them on your phone as you are getting them too and transcribe them later)
- Keep a list of impressions you sense the Lord speaking to you.

## **Communicate What You Need**

Whether you are needing more rest, are dealing with something you want prayer on, or have an issue that has come up with a team member make sure you communicate what is going on with you and what you need to your team leader or co-leader. Chances are if you are struggling with something than others are too so don't be afraid to speak up and get some extra help.

## **Culture Shock**

Be aware that how things are done in the country you are going to may be incredibly different than how things are done in your home country. Especially if you haven't traveled much before “culture shock” can be very emotionally draining. Be aware of not judging when you notice things are done differently. Seek to understand things from a new perspective or, at the very least, suspend judgement and try to not make any assumptions.

## **Gifts**

It's a great idea to purchase some small gifts for your supporters or in country people you have met. Something in bulk that is small and travels easily works best. Examples include postcards, bracelets, local candy, local currency coins, keychains, etc.

## **Use the Local Language**

Show honor & respect for those you are visiting by using whatever pieces of the language that you can and inviting people you meet to teach you words or phrases. This shows that you are trying to build a bridge to connect with others on their terms.

## **Drinking & Smoking**

We ask that all team members refrain from consuming alcohol (regardless if they are of legal age) as well as the use of tobacco for the entirety of the mission trip, including air travel.

## **Photography**

Be aware of your environment as you take pictures. Ask people for permission before photographing them and be especially aware of how you take pictures of children. Ex. Some European countries ban people from taking pictures of kids unless they are in large groups.

## **Relational Guidelines**

### **Dating**

DO NOT enter into a dating relationship while on a mission trip; either with someone on your team or a national. The potential for damage, and at the very least distraction, far out ways the potential for good. Understand that you are in a highly intense and emotionally charged environment that is very different from day to day life.

### **Friendships with Nationals**

Make friends with the people you meet on your trip but set healthy and realistic expectations with them for what this will mean after you leave.

- Don't say "I'll write" if you know you won't.
- Absolutely do not invite someone to come visit you unless you fully understand what that means in their cultural context and are prepared to host them. In some cultures this would be an open door to show up at your door and expect to be hosted for several months.
- Understand what is appropriate for male-female interactions.
- Do not freely give out your contact information (your ministry host can advise you on guidelines depending on the country you are in).
- Be aware of what relational words may mean to people before you put a title on a relationship.
  - If the Lord leads you to enter into a significant relationship with someone as a mentor, spiritual parent/child etc. know that #1 the other person may have unspoken expectations about what that will entail that may be different than yours and #2 you must be willing to take full responsibility for the expectations that you are setting with that person.
  - Another Example: In some places a godparent is someone that will pray for a child as they grow up and be an example to them. In other places people who support a child through a monthly sponsorship program are called a "godparent". Yet in other cultures a godparent is someone who takes on financially responsibility for an individual such that they would pay to send them to college or cover their wedding. If a child asked you to be their godparent you would want to know that that means!