



Frequently Asked Questions

Health Concerns

What vaccinations and/or medications do I need?

Please visit the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#) for the most up to date recommendation and schedule an appointment at a travel medicine clinic or with your primary care provider prior to your departure. The Curiosity Project will notify you if a yellow vaccination card is required for travel.

Where can I get my vaccinations and other travel-related medical advice?

Passport Health clinics are a great and convenient resource.

1. [Click here](#) to find the clinic closest to you.
2. Try to schedule your appointment 4-6 weeks prior to your departure so that you have time to receive full doses of vaccines that are given in a series
3. Please remember to bring your yellow vaccination card to your appointment if you already have one.
4. Passport Health also provides destination specific advice for travelers [HERE](#).

What coverage is included in Travel Insurance?

Each participant will be enrolled in Travel insurance for the duration of the trip. Coverage includes: Medical Assistance, Personal Assistance (i.e. assist with replacement documents such as passports, credit cards, cash advance in local currency), Overseas Legal Assistance (i.e. connect you with an English-speaking lawyer), Evacuation or Repatriation Services, and Emergency Telephone Translation Services. The specific Summary of Benefits will be provided to you prior to departure.

Program Costs & Payments



What is included in the program costs?

1. **Travel & Evacuation Insurance.** The Curiosity Project will enroll you in travel and evacuation insurance for the duration of your trip.
2. **STEP Enrollment.** You will be enrolled in the Safe Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) with the State Department prior to departure to ensure the local embassy is aware of your presence.
3. **Visa.** Depending on the visa requirements of your destination country, you may be required to submit additional documents or complete additional forms. You may also be required to send in your passport to The Curiosity Project so it can be submitted to the embassy for visa processing. The costs of any visa procedures, whether before departure or at passport control in country is included in the program fee.
4. **Pre-Trip Meeting.** Approximately 2-3 weeks before the departure date, there will be a team pre-trip meeting to go over trip details and answer any last-minute questions you may have. The meeting will be via video or phone conference.
5. **Team Supplies** for all volunteer and service activities.
6. **In-Country Transportation.** All in-country transportation including internal airfare, boats/ferries, buses/cars/taxis, fuel costs and tips are included in your program cost.
7. **Accommodations.** All accommodations throughout the trip are included. You will be expected to share a room with someone of the same sex. However, if you would like a private room or a room upgrade, you will be responsible for the associated costs.
8. **Meals.** All meals once you are in the host country are included in your program cost. If you would like food in addition to what is provided, you will be responsible for the associated costs. Alcohol is not included.
9. **Clean Water.** Clean drinking water is included in the program cost. You are required to bring a reusable water bottle for this purpose, as water is often provided in large jugs.
10. **Translators.** The cost of translators is included in program costs when appropriate.
11. **Touristic Excursions & Activities.** At least one touristic excursion or activity is included in the program costs. These activities offer you the opportunity to gain a more profound understanding of the culture of the people you are serving, as well as a well-deserved rest after many days of hard work. Information about the activity will be provided to you prior to departure and discussed during the pre-trip meeting.
12. **Tour Guides & Driver.** The cost of tour guides and drivers are included in program costs. Tips are also included in program costs. If you would like to give any additional tips, please speak with your Trip Lead to determine if it is appropriate.



What is not included in the program costs?

1. International airfare**
2. Any fees associated with international airfare, including changing itineraries, baggage, upgrades, flight delays, seat selection, etc.
3. Meals while traveling internationally
4. The cost of any vaccinations, prophylactic or personal medication necessary for travel
5. Touristic excursions/activities not included in trip itinerary
6. Alcoholic beverages
7. Room upgrades

8. Souvenirs
9. Internet and Phone Access

** The Curiosity Project will provide suggested flight itineraries, including the flight that the Trip Leader will be on. International airfare can be arranged by The Curiosity Project for a \$100 booking fee, in addition to the cost of the flight. (You must notify The Curiosity Project 60 days prior to departure if you would like to have The Curiosity Project book your flight. Payment is due at least 7 days before your flight is booked.)

What is the payment schedule?

1. *Within 14 days of acceptance to program:* \$500 deposit is due to The Curiosity Project, Inc.
2. *45 days prior to departure:* Half of the remaining program cost is due.
3. *30 days prior to departure:* All outstanding program costs must be paid in full.

*Program costs may be paid via Venmo, Facebook, credit card online or by check.

Are payments refundable?

If the participant must cancel their trip commitment for any reason, the participant must inform The Curiosity Project in writing. The Curiosity Project incurs administrative costs prior to the departure date and therefore, in all cases, the \$500 deposit is not refundable. (The Participant may, however, transfer the deposit toward an alternative trip scheduled within 24 months of the cancellation date, pending availability.)

The Curiosity Project reserves the right to cancel a trip at any time. In the unlikely event of such a cancellation, the total amount paid including deposit will be fully refunded. The Curiosity Project is not liable for any other refund including interest, liability or cancellation costs of any kind.

Are payments towards my trip tax-deductible? Are donations made on my behalf for my trip tax deductible for my friends and family?

Yes! A portion of your payment made is tax-deductible because payments are made directly to The Curiosity Project which is a 501c3 organization.

Pre-Trip Concerns

What should I pack?

You will be provided with a suggested packing list. You may check one bag and have one carry-on bag. Take only what you can carry, Pack light! Pack essentials in your carry-on bag in case of lost luggage. Respect all [TSA Rules and Regulations](#). Once in country, your daily bag should contain a bottle for drinking water, personal snacks, pen or pencil and notepad, sunscreen, lip balm, antibacterial hand sanitizer, insect repellent, tissues/toilet

paper, hat, umbrella, light jacket and other appropriate clothing or equipment for inclement weather.

When must my flight arrive in-country?

You are expected to arrive at the in-country airport no later than the date and time indicated by The Curiosity Project team on the suggested flight itinerary. The team will meet in the baggage claim area, unless otherwise indicated.

Will I be required to carry and check any baggage for The Curiosity Project, Inc.?

If the Curiosity Project needs you to carry baggage containing team supplies, in addition to your personal luggage, you will be notified at the pre-trip meeting. The Curiosity Project will cover the cost of checking the baggage of team supplies to the final destination.

What should I do if I plan on bringing a credit card?

In the developing world, credit cards are not universally accepted. Be prepared to show a picture ID if you use your credit card. The specifics of each host location will be discussed at the pre-trip meeting. If you plan to use a credit card, Visa is the most commonly accepted, followed by MasterCard. American Express is the least likely to be accepted. Be sure to carry copies, front and back, of any credit cards you will be carrying with you, as well as cancellation information in case your wallet is lost or stolen. Contact all of your credit card companies to alert them of your planned international travel. Remember that credit cards often charge international transaction fees; these fees vary by company, so please obtain a schedule of your company's rates prior to departure. The Curiosity Project is not responsible for international credit card fees.

What should I do if I plan on bringing cash?

Plan to use cash for most purchases. Be sure you have sufficient local currency for shopping or extra items not included in the program costs. U.S. currency is accepted in many countries. Please check with your Team Leader prior to departure to determine if U.S. Currency is accepted at your destination. If you plan to carry cash be careful of how you remove it, as there is always the possibility of theft. Please note that exchange services in airports typically charge the highest exchange rates. If you plan to get local currency in-country, the best method is through an ATM. Traveler's checks are not widely accepted and not recommended as a method of payment.

In-Country Concerns

Will I have Internet access?

Internet access varies by country and is never guaranteed in any location; you will be provided with additional information prior to departure. The Curiosity Project is not responsible for any

fees associated with Internet usage during the trip. To get the most out of your experience, we suggest limiting your usage as greatly as possible.

Will I have cellphone access?

The Team Leader will carry a cellphone for use in case of emergencies. If you would like to use your personal phone during the trip, please contact your service provider to set up international calling and/or texting. It is a good idea to turn off data on your phone during the trip, as international data usage tends to be very expensive. The Curiosity Project is not responsible for any fees associated with international calls or texts. To get the most out of your experience, we suggest limiting your usage as greatly as possible.

Who will be notified once I arrive safely in-country?

Once you arrive safely in your host country, the Team Leader will send an email to notify your emergency contact. If other individuals need to be notified of your arrival, be sure to inform The Curiosity Project at least one week prior to your departure.

Which foods and beverages on the trip are safe to consume?

Contaminated food and drink are a major source of illness while traveling. The Curiosity Project makes every effort to provide participants with food that has been prepared carefully and safely. It may be wise to avoid raw fruits and vegetables depending on your destination. If you have any questions while in-country about a food or beverage, please ask your Team Leader prior to consumption. It is a good idea to drink only canned or bottled beverages and use a straw if you did not see the bottle or can opened. In general, boiled beverages such as coffee and tea are safe. Never drink tap water – always drink purified, bottled water. The best ways to avoid becoming ill are to wash your hands with soap and water or antibacterial gel regularly, drink plenty of non-caffeinated and non-alcoholic beverages, and get enough rest.

Can my dietary restrictions be accommodated?

Every effort is made to accommodate dietary restrictions or allergies, but due to limited resources in certain countries this may not be possible. Please check with The Curiosity Project as soon as possible to determine if your dietary restrictions can be accommodated in the country you wish to travel to. Be sure to bring plenty of snacks to supplement main meals.

What can I expect for accommodations?

The Curiosity Project expects accommodations to be clean and safe. Accommodations will vary based on location. All rooms will be double occupancy; individual rooms are available at a single occupancy supplemental cost.

Can I bring candy and/or gifts to locals?

We discourage bringing gifts of candy, but small gifts like stickers, small stuffed

animals, toy cars, pencils, toothbrushes and other fun and useful items are wonderful. We will be visiting hospitals, schools and orphanages with lots and lots of children. Most of the time the gifts will be given to the director of the project so the gifts can be fairly distributed without causing chaos. Gifts that can be shared like soccer balls, badminton sets and bubbles are also great. This will be discussed again at the pre-trip meeting.



What is the latest safety information from the U.S. Department of State?

For the latest security information, Americans traveling abroad should monitor the [Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs' Website](#), where the current travel warnings and travel alerts, as well as the worldwide caution, can be found. Up to date information on safety and security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the U.S. and Canada, or for callers outside the U.S. and Canada, a regular toll-line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday-Friday. The Department of State urges American citizens to take responsibility for their own personal security while traveling overseas. For general information about appropriate measures travelers can take to protect themselves, see the Department of State's pamphlet "A Safe Trip Abroad," on the website. The Curiosity Project enrolls all participants in the State Department's Safe Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) prior to departure to ensure the local embassy is aware of your presence.

Travel Tips



Before you go:

1. Pack conservative clothing. Leave flashy garments and jewelry safely at home.
2. Good walking shoes are a must! You will be doing a lot of walking, so make sure that you have some comfortable shoes for your feet.
3. Make sure you are up-to-date on your vaccinations and any other medications necessary for travel to a specific country.
4. Check the weather for your destination. The seasons vary across the world, and rain is just as common as sunshine. Be sure to pack sunscreen and insect repellent!
5. Make 2 copies of all your cards/documents/passport prior to departure. Have one set on-hand should anything go missing. Know how to cancel your credit cards. Leave 1 set of copies at home with someone in case of an emergency. Snapping pics of these documents and cards on your cell phone is always a good idea as well.
6. Do not forget your smile and cheery disposition! Be sure to be ready for an adventure and open to whatever you may encounter. Each trip is a new experience!



At the airport:

1. Arrive at least 2 hours prior to international flights. Have a hard-copy of your flight itinerary and booking numbers, unless you are using cell phone apps.

2. Pack prescription medications, with ORIGINAL labels, in your carry-on bag.
3. You may be expected to carry and check a bag containing team supplies to be used on the trip. If this is the case, you will be notified at the pre-trip meeting.



In-Country:

4. Always carry your passport with you.
5. Be cautious of how much money you carry and when and where you remove it to mitigate the chances of theft or loss.
6. When arriving in-country, grab a hotel business card to keep with you. This can facilitate any transportation needs to the hotel, especially in non-English-speaking countries.
7. Be sure to pay attention to the Trip Leader's briefings on the daily schedule of activities.
8. Pay attention to the food and beverages while in country. A general rule is that if the food is well cooked and hot, it should be safe to eat. Water that has been boiled or purified with iodine is safe for consumption.
9. Wash your hands with soap and water or anti-bacterial gel often. This can prevent illness and keep you healthy while you participate actively in the clinic.
10. Rest up! Days can be long and difficult while traveling, and it is important to get plenty of rest in order to adjust well to the new environment and perform at your best.
11. Dress conservatively. No short-shorts or skirts. Tank tops are okay with a scarf covering your shoulders. Knee length skirts and longer are a great alternative to shorts.
12. Drink plenty of water. The Curiosity Project will provide bottled water daily.

General Expectations of Participants



The Curiosity Project asks the following of participants to ensure a smooth trip:

1. Get comfortable with being uncomfortable! Travelling internationally will push you out of your comfort zone. Be open to the personal growth and transformational experiences this opportunity will present you with.
2. Remember that you are a participant in a foreign country, and your American rights do not necessarily apply. Be aware of different laws and customs.
3. Be flexible. Recognize that despite careful planning, the situation on the ground can change quickly; adapt to changes as they occur.
4. Be professional. You are representing The Curiosity Project as well as the U.S. Do not speak or act in ways that reflect poorly on these entities.
5. Always communicate concerns or questions to the Team Leader.
6. Never promise or pledge specific treatment or obligate The Curiosity Project in any way.
7. Never speak negatively of the host country. Avoid commenting on local, national or international political issues.
8. As a team, be sure to work together to ensure daily activities run smoothly, as well as provide support and encouragement to one another and staff at the host facility.

Additional Notes:

1. While working with severely underserved populations in-country, it is possible to become focused on an individual situation. Always remember that there are hundreds of locations that can benefit from the assistance and influence of The Curiosity Project. Participants cannot involve themselves in activities other than those outlined by the specific trip itinerary. Providing assistance in any way other than can weaken the true position of The Curiosity Project and hinder The Curiosity Project, Inc.' success in providing impactful service that empowers locals.
 2. Regardless of your background, you are a foreigner and most individuals you come in contact with will assume you are wealthy. People may ask you for favors or money, as they may view you as the solution to their ailments and poverty. Be careful not to promise any assistance you cannot provide during your stay. Never give cash to locals, as this encourages the aid-based cycle of dependency.
 3. The Team will conduct daily briefing sessions. These sessions will set team goals and expectations, review schedule, address concerns, and offer the opportunity to share experiences and reactions. Each participant is expected to attend the daily session.
 4. Remember, you may offer encouragement toward the success of an in-country project, but you may not obligate The Curiosity Project in any way.
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General Cultural Considerations

It can be difficult to leave the comforts of home and immerse yourself in a foreign environment. It is normal for volunteers in developing countries to experience culture shock. Unexpected surprises and circumstances contribute to culture shock, and for this reason, preparation is essential. Participants can minimize their frustration by knowing what to expect before they arrive at their destination. The information provided below is meant to help with just that.



Be prepared to experience some of the following:

1. **Initial Shock.** Common symptoms of culture shock are frustration, paranoia, criticism of local people and customs, oversensitivity and overreaction to minor difficulties, changes in eating and sleeping habits, loss of sense of humor.
2. **Adjustment.** Gradually, as you orient yourself, you regain confidence. As this happens, your perspective becomes more balanced; you are less critical and more willing to integrate yourself into the culture of the country you are visiting.
3. **Emotional Roller-Coaster** It can be shocking to experience poverty for the first time. Positive ways to cope with these feelings are to recognize that you are working to help the community and to discuss your feelings with your Team Leader and other group members.



Considerations:

1. Travel with a spirit of humility and a desire to meet and learn from local people.
2. Take care of yourself. Eat well, exercise and get sufficient sleep.

3. Do not take anything too seriously
4. Do not let others irritate you. You have come a long way to learn; enjoy the experience!
5. Cultivate the habit of listening and observing rather than seeing and hearing.
6. Spend time reflecting on meaningful aspects of your trip: What are you learning?
7. Be aware of other people's feelings and try to avoid behaving in a way that others may perceive as offensive.
8. Spend time each day reflecting on your experiences.

Time Considerations:

In the US, making others wait is usually considered disrespectful and rude. However, most other countries do not have the same attitude towards time and punctuality. While you are abroad, it is your responsibility to be ready for the day at the time appointed by the in-country host, and be aware of how your actions may be delaying or hurrying the group. Although you are expected to be punctual, you are also expected to be prepared to wait patiently for others, especially individuals from your host country. This is a function of a culture with a more relaxed attitude toward timeliness and schedules; do not be insulted.

Language Barriers:

Many of the patients you encounter live in rural villages and will not speak or understand English. The local staff may speak English and translators will be provided as necessary. It can be frustrating to not speak directly with patients, but remember that smiles and hand gestures go a long way in communicating and connecting with people.

Social Etiquette:

Appropriate dress varies from culture to culture. Participants must dress appropriately to show respect to the host facility, prevent misunderstandings and avoid offending the local community. Understand the local social etiquette. Learn the standards of politeness and common courtesy (greetings, giving and accepting gifts, table manners, eating customs, gestures, sacred spaces, etc.). For more information, refer to the country overview packet.

Trust:

Recognize that when you first arrive at the clinic site, you will be a stranger to the local staff and community. You must work to earn the trust and confidence of those around you, and prove your competence and trustworthiness. It is important to demonstrate your dedication and commitment to hard work and empathy towards the community.

Upon re-entry to the U.S.:

1. Be ready to experience boredom, isolation, disorientation and annoyance and jet lag. [Click here](#) for tips on how to cope with jet lag.
2. Keep in touch with other team participants. Develop friendships with people that understand experiences of travelling to developing countries.
3. Keep up to date with current event in your host country. Anything you do to maintain your connection with the world at large will solidify the significance of your trip.
4. Remember that you can maximize your impact by inspiring and sharing your experience with other.