

Dear **Trip Leader**,

Included in this document, you will find important “Last-Minute” information for your upcoming trip to Costa Rica, including passport info, phone numbers where your group can be contacted, details about passing through customs, etc. I would **STRONGLY RECOMMEND** printing out this email to ensure you have a hardcopy and carrying it with you when you leave for Costa Rica. Let me know if you have any questions or comments about the information here. I hope it is clear and helpful!

If you have not yet returned your completed Emergency Contact Form, please make sure and do so before your group’s departure. Thanks!

A Word on...PASSPORTS

Everyone must provide you with a photocopy of the first two pages in his or her passport, the “information pages”, including the photo. Keep these with you during the trip. If someone was to lose or misplace a passport, they will need these to apply for an emergency passport at the US Embassy in Costa Rica.

A Word on...AIRPORT TAXES

The only thing not included in your costs is a **\$26** per person airport tax that the Costa Rican government charges you upon leaving the country. ***This MUST be paid for in cash.***

Collect the tickets and passports when you are in Costa Rica. YOU -the group trip leader- are responsible.

Most of the questions on the customs form are self-explanatory, i.e. name, age, passport info., etc. But here are a few answers that might not be so obvious:

- Your reason for traveling is **TOURISM**, not work.
- Indicate your length of stay, including your two travel days.
- Your address in Costa Rica will be **San Jose**.
- You are **NOT** visiting a farm if they ask you this.
- Everything else, i.e. flight #, # of family members traveling with you (0 unless other family members are on the trip), should be pretty obvious.

When you are leaving for your return to the States at the airport, first pay required departure tax, then you may go to check-in for your flight. Just don't get caught without cash at the airport on the last day.

TRAVEL DAY

If you have any significant flight delays, or cancellations that will result in you missing a connection, if possible, please call 678-457-3412 and leave a detailed message. Even if you get voicemail, please leave a message as we check them often. We can alert our staff in Costa Rica about changes or delays.

If we set up your travel and you should need to reach the travel agent on your travel day, you can call Tan Travel at 800-777-8261. Ask for **Lydia**, Linda, or Allan, in

that order. They might be able to help you as well, however, they will not be able to communicate with staff in your receiving country. (Note: Tan Travel is open Mon-Fri 9-5 CT and Saturday 10-2 CT)

If you do have delays, **don't worry** about your hosts on the other end in Costa Rica. They know these flight schedules well and are prepared for potential delays and/or cancellations. However, if you do feel like you need to call directly to Costa Rica, please call **Jeni McLane Barrantes**, your main host, at the following number:

011-506-8991-9043 cell

Rest assured, our staff live in a constant state of flexibility and will adapt accordingly.

A Word on...CUSTOMS

After you get your luggage and pass through customs, just head outside through the front opening and TO THE RIGHT, and you will be met by one of our local staff. Don't accept a bus ride from anyone unless you are confident they are with Young Life. Don't accept any assistance with your luggage unless you are prepared to tip. The airport and the environment in Costa Rica are very laid back and safe, but I suggest keeping your group close together, eyes or hands on your luggage at all times, etc.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFO:

If you'd like to give friends or family a number where they can reach you, or a member of your group, ***in the case of an emergency***, you can provide them with the following numbers (from the USA, dial numbers exactly as listed):

011-506-8991-9043 Jeni McLane Barrantes' cell

011-506-2280-4363 Young Life office, Jeni McLane Barrantes' **ext 105**

Please encourage anyone who must call to do so only in the case of an emergency, if they have to reach you. Folks shouldn't call just to report that the dog is having a good day, the stock market dropped a point, the price of gasoline has hit \$5, etc. **YOUR TRIP LEADER WILL BE THE ONLY PERSON ABLE TO CALL HOME...DO NOT BRING YOUR CELL PHONE TO COSTA RICA AS IT WILL BE STOLEN...if not by a thief, then by us ☺.** Set up a calling "tree", having one parent receive the call from the trip leader and then pass the message onto others.

Finally, a few thoughts as you and your group prepare...In his wonderful book "Gracias", a personal journey of time spent in Latin America, Henri Nouwen writes "God himself became flesh for us so that we would be able to receive him every time we find ourselves serving another human being." I think this is so appropriate for the adventure of service you have in front of you. You will serve and yet be blessed in receiving Christ as you do so!

Certainly we need to see Christ in anyone we are trying to love and serve, no matter what country they reside in, no matter what their socioeconomic background, but

how exciting to think ahead to those precious people of Costa Rica that your group will have the opportunity to serve, to realize that just as we are all ambassadors of our Lord wherever we go, it is in fact He that you will be caring for and giving your time and efforts to when you labor in love for the Costa Ricans. I encourage you and your group to consider this perspective.

You will also have the powerful experience of working as the Body of Christ. In light of this, consider the following scriptures:

"If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body."

-Corinthians 12:17-20

And so shall your group be working as one Body, leaning on the strength and perseverance of one another, depending on the sustenance of Jesus as your Head.

May you all go with hearts prepared to be poured out. May you all go expecting only this; that the Lord has negotiated your paths to this point and to this country you are about to visit and regardless of who you encounter, no matter what your agenda, what project you are assigned to, beyond the weather, the housing, even your health, He will be present with you and writing a new and wonderful chapter in each of your folks' lives.

Young Life is eternally grateful for your willingness to serve the Lord in this way.

Grace and peace be yours!

-TAIT

Jeff Tait

Young Life Expeditions: Adventures in Short-term Missions

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