



LOS MÉDICOS VOLADORES

THE FLYING DOCTORS

Packing for Your Trip

Central America Trips

PLANNING:

Submit your trip planning form and check as soon as possible. You will also need to be a member in good standing of LMV, which is a 501(c)(3) organization. Membership dues are \$45 per year. Talk with your LMV trip coordinator regarding any needed help with the luggage and equipment that you plan on taking on the trip.

Place your passport where you can easily reach it during the trip. Make a copy of your passport and keep it in a safe place in another piece of luggage. If you are a healthcare professional, you will need to bring a copy of your license. We normally will have E-tickets for airline trips. You will receive an itinerary of the trip; make a copy and leave it with your contact person here at home.

LUGGAGE:

LMV flies into Central America on commercial airlines. We will need to abide by each airline's rules for international flights. We will be carrying medical supplies and equipment as part of our checked luggage. Any hazardous items will need to be in your checked luggage, and must comply with airline regulations. Remember that all carry-on items will be searched at each airport at least two times.

PACKING IT IN:

Be sure you do not bring more than 30 pounds MAX in your ONE carry on bag, or the airline may require you to pay for extra weight. You will be allowed TWO checked bags or boxes that weigh up 70 pounds; this may include medical supplies, equipment, clothing, etc. Even one additional pound over the allotted 70 pounds per bag or box will cause the airline to require you to pay the extra fee, which is \$50 or more per bag over the weight limit.

Additionally, you will need to write an inventory list for each box or bag, with item name and date of expiration if item is medicine. Keep the inventory list with your passport so you can show it if asked. **DO NOT CARRY ANY SHARP INSTRUMENTS IN YOUR CARRY ON BAG (E.G. DENTAL TOOLS).**

You will be gone for about 10 days; 2 of these days will include 5 hours of flying time. You will not need, for example, a whole bottle of shampoo. You'll find that small plastic bottles are available at most drug stores for carrying a few day's supply of anything you must have for trip. Remember to check ahead of time regarding security requirements at US airports in particular, however. Check the Transport Security Administration's website for updated info at www.tsa.gov.

WHAT TO BRING:

Clothing: Don't bring too much! Include at least two sets of work clothes—for instance, jeans and a t-shirt or scrubs. Add extra underclothing and socks. Something a little dressy for meetings with city officials and parties that are given in our honor. Sturdy, comfortable shoes. Flip-flops or beach sandals for Saturday and Sunday beach wear. The sand on the beach is black and gets very HOT. Bathing suit. Sweater or light jacket. Central America will be hot in late spring and fall, but sometimes cool in the evening. Check with the LMV trip coordinator or on the Internet for projected weather conditions in Central America.

Please note that Central American countries are conservative countries. Shorts (of an appropriate length) and pants for women are acceptable; however, other revealing hot-weather garments popular in the USA are not appropriate in Central American villages.

Toiletries and Medicine (9 to 10 days supply in small containers): Shampoo, soap, moisturizer, shave cream/razor, toothbrush/paste floss, comb/brush, Aspirin/Tylenol, Pepto Bismol tablets, Band-Aids, antihistamine. Prescription medication you ordinarily use. (with prescription, if possible, since drugs of any sort may be checked on re-entry into the USA).

Other Stuff: Money. Cash of at least \$200 in small bills to start trip. There are ATM's in most large cities in Central America. Credit cards are accepted in most establishments. El Salvador's main currency is US dollars. Guatemala has their own currency; check online for current exchange rates. The flight will be 5 to 6 hours plus waiting time at the airline gate so bring a book or two to pass the time. Ear plugs to help you sleep due to dogs, rosters, bus horns, fireworks, church bells, etc. Don't forget a hat, sunglasses, sunscreen and insect repellent. English/Spanish dictionary. Handy wipes, small wash cloth, small towel, and toilet tissue. Camera and film, extra batteries especially if camera uses type other than normal AA/AAA batteries.

Final Word: Remember that we are guests in these countries and our behavior must be appropriate. We represent a group of medical professionals as well as US citizens.

NOTE: If you have any other suggestions that will help future trips run smoother; please let the trip leader know so it can be incorporated into the trip planning.

HAVE FUN!