



**STUDENTS
FOR HAITI**

Planning your trip to Haiti

When traveling anywhere you should do ample research before your arrival and traveling to Haiti will be no exception. It may even require greater care than what you are used to with regards to what to bring, how to behave, and what to expect. While in Haiti, always remember that you are a visitor and that the Haitian people are not pieces of artwork in a museum but people that are proud and ready to interact with you- if you make the first approach.

To follow is information that we believe will be helpful to know as you go about making your plans. Although there is a lot to think about, get excited, because you are sure to have an amazing trip!

Basics Prior to Arrival

Passport/Visa:

Haitian law requires U.S. citizens to have a passport to enter/ exit Haiti and the passport should not have an expiration date within the past 6 months. A Visa is not required upon entry. When entering the country you will have to show your passport to Haitian Immigration. The Dominican Republic also requires a visa.

Links:

<http://www.haiti.org/index.php/consular-section/consular-services/26-the-embassy/content/138-visas>

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1134.html

Traveler's/Medical Insurance:

This really depends on your length of stay in Haiti, your own personal risk assessment, and what you will be doing. First step you should take before investing into any new insurance policies is to check and see if your medical, car, and life insurance or your parents will cover you in Haiti and its limits. Another place to look for coverage is your credit card company's policies on travel purchases. If you are staying in Haiti for a few weeks and will be in a controlled environment the aforementioned coverage should be enough. However, if you are staying for several months at a time and/or will be participating in high-risk activities you might want to consider investing in additional travel insurance protections.

What can traveler's insurance help with?

- *Accidental Death and Dismemberment*
- *Baggage Protection*
- *Travel Protection- if a reservation is canceled for a flight will help reimburse you*
- *Emergency Evacuation*
- *Medical*

Links:

http://frugaltraveler.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/01/29/should-you-buy-travel-insurance/?_r=0

[http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2013-07-13/site/sc-cons-0711-karpsspend-](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2013-07-13/site/sc-cons-0711-karpsspend-20130713_1_travel-insurance-trip-cancellation-trip-insurance)

[20130713_1_travel-insurance-trip-cancellation-trip-insurance](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2013-07-13/site/sc-cons-0711-karpsspend-20130713_1_travel-insurance-trip-cancellation-trip-insurance)

Vaccinations:

Prior to visiting Haiti you should schedule an appointment with a travel clinic to ensure you are medically set to go. Some nonprofits may require a physical be completed before arriving in Haiti. Before departing to Haiti it is highly suggested to check on the Center for Disease Control website for alerts on any new outbreaks. This is a suggested list of vaccinations and medications you might want to discuss with a Travel Doctor:

- ⌘ *Hepatitis A/B*
- ⌘ *Tetanus/Diphtheria (DT)*
- ⌘ *Typhoid immunization*
- ⌘ *Preventative malaria medication*

Links:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/haiti>

Money:

The Haitian currency is called the Gourde however US dollars can be used as well. Try to bring as many small bills as possible: ones, fives, and tens are the suggested bills. Most Haitian vendors won't accept American coins and expect change to be in gourdes. Things are incredibly cheap in Haiti so for a trip that will last 5 days the suggested amount to bring is 100 USD. The majority of this will be spent at the hotel, airport, and travel if it isn't arranged previous to your trip.

Links:

<http://www.redcross.ca/haiti2010/hope/diary-sc-nothingiseasy.asp>



What to bring:

Clothes: Depending on the season bring conservative clothes, nothing overtly revealing and clothes that are light and easy to wear. Clothing that is sweat-resistant or dries quickly may be helpful in the humid conditions.

Water bottles: Though you won't be able to bring water bottles with you into Haiti you should bring a reusable canteen or water bottle that you should be prepared to refill whenever a safe water source is available. A Britta water filtered bottle will not protect you from water-based transmittable diseases. When you first arrive in Haiti you may want to buy several water bottles at the airport.

Food: You will be able to bring granola bars and sealed items into the country-bring something to snack on. If you are prone to low sugar levels bring something that will balance you out. Gum or mints may be helpful.

Medicine: Diarrhea medication: water sanitation is not always guaranteed and if you are eating street food diarrhea may occur. Ibuprofen: if you are prone to headaches, muscles pains, or sensitive to climate a headache and/or pain reliever will aid you. Motion Sickness relief: the roads in Port Au Prince are not in great condition and if you are headed to a rural region the roads could be treacherous and in disrepair; it can feel like you are riding a rollercoaster

Miscellaneous items: zip-lock bags help protect from insects and water and will help protect any food that you carry and help organize any of your other personal belongings. If you are a cigarette-smoker or tobacco user be aware that in Haiti smoking cigarettes is seen as a privilege of the upper class. You may want to bring nicotine gum or patches. Hand sanitizer, lotion, deodorant, cheap perfume body spray, and mouth wash will also ease your trip.

On the ground:

Language:

The language used in Haiti is Creole, with some similarities to French. Knowing French will be helpful but be aware that only 2% of the population can speak traditional French. English and Spanish are not widely spoken; only business people and some younger people can speak either of these languages. Knowing basic phrases can help you interact with the Haitian people.

Links:

<http://www.omniglot.com/language/phrases/haitiancreole.php>

http://www.travelinghaiti.com/haitian_kreyol.asp



Traveling in Haiti & Interacting with Haitians:

- ⌘ *Prior to your visit to Haiti organize travel arrangements with the nonprofit you will be working with on the ground. Many have shuttle systems or their own automobiles that can be organized to pick you up. In the rare case they do not have something in place ask them what the best course of action is to take. Taxi services, and a bit more expensive chauffeurs, are readily available at the airport. Make sure you have the address of your destination ready. Negotiate the expected price the trip will cost with your taxi driver BEFORE getting into the car. Several taxi companies will have set price ranges that are reasonable. Doing your research beforehand is paramount for your safety and overall enjoyment.*
- ⌘ *While traveling to your destination ask your driver if it is okay to take pictures. There may be neighborhoods that you travel through that are not friendly towards people taking pictures or there may be times when the driver recognizes that taking pictures will put you in danger.*
- ⌘ *While walking around in Haiti remember to be respectful of the Haitian people and their country. They are a very proud people that continue to live with their heads held high. As stated before ask before taking pictures of someone since some may charge you for the picture. Handing out food, money, or other things can be received negatively though most children will accept any gifts happily. The poverty in some areas may upset you, but try your best to continue smiling and interact with the people as if you were visiting any other place.*

Links:

<http://wikitravel.org/en/Haiti>

<http://www.travelmarket.com/haiti/c-ht/travelguide.htm>

Safety:

Use common sense while traveling in Haiti. Here are a few final reminders:

- 1. Keep passport on your person at all times and keep a photocopy in your bag**
- 2. Never travel alone anywhere**
- 3. Leave an itinerary of what you will be doing, where, and who to contact on the ground in Haiti with your parents or reliable contacts**
- 4. Decentralize important items: disperse money in several locations: carry-on, wallet, shoe, etc.**
- 5. Dress conservatively-nothing flashy and nothing that will draw attention your way- wear as little jewelry as possible**

Links:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_5850.html

<http://www.bbc.com/travel/blog/20130110-is-haiti-safe-for-travellers>

