

Welcome to the Dominican Republic!

Where will we be traveling?

The Dominican Republic is a Caribbean nation that shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti to the west. It is made up of 29 provinces, and it is run as a representative democracy, with elections every 4 years. The country is the home of Merengue music, is predominantly Christian, the national language is Spanish, and the national pastime is baseball.

Santo Domingo: We will be staying in Santo Domingo, the capitol, approximately 20 minutes from Las Americas Jose Francisco Pena Gomez International Airport. Santo Domingo is located in the Distrito Nacional province, which is on the southern border of the country on the coast of the Caribbean Sea, and is



home to the president's office, the Zona Colonial (a famous and beautiful colonial district), and nearly 3 million Dominicans.

Villa Verde: Most of our week will be spent in Villa Verde, located approximately 45 minutes north of Santo Domingo. It is a privilege to be accepted into this new community. They are looking forward to partnering with our teams to build an independent, sustainable medical infrastructure and lasting relationships.

Food: Food is an important part of Dominican culture, and much of what we will eat during our time is traditional Dominican fare. Rice and beans, plantains, fruit, scrambled eggs, chicken and pork are dietary



staples. Many team members have found it helpful to bring granola bars or meal bars as well as fiber supplements from home.

Water: As in most developing countries, the tap water is not potable. Please refrain from using it to drink or brush your teeth. We will provide bottled water. Do not flush toilet paper down the toilet, remember to place toilet paper in trash.

Communication: Cell phone service will be available in Santo Domingo. If you plan to use your cell phone service while abroad, we recommend contacting your cellular carrier about the global service plans offered. Some team members have found it useful to download WhatsApp, a cell phone app that allows users to text via the internet even when they don't have cell service. 911 is still the first contact in case of emergency, and 1411 is directory services. There is reliable Wifi at the Guesthouse.

Money: The official currency of the Dominican Republic is the Dominican Peso, denoted as RD\$. To get the conversion, you can visit [XE Currency Converter](#). Exchanging money in commercial banks, exchange houses and hotels is legal, and the exchange rate is determined by the Dominican Republic's Central Bank and market conditions. It is best to use cash and not credit cards, as there is a high risk of credit card fraud. \$100 cash should be enough for snacks, any alcoholic beverages, and souvenirs you buy during the week (see: Budget Breakdown).

Photo Ethics: Travel in other countries provides for many opportunities to take photos, but when taking photos of individuals in communities, we need to be mindful of our intentions and usage of photos. **Any images that have faces of individuals that you intend to use require spoken/written approval.** View a video tutorial on items to consider when taking photos abroad.

<https://www.radiaid.com/social-media-guide>

Contact Information: Community Empowerment Leaders

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Packing List

Personal Items:

- Passport
- (2) copies of passport & airline tickets
- Toiletries: soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothbrush & paste, feminine products
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent with 30% DEET per CDC recommendations
- Towels: Washcloth (bath towels are provided)
- Personal meds: NSAIDS, Benadryl, allergy meds, antacids/antidiarrheals
 - Zofran (for nausea); Malaria prophylaxis
- Toilet paper: 2-3 rolls (for clinic)
- Earplugs (shared rooms)
- CE Reusable water bottle

Clothing:

- Scrubs for clinic (one set per day)
- Seasonal clothing; sweat wicking material is great, as it is very hot/humid
- One outfit for a night out
- Bathing suit
- Socks & underwear
- Comfortable, close-toed shoes for walking (tennis shoes or work boots)
- Flip flops for possible beach day
- Sweatshirt or jacket for nights
- Raincoat (optional)
- A bag or backpack to bring your phone, passport, and medical supplies to clinic

Medical Supplies:

- Stethoscope
- Penlight/Pens
- Copy of medical license or hospital ID
- Medical Spanish dictionary if needed
- Trauma shears and Oto/ophthalmoscope (if you have them)

Miscellaneous:

- Spending money or credit card for souvenirs (if desired- there are ATMs in Santo Domingo with good exchange rates)
- Snacks/granola or meal bars and fiber supplements
- Plastic bags for dirty clothes
- Travel games, books, headphones for downtime after clinic
- Suitcase with medications

What **NOT** to Bring:

- ⊗ Bottled water
- ⊗ Expensive jewelry or other personal valuables
- ⊗ Bed linens or pillow

Packing tips:

- ✓ Use duffel bags or sturdy luggage that can sustain a beating
- ✓ Pack as lightly as possible to accommodate medical supplies

Travel Smart, Travel Safe

Evacuation Insurance:

Per policy, evacuation insurance is required for all Rush trainees in all programs, and strongly encouraged for everyone else. Depending on your trip, the cost is usually about \$60-\$80.

Malpractice Insurance:

The policy provides medical professional liability coverage for indemnity, defense costs and regulatory defense costs up to \$1M per claim, subject to a \$3M group aggregate limit. The policy provides coverage for such claims in particular countries included in the policy that arise out of the Global Health Initiative's (GHI) operations in that country. In order for the coverage to apply, each provider must be included by name in the policy (to be added before departing for a trip), and the provider must be engaged in the scope of their duties with GHI. All volunteers of the GHI are considered providers and will be covered by this policy. The policy has a per claim retention (or deductible) of \$50,000.

Malaria, Cholera, Dengue, Zika: What You Need To Know

First, understand and minimize your risk: ensure that all of your routine vaccines are up to date- these include the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine (Tdap), varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, polio vaccine, and your yearly flu shot- and wear insect repellent with at least 30% DEET per CDC recommendations. The CDC does recommend that medical personnel travelling to the Dominican Republic be vaccinated for Hepatitis A and Typhoid as well as take malaria prophylaxis; that said, many experienced trip leaders opt not to take prophylaxis because risk in the areas we work in is very low. In July 2016, the New England Journal of Medicine published a thorough review called Medical Considerations Before Travel- check it out at the link below. Also included is the link to the CDC pages on Zika and recommendations specific to travelling to the Dominican Republic.

Travel Advisory

We recognize that travel to the Dominican Republic poses certain risks and that the U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory recommendations change fairly often. We take maximum precautions and do everything we can to ensure your safety, however you do travel at your own risk. We are in constant

communication with our partners in the Dominican Republic, and if we feel that the current climate poses grave danger to our team members, we will cancel a trip. You can stay up to date on the U.S. Department of State's warnings at the website below.

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/dominican-republic-travel-advisory.html>

Information & Resources

<http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMra1508815#t=article>

<https://www.cdc.gov/zika/>

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/dominican-republic>

Money Matters

Your Amenities Budget includes:

- Lodging (2-8 persons per room)
- Transportation to and from the airport
- Daily transportation to the work site
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner
- Purified water
- Tips/gratuities

Your Administrative Budget includes:

- Orientation materials
- Organization, planning, and visits to clinic sites, hospitals, lodging
- Planning & evaluation with full time coordinator for pre and post trip, telephone, fax, internet
- Interpretation

Your Budget DOES NOT include:

- Telephone calls or phone cards.
- Any R&R activity
- Any alcoholic drinks
- Departure taxes
- Food outside meal times
- Any other transportation service



Deposit and/or Logistics Fee Payment

Please complete payment at least 2 weeks prior to departure date.

Include your NAME and TRIP on your payment.

Venmo, Quick Pay or Zelle transfer to Babs Waldman:

Quick Pay or Zelle: info@community-empowerment.org or (224-999-3235)

Venmo: [@C_empowerment](#)

OR

Send a Check or Money Order:

Community Empowerment
Attn: Babs Waldman
8 Milburn Park
Evanston, IL 60201

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