



2026 DR TRIP TRAVELER GUIDE

Prior to your trip:

- Download the American Airlines App (or applicable airline)
- Download the CBP MPC App (Mobile Passport Control)
 - *Do NOT fill anything out yet! We will let you know when to do so*
- ¡MUY IMPORTANTE! Please carefully read all info on the following pages

A Little About CUPS Mission

Our mission is to rescue a child, transform a family, and do it again tomorrow. In areas plagued by poverty and joblessness, vulnerable children are enticed into human trafficking and exploitation with promises of financial security and a brighter future. CUPS Mission intervenes by providing discipleship, education, and empowerment. We foster spiritual growth through Bible studies, basketball programs, and personal relationships built on accountability. We support children in accessing education, offering English programs and first aid training. We equip our communities by teaching culinary, baking, and sewing and alterations skills, enabling them to launch micro-businesses from their homes.

First Things First - YOUR PASSPORT

If you don't have one or yours is expired, apply for (or renew) a passport with the State Department at travel.state.gov/passport right away. YOUR PASSPORT MUST BE VALID TO AT LEAST 6 MONTHS AFTER YOUR TRIP DATES. We've experienced instances where participants couldn't join us due to expired or delayed passports. **Make two copies** upon receiving your passport: one for travel (keep it separate) and the other for your emergency contact. *You will receive instructions at a later date on when and where to upload a copy of your passport to your ServiceReef account.*

We encourage each participant to also view the cupsmiission.com/trip-RESOURCES page on our website for valuable video modules with additional information and trip tips.

Airline Packing Guidelines

You are allowed to have (1) PERSONAL BAG and (1) CARRY-ON for your entire trip.

 **However... If at all possible, try to pack everything you need in one or the other. It's easier to wrangle 1 bag rather than 2.**

- Your PERSONAL BAG will go under the seat in front of you on the plane
 - examples: Backpack, Purse, Zippered Tote Bag
- Your CARRY-ON will go in the airline's overhead storage compartment
 - examples: Backpack, Small Rolling Suitcase
 - Be aware of the size requirements listed on your airline's website as this bag will contain **your** personal items

Checked Bag for Donations

To help meet the needs of our mission, it's crucial to collect the specific items on the Donations List found on our website at cupsmission.com/trip-RESOURCES. It's best to pack them in an old suitcase that you can leave as a donation. (If you or someone you know doesn't have an old suitcase to donate, consider purchasing one inexpensively from a thrift store.)

- *Please note that the list of supplies may change from year to year.*
- *According to American Airlines (aa.com), the 1st checked bag is \$35 and the 2nd checked bag is \$45.*

Personal Packing List

Start by packing what you think you'll need, and then take out half! You probably won't use most of what you bring 😊

- **YOU WILL NOT NEED:** towels, sheets or pillows. Those things are provided.
- **YOU MAY WANT TO BRING:** an extra washcloth because you will be given just ONE (1) to use for the week. A beach towel, Rio Vista has a limited number available for us to use.
- We recommend that you avoid bringing valuables or electronic devices. Cell phones can be used for pictures where appropriate; however, service may not be available in all areas. Rio Vista does offer free WiFi although it can be spotty at times.
- **Bring a reusable water bottle!** Preferably an insulated one. You will need to HYDRATE! HYDRATE! HYDRATE! We even suggest bringing hydration packets such as Liquid IV or DripDrop Electrolyte singles. Magnesium tablets will also assist in preventing cramping.
- **We recommend bringing bug-repellant wipes, sunscreen, and bracelets.**
Be mindful of liquids and toiletries in your carry-on; they should not exceed 3.4 oz. each to comply with TSA regulations
 - see tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/liquids-rule for carry-ons
 - liquids are allowed in checked bags
- You may want to bring your Bible and/or a journal and a pen.
- You may also want to bring a deck of cards or other card game such as UNO for downtime in the evenings



DRESS CODE

Here are some pointers for appropriate mission clothing:

- Clothing should be culturally appropriate, modest, and functional FOR BOTH MALES & FEMALES
 - *Our Dominican missionaries and student leaders are very modest and we ask that you respect the culture they have created for the mission and bring only modest clothing*
 - NO tank tops, NO shorts with less than a 5.5 inch inseam, NO political messages or suggestive imagery, NO sheer, cropped, or low cut shirts, NO visible undergarments, NO tight clothing including jeans
- Consider bringing gently worn, or second-hand clothing for workdays. Keep in mind that trips typically last five days (not including travel days), and you might want to change T-shirts twice a day (due to sweat).
- If our On-The-Ground leaders, or team leaders ask you to adjust your outfit, please do so graciously.

MENS Acceptable Clothing:

- Crew neck t-shirts, polos
- Shorts with at least a 6 inch inseam (including athletic shorts)
- LOOSE-FITTING jeans or lightweight pants (linen, chino, khaki)

WOMENS Acceptable Clothing:

- Crew neck t-shirts, polos, modest tops with sleeves
- Shorts with at least a 6 inch inseam (including athletic shorts)
 - We suggest bringing a few pairs of longer length bike shorts to wear underneath loose clothing like athletic shorts or skirts/dresses
- Casual skirts/dresses to the knee or longer
- LOOSE-FITTING jeans or lightweight pants (linen, chino, khaki)
- Leggings are allowed ONLY IF WORN UNDERNEATH another garment

Applicable to MEN and WOMEN:

- Loose-fitting, natural fiber or moisture wicking clothing will be cooler and more comfortable
- Sandals or flip-flops to wear at the mission house, Crocs are allowed ONLY at the mission house
- **CLOSED-TOED SHOES/SNEAKERS WITH GOOD TREAD** that can be worn to the dump and on the mountain hike; something potentially to discard or donate at the end of your trip
- A modest bathing suit
 - Please bring a solid cover-up, or shorts and a tshirt to wear to and from the pool/beach
 - The shorts length rule also applies (at least a 6 inch inseam)
 - A one piece swimsuit - no cutouts, deep necklines, or high cut silhouettes
- 1-2 disposable “pocket ponchos” in case of rain

Social Media:

Unless you want to filter every post you make moving forward, please do not “friend” any of the children in the villages on social media. Remember that they are watching every post you make. We want to set a good example, and not stir envy or jealousy in the hearts of others.

Rio Vista Rules:

- **NO** alcohol is allowed on Rio Vista property
 - If your group wants to come and drink outside of the mission “properties”, Sosua by the Sea is a place that you can stay
- **NO** smoking or vaping is allowed on Rio Vista property, within the villages, at the dump or in front of any OTG team member
- You may **NOT** leave Rio Vista property without permission from our OTG team

Bringing Money

- Consider bringing one credit card for emergencies.
- If you want to snorkel, bring \$35, sometimes they give us a group discount.
- Bring money in small bills (1's & 5's) for any souvenirs you may wish to purchase.
(It's hard to bargain for a \$5 item when all you have are \$20s!)
- And yes, you can use some of your cash to tip our drivers/translators as you feel led.

Our favorite word in the DR is FLEXIBILITY or flexibilidad. We operate in dynamic mission fields; unexpected changes can (and do) occur.

Age Restrictions, Groups, and Room Assignments

- Solo travelers must be 18 years of age or older by the date of departure for their selected trip week.
- All groups must designate 1 leader to serve as the primary point of contact with CUPS staff, both stateside and while in the DR. Groups exceeding 20 members must maintain a ratio of at least 1 designated leader for every 10 group members while in the DR.
- All minors must be accompanied by at least 1 responsible adult for the duration of the trip week, with a minimum ratio of 1 adult for every 5 students.
- Minors will not be assigned to a room with fewer than 2 other individuals, except when sharing with an immediate adult family member.

Serving Opportunities You May Do During Your Trip

Each day, you'll typically have the opportunity to participate in two to three activities, allowing you to experience various villages. Please keep in mind that we may not be able to do all these activities and variations or additional activities may be included.

(M) MORNING	(E) EVENING
(A) AFTERNOON	(AD) ALL DAY

- Bible Camp (M, A) - *Summer only*

- We serve 100s of kids through Bible camps. You'll dance and sing, share your testimony* and pray while helping with Bible lessons.

***Everyone** should be prepared to share their testimony - it's *your* story of how Christ has changed *your* life. If you need to practice sharing beforehand, please do. If you need to write it down, please do. If you need help, please let us know!

*Sharing your testimony is *crucial*, whether you're traveling individually or with your church group. Revelation 12:11 emphasizes the power of testimonies in overcoming the enemy, stating, "*They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the Word of their testimonies. For they loved not their lives even unto death.*"

Your story demonstrates Christ's love and sacrifice, crushing the enemy's work and expanding God's kingdom.

- Dump Ministry (M)
 - We serve soup (with hot sauce & mayonnaise—Dominican Style!), bananas, peanut butter sandwiches, and fresh water to people working and living in the city garbage dump.
 - Remember the Greeting. If we only meet physical needs without reminding that it is done in His name, we have forgotten why we are there in the first place.
 - Be mindful of your body language and facial expressions. Smiles & eye contact speak for us where language is a barrier.
 - Please remove sunglasses.
 - Avoid touching your face.
 - Out of respect, please **wait** to use hand sanitizer until we are back on the main road.
 - **ABSOLUTELY NO PICTURES AT THE DUMP**, again out of respect
- Mountain Village Hike (AD)
 - Explore Alto de la Jagua through a physically demanding hike, with activities like an adult Bible study, kids' mini Bible camp, worship, and a community meal.
- Painting Houses (M, A)
 - Help brighten up the communities by painting, as many families can't afford to decorate their homes. Encourage homeowners to take ownership of their homes' appearance.
- Worship & Missionary Story (E)
 - Gather for worship with your team and Dominican friends. Listen to the testimonies of one of our missionary families and learn how the Lord led them to serve with CUPS!
- Village Movie Night (E)
 - Enjoy a fun evening with kids and families in the villages. Worship together, dance, sing, and watch an outdoor movie.
- House Visitation (M, A)
 - Go door-to-door in various communities to connect with families, learn how to pray for them, and pray with them with the help of a translator. Share your testimony and offer a small gift of rice and oil. Hold on to these items until everyone is finished praying to not distract anyone. Focus on the homeowner and engage with them.
- Snorkeling/Free Time (M)
 - Enjoy some leisure time to relax on the beautiful Dominican beaches. Options include a snorkeling cruise, shopping in a local market or lying on the beach.
- Worship & Last Nightly Debrief (E)

- Reflect on the lessons learned during the week. Worship together, share your “snapshot” moments, and discuss your experiences serving the Lord.

Large teams may be split into 2 groups at the start of the week: **RED Team** & **BLUE Team**

This helps with seating on our trucks as well as keeping groups more manageable when interacting with the kids and oftentimes entering people's homes.

Each team will *hopefully* have the opportunity to experience each of the villages at least once.

SEE AN EXAMPLE OF A **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

Please remember this is a working mission trip that can often have days full of service work, at times with little rest between activities. All of our days require travel on open-air “safari-style” trucks, anywhere from 20 minutes to almost 2 hours, depending on the day. We also do a LOT of walking, often on uneven terrain. Remember, the DR is located in the tropics so it can feel as hot as 100° or more with the humidity, especially in the summer months.

EXAMPLE OF A TENTATIVE SCHEDULE*

*Schedules are always subject to change

MONDAY

Afternoon - Arrive into Puerta Plata

1st stop: Mission in Zion to drop off and sort donated supplies

2nd stop: Rio Vista Mission House in Sosúa

Evening - Dinner, Orientation at Rio Vista

TUESDAY thru FRIDAY*

(all times shown are approximate)

~ 7:30 or 8:00	Breakfast @ Rio
~ 9:00 or 9:30	Head out to the Dump and/or Village Visit**
~ 12:00 or 12:30	Lunch @ Rio and brief break
~ 2:00 or 2:30	Head out to next Village Visit
~ 6:00 or 6:30	Supper @ Rio
~ 7:30 or 8:00	Varies nightly...Village Movie Night, Missionary Visits @ Rio

*WEDNESDAY or THURSDAY

- Mountain Hike to visit the Village of Alta de la Jagua. All day activity. Lunch served while there.
 - **PLEASE NOTE!!** *The Mountain Hike is extremely challenging!*
 - *It can take as long as 1.5-2 hours for some to reach the top*
 - *The incline can be as much as 52°*
 - *There is no paved road... just dirt, tree roots and lots of mangoes on the ground*
 - *It can also often be muddy with unexpected rains coming through*
 - It is worth the trip **IF** you feel you are up to the physical challenge.
 - **HOWEVER**, it is not for everyone. It may not be suitable for some travelers with particular medical issues including, but not limited to, asthma, heart complications, painful or artificial joints, etc.
 - If you are uncertain, please speak with CUPS staff prior to committing to the hike and they can help you decide what will be best for you.
- For anyone who cannot or chooses not to do the Alta de la Jagua hike, there are alternate activities and service opportunities 😊 Be sure to speak with CUPS staff for details.

**One morning will be set aside for going to the beach, snorkeling and shopping.

SATURDAY

(all times shown are approximate)

~ 7:30 or 8:00 Breakfast @ Rio

~ 9:00 to 10:00 Prep for Departure and Head to the Airport

Questions? EMAIL Trips Coordinator, Mary Cameron Dillard | marycameron@cupsmission.com | or CALL | 877-291-6501