



# Travel Like a Missionary

5 tips for making the most of your next trip



MISSION DOCTORS ASSOCIATION  
*A Mission of Healing, A Partnership of Hope*



# BE PREPARED

Just as a missionary does research to get ready for a trip, so should you. What is the climate like at your destination? What kind of activities will you be doing? What's your housing like? Your answers to these questions will provide insights into what your trip will be like and help you enjoy your time more.

## **Bring the essentials.**

**A camera:** “There are so many great moments to capture everywhere that mental pictures just aren't enough,” said experienced traveler and Mission Doctor Board Member Ashley Martabano.

**A flashlight:** “You never know when the local power company may provide you with an unexpected opportunity for a candlelight dinner,” said missionary John Ruley.

**Health items:** “I recommend bringing Immodium and Pepto-Bismol. A small bottle of mouthwash for toothbrushing is also a good idea,” said Ruley.

## **Don't bring what you don't need.**

You always need less than you think you do. Missionaries have told us that they came home and unpacked shirts they never even wore in their mission country.

Remember that if you really need something in a country, you can get it there. “I have learned that, just as they do sell shoes in Ireland, they also do sell shirts in Cameroon,” said Mission Doctor Tim Cavanagh.

“Not having excessive creature comforts helps me think clearly about how people in mission countries live,” said Cavanagh.



# BE FLEXIBLE

When living on mission, you never truly know what each day will bring.

Often, the best experiences can come from saying 'yes' to something. You never know what could happen.

At the same time, it's important to be prepared for things to go wrong. Flights get cancelled, travel plans change, and people fall ill.

Being flexible and having back up plans will help reduce the stress in these situations.

Elise Frederick, Mission Doctors' Executive Director shared: "Always have a plan B and contact information that everyone has agreed to regarding arrivals... too many things can happen with connecting flights and having everyone on the same page helps!"

All journeys  
have secret  
destinations of  
which the  
traveler is unaware!

Martin Buber

"The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page."

Saint Augustine



# NOURISH YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Often we hear from missionaries that they could not do the work they do without a strong spiritual life. Prayer can become especially valuable in a situation when one is traveling.

Find a Church for Mass in the location you're visiting. John Ruley shared: "Attending morning Mass at the local church is a great way to get in touch with the local community. After our third morning Mass in Uganda, the priest ran after us to find out who we were."

You can find Mass times for your domestic travel on [www.MassTimes.org](http://www.MassTimes.org).

There are other spiritual resources as well. Tim Cavanagh cited the Liturgy of the Hours as a valuable resource. "Like the Mass, the Liturgy is the same all over the world. This universal prayer becomes another way you can remain connected with those in mission lands after you return home."

"Remember that you are never alone. Christ is with you on your journey every day of your lives!"

St. John Paul II



# LIVE OUT YOUR FAITH

Identify ways to serve others while traveling.

This can be as involved as volunteering your time while traveling or as small as bringing a small gift to your host.

Be kind to others. If you see someone in need, help them, even if you don't speak their language. Kindness and love have no language barrier.

Along the same lines, be loving toward those you are traveling with. It can be easy to get stressed, but showing love to one another has an impact.

“The most common thing people said to us in thanks was to mention the way we walked as a couple each day and talked with each other. We had no idea that anyone gave us any thought or notice on these walks, but apparently that was not the case,” said Tim Cavanagh.

“Love is the greatest form of evangelization because it makes an invisible God visible”

Jason Evert



# BRING YOUR TRIP HOME

When packing your suitcase at home, make sure you leave room to bring back cultural souvenirs. These will serve as a great reminder of your trip and encourage you to pray for the people you met abroad.

Take lots of photos of other people. Selfies at historical sites are great, but so are photos of local people living their everyday lives.

Write things down as you go. Snippets of stories, important quotes, the things of each day that impacted you: all of these will be a great way to remember and share your time in the future.

**Traveling like a missionary is about attitude.**

**With preparation, a heart for others, and a willingness to take on challenges, you'll be traveling like one too!**

“Traveling exposes us to the fullness of God’s creation, and gives us a deeper appreciation for what God has made.

Traveling can expand the capacity of our hearts to love others– and that’s the goal of the Christian life.”

Benjamin Corey

# A Traveler's Prayer

Dear Lord,  
Guide us and protect us on our journey.

Please help us to reach  
our destination safely.

Watch over us, calm our anxieties, and help  
us to find peace as we travel.

May we carry your wisdom with us wherever  
we go and put you first in all our interactions.

Help us to see you in all we meet and  
recognize you in the beauty of creation.

Amen.



MISSION  
DOCTORS  
ASSOCIATION

*A Mission of Healing, A Partnership of Hope*

Following Christ's call to heal the sick, Mission Doctors Association provides lifesaving medical care for the poor and training for local healthcare professionals around the world.

To learn more about Mission Doctors visit [www.MissionDoctors.org](http://www.MissionDoctors.org)