

Haiti Trip Information

- Preparing
 - A trip to the travel doctor is a good idea – especially if you do not travel regularly to third world countries.
 - Check out the CDC site - <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/haiti>
 - There is no KNOWN cholera in the area where we will be traveling
 - Treat Clothes with Permethrin (available at Dicks) to keep mosquitos away if you want to – we do! Haiti has Zika, Chikungunya, and Dengue – none of which have preventative medicines, so the best preventive is to not get bitten.
 - Get travel insurance to cover medical evacuation in an emergency (you really don't want to be in a Haitian hospital). check out squaremouth.com
- Money
 - Bring small bills – they should be as new as possible – many people will not accept torn or ripped us currency.
 - You will need \$1s, and \$5s or \$10's for the airport – see below
 - The lodging fee is \$60/night – that includes breakfast and dinner. Tingue (see below) likes cash, but will happily take a check.
 - Rotary – I'm told it's \$25 US for dinner.
 - There is a wealth of reasonably priced shopping at the airport – credit cards usually accepted. Shopping can happen when we return.
 - Sometimes we can get local people to show up to sell souvenirs, but then we need to make sure we buy something... we can decide that when we are there.
 - Depending on if Maxo has a car or not – Tingue's drivers are \$25 locally (back and forth from the school), \$50 for the trip to the Leogane Rotary, and \$100 for the airport run. We can share those fees.
- Airport experience
 - The best idea would be to come to Philly to ensure we all travel together, but if that's too much of a cost we will coordinate and meet in Miami or Ft. Lauderdale.
 - The entry forms ask where you will be staying. Use Maxo's address
 - Jean Maxo Michel, 20 Baselais, Gressier, Haiti 6160 phone: 509 3852 6679
 - The costs at the airport are \$10 for the entry visa, \$2 for a luggage cart if needed, and \$3 or so a bag for the porters. There will be a slew of porters vying to help - and some will latch on even if you already have one and then want to be tipped at the car. Just keep saying 'no - just 1'. I usually end up with only 2 that way 😞. Even Maxo couldn't keep them away.
 - On the return trip, if you buy Rum at the airport, you'll need to put that in your suitcase in Miami for the trip to Philly or wherever you are returning to.
- Ride to the guest house
 - With any luck, our car will be air-conditioned.
 - It will take us anywhere from 1.5-4 hours to get there – just depending. Hey – it's Haiti! Bring snacks on the airplane to eat in the car. Be prepared to witness extreme poverty.
 - And fill up a water bottle in the airplane **before** you get off , although there is a place to purchase bottled water at baggage claim (I believe).
- Lodging
 - We will be staying up at the New Life Center Guest House. It is run by Tingue Marc Rochel 509 3711 1319 OR 509 2813 8550.
 - The Guest House doubles as a community center – the church is in the same compound. There are large common area rooms and bedrooms, most with 2 beds or bunk beds.

- There are guards at all times, and the gate is locked at night. I have always felt quite safe. There are also dogs.
- They give you a key to your room and you keep it locked. I keep my passport locked in my suitcase in the room. You can give it to Tingue who will put it in a safe, but then you need to make sure you get it back before the return trip.
- It's about a 15-minute ride on a bumpy dirt road from the main road to the guest house and back to the Community School.
- There is gravity fed water that comes out in a small stream in the shower.
- There are flush toilets. Bring TP with you – while they usually have it at the guest house, it's not guaranteed to have it at the airport or the school or Maxo's house.
- There is filtered water available for drinking in the dining area of the guest house. Use that to brush your teeth.
- Sheets and pillows are provided, as is a towel. I usually bring my own towel and wash cloth as theirs are...well used...
- Some of the rooms have mosquito netting, some don't. If you have some, bring it. I have a self standing mosquito net tent that I put on the bed.
- Unclear as to sharing of rooms – it depends on the makeup of our group and who else is there. But be prepared to share a room with at least one other person, and up to 4 in the room with bunk beds.
- Food – breakfast and dinner are included, but breakfasts are likely to be very basic – cereal and oatmeal. Bring your own if you require more. (last time we were pleasantly surprised with large delicious breakfasts!)
- There is no air conditioning at the guest house, but there are overhead fans.
- There is electricity during the day – a generator at night. Same plugs as here, so you can charge your electronics. Sometimes the generator runs out of gas at night. That is more likely to happen with a group there.
- Food
 - Maxo will bend over backwards to feed us lunch, even though each and every time I ask him not to! (it's expensive).
 - In case he listens this time... pack a couple lunches. I often bring tuna in a foil packet with sandwich rounds, and fruit in a can.
 - Bring some power bars in case we are delayed without access to food.
 - I leave any extra food with Maxo when I leave except for a few power bars to get me to Miami. (There IS food for sale at the airport, but it's closed just as much as its open, so I don't rely on it...and I'm not fond of eating with the cockroaches...) But I HAVE eaten it – and not gotten sick, and it's good!
- Clothing
 - Dress Code
 - Casual in General, a little nicer for Rotary.
 - Haitians tend to dress up for Church. Women – cover shoulders.
 - Average temp is 85. No matter the season, it can rain at any time. Bring a change of shoes – if you are caught in the rain, your shoes will be covered with mud.
 - I bring flipflops for the shower, and slippers to change into once I get back to the guest house. I leave my dirty shoes at the entrance. This is not required, but it helps keep the floors cleaner.
 - You WILL get dirty! Walking on dirt roads (closed toe shoes) and sitting on rocks or the ground.
 - Bring Rotary shirts for photo ops!
 - If you treat your clothes – include PJs. Permethrin can be purchased at Dicks. Some people just spray their clothes every day with deet, but I find the permethrin to be a lot more effective.

- Pack a water bottle. There is a well now at the school, but no filter yet, and the water hasn't been tested yet. There are Sawyer filters there that can be used.
- The general rule is – if you THINK you might need it – pack it. It's difficult to just run out and get something there.
- I pack closed toe sandals and usually wear peds or short socks. Sturdy/comfortable shoes are your best bet – we can do a lot of walking.
- I bring a backpack with me everyday, and usually a waist pack.
- Toiletries
 - There is usually sunscreen and bug repellent at the house - teams tend to leave them there, but I still bring my own.
 - Everything else, bring. They try to provide soap, but sometimes there isn't any.
 - Carry TP in your pockets at all times! They SHOULD have some at the house... I think I've only been there once when they were out and it took 2 days to get it – so I always bring a little. But outside of the house it's rarely available.
 - It's noisy at the guest house – even at night with the dogs and animals. Some rooms have open windows into common areas. I use earplugs.
- Medical
 - Medical facilities in Haiti are not close, nor are they the same standards that we are used to.
 - Bring EVERYTHING you might possibly need – it is not easy to run out to the store to get something.
 - They burn garbage, so air quality is not always good. If you suffer from asthma, consider how to handle this. I bring and stay on Claritin when there.
 - We will ask you to sign a waiver, medical included.
- Connectivity
 - Cell phone coverage is spotty up at the Guest House, better down by the school, but never dependable. It used to be great, but then a hurricane happened 2 years ago and it never got fixed.
 - There is no reliable wi-fi at the guest house. When it's available, Tingue will charge \$5 a day to use it (that's all of us). That's what it costs him. I tend to pay AT&T's \$10 a day to use the phone as if I have it at home and then use my hot-spot when I can get cell coverage up at the guest house to use my laptop. Sometimes that means going outside to work on the computer.

Typical Itinerary

Arrive Thursday Afternoon – go right to guest house – settle in – walk around.

Friday AM – Check out the school. Do projects.

Friday Afternoon – Maxo's house & seeing the community – maybe walk home with a child to see the walk and where they live.

Saturday Morning – Maxo's English Language Institute – at the school

Saturday Afternoon – unclear – NOT going into Port-au-Prince! (Kathe and I did that once and got caught in a 7 hour traffic jam and missed the Rotary Meeting!). Possible trip into the mountains.

Saturday Evening – Rotary

Sunday Morning – Church – Maxo has just started having church services at the school (he has a certificate in Theology).

Sunday – People on a short trip leave at a time TBD, and I and whoever wants to stay longer go to the Sunday Language institute or back to the guest house and prepare for the projects the next few days.

We don't really sight-see, so if we have people who want to do that, we can try to get an evening flight out and sight see on the way to the airport, or we can spend longer and take some days.