



Travel Tips

The **PURPOSE** of this section is to provide suggestions based on our experiences and those of others who have participated in short-term ministry in Costa Rica and Chira Island. It is hoped that this information will help others be better prepared for a safe, healthy, and fruitful ministry, ready to meet whatever challenges come their way.

Avoiding Travel Stress International travel creates stress for everyone but there are things you can do to minimize stress and its effects on you. In addition to the obvious "get plenty of rest and eat right" the advice listed below should help.

- Plan ahead to avoid last-minute panic. Follow the **Trip Preparation Time Line**, and **Check List** faithfully so that you do not have to spend the last few days a whirlwind of activity.
- Arrive at the airport in plenty of time to check in, clear security, locate your gate, etc.
- Do not pack anything in your carryon luggage that might cause problems at security check points, nor anything in your checked luggage that require you to have to go to security and explain why you have a questionable item. (There are provisions for transporting a restricted item if you clear it in advance with the airline and make security aware what you bag contains)
- Be sure your medications are properly labeled and packed according to **packing tips** for prescriptions.
- Be certain to have on your person or in you carryon anything that you must have should your bags be delayed or even lost.
- Cut back on sugar and caffeine before and during your trip. These stimulants will exacerbate anxiety and prevent rest.
- Drink lots of water on very long flights
- Finally, do not stress over safety. You already survived the most dangerous part of your trip, travel to the airport!

A VALID Passport is one that has been signed with black ink, is in good condition, has blank pages for arrival, departure, and visa (rubber) stamps, and does not expire until at least six months after your planned travel dates.



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U.S. Passport [State Department Passport Services](#)

If you do not have a valid U.S. passport, you must make application for one several months in advance to make sure it arrives in time. In most cities you will need to go to the main U.S. Post Office and ask for State Department document **Form DSP-11**, (Passport Application). Once completed the form must be returned with two passport photos (2 inch by 2 inch black and white or color - staple one to the form as per instructions and then paperclip it to your birth certificate) and an original/certified copy of your birth certificate (a copy will not be accepted). In exceptional cases where no birth certificate is available, naturalization papers, marriage licenses, etc. can be used but it might require two trips to Passport Services. In four to six weeks your Passport and birth certificate will be mailed to your address.

If you have a valid passport, it must have an expiration date at least six months after the anticipated end of your trip. If there are no empty pages for visa and/or arrival and exit stamps, you must have the passport amended to add extra pages.

When traveling, I recommend making two photocopies of the photo ID and signature page of your Passport plus any pages with foreign VISA imprints. Take one of these copies with you and keep it separate from where you keep your Passport. Keep your passport in the safest place of your belongings while you are out of the country.

Fee for those 16 and older is \$55 (plus \$30 processing fee) and is valid for ten years. For those 15 and younger the fee is \$40 (plus the \$30 processing fee) and is valid for five years. In many cities the Passport Services window operates on limited hours (e.g. 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) so you should call before you go to make sure service is available when you get there. For those needing to replace an expired passport the form is **Form DSP-82** also available at your main post office.

A service exists for getting information on U.S. Passports. It is the National Passport Information Center. To inquire as to the status of a Passport Application you have in process, call 1-900-225-5674 (8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday except holidays) and for \$1.50 per minute you can get live operator assisted status updates. This same number offers 24 hour per day automated information at \$0.55 per minute for general information (such as I have already listed above) but no status update. However, the smart thing to do is handle this issue far enough in advance so that time is not an issue.

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