



Concerning Food...

Remember: "It is not about you... It is about THEM"

Safe Eating

In all our trips to Costa Rica we have always eaten with our Costa Rican hosts and we have never become ill from something we have eaten. Even though we buy our own food and take it with us to the Island, one must consider the implications of not eating what your host offers and how that might impact your ability to minister to a people you are unwilling to eat with. Most Chireños are very poor and the food they place before is often at great sacrifice. To refuse what they offer is insulting and hurtful. We follow a few simple rules.

- **Always be thankful for what God provides and ask Him to bless it and make it safe. Remember, people get food poisoning every day in the United States so this is not just a "third world" problem.**
- **Wash your hands before eating. (Let your hands "air dry.") Take and use one of the antibacterial *Hand Sanitizers* when soap and water are not available. We put the 1/2-ounce travel size in our family pack and store the 4-ounce size in our bags to refill the travel size with.**
- **Eat and drink only items in which you have confidence in the source**
- **Know who prepared the food. Items prepared and served by our Costa Rican hosts have proven to be safe, in fact, they go out of their way to make certain things are adequately prepared for visiting teams**
- **Fruits with skins (bananas, oranges, etc.) are safe as long as you peel them yourself**
- **Be very careful when eating items sold by youth that flock up to the windows of buses, vans, and taxis at stopping points**
- **Bottled soft drinks and water (hot or cold) are safe as long as the caps or safety seals do not show signs of being previously opened. There are reports that empty water bottles are sometimes refilled with unsafe water and resold but we have never encountered this ourselves. (Note: Remember to use clean water when brushing your teeth and keep your mouth closed when taking a shower. It is wise to take some anti-septic mouth wash to rinse your mouth with after a shower)**
- **Hot tea and coffee are safe since they are made with boiled water.**
- **Some frequent travelers recommend taking a single chewable Pepto Bismol® tablet (Bismuth Subsalicylate) just before eating to help minimize stomach upset. (Provided by leaders only)**

The purchase of medications, plants, animals, fruits or vegetables (in Costa Rica) are prohibited and cannot be brought to USA.