

PREPARATION AND PACKING INFORMATION

DEPARTURE

We ask that you arrange your air travel to arrive in Iquitos, Peru, on Saturday of the first weekend listed on your expedition schedule. For your return flight home, you will be returning to Iquitos from the jungle by noon on Friday of your last week. We do have a final dinner scheduled Friday evening, and most everyone leaves the following day. However, if your travel plans require you to leave Iquitos Friday, it's best to plan an evening flight should any problems arise. For Pastaza and Aguarunas 'remote' teams, we travel on an oil company or Peruvian military plane, and the flights are not always dependable. They may return to Iquitos late on Friday, or be postponed until the following day, or later due to inclement weather. In the event of postponement, you may have the option to fly directly to Lima from the oil base in Andoas or Saramiriza.

You can purchase your domestic flights, Lima/Iquitos/Lima, directly from Lan.com, peruvian.pe/en, or starperu.com. LAN, although higher priced, is the most reliable for on-time flights and has more non-stop options. In Lima, several trip members have enjoyed staying at [3B in Barranco](#), which is fun if you have more than just one night in Lima before heading to Iquitos. Arrangements can also be made by 3B to pick you up at the airport after you arrive in Peru. Please check your FAQ document for more Lima options.

PASSPORT

A valid passport is required, but a visa is not for most travelers to Peru. If you do not have a passport, allow at least one month from time of application and tell the passport office the date it is needed. If necessary, the passport offices will FedEx your passport to you but you will need to provide them with a credit card number for this service. Your passport should not be within six months of expiration while traveling and must have at least one full empty page for stamps. Please renew early if necessary. Bring a minimum of two photocopies of your passport photo page. Your photo must be visible on the copy.

US Passport information: <http://travel.state.gov>

Visa information: http://www.embassyworld.com/Visa_Search/Visa_Search.html .

VACCINATIONS

Vaccination certificates are only required for trips labeled as 'remote'. If you are traveling with our team to either the Pastaza or Upper Marañon rivers (remote trip), then you will need to show your Yellow Fever and Hepatitis B certificates. We strongly recommend you see your physician a minimum of six weeks before the departure date to help you decide what immunizations you need to have. If you will be doing additional travel within South America, a Yellow Fever vaccination certificate will be necessary to cross borders. Further vaccination information is available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>. Most volunteers take anti-malarial medications.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

You must provide Amazon Promise with proof of medical evacuation insurance prior to your departure for Peru. We suggest www.uhcsafetrip.com We ask that you purchase trip cancellation/interruption coverage through your local travel agent.

MEALS

While in Iquitos continental breakfast is included at your hotel. Lunch is included on clinic days, but not during non-clinic days. Dinner in Iquitos is not included in the trip fee. All meals during the jungle portion of the trip are included. Meals on jungle trips are very good, with lots of fresh fish, local fruits, beans, rice, and vegetables. We bring a cook with us on all trips. Bring your own snack items, such as trail mix, candy, breakfast bars, fruit leather, jerky, nuts, Gatorade. There are a couple of grocery stores in Iquitos where you can purchase large bottles of water and more local snacks. *The Peruvian staff always appreciates any extra bars of dark chocolate!

MEDICAL SUPPLIES If you have room in your luggage after packing and would like to bring some medical supplies to donate, GREAT! We need most everything but topical antifungals and antibiotic ointments, sterile saline eye drops, light-weight adjustable canes, alcohol wipes, and vitamins, particularly for children, are costly and hard to come by in Peru. You can buy one-ounce tubes of topical ointments and saline eye drops at your local dollar store. Children's vitamins (No Gummies, they melt!) are expensive when purchased retail. We have gotten an NGO price for jugs of 1000 children's vitamins from Nutrabulk, out of Arizona: sales@nutrabulk.com. Finally, we always need reading and sunglasses. If you contact your local Lions Club, they will often provide them. Given enough lead time, they can supply you with reading glasses which are cleaned and labeled in an individualized plastic sleeve. (Do not bring distance glasses!)

ONE-WEEK TRIP VOLUNTEERS (or Iquitos portion of jungle trips)

- After-bite preparations to reduce stinging and itching
- Anti-diarrhea preparations such as bismuth pills and a 3-day course of Ciprofloxacin
- Oral Rehydration Salts, (We suggest you mix them with Gatorade, Crystal Light, etc.)
- Sanitary supplies - Come prepared for the unexpected
- Bottled drinking water is provided during clinic days, and you **MUST** always have your own water bottle that you can refill.

ITEMS FOR YOUR HEALTH AND COMFORT

- Repellent - Even though we will be working in the city and there aren't a lot of mosquitoes, some people are sensitive and end up using it
- Sunscreen - waterproof/high potency. Tropical sun is very hot!
- Water bottle/canteen
- Headlamps are very useful for doing GYN and other types of exams. Blackouts do occur in the city sometimes, so it's always best to be prepared
- Earplugs for light sleepers. The hotel is on a main street so bring them just in case
- Personal toiletries, including pre-moistened towelettes
- Personal medications
- Washcloth
- Daypack
- Fleece blanket or lightweight sleeping bag. Why? Well the A/C is often full blast or nothing at all and you may need it at night
- Duct tape for sudden "repair" emergencies.

CLOTHING

Iquitos has a tropical humid climate that experiences sudden changes in temperature. It can be extremely hot and humid one minute and the next minute torrential rains and wind bring the temps right down. Long sleeves, lightweight pants, and a hat are good protection against the sun. Dress code for clinics is casual and comfortable (yet presentable). Most people wear pants or shorts with either t-shirts, short sleeved shirts or scrubs. Sneakers, sandals or hiking boots are fine as well.

- Casual clothing for city use. Pants, shorts, t-shirts, camp shirts are fine. Some people end up going out on the town so keep this in mind when packing
- **Clothes made from rapidly evaporating "dry-fit" fabrics are a HUGE advantage over cotton**
- Hat to protect you from the sun. **VERY IMPORTANT!**

- Lightweight jacket/rain poncho
- Sunglasses - It's good to bring an extra pair in case yours are lost or broken.

FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT

- Camera with charger or spare batteries, USB cable for downloading photos onto a flash-disk at an internet cafe. Most chargers can be used in Iquitos even though it's 220V there. Please check your device beforehand. Otherwise, you will need a voltage converter.
- Silica gel to keep moisture out of your camera.

MONEY

All expenses are included in your expedition fee EXCEPT the following:

- Airfare
- Evening meals while in Iquitos, and lunch on non-clinic days in Iquitos (Lunch is brought into clinic when working in Iquitos)
- Souvenirs - You will want extra money for buying local craft items. We're always asked how much money to bring, but that is hard to say as some people buy very few souvenirs and others buy out the market!
- Currency - It is not convenient to cash travelers' checks. US currency is preferred and small bills are recommended. US currency should be as new as possible. No tears, ink, pen marks or worn currency as banks, vendors, and money exchangers will not accept US bills in these conditions. **We are very serious about this - your money will not be accepted unless it appears new**
- Changing US dollars into Peruvian soles - The exchange rate generally ranges from about 2.70 to 3.3 Peruvian soles to 1 US dollar. You can check www.xe.com/ucc/ for the latest rates. It's a good idea to exchange a small amount of money into Peruvian Soles at your local bank before you travel or at the exchange kiosk where you retrieve your luggage in the Lima airport. We will show you the best and safest places to exchange your money in Iquitos. **Please don't change money in Iquitos until we have shown you where to go.**
- There are cash machines in Iquitos where you can get cash advances from your debit or charge card. For MasterCard and VISA ATM locations in Iquitos, go to www.mastercard.com or www.visa.com
- It's a good idea to tell your bank/credit card company the dates of your travel so they don't shut your account down when foreign charges appear. Check with them before you leave to determine if you can use your card at a VISA/MasterCard ATM in Peru. Also check your pin number, your daily withdrawal limits for cash, and the fees and charges you can incur with each use.

DONATIONS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

You may wish to donate/gift items to local people you meet in the clinics. T-shirts (with no holes or stains) are very popular. We often see children with dirty clothing or who are infested with lice or scabies, so clean children's summer clothing is very helpful, as is small to medium summer clothing for adults. School materials (in Spanish, please) are great, too.

REMOTE TRIPS INTO INDIGENOUS AREAS - PASTAZA RIVER AND AGUARUNAS VOLUNTEERS

All Pastaza River and Aguarunas remote trip volunteers must be in good shape, have traveled and camped in rough, remote regions previously and be accepting and willing to participate in local cultural life. Remote trips are thrilling, adventurous and full of discovery as you work in true indigenous villages, but they can also be very challenging and difficult. You should be able to hike thru swampy jungle, be prepared for unexpected schedule changes, be willing to travel by helicopter or small plane, be prepared for long cramped boat rides and intense heat and humidity. In general you should be a low-maintenance traveler! Due to the small numbers allowed on these trips, it's best to know basic Spanish (but not necessary). It's our goal to accommodate all who wish to participate in an Amazon Promise medical trip, but please note that the remote trips are not for everyone.

All meals while on the jungle portion of the trip are included in the trip fee. However as stated above, meals while in the city, other than the team dinner at the end of the trip, are not included in the trip fee. You will need to bring your own tent and camping supplies for all remote medical trips.

WHAT TO BRING FOR ALL 2-WEEK JUNGLE TRIPS - (YARAPA RIVER OR REMOTE)

PERSONAL FIRST AID KIT

Please advise us of any special dietary needs, health concerns, or physical limitations in advance. Talk with your doctor about prescriptions and precautions, and carry a well-stocked personal first aid comfort kit. Among items to consider:

- Extractor kit– not so much for possible snakebites, but for serious ant or bee stings
- After-bite preparations to reduce stinging and itching
- Anti-diarrhea preparations such as bismuth and a 3-day course of Ciprofloxacin
- Oral Rehydration Solution - ORS (Gatorade, Crystal Light, etc. are good for mixing with the ORS to give flavor but will not rehydrate you when used alone)
- Sanitary supplies – Come prepared for the unexpected. Carry a few extra plastic bags for used sanitary supplies
- Bottled drinking water is provided. Individuals with very sensitive digestion or traveling far from camp may want further security with a personal filter and/or water purifying tablets
- Moleskin for blisters
- Noxema, Tea Tree Oil facial pads – They're cool and refreshing during long clinic hours
- Wet Ones for those days in remote areas when we won't be able to bathe.

ITEMS FOR YOUR HEALTH AND COMFORT

- Repellent – lots of it! We do not recommend putting a high percentage of DEET directly on your body (watch it eat up paint and nylon)! Even better than repellent is good cover-up clothing – light, cool shirts (long and short-sleeved) and pants with legs that fasten at ankles, in light colors. DEET spray for clothing is good for added protection. Natural remedies with Citronela or lemon eucalyptus work well.
- You should seriously consider spraying your clothing with permethrin prior to your departure (such as Sawyer brand available at REI). This lasts for 6 washes and has always worked well
- Sunscreen – waterproof/high potency. Tropical sun is very hot!
- Water bottles/canteen. It's a good idea to keep one water bottle for clinic and also have a collapsible "Platypus" water bag in your hut or tent
- Powerful flashlight + extra batteries. Headlamps are most useful. Extra D, AA and AAA batteries make good gift/trade items. In the tropics, you will have a solid 12 hours of darkness. It becomes very dark and it falls suddenly. Team members tell us that they use their flashlights more than they thought and were glad they brought extra batteries
- Headlamps are very useful for not only seeing at night but also for patient exams.
- Earplugs for light sleepers and travel pillow
- Lightweight blanket. Many returning alumni carry a fleece throw with them as the jungle nights can become very cool depending on the time of year you're traveling. Top-sheet bags from an outdoor store are great
- Personal toiletries, including pre-moistened towelettes
- Washcloth, poly-blend towel for remote trips. Bring your own sheets for all remote Pastaza and upper Marañon River trips
- Daypack/backpack for day trips to clinic
- Garbage bags and Ziploc bags – anything to keep things tightly closed. Dirty clothes

are best kept in a mesh bag to air out or a garbage bag to sequester them

- Mosquito coils
- Duct tape for sudden "repair"; emergencies - every volunteer uses some at some point of the trip
- Many hours are spent on the river in boats. A boat cushion, a chair such as a crazy creek chair or Thermarest chair will be useful. Thermarest mattresses can also be used. This is more important for remote trips where we travel by canoe although even on the Yarapa trip it's nice to have
- Clothesline for your towel or clothes you might wash.

CLOTHING

Overall dry-fit fabrics have a big advantage over cotton as things just don't dry well in the jungle. But they're thin and mosquitoes can bite through them. Army Navy and second-hand stores are great sources for clothing as well.

- Casual clothing for city use. Hospital scrubs are cool and fast drying
- T-shirts, camp shirts; tank tops offer less sun protection
- Long and short sleeved cotton shirts. (Long for sun and bug protection)
- Long and short cotton pants. Go for loose fitting, breathable pants. Lots of pockets and Velcro or ties at the ankles to keep the bugs out. Many people invest in convertible pants ... and never unzip them. (Typical wear is short-sleeved shirt with long pants instead of shorts)
- Lightweight rain poncho
- Swimsuit/towel
- Hat to protect you from the sun. VERY IMPORTANT!
- Sneakers
- Cotton socks long enough to tuck your pants into to keep bugs out
- Waterproof or water-resistant hiking boots
- Shower shoes/sandals/Texas or another sandal that won't come off in the water
- Fleece or lightweight jacket – it can get chilly at night
- Sunglasses – Always good to bring an extra pair in case yours are lost or broken
- Many volunteers purchase inexpensive rubber boots in Iquitos to take to the jungle. However, if you have size 13 (or greater) you should probably bring your own. We often have several which have been donated by previous volunteers that you can borrow if available.

FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT

- Camera with a large memory card, charger, extra battery (as applicable)
- Silica gel to dry out your airtight camera case (or a zip loc bag to keep it in)
- Playing cards

- Paperback books or E-book reader
- You can recharge anything using our generator
- For remote trips a small volume Solar Shower to be placed in the sun to give you a warm shower at the end of the day.

CAMPING GEAR

The luxury of being based out of an actual lodge or camp that has toilets and showers is only possible on the Yarapa, lower Ucayali River trips. (Please check to see which area you're going to be working in.) Remote Pastaza or Aguarunas trips are based solely on camping, and we will be sleeping in tents in the villages where we work. For camping, bring an inflatable sleeping pad for your comfort and a backpacking tent. A sleeping bag is not necessary, but a lightweight flat sheet or cotton sleep sack/light sleeping bag liner is needed. If you bring a tent, bring one that is self-supporting (does not need to be tied to anything) with good ventilation and a plastic tarp for a ground cover. Also, make sure your tent has a good rain cover that goes from the top at least half way down to the ground.

MONEY

All expenses are included in your expedition fee except the following:

- Airfare from the US to Iquitos, Peru
- Evening meals while in the city (except for the team dinner on the last day of the trip) and lunch on non-clinic days while in Iquitos. All meals while in the jungle are included.
- Additional city tours or sightseeing
- Souvenirs – You will want extra money on the river for buying local craft items, but some villagers would rather trade for items they need. We're always asked how much money to bring, but that is hard to say as some people buy very few souvenirs and others buy out the market! Average costs are \$2 for a bracelet and up to \$50 or more for paintings, carvings, blowguns, baskets, and pottery. Note: There will be trading in most jungle villages we hold clinic in.
- Currency – It is not convenient to cash travelers' checks. US currency is preferred and small bills are recommended. US currency should be as new as possible. No tears, ink or pen marks. Currency should not be worn. Banks, vendors, or money exchangers will not accept US bills in these conditions. We are very serious about this – your money will not be accepted unless it appears new
- Changing US dollars into Peruvian soles – The exchange rate generally ranges from about 2.70 to 3.3 Peruvian soles to 1 US dollar. You can check www.xe.com/ucc for the latest rates. We will show you the best and safest places to exchange your money. Please don't change money in Iquitos until we have shown you where to go. We suggest exchanging a small amount of money at your local bank before traveling or at the exchange kiosk in the Lima airport where you retrieve your luggage.

- There are cash machines in Iquitos where you can get cash advances from your debit or charge card. For MasterCard and VISA ATM locations in Iquitos, go to www.mastercard.com or www.visa.com

. It's a good idea to tell your bank/credit card company the dates of your travel so they don't shut your account down when foreign charges appear. Check with them before you leave to determine if you can use your card at a VISA/MasterCard ATM in Peru. Also check your pin number, your daily withdrawal limits for cash, and the fees and charges you can incur with each use.

ITEMS TO DONATE OR TRADE

Suggested items to trade:

- T-shirts (the #1 favorite trading item with the local villagers. Bright colors with writing or graphics, with no holes or stains)
- Boots, sneakers, sandals – generally smaller sizes
- Clothing – summer wear, small and medium adult and children's sizes
- School supplies – pencils, sharpeners, notebooks, etc.
- Fishing line and hooks
- Sewing supplies
- Tools
- Cooking utensils
- **PLEASE DO NOT BRING CANDY TO PASS OUT TO CHILDREN**

Just about everything you can think of and then some. Also, camping gear and clothing are a much-appreciated gift or tip to the Amazonian guides.

HOW TO PACK

Duffel bags, suitcases of ballistic nylon, or wheeled backpacks are all fine. Always keep your bags zipped or closed to prevent surprises of insects and other creepy crawlers. If you bring medical supplies, just mix it in with the rest of your supplies. Another trick is to pack some of your clothing in large Ziploc bags – it's quite a treat to have a nice dry shirt to wear after a wet, sweaty day in the jungle!

HAPPY PACKING!

