



Is it safe to travel to Costa Rica?

Safety is of the utmost importance to our organization! We want participants to feel safe throughout the entire week, and we want parents and church leadership to know that we take every precaution in order to ensure their safety. With that said, we do rely on Adult Leaders and youth to help the YouthWorks staff in maintaining the safety policies and procedures for their mission week.

We have worked with local leaders in Costa Rica to understand what safety concerns to monitor and how we can prepare well to ensure the safety of all who come on our trips.

Where will we stay?

Our lodging will be at one of two places: either a rented camp facility or a facility owned and operated by Rice & Beans Ministries. Rice & Beans is in the process of building a new facility, so the location of your group's housing will depend on the length of their construction. Both of these housing sites are secure and contain bunks for participants to use. Showers are also located on site with access for all participants to shower daily.

What does transportation look like in Costa Rica?

Getting to and from Costa Rica:

- Groups are responsible to purchase their own flights to and from San Jose, Costa Rica (via SJO airport). If possible, book flights that are earlier in the day, as starting travel early helps mitigate issues surrounding flight delays.
- A private bus contracted by Rice & Beans Ministries will pick you up at the airport on Saturday when you arrive. This bus will take you back to the airport when departing the following Saturday.

While you're in Costa Rica:

- Bus transportation during the ministry week will be provided and included in the cost of the trip. Groups **do not** need to plan their own transportation while in Costa Rica. Bus transportation is included at all times during the ministry week.
- Because Friday is an optional Tour Day (a non-ministry day), transportation is not provided for the tours, but bus transportation can be arranged upon request to get to/from tours (there is an extra cost for this). Bus transportation to get to and from tours on Friday will be arranged through Rice & Beans Ministries, who has negotiated rates with local drivers to keep bus costs low for groups.
- If groups do not want to attend a Tour on Friday, they can arrange flights to depart on Friday and transportation will be provided to the airport.

Required Travel Documents

We require that each person obtain a passport. Because you will be flying into Costa Rica, a passport card (as opposed to an actual passport) is not a valid travel document. Groups should make sure that passports have no less than 6 months before the expiration date from the week of the scheduled trip. Groups are also encouraged

to make at least two paper copies of the passport and a photograph of the passport as well in case a passport is misplaced.

We have additional information and resources on our [Travel page](#).

Is trip insurance required?

While trip insurance is not required, groups should consider obtaining travel insurance. You can check out our [Travel page](#) for some recommended options or find travel insurance on your own.

What medical considerations should we take into account?

While vaccines are not required to enter Costa Rica at this time, participants should be up to date on standard vaccines, such as tetanus, mumps, measles and rubella.

Be sure to bring bug spray (at least 25% DEET), as there is a limited risk of mosquito-borne illnesses present in Costa Rica.

If someone needs medical attention, participants will have access to medical treatment while in Costa Rica. Our partners have identified safe and secure medical centers in the community. Your group may want to consider buying supplemental travel insurance that includes medical coverage.

What currency is used in Costa Rica? Can I use American currency?

The US dollar is generally accepted in Costa Rica, but bills must be in good condition and \$20 or lower. You can feel free to bring or exchange money into Costa Rican colones, but this is not required. You can also use your American credit or debit cards at many of the stores in Costa Rica, though you'll need to call your credit card company or bank ahead of time and alert them that you will be out of the country.

It's generally a good idea to bring extra cash for emergencies or other small purchases while visiting in Costa Rica.

How is the Food Bag Ministry a necessary part of preparing for our trip?

In addition to the pre-trip resources found on the YouthWorks Dashboard, you have the opportunity to raise additional funds to support the food distribution ministry of Rice & Beans. YouthWorks groups will work directly with Rice & Beans to package food bags each afternoon and distribute them to families in need. The YouthWorks per person price for the trip itself includes one food bag per person. However, groups have an opportunity to raise additional funds before their trip that will enable the purchasing of more food to distribute when in Costa Rica, which will increase the ministry reach to families in need. The cost to fill each bag with food is \$12.00. A food bag will feed a family of four for one week. Money will be collected by Trip Leaders, and then the food will be purchased by YouthWorks and Rice & Beans in Costa Rica.

Depending on how many bags groups want to fundraise for, YouthWorks and Rice & Beans will coordinate getting bags shipped to each registered group's US facility address so that groups may decorate the bags and show them to individuals from whom they are seeking to raise funds. Groups will then pack and bring the decorated bags with them to Costa Rica. All food will be purchased from local vendors once in Costa Rica to then be handed out to families in need.

Check out this video for a glimpse into this ministry: <https://vimeo.com/127397491>

Are there any additional fees?

Sunday Cultural and Tourist Activities – After church on Sunday and before dinner, groups will ride in busses to a few different markets or local cultural locations. There are no required costs for this time, but people may want to purchase souvenirs at one of the stops. We recommend bringing at least \$10 per person for items that individuals may want to purchase.

Friday Tours – Groups will have a few optional tours to pick from for Friday. The cost of these tours and the bus fee will vary depending on the tour chosen. Tour options are listed separately and are booked separately from the mission trip. Please ask the Service Center for what the tour options are and how to book them.

Tips – YouthWorks partners with Rice & Beans Ministries, which has a local staff consisting of hard-working individuals. Though ***tips are never required***, some groups may choose to bless the staff of Rice & Beans Ministries. YouthWorks staff may not receive tips.

What should we pack?

Clothes:

- There will be a packing list on the YouthWorks Dashboard, accessible via logging in at www.youthworks.com.
- Because of space constraints on busses, please limit baggage to one bag plus your carry-on (i.e. backpack or handbag). For teams bringing food distribution bags and other ministry supplies, extra bags will be necessary to pack those supplies and can be counted in addition to the one bag and one carry-on limit. Some groups pack food bags in sturdy plastic bins and donate these to Rice & Beans at the end of the week.

Supplies:

- Food Ministry Bags – please pack and bring the amount of food bags you raised money for
- School supplies and backpacks to be donated to local partner schools

Do you have additional questions?

Please reach out to a Mission Trip Associate at www.youthworks.com or at (800) 968-8504.