
Preparation Packet

Preparing your team for Panama



Baptist Bible Fellowship International
Go, Teach, Prepare
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“This is a working document”

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Our Mission

Our mission is to fulfill Matthew 28:19-20 **“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”** and Mark 16 **“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”**

Through the example of the Apostle Paul we are planting churches in areas of Panama to teach the truths of God’s Word. This doesn’t limit us to just one church building, but we are utilizing various ministries to fulfill these commandments. Building relationships are key here in Panama, and by working with other national pastors we are able to reach more people.

Each ministry is unique and has the ability to reach different people. Just like you being part of this mission team. You have talents and gifts that God has given to you that make you a vital part of this ministry. With all of us working together for the same goal of reaching souls with the Gospel we can accomplish great things for the Lord! All that we have becomes tools that God may use to accomplish his purposes. We ask that you join us and take the same attitude. May all that you have be submitted to the Lord for his will to be done through you, and us, and to God be the Glory!



What to Expect

What do you want first... the good news or the bad news? Let's end on a good note so I'll give you the bad news first...

The "Bad News" is missions and cross-cultural ministry is challenging. It is different and sometimes confusing. It is often ambiguous and makes you feel helpless, tired, angry, or at times, out of control. You will face language barriers with people you desperately wish you could connect better with. You will be way out of your comfort zone while you learn new systems and see strange things that you aren't used to. Some things will make you very sad or afraid, while other things you just won't like. At times you may be hot, sweaty and uncomfortable. You may wonder if you can really make any kind of a difference, or how God will actually use you. But...wait...there is good news too!

The "Good News" is that the "Bad News" isn't really so bad, because when we are in positions like the ones described above, we have an opportunity to trust God like never before! That's when we often see God like never before. We realize how small we are and how small the world really is and how big God is. We realize that the Church is something much larger than we understood and that wherever there are believers in Jesus Christ, we have brothers and sisters in the Kingdom of God. We learn about how God loves all people, and has a great redemptive plan to show them, and we are part of that. In some way, small or large you are going to play a part in that plan when you are in Panama.

Practically speaking, you will learn about culture and people and God every day. What you do will be out of the foundation of your own relationship with Jesus Christ (John 15) because we cannot produce anything on our own. Jesus is the vine!

Each day you should make time for devotions and a good breakfast. Then we will have a project or activity planned. You will know ahead of time what that will be. Make sure you have everything with you when you leave in case you do not return until the end of the day. We will probably always have lunch and dinner together and in between plan to drink a lot of water. Make the most of each day with relationships and work because all you do will help move the ministry forward. Please make sure you remember that Missionaries work very hard to build trust with the people and you

can either add or take away from that. Every smile, handshake and "hola" makes a difference. We will work hard each day and then at the end we will regroup and debrief to talk about what we see God doing. It is very important that you get a good nights sleep because you will get tired. We will also plan to have a little down time and recreation. That's about what you can expect...and by the way...never expect the same trip twice!

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." - 1 Corinthians 10:31

Prayer Focus

- ❖ Pray for an open heart and open mind before, during and after the trip.
- ❖ Pray for the resources needed to take this trip.
- ❖ Pray for team unity as you prepare.
- ❖ Pray for people to come to know Christ on the trip.
- ❖ Pray for people to grow as committed Disciples of Christ from this trip.
- ❖ Pray for Panamanian pastors & leaders to be encouraged by the team.
- ❖ Pray for safety physically, emotionally and spiritually for the team.
- ❖ Pray against fear that paralyzes you and ask for faith that moves you.
- ❖ Pray for good attitudes, open minds, and no complaining on the trip.
- ❖ Pray for the people you will meet, that they will experience the love of Christ through you.
- ❖ Pray for the people and church family supporting you to go on this trip.
- ❖ Pray for the team to see God in new ways before, during & after this trip.
- ❖ Pray for God to change you, giving you a new vision and greater focus of the Lord!

Matthew 28:16-20

John 3:16-21

John 10:1-21

John 15:1-17

Acts 4:12-13

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

Galatians 3:6-14

Ephesians 6:10-20

Philippians 2:1-16

Philippians 4

Colossians 3:12-17

1 Thessalonians 1:4-10

1 Timothy 4:12-16

2 Timothy 2:20-22

2 Timothy 3:12-17

Revelation 7:9-10

Possible Scriptures for Reflection...

Trip Guidelines

Things we want you “to do” ...

1. Do be grateful for everything that happens on the trip to you, and for you. Express your gratitude often to anyone that does anything for you.
2. Do be helpful in any way you can be to your leaders and teammates. We need to follow the example of Christ and serve one another.
3. Be flexible with time. Understand that the United States runs on a more EXACT time schedule than most countries.
4. Pray every day on your own, before, during and after the trip. Get used to listening for God’s voice and seeking Him directly for direction.
5. Do minister only to those of the same gender unless otherwise told.
6. Do realize that everywhere you go people will be watching you and so you must act appropriately.
7. Do drink lots of water everyday. It is hot even in the rainy season.
8. Do mark / label all your gear and belongings CLEARLY before the trip.
9. Do keep your Plane Tickets, Passport and ID on you and ready at all times during travel.
10. Please report it immediately when there is any sickness, or problems with anyone on the team.
11. Ask someone for permission before you take his or her picture.
12. Check with your interpreters regarding all local customs and protocol in interacting with the people in Panama. If you don't know, just ask.

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13. Please involve every one in every activity that you can so no one feels left out and feelings are not hurt. We want to be welcoming to all the nationals and those in our group.
 14. We will protect and respect each other. We will treat each other as brothers and sisters and hold one another in the highest regard at all times. We model the Kingdom in our relationships.

Things we “don’t want you to do” ...

1. No one is permitted to go off alone at anytime without permission and especially after dark.
2. All team members are to remain at the hotel during the evening hours.
3. Everyone must be present and on time for all meetings or activities with all necessary materials. You are advised to know the schedule well so you can be prepared.
4. Team Interaction – We will handle inner-team conflicts in a Biblical way (See Matt. 18). We will look for ways to build each other up, not tear each other down. We will be honest with one another and speak directly to each other (Not about each other to everyone else).
5. Leaders will be spoken to with respectful tones. Their authority will be accepted without question. Some “situational” rules will have to be made for safety that might not be included here.
6. Language and Self-Presentation – Foul language is not permitted. Loud talking or rambunctious behavior in public places that might draw unnecessary attention to our team can be counterproductive and we ask you refrain from that. We have to carry ourselves in a way that will not be contrary to the goals we have as a group or as Christians. We represent Christ, our church, our country, and our missionary’s wherever we go and we can’t forget that.

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7. Money: You must never flash money or wave money around on the trip. Keep your money on your person and do so in your front pocket not your back pockets of your clothing. Do not give money to anyone on the street or nationals for any reason. If you want to give something please clear it with the team leader and the Missionary first.
 8. Clothing:
 - All skirts and shorts must be of modest length, **not** above the tips of your fingers.
 - We prefer no skintight clothing if possible (Pants, spandex or shirts).
 - Clothes with labels, words or graphics that could be offensive should not be worn.
 - No halter-tops, mid-drift t-shirts, or tank tops are permitted. The only time this is an exception is when, or if we go swimming.
 - We ask that for church services and while attending church functions please follow the following recommendations:
 - Men: Khakis or nice jeans and a polo or button up short or long sleeve shirt.
 - Ladies: Pants or a skirts (same requirements as above) and a nice blouse. No low cut neckline please.

Also, be prepared with enough clothes for possibly two services on the trip. There is an options for laundry service (small fee).
 9. Water: Most water is safe to drink but as a rule don't drink it unless it is from a bottle or you see the missionaries drinking it.
 10. Electronic Devices: Personal electronic equipment is at the discretion of your Trip leader.
 11. Do not give out your personal contact information to anyone unless you have prior approval of your team leader.
 12. We prefer no smoking at any time. The use of drugs or consuming alcohol is prohibited. Do not try to bring it or to buy it.

Discipline Procedure Policy - If a rule is broken discipline will be enforced by the Trip Leader. If the offense is serious, the Trip Leader will report it directly to the Missionaries. In extreme cases the missionaries reserve the right to send team members home early or suspend their involvement from all activities for the remainder of the trip. Minors will be accompanied home by an adult team member. The offender will pay for all costs incurred by the offense.

Health & Safety

Shots & Vaccines

Covid-19 procedures:

At this time (of course things are changing almost daily) Panama requires either proof of being vaccinated or a 48 hour window of a negative Covid test to enter the country. They were doing testing in the Tocumen airport for travelers entering the country, but I'm not sure if this is still happening due to airlines requiring negative tests to even board the flights to Panama.

To board the country to leave for the U.S. you will also need a 48 hour window of a negative Covid test. These tests are offered here in Boquete just 10 minutes from the hotel, and are done within an hour. The cost at this time is \$40 each test.

There are still NO ADDITIONAL REQUIRED shots for travelers visiting Panama. There are always RECOMMENDED shots based on the entire country. Two of the more important for our area would be Hepatitis A and Typhoid and you will want to make sure that your Tetanus is also up to date as well. For more info Click Here: (<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/panama>) and consult your Doctor if you have questions. For the most up to date information, please refer to the following 2 websites.

" The Center For Disease Control - <http://www.cdc.gov> "

The World Health Organization - <http://www.who.int/en/>

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an accident on the trip we have the following options:

- We have a local clinic for small situations
- Drive to the Hospital or Call 911

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- Boquete Emergency Response Team - **6619 7911 (7pm-6am, weekends)**
 - Red Cross at **228-0692** or **228-2187** Good medical care is widely available in Panama City, but is extremely limited elsewhere. Many travelers go to one of the following hospitals or clinics:
 - Hospital Chiriqui, David **774-0128** (Ave.3ra. Y Calle Central, David, Chiriquí, Rep. De Panamá) <http://www.hospitalchiriqui.com>
 - Centro Medico Mae Lewis, David **775-4616** (Calle 15 y Carr. Panamericana) <https://www.facebook.com/Centro-Médico-Mae-Lewis-214985535244019/>
 - For a guide to other hospitals and clinics in Panama, click below <http://boquete.ning.com/page/medical-resource> For a guide to other hospitals and clinics in Panama, click below <http://boquete.ning.com/page/medical-resource>

NOTE: Some groups use a special mission trip insurance to cover emergency medical costs while traveling if they're not already covered by the church. Click below to learn about Brotherhood Mutual Insurance which we have used before:

<http://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/index.cfm/insurance/mission-travel/>

Pharmacy Info

There are various pharmacies through the area. We have 5 here in Boquete, and there are others located in David.

Though it's probably obvious, the most common issues we see are:

- Sunburn - Bring sunscreen and hats and use them.
- Dehydration - Bring your water bottle and fill it everyday.
- Bug or Animal Bites - Bring a good bug spray and don't handle animals you don't know.

Packing and Travel Reminders

WHAT TO BRING?

- Your Passport (Do not pack it – bring it)
- A Bible, pen and blank Journal
- Toiletries and personal hygiene items
- All “Over-the-counter” Meds in original packaging/prescription
- An outfit for Church (Women - Skirts/Dress/Pants / Men - Pants/polo shirt)
- Tennis shoes
- Flip Flops
- Bathing suit (Women - one piece / Men - shorts and shirt)
- A Beach towel (just in case we go swimming)
- Water Bottle
- Comfortable clothing that breathes
- Heavy Sunscreen
- Lip Balm
- Sunglasses
- Hat to cover your head
- Insect Spray OFF
- Personal Hand sanitizer
- You can get a local chip for cell phones or setup an international plan
- Wind breaker or poncho
- Small Camera
- Small flash light
- Powder for chaffing (Gold Bond is your friend)
- Cash – US currency is used here, or a credit card
- A great attitude and desire to serve the Lord!!!

FOR YOUR TEAM

- Equipment that you will need for the work. (Many projects will be determined closer to the actual trip dates.)
- Tools to build relationships with kids (Balls, toys, etc.)
- Discipleship materials (Bibles, Gospel Tracts, Spanish Worship Music, etc.)
- Donations of "gently used" clothing for people we work with.

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- School Supplies
 - Cash to buy resources on the trip. Most things you will need are available here in Panama. Specialty items or expensive things are an exception.

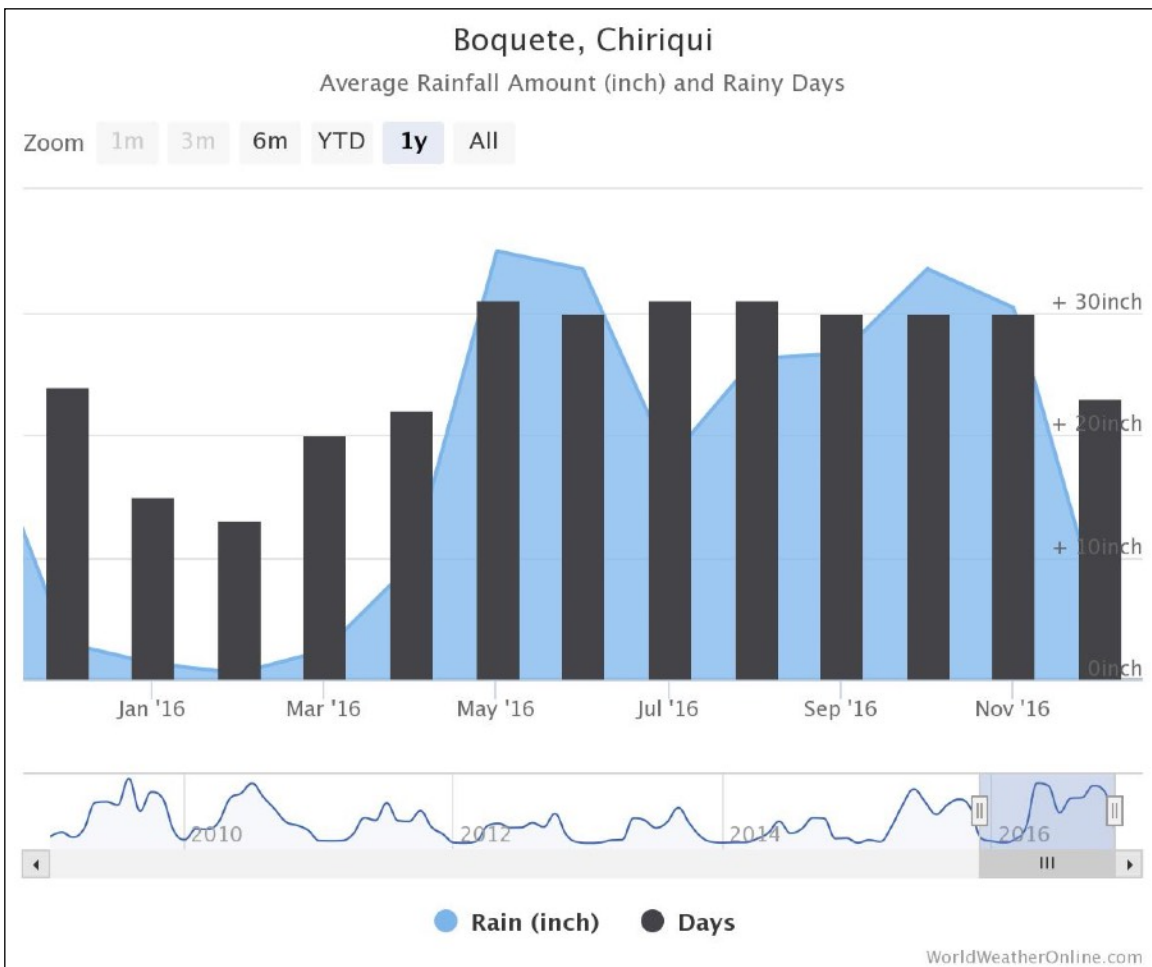
TRAVEL REMINDERS

- Passport Regulations - Make sure that your passport has at least 6 months before it expires or Panama will not allow you to enter. More than likely, the airline will not print your ticket for you. Avoid this ahead of time. Verify your expiration date. (***There must be at least 6 months before the expiration of your passport from the trip start date.***)
- All airlines are different, so please check the specifications for carry-on and checked bag size and weight limitations as well as how many are permitted before you have to pay extra. Sometimes it is worth it to pay extra because shipping is just too expensive but its good to know.
- Be sure to weigh your bags before you come. It makes it a lot easier at the airport if you don't have to switch things around in bags at the desk.
- Remember to thoroughly check every pocket of your carry on bag(s) to be sure there is no surprises in them from previous uses that might be a problem through the metal detectors. If you think something won't pass because it is metal, or a liquid, just pack it in your checked bag.
- Make sure you are careful about what you have on your person during days of transit.
- Clearly mark your items/bags with your name and address your checked bag for security. It is useful to have a group marking (I.e. The same colored Duct Tape or strong plastic tag that wont come off easily).
- Remember you will have the ability to do some laundry while you are on the trip. You will also be located very near stores that you could get anything you need. So you may not have to bring everything if you can get it in Panama or use it multiple times.
- The Address to use for Customs in Panama is:
Iglesia Bautista La Gracia, Bajo Boquete, Chiriqui, Panama
Tel: +507 6992-1733 (...*This is the Church Address and Stan's cell number*)
*If you run into any problem you can also call me on my **Magicjack stateside number 607-595-1557.***

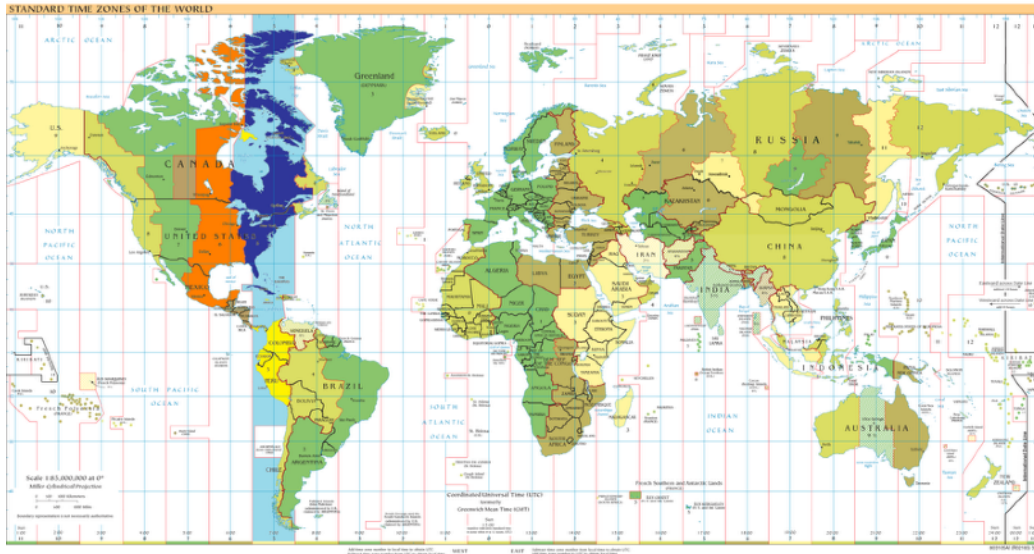
Good Things to Know

Weather

Panama has only 2 real seasons. Dry Season and Wet Season though all year long it is hot (like between 80 - 95 Degrees Fahrenheit). Dry Season is the most comfortable. It runs from Dec. - April and it is hot but there is a nice breeze. Wet Season can be sticky and humid depending on where you are in Panama, and it rains almost everyday. Many times at the same time of the day and when it rains, it REALLY rains. Because of the moisture and humidity, it is very important that you eat and drink well every day.



Time



Panama is on *Eastern Standard Time* & does NOT practice daylight savings.

Money



Panama uses the American Dollar and a Dollar Coin called a "*Balboa*" which is equal in value. Therefore there is no need for a currency exchange. Panama is still mostly a cash society though Visa Credit Cards are accepted. You can withdraw at ATMs but there is always a fee of around \$5. Remember to contact your bank or financial institution if you plan to use your card outside the country and inform them of where you will be so your card is not blocked.

The Panama Canal



The Panama Canal is by far Panama's most valuable resource and what it is best known for. If you learn the story of the Panama Canal you will understand much about this little country, its strategic value to the rest of the world and Panamanian people. Completed in 1914, the Canal has never had a day off. It is the economic engine for the country and for that reason more than 60% of the population of the entire country lives near the Canal. Now with the expansion of new locks they are even busier! It would be great to schedule in a trip to the Mires Flores Lockes Museum when you come in order to learn the story in more detail.

Trip Planning

Airports

Tocumen International Airport (PTY) - is the largest airport in the country of Panama and in Central America. It serves as the home base for Copa Airlines and is the preferred airport for our groups from the USA to use. The abbreviation is (PTY). American, Delta, United and Copa Airlines all have flights into Tocumen.

- American - <https://www.aa.com>
- Delta - <http://www.delta.com>
- United - <https://www.united.com>
- Copa - <http://www.copaair.com>

Enrique Malek International Airport (DAV) - is a smaller airport located in the city of David, Panama, and only 30 minutes from Boquete. Only two airlines currently fly into Enrique Malek (Copa and Air Panama). The abbreviation is (DAV). It is possible to find good rates from the States flying into San Jose, Costa Rica and flying Air Panama down to David.

- *Air Panama* - <https://www.airpanama.com/portal/>

Mission Nation Travel - This is a travel agent that has been used by previous teams with great success. You may want to have them give you a quote. Let them know you heard about them from us. Thanks.

<https://www.missionnation.com/home>

Rental Vehicles - Rental vehicle options depend on the group size. We are not able to host teams much larger than 18 people. The rentals in David do not keep vans in their inventory and they must be brought down from Panama City. Normally only one is available per group.

The cost for a 15 passenger van with full insurance is around \$800 depending upon time of year.

Hotels - We have multiple hotels in the area of Boquete, but we have narrowed it down to make things easier for you. Hotel Valle Del Rio and Hotel Ladera are more like hotels you would expect just like in the States. They offer very good rates including breakfast in the morning. We have less expensive hotels and even many hostels in the area, but we want our teams to have a wonderful experience when they come, and to receive a peaceful good nights rest!

You can look into both of the websites and we need to request pricing for special rates based on the number of people in the team. We can't get the pricing until we have an idea of how many will be on your team, and the dates are confirmed. You can expect a price of around \$50-\$55 per person per night and this includes breakfast.

- Hotel Valle Del Rio - <https://en.valledelrioboquete.com>
- Hotel Ladera - <http://www.hotel-ladera.com>

Recommended Resources

Books

- ❖ **"Cross-Cultural Servant Hood"** by Duane Elmer

http://www.amazon.com/Cross-Cultural-Servanthood-Serving-Christlike-Humility/dp/0830833781/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1457142922&sr=1-1&keywords=cross+cultural+servanthood

- ❖ **"Cross Cultural Communications"** by Duane Elmer

https://smile.amazon.com/Cross-Cultural-Connections-Stepping-Fitting-Around-ebook/dp/B0028N5U8E/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1491539300&sr=8-1&keywords=cross+cultural+communication

- ❖ **"Mack & Leean's Guide to Short Term Missions"**

http://www.amazon.com/Mack-Leeanns-Guide-Short-Term-Missions/dp/0830822690/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1457143733&sr=8-7&keywords=short+term+missions

- ❖ **"The Path Between The Seas"** by David McCullough...This is a huge book but by far the most detailed resource I have found on the story of the Panama Canal. This is only for the ambitious readers!

http://www.amazon.com/Path-Between-Seas-Creation-1870-1914/dp/0671244094/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1457151815&sr=1-1&keywords=path+between+the+seas

Websites

FYI Panama Country Facts

<https://joshuaproject.net/countries/PM>

Travel Information

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en.html>

Manna International

<https://mannaworldwide.com/pages/countries/panama>

Free Bilingual Children's Ministry Resources

Possible “Free Day” Activities

Due to the weather in the wet season (May - October) we need to pick activities that would be a half day event for the morning or indoor events.

- Janson Coffee Estate
 - Coffee tasting and tours, horseback riding, kayaking, fishing,
- Boquete Tree Trek
- Road Trip to Volcan
- Hiking
- and various other activities to partake in.

Our participation outside of ministry activities

We desire to spend as much time with you and your team as possible. However, because we have many teams that come to minister with us every year we cannot participate in every activity or go to every restaurant.

Each team increases our costs on average of \$200 - \$250 in added expenses for that month. Some months during the summer we have multiple teams doubling that amount up to \$500. Please be aware and understand if we don't take part in some activities outside of ministry activities.

If you're able to plan ahead and include in the cost of the trip to cover the additional expenses for us during your visit we certainly would appreciate it, and be happy to participate with you in all activities.