



COSTA RICA MISSION TRIPS 2015

*"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,
which God prepared in advance for us to do."
~ Ephesians 2:10*

COSTA RICA





Matrix Ministries

Connecting Volunteers to Community Needs



- Connect local volunteers to community needs
- Fund projects that benefit orphans & churches in third world countries



- Send mission teams to assist orphans & churches in third world countries
- Encourage spiritual growth



Hogar de Vida Children's Home
Association of Iglesia Biblica Churches



Global Orphan Project

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matrixministries

COSTA RICA MISSION TRIPS 2015



Our Missions Philosophy

- We support the goals and efforts of the organization or local church we are working with and work along side of them. It's not about us.
- We involve participants in meaningful projects that challenge them to step out of their comfort zone and experience what God can accomplish through them.



Spiritual Growth

While serving on a mission trip is important, we put equal importance on the spiritual growth and life-change that can happen during a mission trip experience! Six weeks before departure, our teams begin preparing for the journey with *The Hole In Our Gospel* Personal Action Journal. The study, written by Richard Stearns, the president of World Vision, challenges us to open our eyes to the realities of the poor, expand our faith and respond to God's call for us to care for those in need. Participants tell us this is a powerful part of their mission trip experience.

FEBRUARY 2015

Projects: Hogar de Vida Children's Home & Iglesia Biblica
Cost: \$890 plus airfare

JUNE 17-26, 2015

Projects: Hogar de Vida Children's Home & Local Church Project
Cost: \$890 plus airfare

AUGUST 24-Sept 1, 2015

Projects: Hogar de Vida Children's Home & Local Church Project
Cost: \$890 plus airfare

Additional Trips Available for Groups of 10 or More

- March 8-15, 2015
- April 6-14, 2015
- July 20-29, 2015



Costs include:

- Transportation
- Lodging
- Meals
- Travel Insurance
- Devotional Materials
- Team Shirt

Additional Costs:

- Airfare (\$500-\$700 depending on how early you book)
- Personal snacks, souvenirs
- Excursion day costs - \$40-\$50 plus one meal

Fund Raising

The majority of our participants fund their trip 80 - 100% with the support of friends, relatives and coworkers. We encourage you to involve others in your journey rather than writing a check on your own. Sample support letters are available for your reference and we'll be happy to help you with your letter writing.

Travel Requirements:

- Valid passport, not set to expire in the next 6 months.
- Current tetanus shot. No other special shots needed.
- Age 16 or older unless family trip is specified.

Location:

- We fly into Juan Santamaria International Airport, San Jose, Costa Rica
- Mission location is 40 minutes north of San Jose in the town of Atenas.

Lodging:

- Hogar de Vida Children's Home
- Hotel Cafetal

Ministry Partners:

- Hogar de Vida Children's Home
- Iglesia Biblica Churches in Atenas, Desamparados, Frailes and Grecia
- The Brook Ministries, training Central American Pastors

Trip Planning:

We take care of all the details for each trip and will keep you informed every step of the way. Well established partnerships at our destinations takes the guess work out of our trips and helps teams to feel immediately welcome. Our experienced team leaders facilitate a mission trip experience that allows you to serve, build relationships and take time out for prayer and personal reflection.

TIDBITS OF INFORMATION

Answers to some of the most frequently asked questions and concerns

LANGUAGE: Language of Costa Rica is Spanish. Don't be timid to use whatever Spanish you know. There are quite a few English speakers at the locations where we serve.

MONEY: Costa Rican currency is colones. The exchange rate changes daily and currently is around 500 colones to one dollar.

WEATHER: The weather is beautiful. The average temperature runs between 75 and 85. It cools down around 4:30pm and at night dips into the low 60's. There are two seasons, wet and dry. The dry season is approximately from November to May and can get very dry, dusty and at times very windy. The rains begin around the beginning of May and normally the wettest months are September and October. Atenas is coined the "best climate in the world" because the temperature varies the least in 365 days in the year. The sun is intense during the middle of the day. Don't spoil your trip by getting sun burnt, use sun screen and a hat when working in the sun.

ELECTRICITY is 110 watts, which is the same as in the United States.

DRINKING WATER is from a well and is clean and tested safe. It tastes better than North Dallas water by far! Stay hydrated, drink water - if you have not urinated by lunch time, you are not drinking enough.

BUGS & CRITTERS: Mosquitoes are seasonal, usually around the beginning of the wet season. Flies are also seasonal, usually in July and August. It is less buggy than you would expect. You may see an occasional small scorpion. Large iguanas are commonly seen sunning themselves. They will run from you.

IMMUNIZATIONS: Your tetanus immunization should be up to date. They do not have malaria in this area, so additional immunizations are not needed.

FOOD: You will eat a variety of Costa Rican and American food. The general diet included lots of rice, beans, fresh vegetables and fruits. The large meal is at noon.

TIME: Costa Rica doesn't use daylight savings time. Daybreak is about 5 a.m. and it gets dark about 6. There is very little variation in the whole year. By culture the kids are usually in bed by 7 or so and the adults are close behind them. But the days start early, usually by 5:30 at the latest.

PHONES: Costa Rica does not have the same cell phone carriers as the US, so many phones won't work there at all. Newer iPhones, etc. will connect to ICE phone service in Costa Rica if you do not disable roaming. It is VERY costly, so set your phone accordingly or you will see huge charges. Several of our locations will have wi-fi, which is more reasonable if you would like to send brief text messages to family members to check in from time to time. However, we encourage you to minimize time you spend communicating back home. Youth trips may have more specific guidelines for phone usage. Those guidelines will be communicated during trip meetings. Emergency phone numbers will be shared with family members. Limit time with head phones, email, phone calls. Be courageous, be still and know that God is God and wants to spend time with you.

WASHING CLOTHES: There may or may not be a washing machine at the house where you will be staying. If not you can always hand wash items as needed.

BEDDING/BATH: Sheets and towels are provided at all of our lodging locations. If your excursion day includes a beach trip, you may want to bring your own beach towel.

BATHROOMS: The toilets are flushing but the toilet paper needs to go in the trashcans. There are hot showers (as a general rule). The hot water for the showers comes through an electrical device nicknamed a "widow maker". Don't touch it while in the water or wet. The water is heated as it goes through the widow maker and therefore the faster the water is running the less time it has to heat. Be considerate of your other team members when taking time in the shower.

MORE TIDBITS OF INFORMATION

SIGHT SEEING DAY: Each team has a day out that involves going to the beach or a national park. We'll also have a day to do shopping for Costa Rican souvenirs.

BUDDY SYSTEM: The grounds at both Hogar de Vida and Hotel Cafetal are beautiful and you'll find rivers, waterfalls and other things to see nearby. During free time you may explore these areas as long as you tell your trip leader where you are going and NEVER go anywhere alone. Use the buddy system. Participants under 18 must be with an adult at all times.

SWIMMING: Both Hogar de Vida and Hotel Cafetal have nice swimming pools. Swimming will be during designated times and appropriate swim attire, per dress code guidelines is required.

PHOTO RESTRICTIONS: Take all the photos you would like during the trip! We encourage it. DO NOT post photos of children at Hogar de Vida on facebook, or any other social media or websites. New restrictions are in place to protect these children who are already in a "protective" custody situation.

SMOKING AND DRINKING: Because of cultural perceptions and possible stumbling blocks which could result, Matrix Ministries has a stringent policy against the use of tobacco or consumption of alcoholic beverages of any kind during team missions.

ILLEGAL DRUGS: Under no circumstances will the use, sale, purchase or possession of any illegal drugs be tolerated

COMFORT ZONE: During your time in Costa Rica you are more than likely out of your comfort zone. Things will be different. Be prepared to be flexible. Be open to God using you in ways you may not have every expected!

DRESS CODE: We will follow the standard of dress set for Hogar de Vida Children's home, adhering to high standards of modesty, hygiene and grooming. See detailed dress code later in this document.

GIFTS: On every trip we will take clothing and supplies for the Children's Home. Please do not give children candy, toys or other gifts.

OUR ATTITUDE: The attitude of each of our participants must be one of service. We are there to serve. Because we come from a background of "wealth" compared to those we are serving, we must take extra care to not appear like we are there to "rescue" them from their situation. The longer you are there, the more you will see how rich the lives are of those you encounter! Not because of their material possessions, but because of their unhindered relationship with the Lord and the simplicity of their lives!

DAILY SCHEDULES

DAILY DUTIES: All mission team members will have daily duties, which may include things such as:

- Cooking breakfast
- Setting the table or doing dishes
- Sweeping rooms, taking out trash
- Helping with music, crafts or game time at the Children's Home
- Work assignments, depending on projects planned for each trip. (Painting, raking leaves, power washing, minor repairs and construction, etc.)

* We care for our living quarters as if it were our own home and strive to keep things orderly while we are there out of respect for our hosts.

A TYPICAL DAY:

6am	Wakey-wakey
6:30am	Breakfast
7am	Team devotions
7:30am	Work on projects at your location
Noon	Lunch
1pm	Continue on projects
3:30pm	Crafts and game at Children's Home
5pm	Clean up for dinner
6pm	Dinner
7pm	Evening Team Devo's
9pm	Everyone in rooms
10pm	Lights out - quiet!

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

Wednesday Night: English speaking Bible Study at Church

Fridays: Go to open air farmers market in Atenas

Saturday: Typically a short work day, afternoon time to walk to the river or waterfall

Sunday: Church in the morning, lunch at a restaurant, free time in the afternoon

Excursion Day: Typically one of the last days of our trip.



SIGHT SEEING/EXCURSION DAY:

Each trip includes a full day sight-seeing excursion, which will be determined prior to the trip, based on the makeup of the group. Our past excursions have included:

- Jaco Beach
- Rainforest Zipline
- Manuel Antonio State Park
- La Paz Waterfall Gardens
- Arenal Volcano and Hot Springs
- Poas Volcano & Zoo Ave

Costs for excursion day, souvenirs and personal snacks are not included in your trip cost. Most of these trips will cost \$50 or less for entrance into the location. You will also need money for meals, about \$7-\$10 per meal.

ABOUT COSTA RICA



Our mission trips take us to the Central Valley region of Costa Rica in rural coffee farming towns outside of San Jose. The average middle class family in these areas earn between \$400 - \$900 per month. While the situation in Costa Rica is better than in many other Latin American countries, poverty and neglect still affect many Costa Rican children and families.

According to the United Nations Children Fund, 36,000 children in Costa Rica are orphans or live in situation with non-existent family structures. These children are at risk of ending up in the streets in the midst of prostitution, drug abuse and gang violence.

70% of the population are Catholic but only about 20% are active in a church. There are many opportunities to share the gospel and small Christian churches are growing rapidly.

ABOUT HOGAR DE VIDA CHILDREN'S HOME



Hogar de Vida is a temporary shelter that houses up to 35 children ages birth to 10 years old. They are a Christian ministry working in partnership with PANI, Child Protection Government Services of Costa Rica, providing a Christ-centered home for "at-risk" children. These are children who come from abuse, neglect or are simply abandoned.

While in the U.S. we see children such as this placed in foster homes, in Costa Rica children are placed in facilities for this purpose. The goal is for children to be returned to the home if conditions improve. Unfortunately, many are not returned to their homes due to abandonment or continued family issues. Children are made available for adoption, but after about age 5 it becomes less and less likely they will be adopted and they spend their childhood in

Hogar de Via is a Christian mission that lives by faith and relays largely on financial support and donations. The government provides less than 50% of the funds needed to take care for the 35 children at Hogar de Vida. The rest of their support comes from donations and ongoing sponsorships.





Packing for your Mission Trip

Luggage

- One checked bag under 50lbs, 62" in length.
- One carry on bag under 40lbs, 45" in length and a personal item (purse or small backpack)

We can usually do laundry there, so no need to over-pack. If you can take all of your personal items in a carry on bag that's ideal! We will have extra bags to take with clothing and other items for the orphanage, so the lighter you pack the more items we can take for others.

Personal Items

- Bug repellent
- Sunscreen, chapstick
- Bring your own toiletries, medications, allergy medication
- Ear plugs – it's a good idea, just because you're sleeping in a different place and the neighborhood rooster sometimes thinks it's time to wake up at 3am.
- Hairdye, curling iron if you use them. Note to women – the humidity makes your hair seem to do whatever it wants to do! Even if you don't normally wear something to hold back or pin your hair, you may find yourself wanting to.
- Hole In Our Gospel Book and Journal or whatever study has been communicated for your team
- Bible & notebook
- Camera & extra batteries
- Money for sightseeing day and souvenirs. (\$50-\$75 should be plenty)

Work Supplies

- Hat and work gloves
- One set of work clothes that can be ruined working
- Paint removing wipes or Lava type soap to clean hands

Clothing

Temperatures are usually around 85 by afternoon with nights cooling down to the 60's.

- One set of church clothes – casual clothing is fine
- Modest sleeping attire
- Tops/blouses/shorts/pants
 - No low cut shirts or thin straps for women
 - Lightweight cotton breathable material is most comfortable with the climate there. You'll find it rare that you want to wear long pants or jeans.
 - Underwear and socks – we have a washing machine, so you don't have to pack enough for every single day.
 - Good walking shoes, work shoes, sandals
 - Light sweater or jacket, rain jacket or umbrella in rainy season
- Swim suit, modest one-piece for women

Other handy items:

- Small container or tote to keep shower items in

DO NOT BRING

- Large bottles of liquid items, such as shampoo, etc. A one quart bag should hold all liquids in containers of 3 oz. or less.
- Minimal amounts of makeup.
- Keep jewelry to the bare minimum. We recommend you leave expensive jewelry at home.
- Laptop computers or any expensive electronics. They are the most sought after item by thieves....and you won't have time to use them.
- Do not overpack!
 - a) You will be living out of your suitcase during the trip - no dresser drawers etc. b) People live very simply in our locations and you'll find yourself not being overly concerned about your attire.



Misc.

Your trip leader will have a kit with the following items. No need to pack these for each person.

- Band-aids
- Tums, antacids
- Advil
- Neosporin & hydrocortisone creams

DRESS CODE SPECIFICS

SHIRTS/BLOUSES

Women and girls: Backless apparel, midriffs, muscle shirts, tops with one sleeve/strap, spaghetti straps, tops with straps less than 2 inches (three fingers wide), tops that are deep or low-cut, see-through blouses and tube tops are not acceptable. Tops must cover the belly, sides, midriff and chest (no cleavage showing). The midriff must not be exposed when going through the normal activities of a work day (bending, stretching, reaching, etc.) Men and boys: Shirts, tops, caps, etc. must not contain any questionable designs, such as beer, cigarettes or violent rock groups. Tank tops are acceptable for work and beach. Off campus short sleeve shirts are required.

SHORTS/PANTS

Shorts (Men and Women) must fingertip length or just about 2 inches above the knee or longer. Skirts and dresses should be knee length. The waistband must be positioned such as to completely cover undergarments. No sagging pants, sneak holes or rips are allowed.

UNDERGARMENTS

Complete undergarments must be worn at all times. Undergarments, including bra straps and waistbands must not be visible. Extra caution must be taken to be aware if a slip is needed under skirts.

JEWELRY /TATTOOS

Tattoos and/or any other drawings on the skin must be covered. No visible body piercing such as nose, eyebrows, tongue, lips, etc. is allowed. Only women are allowed to wear earrings; men are not permitted to wear earrings or any other object in the ear. Any jewelry depicting the occult, illegal drugs or questionable symbols will not be allowed.

SWIMWEAR

A full one-piece bathing suit is acceptable for women. No "tease" holes, French cuts or plunging necklines. A short sleeve T-shirt and modest length shorts are an appropriate alternative. Men must wear full-cut swim trunks or shorts. No skimpy, racing or European cut trunks are acceptable.

CHURCH AND OFF CAMPUS ATTIRE

Casual, but very modest attire.

Attire that does not meet the above standards will be brought to the attention of the individual and a request to change will be made of the person.