

Who Has a Question?

answers to common questions about bfr mission trips



- *How do I prepare for the long flights?* The flights are really not bad if you are prepared. They will feed you several times each long leg. There will also be movies that you can watch. It is good to remember to drink plenty of water and to walk around here and there throughout the flight. You may want to think about getting a pair of compression socks, ear plugs, a good book and a pillow. Your team leader will advise you and the team which legs are best to sleep on and which you should try to stay awake. This helps to acclimate you to the time change.
- *Do I need a journal?* Even if you typically do not journal it is a great idea to journal each day. There will be SO much that goes on in the 10 day period you are gone and writing it down is a great way to preserve those memories. We will provide time and resources in order for you to do so.
- *What will I be eating?* All of the food we will eat on trips will be safe and prepared with our Western bellies in mind. The food in Africa, while very good, is different than you may be used to. There will be a lot of rice, beans and cooked vegetables. When eating out it is a good idea to steer away from salads. This is just to avoid potential problems. Also know that condiments are going to be different than what we are used to. There is no Chick-fil-a and cute little dipper ketchups so taste the condiments before you smother your "chips" (fries) in their ketchup.
- *Would you like to take some tea?* This is a question that you will most likely be asked once a day, if not more. We encourage you to try it. This is not your momma's big glass of ice cold sweet tea, think more spot of tea in England. It is traditionally served hot with milk already mixed in. You will be able to add sugar to your liking. It is polite to take the tea, even if it is not your favorite. I would suggest just pouring yourself a small amount at first, you can always take more. You may be wondering if it is safe for you to drink, the answer is yes. It has been boiled and safe for you to take. This is also a social aspect of their culture. They take this time to sit and talk and get to know the team.
- *Is it ok to drink the water?* It is very important for you to drink plenty of water. We will have large bottles of purified water that you will be able to refill as often as needed, so you will need to keep your wide rimmed water bottle with you each day. This will be room temperature water and will also be used for brushing your teeth. If you have trouble drinking a lot of water grab some of those water flavor packs from the grocery. You will not want to drink the water from the faucets. It is ok to use for bathing and hand washing but not in your mouth.
- *What is the bathroom situation?* Your lodging will have normal bathrooms. Your team leader will give you special instructions if needed. While on the field, you will most likely use an inclosed long drop. Cleanliness will vary. Keep toilet paper or kleenex and hand sanitizer with you. If you are uneasy with smells, pick up a small bottle of peppermint essential oil. This will help to mask the smell, a little bit goes a long way. Girls- if you are on your period during the trip it is very important that you bring a few grocery sacks for you to dispose of your used sanitary products. You cannot put anything other than toilet paper in the long drops or toilets. There will be a specific place for you to dispose of these things at the guest house. If you have any questions please feel free to talk with your team leader.
- *What shots do I need?* Have a chat with your doctor and make sure that all of your normal shots are up-to-date. Aside from that, no shots are required but several are recommended. That is why we advise you to talk to your doctor and get his/her opinion. We have individuals that get every shot and individuals that don't get any. This is a personal decision that you can make with your doctor. Remember to ask in advance how much your vaccinations will cost and if your insurance will cover them so you can make an educated decision! BFR highly recommends a tetanus shot, we are often in areas with exposed metals with rough edges.



- *What meds should I bring?* All your normal, day-to-day meds; a prescription malaria med; a wide-spectrum antibiotic (just incase); an allergy medicine is a good idea: it is very dusty and the air quality is very different so it is a good idea to have a non-drowsy allergy medicine and tylenol/advil or pain-killer of your choice.
- *Jambo, Tafadhali, Asante Sana! Do I need to get Rosetta Stone!?!?* In one word - NO. Africa has many languages but most people know English. Your team leader will teach you some basic words, like Hello, thank you, please but there is no need to spend a lot of time or money on learning a new language for this trip. It is good to remember to speak very slowly and avoid any American slang. They speak very proper English so things like "y'all, fix'in to, nothin', yeah and nah" are empty words to them. Also if you do not understand something they say, it is ok for you to ask them to repeat. It is better to understand what they are saying before you respond.
- *How can I best prepare myself for this trip?* The best way to prepare for a trip like this is to pray and to come to the team meetings. We will be providing training for some basics that you will need on the field but the best thing you can do is surround your trip, team and team leaders with prayer. Pull out your Bible and read through verses on serving others and being in God's will. Bottom line - you can prepare in a million ways, but God is going to control this trip and your experiences so our best advice is to be open and ready for that. It may look totally different than you were expecting or it may be exactly what you pictured. It is our best advice to just be in the moment and be open to what God has in store. Feel free to ask your friends and family to also join us in prayer. Know that the BFR Crew is 100% available to you.
- *Do I need a new wardrobe? What can I wear?* No need for a new wardrobe. It is important to know that this is not a fashion show and comfort and wearability trump style and cuteness any day. The weather is warm in the day and cool at night. The sun is strong so light colored shirts may be a good idea. Dressing conservatively is a must. Girls - long skirts, T-shirts, capri pants and dresses are always good. Guys - lightweight shirts, pants, and t-shirts. Closed-toe shoes best. You will need something nicer like a long skirt and button down for church. It is helpful to reference the trip schedule while packing.
- *Will we follow a schedule?* Your team leaders will be following a specific schedule each day. For team members, flexibility is key. African's are rarely on time but we will do our best to keep our schedule, in order to get everything accomplished. Follow your team leader's lead on the flow of the schedule. There may be reasons that the schedule needs to be changed, just go with it. Your team leader will be communicating with the team throughout the day to update you on any changes. It is also important to be flexibility in what you are doing. One day you may be helping build a structure and the next be serving lunch to 50 kids. Be open and ready for God to stretch you in new ways. There maybe something the team leader sees in you that you do not or there maybe a need that you can fill. Go into everyday with a heart and spirit of serving. Be proactive in situations, playing with kids, helping serve lunch, getting the team water, making sure vans are packed with supplies and ready to go. These are the little things that will help the trip run smoothly.
- *Is it Safe?* There is always a risk when you travel anywhere. We assure you we take the utmost precaution when traveling. We stay in a hotel in Uganda and in Kenya within a secured, gated compound. We do not take public transportation, because we are blessed to have drivers who are very dear friends of ours. This is a job we do every single day, so we talk to the leaders who live and work in the territories we serve almost everyday. We are constantly up to date and aware of what is happening, and our leaders there are constantly informing us on things going on. We, of course, heed caution if necessary.