



# Travel Guide

## Total Health Travel Guide

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## **Total Health Travel Guide**

### **A Note From Total Health**

Thank you for joining us in our work at Salud Total. As with any travel over-seas there is some risk involved in your trip, but there is also great reward. Working with people who have so little provides a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction that our current US medical system simply cannot offer. You are taking on a work that will reward you in ways you cannot imagine and will change you in unexpected ways. You will have the opportunity to live with a family in a place and culture that is completely different from your own. It is a rare opportunity to get to know people of a different country in a truly special way. There is so much to discover in Central America, take the time to enjoy it.

### **Contact Information**

Total Health

Jay Martin

Phone: (614) 398-1210

Email: [admin@totalhealth.org](mailto:admin@totalhealth.org)

Mail: P.O. Box 424, Lewis Center, OH 43035

### **Contacting home from Honduras**

- The easiest way to have a reliable connection to home is to talk to your cell phone provider and get an international travel plan. It varies some from one provider to another, but this should give you constant internet access along with free or low cost calls and texting.
- Most hosting sites and clinics have wifi internet access. It is not always available but is working much of the time. If you would prefer, you can simply use that to connect with people outside of Central America.
- For either of these options, we recommend using “Whatapp”. This phone app will allow you to send text messages and make phone calls through your internet connection. It is used heavily in Central America and those around you will be familiar with it.

## **Total Health Travel Guide**

### **Trip Planning Check List**

- Total cost varies by site and length of trip. We will give you an estimate before you sign up.
- Try to complete the application as early as possible (6 months prior to planned trip is ideal)
- \$50 application fee (non-refundable) is due with application
- Begin obtaining any immunizations needed (see “Immunizations” on page 8)
- Obtain a passport
  - DO NOT PUT THIS ONE OFF!
  - Allow 6 weeks for processing
  - Required before we purchase a ticket!
  - Send a copy of your passport to Total Health
- If you plan to raise support, start immediately!
  - See “Raising Support” page 9 for more information
- Cost of plane ticket is due at least two months prior to trip date
- Make sure plane tickets have the same name as your passport
- Final amount due at least one month prior to trip date
- Pack
  - See packing list on page 15
- Don't forget your passport!
- Always call with any questions

### **Working with the Local Church**

Salud Total (the clinic you will spend most of your time in) was created by Iglesia Gran Comision (Great Commission Church). They continue to own and run the clinic. We partner with them to make the clinic function full time. The members of this church play an integral role in the success of the clinic serving as hosts for medical team members, translators, and workers. They use this clinic not only as a way to serve the poor in their area, but also as a way to share their beliefs. Each patient seen in the clinic will also be seen by someone from the church who will share with him or her the fundamental beliefs of the church. If you are not comfortable with this then please do not go. You will not be asked to participate, but if your beliefs are the same as those of the local church you are welcome to share them. Please respect the beliefs and practices of the local church. Without these people, we would not be able to continue to provide care to those in need as effectively as we do today. For more information on the beliefs of the local church go to <https://igcla.com/statement-of-faith/>.

## **Total Health Travel Guide**

### **Cultural Do's and Don'ts**

- The families you will be staying with are part of an Evangelical Christian Church. They typically do not drink alcohol and you are requested to refrain from drinking alcohol while in Central America.
- You are welcome to dress casually and shorts are fine. Shorts and pants are normal attire for women. Please be considerate of your surroundings and dress modestly.
- You will have the opportunity to attend their church services during the week. We strongly encourage you to attend church with your host family, but the final decision is entirely up to you. You may stay at home and rest if you would prefer.
- All host families pray before eating their meals. If you are eating with them please wait until everyone is served and a prayer is given.
- You will be traveling to a very poor place and you can be a target due to your relative wealth. Do not carry large amounts of money.
- Do not go out without your host family. Do not take walks by yourself after dark. You are quite safe when with a local family, but unless you are fluent in Spanish and familiar with the area it is best to stay home with your host family in the evening.

### **Cultural confusion**

If you come across something that you don't understand or that seems inappropriate please save judgments until you know all the facts. While working you may notice that a few patients are arriving in newer cars or are wearing nicer jewelry or even carrying a cell phone. Remember that these items do not always belong to them. They are often borrowed from friends and family members based on need. They also do not necessarily indicate wealth. Someone earning \$5000 or \$6000 per year may be required by his/her employer to carry a cell phone, but may still live a very modest life. Even if a patient does have a good income, we give care to anyone who comes, regardless of their income. But, we focus on giving care to those in greatest need and it is these people who make up the large majority of our patients.

## **Total Health Travel Guide**

### **Travel tips**

You will be given an e-ticket for your flights. Please keep this printed page with you throughout your trip. You simply take it to the ticket counter at the airport and you will be given your boarding pass there.

Your passport is very important...DO NOT FORGET TO BRING IT TO THE AIRPORT. Also remember that a US passport has significant value in many parts of the world so keep it safely stored in a secure location. After arriving at your host home, place your passport in a secure location (in your suitcase at your host family's home) and keep a photocopy of your passport with you (this should be made before you leave).

After you get through immigration, collect your luggage and proceed out the sliding glass doors. There will be someone waiting to meet you there unless other instructions were given to you before the trip. This person will take you to your destination.

### **Money**

Do not carry a large amount of cash. Money that you do carry should be placed in different locations with a small amount that you can access easily. Most stores in Honduras accept Visa and Master Card. The street vendors obviously use cash only.

### **Electricity**

Central America uses the same type of electric power as in the US. No need for any converters, your electronics can simply plug in.

### **Safe water**

You will be provided with safe water throughout your trip. Never drink water from the faucet. You should also use bottled water when brushing your teeth. If you are at a restaurant do not drink anything that is not given to you in a bottle. There is plenty of water to drink at the clinic.

## **Total Health Travel Guide**

### **Eating in Honduras**

Food prepared for you by your host family can be considered safe. If you eat out, you should eat only cooked foods. Fresh fruits and fresh vegetables are the primary vectors for disease transmission. Fruits that you peel yourself are fine to eat (such as bananas or oranges). Milk and cheese are fine if you are sure they are pasteurized. Those foods served by your host family will be safe. If you are not sure, just don't eat it. Your host family or interpreter can help you make good decisions regarding food. If you order a drink be sure to request no ice.

### **Latino time**

The people you will work with in Latin America are very relational and place a much higher value on time with you than keeping schedules on track. Do not be surprised if you get started late in the clinic. Simply be ready to go when the time comes and enjoy the time you have by getting to know the people more. Many Americans find it very frustrating to wait when there are patients to be seen. Don't worry; they are always taken care of. Also remember that in a third world country things don't always go as planned. Equipment, cars, busses, etc. break down frequently. Don't get rattled...just ask where you can help and jump in. Flexibility is a key to enjoying your trip. If the schedule needs to change to adapt to a certain situation your hosts will work it out with you.

### **Lab testing and x-rays**

Lab facilities are very limited. We are usually able to do urinalysis, finger stick glucose tests, and sometimes malaria testing at the clinic. Ultrasound, and blood work can be done but all require additional money and have a turn around time of 24 hours to a couple weeks depending on the test being ordered. Please be judicious with your ordering of tests since we have limited funds to operate the clinic with.

### **Culture and language barriers**

Your interpreters will usually recognize cultural or language barriers to communication and take care of them for you, but occasionally what you are being told may seem odd. Please make sure you understand what the patient is really trying to say. For example, if a patient says they have a headache and pain in their brain they are trying to tell you they have both a frontal headache and an occipital headache. These simple misunderstandings are usually easily managed, but should be watched for.

## **Total Health Travel Guide**

### **Immunizations for Honduras**

This is a basic list of recommended immunizations based on CDC recommendations. Please check the CDC web site at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) to obtain an updated list and ensure your safety. It is your responsibility to ensure that you get the appropriate immunizations.

- Highly recommended
  - All childhood immunizations (MMR, Polio, etc.)
  - Hepatitis A
  - Typhoid
  - Tetanus
  - Malaria prophylaxis (chloroquine or doxycycline)
- Recommended for healthcare workers (or anyone who may be exposed to body fluids)
  - Hepatitis B

### **Common medical problems seen**

#### **Primary care medicine**

Many of the problems you care for are straightforward primary care problems. You will see HTN, DM, back pain, overuse injuries, headache, etc. You will have a chance to look through the available medications in the pharmacy prior to seeing patients so you will know what is available.

#### **Tropical diseases**

There are several tropical diseases that you may see while in Honduras. If you have questions on diagnosis or treatment please talk to the clinic doctor. He or She will be very familiar with the diagnosis and treatment of these diseases. You may want to review the symptoms and treatment of the following diseases prior to traveling.

- Malaria
- Intestinal parasites
  - Amebiasis
  - Nematodes
  - Tape Worms
  - Giardia
- Skin infection
  - Scabies
  - Impetigo
- Fungal infections

## Total Health Travel Guide

### Raising Support

Many people traveling on short-term mission or charitable trips raise funds for their trip through letter/telephone campaigns. Start by “name-storming”. Write down the name of anyone you can think of who may want to participate in your trip. Many people enjoy the opportunity to be a part of your work without actually making the trip. Don’t limit yourself on this list. Write down anyone you can think of: relatives, coworkers, bosses, neighbors, friends, old roommates, your dentist, etc. You can go back afterward and prioritize, but for now just get the names down. You should be able to come up with at least 50 names. After name-storming go back and prioritize the name as high, medium, or low. Do not count people out. You will be very surprised by who sends support and who doesn’t.

Step two is to write a fund-raising letter. A sample is included at the end of the section. Remember that you are raising support for Total Health to send you on a trip. It must be clear that you are not raising the money for yourself. In your letter, be sure to bring the reader up to date on what you are doing, educate the reader on the need, involve the reader by asking for a specific action, thank the reader for their support, and close the letter personally. Each letter should be addressed individually, do not send a form letter with a generic heading. Never apologize. Always give some specific amounts for giving (for example “please consider giving \$50, \$75, or \$100 dollars”). Follow up phone calls are very helpful. **BE SURE TO TRACK WHO YOU SENT LETTERS TO AND WHO SENT MONEY BACK!** You will need to send them thank you notes at the end of your trip. We strongly recommend that you send a letter summarizing your experience along with a couple pictures.

*It is vital that you include a disclaimer at the bottom of your letter.* Since we are a non-profit organization and you are raising money for this organization there are certain rules we are required to follow. The disclaimer essentially says that if money is donated, Total Health gets to decide how it is used. That means that if you are unable to go or if the trip were canceled for some reason Total Health can use the money for future activity in any way it feels best to carry out its mission. The following should be included in your letter or placed at the bottom of your letter and referenced.

## **Total Health Travel Guide**

**Be sure donation cards are filled out by each donor.** A copy of the card is supplied in this Travel Guide. You may make copies of this and distribute them with your fund raising letter. If we do not have the needed information from your donors then we cannot send them the tax information they will need at the end of the year!

Donations should be sent to you. Mail your donations with their donation cards to Total health on a weekly basis. Send them to : Total Health, PO Box 424, Lewis Center, OH 43035.

## **Total Health Travel Guide**

### **Sample fund raising letter:**

Date: (today's date)

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Smith,

Hello. Hope you are all doing well. We have been busy as usual but everyone is doing well. The kids have just finished their school year and are looking forward to summer. I am personally looking forward to this fall when I plan to join a medical mission trip to Honduras.

I have wanted to share my medical skills and talents with those that are less fortunate for many years. I now have an opportunity to travel to one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere and provide medical care. Honduras is a small country in Central America. It is very poor with the majority of people living in poverty. The average income of the families served is approximately \$700 per year per family!

Starting November 4 I will be leaving for a one week trip with a team from Total Health to work in a free clinic in La Ceiba, Honduras. Total Health is a US based non-profit organization that supports the clinic in La Ceiba. The cost for this trip is a little over \$1500. I am investing my resources in this service project, but need to raise additional support to make this humanitarian service a reality. Please consider giving \$25, \$50, or \$100 to support this free medical care. Your gifts are completely tax deductible. Please refer to GIFTS below for more information. Since plane tickets must be purchased by August 4 your early response is much appreciated.

Thank you for your interest in supporting this humanitarian service.

Sincerely,

John Doe  
1234 Loop Dr.  
Columbus, OH 12345  
(614) 555-1234

GIFTS to support humanitarian trips sponsored by Total Health are tax deductible. CHECKS MUST BE MADE OUT TO TOTAL HEALTH. The donor may list "humanitarian medicine" in the check memo along with the name of the medical personnel. Should the trip become over funded, Total Health will use the excess funds for continued medical care at Salud Total in a manner to be determined by Total Health. In the unlikely event that the trip is changed or canceled, or the traveler is unable to make the trip, Total Health will use the collected funds for continued medical care at Salud Total in a manner to be determined by Total Health.

## Total Health Travel Guide

### Total Health Donation Card

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Total Health Donation Card

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Total Health Travel Guide

### Travel Insurance Tips

We will purchase travel insurance for you. We use Insurance Services of America to purchase travel insurance through Seven Corners, Inc. You will get an email before your trip that has your insurance information on it. It is very important for you to print this and take it with you on the trip. It has all the insurance and contact information you would need if a problem would arise.

The following are some tips from Seven Corners for travelers using their insurance:

1. ID Cards: make sure your team prints a copy or two before they leave
2. Pre-certification: if anyone needs to be hospitalized, needs a CAT scan or MRI or requires surgery, then call the insurance company's number on the ID card
3. If an incident occurs while you are away from your home country, **treatment MUST begin in the foreign country** for you to be eligible to submit claims once back in the US.
4. Coverage for treatment of an illness or injury that occurred on your trip (see #3 above) is available for a **maximum of 90 days** after your return to the US. The amount of coverage is limited to the follow-up home country benefit maximum.

## **Total Health Travel Guide**

### **Re-Entry**

Coming home can sometimes be a surprisingly difficult process. While in Central America most people are amazed by the kindness and generosity of those we serve. It is also very moving to experience a time in which we can simply serve others without the interruptions of our daily life at home. Those powerful experiences and emotions are often hard to express or understand after coming home. It is difficult to fully explain such a complex experience to our loved ones, but we feel the need to let it out. Many people even experience a short depression after returning home. There are a few things you can do to help your transition home to be a good one.

While in Honduras you should keep a journal. Take some time every day to write down your experiences and thoughts. Coming back to your journal after returning home helps you process your experiences and apply them to daily life.

When you first get home, don't try to tell your family and friends everything at once. Pick a couple special experiences that you can tell them about to let them know a bit of what happened. You should also plan a special time or meal with family and friends your first week back so you can tell your whole story. Everyone will be ready to give you their undivided attention and you can prevent repeating yourself.

Toward the end of your week start thinking about how you will apply your experiences to everyday life. Just because you are cleaning up after your kids or comforting a friend here in the US doesn't mean it's not a significant service. Recognize that we all have opportunities every day to serve those around us, and while the everyday jobs are not glamorous, they are very powerful. Recognize the importance of them and enjoy the opportunity to serve where you live.

Finally, if you find that you are depressed or need to talk to someone, give us a call. We have all shared your experience and would love to talk to you.

## Total Health Travel Guide

### Packing List

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Clothes                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Jeans/kakis (most prefer kakis and scrub tops at work)</li> <li>◇ Shorts</li> <li>◇ t-shirts</li> <li>◇ Underwear</li> <li>◇ Socks</li> <li>◇ Shoes (tennis shoes, sandals)</li> <li>◇ Pajamas</li> <li>◇ Hat</li> <li>◇ Bandana</li> <li>◇ Bathing Suit</li> <li>◇ Sun glasses</li> <li>◇ Towel</li> </ul> </li> <li>◇ Toiletries (in zip-lock bag)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Toothbrush</li> <li>◇ Toothpaste</li> <li>◇ Deodorant</li> <li>◇ Shampoo</li> <li>◇ Razor/shaving cream</li> </ul> </li> <li>◇ Vision supplies                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Eye glasses</li> <li>◇ Contacts with supplies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Medical supplies for work                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Stethoscope</li> <li>◇ Otoscope (with supplies)</li> <li>◇ Flashlight</li> </ul> </li> <li>◇ Personal medicines                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Pepto-bismol</li> <li>◇ Imodium</li> <li>◇ Ibuprofen</li> <li>◇ Meclizine</li> <li>◇ Cipro</li> <li>◇ Any medicines you regularly take</li> </ul> </li> <li>◇ Miscellaneous                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Passport</li> <li>◇ Airline tickets</li> <li>◇ Money</li> <li>◇ Photo ID</li> <li>◇ Credit card</li> <li>◇ Bible/books</li> <li>◇ Journal/pen</li> <li>◇ Camera</li> <li>◇ Sunscreen</li> <li>◇ Bug spray</li> <li>◇ Hand sanitizer</li> <li>◇ Gifts</li> <li>◇ snacks</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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