



Volunteer Orientation to Haiti and Your Trip

WE ARE SO GLAD THAT YOU ARE COMING TO HAITI WITH US!

We hope that this is one of the great experiences of your life and we will do our best to make it so. This packet will start to orient you as to what you might expect and what you'll need to do to prepare. Make sure that you come to Haiti with an open mind. We make our plans, but we sometimes find Haiti has other plans for us. Our clinics typically see hundreds of patients, deliver babies, repair wounds, drain abscesses, etc. You may arrive, however, to find that the missing critical piece of the puzzle in the village's health is a lack of latrines. That's not often the case, but if it is, you may be handed a shovel. Be prepared to be extremely flexible and to remember that any struggles you may encounter during your week are simply the day-to-day for our patient population. Our journeys are tough, challenging, heart breaking, heart-warming, frustrating, overwhelming, and uplifting all at the same time. When all is said and done, our volunteers often come away feeling that the Haitians have done more for them than they have done for the Haitians.



Remember you are a guest in their country. You probably wouldn't appreciate a group of Europeans who have never spent significant time in the USA coming into your neighborhood for a week and telling you how to fix the US unemployment situation or our public educational system, and pointing out things they feel are wrong with the US culture. Haitians wouldn't enjoy us doing that in their country either. Be humble and ask questions. Sit down and take the time to get to know people. Engage in conversation.

Occasionally our volunteers have previously been to Haiti and come with some of their own goals in mind—visiting people they know, spending time at a certain place, etc. We are more than happy to try to accommodate you. Please be aware, however, that we cannot accommodate all goals. There may be any number of reasons for this. If clinic efficiency or quality is compromised, we may not grant your request. If it is cost prohibitive, overly complicated logistically, or unsafe in any way, your request may not be granted. Please keep in mind that you are signing onto a medical or surgical team. Your first priority in attending this trip is to support this team. You will be working under the supervision of your Team Leader at all times. While in Haiti, you will be expected to follow their direction.

BACKGROUND OF HAITI

Haiti is situated on the Western 1/3 of the island of Hispaniola, just east of Cuba. It is located about 600 miles southeast of Miami, which means a 1.5 hour plane ride. Haiti has an estimated population of around 8.7 million people. With approximately 10 million people crowding a country the size of Maryland, Haiti is the most densely populated country in the western hemisphere. It is also the poorest country in the western hemisphere, with the majority of the population living on less than \$2 per day. As of 2003, 80% of them were estimated to live below the absolute poverty line. Various natural disasters including the earthquake of January 2010 have only worsened the situation. The capital of Haiti is Port Au Prince, a city of around 3 million people. Most of our clinics are in the rural mountains well outside of Port-au-Prince.



BACKGROUND OF CHI

Go to our [website](#) to learn more about our Vision, Mission, Leaders and more. Here is a link to [CHI VS 10,000 NGOs \(non-governmental organizations\) operate in Haiti, so what sets CHI apart?](#) If you're going on a joint trip with CHI & Harvest Field Ministries, here is a [link](#) to learn more about HFM.

Working in solidarity to create healthy, empowered, and self-directed communities in Haiti

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HAITI'S POSITION INTERNATIONALLY

Frequently our volunteers will wonder how conditions in Haiti came to be as bad as they are. This is an extremely complicated question and involves discussion into politics, sociology, finance, religion, and ecology. To begin to understand an answer, we suggest you begin to educate yourself on the history of Haiti. The following is a brief history sketch of Haitian history to frame your thoughts. Recognize that this is extremely superficial and that it will not supplant outside reading.

Pre-European History: The island known today as Hispaniola was first settled around 2600 BC by people traveling from South America in dug-out canoes. The island was populated by three successive waves of indigenous people, most recently the Taino Indians who arrived around 700 AD.

Colonial History: There were between 400,000 and 1 million Taino Amerindians inhabiting the island of Hispaniola, "Ayiti" in Taino, when Christopher Columbus happened it upon in 1492. The Taino were largely gone from Hispaniola within 25 years due to a combination of disease and physical violence. By 1519, both the gold mines and the indigenous labor pool had dried up, so the Spanish began importing slaves from Africa to work the plantations, mostly sugar and tobacco. As the 1600s began, the Spanish citizens on the western end of Hispaniola traded illegally with French privateers (pirates). Spanish troops were sent in and those treasonous areas were depopulated. The French traders moved into the empty towns, further frustrating Spain's ambitions. Between 1669 and 1679, a hurricane, a smallpox epidemic and an outright war between France and Spain convinced Spanish colonists that there would have to be a compromise. They agreed to let the French settlements grow, but only on the western third of the island. Spain established a border in 1731, amended in a treaty with France in 1777, creating the territory of Saint-Domingue. The French colony, based on forestry and sugar-related industries, became one of the wealthiest in the Caribbean, but only through the heavy importation of African slaves and considerable environmental degradation. In the late 18th century, Haiti's nearly half million slaves revolted under Toussaint L'ouverture. After a prolonged struggle, Napoleon and the French army were defeated. Haiti became the first black republic to declare its independence in 1804. Independence has never been easy for Haiti. The new country's economy was primarily based on agriculture. However, it was isolated from trade by an embittered Europe and isolationist US. In fact, the republic often found itself at the wrong end of "gunboat diplomacy". Haiti spent the first 150 years of its existence paying 15 million francs in war reparations to France to compensate them for the loss of their colony and slaves. Haiti is now the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, and to make matters worse, has been plagued by political violence for most of its history. Between 1843 and 1915, only one of Haiti's heads-of-state served a complete term without being assassinated or exiled.

The 20th Century: In 1915, Haiti's strategic importance to the US became apparent as the Panama Canal was opened and the sea-lanes shifted. The US marines have twice occupied Haiti, first following a coup and remaining in control of the country for another 19 years. During that time, they revamped Haiti's constitution to allow non-Haitians land ownership rights and instituted "corvee" (conscripted, forced labor) to build roads, dams, and other public works. Any resistance was repressed brutally. A physician leading the peaceful resistance, Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier became a figure that Haitians rallied around. In the tumultuous wake of the U.S.'s departure, Duvalier was elected in 1956. The peaceful nature of Duvalier quickly ceased and he maintained an unofficial army, the Tonton Macoutes ("Uncle Bogeyman") who killed and intimidated political opponents. The Macoutes, funded and trained largely by the US, kept Papa Doc and his son "President for Life, Baby Doc" Duvalier in power for the next 30 years until he was finally forced into exile. During this time, a grassroots political movement called the Famille Lavalas (flood) began to form around an unassuming but passionate Roman Catholic Priest who spent his time ministering to the poor, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Aristide was elected by an overwhelming majority in 1990, but was ousted in a military coup within the year. Aristide was returned to power by US forces in 2004 after agreeing to a series of economic reforms that would benefit US companies. He immediately disbanded the Haitian army. However, he had only a year left in his term before he stepped down and turned over power to Rene Preval, marking the first non-violent transition of power in Haiti's recent history. Aristide was elected again in 2004, but the results were contested by special interest

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groups within Haiti and within the U.S. In February 2004, an armed rebellion led by former army members rocked the country during its 200th anniversary. Aristide was seized and extradited to the Central African Republic by U.S. forces. An interim government took office to organize new elections under the auspices of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Continued violence and technical delays prompted repeated postponements, but Haiti finally did inaugurate a democratically elected president and parliament in May of 2006. Rene Preval was again elected.

Political instability has often been cited as a reason for Western Nations to withhold aid intended for Haiti. The relative position of powerlessness of Haiti also makes it relatively impossible for any action or funding in Haiti to be held accountable to anyone. The U.S.-led World Bank holds \$150 Billion in aid designated for Haiti's public health system and infrastructure development. In 2003, the U.S. blocked \$500 million in loans to Haiti from the International Development Bank. In 2010, nearly \$2 billion was raised and accepted by non-profits in the United States alone in response to the earthquake of January 12. At the time of the one-year anniversary, it was estimated that less than a third of this funding had actually been spent.

STATISTICS

Keep in mind that all Haitian statistics are guesswork to some degree. We operate amongst a population that does not hold addresses, track births or deaths, hold a national census, or have national identifiers such as social security.

- Infant mortality 63/1000 live births (US is 6.3/1000)
- 8% of children die at birth or as infants. 15% die before they reach 5 years old.
- Life expectancy 57 years old (US is 78 years old)
- HIV prevalence 5.6% (0.6% in the US)
- 55% of the population has no access to clean drinking water. Of the 45% of people that do have access to clean water, most cannot afford it, so they often drink contaminated water anyway.
- Haiti has approximately 70% unemployment. There is little to no industry, manufacturing, or tourism in Haiti to provide a stable job base.
- Haiti is the 3rd worst country in the world for calorie intake with an average caloric consumption of only 450 calories per day.
- There are nearly half a million orphaned children in Haiti. Of these, losing parents to death has orphaned some, but many are "economic orphans". These are children whose parents have given them to an orphanage because they don't have the means to provide the child's basic needs.
- Amnesty International has determined Haiti is tied for first place with Bangladesh as the world's most corrupt nation.

TRAVEL

The temperature in Haiti is typically in the 90's year-round and often quite humid. Our clinics in the mountains will sometimes encounter evening temperatures that drop into the 60's. Dress accordingly. Have water readily available, including during travel. Don't forget to fill your water bottles in the Miami airport, after going through security. It will be a long journey before you reach your final clinic destination and potable water. It is quite often that we have team members who become dehydrated and sunburned and end up spending a day or two in bed. Not a good way to spend your time with us!

Your luggage will be carried in trucks and is likely to be tossed around and get very dirty. Expensive luggage is not recommended. Keep anything fragile, expensive, or indispensable with you at all times. This means passports, money, cameras, etc. Haitian roads are often in poor repair and without apparent traffic regulation. Although alarming at first, there are unwritten rules of the road that all the drivers seem to know and live by. Try to relax and take in the sights around you!

SAFETY

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Haiti is a country with a history of political instability and crime. The US State Department for many years has maintained the recommendation for Americans to “defer non-essential travel to Haiti”. Most of the crime issues are in the major cities like Port-au-Prince. In rural areas such as Archaie and Les Anglais crime is not a common problem we deal with. However, no place can ever completely be immune to crime. Throughout Haiti, roads are often damaged and inadequately sized and driving laws are usually not enforced so travel can be treacherous. Mosquitoes carry illnesses such as malaria and typhoid.

We do a lot of preparations such as hiring trusted drivers and frequently have security guards travel with us when driving in/through Port-au-Prince. We insist everyone takes his or her malaria and typhoid preventative medicines/vaccinations. We require all team members follow strict safety guidelines set forth by your Team Leader. We sleep at secure facilities. We do our best to minimize any safety issues.

Once out of the larger cities, the concern of crime reduces, but you must still remember you are in a developing country and it will be very obvious you are a foreigner. Common sense must be used by always staying with your group, never flashing money, and watching out for your team members around you. Never leave the guesthouse without your leader’s approval and never invite anyone into the guesthouse with you. Always notify your leader or Haitian host immediately if you see anything suspicious or if anyone makes you feel uncomfortable.

You must also be aware of the environment around you. Realize that when walking along a road or a pathway that a tap-tap (a sort of Haitian truck taxi), motorcycle, or donkey/horse could come whizzing by at any moment. Don’t touch unfamiliar plants or animals. Don’t accept or consume food or water other than what is provided at the hotel/guesthouse.

In the event of a significant illness or accident, there are a couple of medical facilities in Port-au-Prince that are capable of providing medical care similar to the level to which Americans are accustomed. If there were ever a critical illness or injury, there is a helicopter med-evacuation service provided by our trip insurance policy that can transport people to a hospital in Miami.

Interesting article that came out in May 2013 - <http://haititourisminc.wordpress.com/2013/05/12/facts-haiti-one-of-the-safest-destinations-in-the-americas/>.

LANGUAGE

Kreyol, or Creole - a mix of French and several African dialects. The relationship between Creole and French is analogous to Spanish and Portuguese. They aren’t the same, but there are a lot of similarities. Our teams will hire interpreters, although it is helpful to learn a few phrases. Some great resources are: Phrasebook, by Charmant Theodore, or Creole Made Easy, by Wally Turnbull. There is also a handy computer program and smartphone app called BYKI/Creole that provides good practice.

Haitians are generally polite and expressive people. Strangers will commonly greet each other. Upon beginning a conversation, it is common practice to first spend a brief time discussing how they and their family are doing, commenting on weather, or inquiring about any recent events/struggles in their life. After pleasantries are exchanged, then you can move into the topic of discussion. Even if you are speaking with someone who doesn’t speak much English, he/she will likely enjoy talking with you. Many Haitians like learning English from you and will probably want to teach you a few Creole words.

- *Bon jou* - Hello (before noon)
- *Bon swa* - Hello (afternoon)
- *Mwe rele... or Non pam se...* - My name is...
- *Mwen kontan rekonet ou, mwen kontan way-o* - Nice to meet you
- *Sak pase?* - What’s happening?

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- *Como ou yay?* - How are you?
- *Ma pi mal.*- Not too bad
- *Ki pwoblem ou genyen?* - What's your problem?
- *Mwe pale pa Kreole* - I don't speak Kreole
- *Femal* - to hurt
- *Grangou* - hunger
- *Djiray* - Diarrhea
- *Fieb* - Fever
- *Avec frizzon* - with chills
- *Ouve bouch ou* - Open your mouth
- *Respire fo or Rale souf ou* - Breathe deeply
- Haitians are famous for some of their witty and insightful expressions. Hopefully you'll pick up on some of these as you go. The most famous one around the US is "geye mon de mon"- beyond mountains, more mountains. Another one that you'll hear a lot from people in the group is "Degaje pa passé"- to improvise is not a sin.

RELIGION

Religion is an extremely important aspect of Haitian life. 80% of Haitians describe themselves as Catholic, and most of the remaining 20% consider themselves Protestant. Depending on whom you ask, about 50% of Haitians also participate in Voodoo to some extent. It's sort of like hedging your bets and most Haitians do not see Voodoo as mutually exclusive to Christianity.

Voodoo (or VouDo) originates from West Africa and is a form of monotheistic ancestor worship. Because the Voodoo god, Bondye "good god", is distant, he is prayed to through a variety of intermediary spirits. Like any self-respecting religion, Voodoo helps its followers make sense of why things happen in the world, provide deities to appeal to, and explain things that are otherwise difficult to comprehend. Haitian Voodoo is particularly interesting, because in order to disguise their practices from their masters, the slaves that brought Voodoo to Haiti incorporated a lot of Catholic imagery and myths.

Be aware that people working in Haiti come from dramatically different backgrounds and traditions, many of which are founded in a religious faith. These people include not only the other teams we'll encounter while in Haiti, but also the members of our team. The Community Health Initiative comprises a diverse group of volunteers and volunteer staff. We are brought together by our shared goal of addressing the healthcare disparities in rural Haiti. In line with this ideal, we partner with and work alongside many Christian organizations pursuing the same and similar goals. Our wide network of relationships enables and expands our ability to recruit volunteers. Many volunteers have been recruited through these ties. Their religious faith may be a large part of why they donate time and talents to working in Haiti. You should not be surprised if a team member—or patient for that matter—offers a prayer for you as an individual, or for the team. Haiti is a challenging place to experience, especially for the first time. Some individuals will journal, write a poem, talk about how they feel, ask questions, pray, or simply ponder what they're experiencing. We all process in our own way. During the meals and nightly team meetings, CHI allows a forum for those who want to share thoughts, stories, writing, prayer, or simply offer a topic of discussion. If you are not interested or comfortable in certain activities, such as praying aloud or sharing a thought, know that you aren't expected to do so. Just remember, you're part of a team. The various skill sets are as a necessary for success as the various individuals who carry those skills. You are expected to be polite and respectful and to not disrupt others whether or not you share the same beliefs or means of processing your experience. As a general note, be aware that religion permeates the culture of Haiti, and thereby the Haitians who convey their culture. If you are offended by religious activity, carefully consider whether or not this is the right environment for you. Again, keep in mind that we are traveling to Haiti for the same purpose. In the end, this trip is not about you—it's about the Haitians.



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FOOD

Local Haitians cook for us and are very careful in how they they clean and prepare food to make sure everything is cooked properly. Some people can get an upset stomach because of the unfamiliar food, even if it is properly prepared. Always let your team leader know if you start feeling sick. We bring medicine to help with diarrhea and upset stomachs so don't hesitate to let your group leader know so we can help you start feeling better.

Our meals will consist of typical Haitian offerings such as beans and rice, with occasional meat such as chicken or goat thrown in. There may be plantains, bananas, oranges, and grapefruit. Peel everything before you eat it. Most people enjoy the Haitian cuisine. But until you know if you like a food, just take a small portion, test it, and if you like it, then eat up! No food in Haiti ever gets thrown out. If everyone in the house eats and there are still leftovers, there will always be someone that will gladly eat what is left, so please do not put a lot of food on your plate if you do not intend to eat it.

Don't drink water that has not been treated, and avoid ice, unless made with treated water. Beer and rum can also be found, although in some of our clinic sites alcohol is not appropriate. Coca-Cola is widely available and potable water will be provided to you.

We generally suggest that our team members bring snacks such as candy (that doesn't melt), beef jerky, crackers, etc. Lunch is not provided in some of our locations, such that these snacks can carry you through. It is often warm enough that most volunteers don't feel like eating much during the heat of day regardless. We also strongly recommend you avoid "street" food. Do not eat anything in Haiti unless approved by your Team Leaders. It may smell and taste wonderful, but you don't want to find yourself spending all of your time in Haiti in the bathroom.

LODGING

Our teams will typically stay in a hotel or resort. We typically have breakfast and dinner prepared for us, access to electricity, cold running water (including toilets and showers), and sometimes even the Internet. Keep in mind that this is Haiti, however, none of these amenities are guaranteed. Electronic plugs that work in the US will work in Haiti. Bedding is typically available and very clean, although some of our volunteers will occasionally prefer to bring their own sheets or sleeping bags. AT&T and Verizon phones will work if international access is activated, although this service is not particularly cheap at around \$3/minute. Sunscreen and insect repellent are typical necessities, while mosquito nets usually are not. It is not common to encounter ants and other critters.

MONEY

Haiti is in the unique position of having two currencies. There is the Haitian Goud, roughly 40 of which are equivalent to the US dollar. There is also the Haitian dollar, which is worth roughly five Goud, although exchange rates may vary. As a general rule, it is usually not necessary to exchange much money. Small US bills are widely accepted. We recommend that you do NOT use credit cards in Haiti. There are no ATM's, and as a general rule, you will only have the cash you brought into the country.

COMMUNICATIONS

If your phone works internationally, you are of course welcome to use it. Internet service may or may not be available. If you do not have access to either of these options, we will make certain that you have access to a phone to make a short call home at least a couple of times during the week. We realize that it's important that your friends and family know that you are well.

ANIMALS

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Our volunteers will see a variety of animals on their trip including cats, dogs, cows, donkeys, goats, and roosters. The treatment of dogs and cats is very different in Haiti than what we are used to the US. It can be difficult to see.

MEDICAL BACKGROUND

A large percentage of the Haitian population suffers from some sort of malnutrition: iron deficiency, vitamin A deficiency, iodine deficiency, protein deficiency (kwashiorkor), caloric deficiency (marasmus), or any combination of these. The #1 killer of children in Haiti is diarrhea. The #2 killer is dehydration and malnutrition. Dehydration & malnutrition are polite terms for starving to death. Many Haitian children are underweight with stunted growth and development. This is complicated by extensive infectious disease, which includes HIV, TB, and lymphatic filariasis. Malaria is very common, as are diarrheal illnesses and asthma. The incidence of H. pylori infection has been documented in some communities to be extremely high. Typhoid and tetanus are endemic and occasionally treated by our teams. Untreated rheumatic heart disease occurs, and it is not uncommon to find children in heart failure from damaged valves. Fungal dermatitis is very common and a simple product of a constantly hot and damp environment. Scabies is rampant and you will find it much harder to acquire than is widely assumed in the US.

The disease processes in Haiti are essentially a product of poverty. In the northern part of Haiti is a region called Labadie. It is a fenced off peninsula that cruise ships will utilize and often refer to as their "private island". It is pristine, and none of the vacationers coming off of these ships give a second thought towards infectious disease. Transport the same vacationers ten miles away, however, and suddenly they want to review their vaccinations while they scramble for masks, gloves, and prophylactic antibiotics. It's silly, but that's how the average person perceives Haiti. In general, our clinics manage late presentations of chronic diseases, preventable diseases, and diseases largely eradicated in the U.S. due to vaccination, health screening, and adequate nutrition. The vast majority of diseases to be found in Haiti are very, very preventable and/or treatable. The reason that they are so problematic is that very few organizations are working towards that treatment with any kind of continuity.

Our providers will also have to make decisions based on limited resources and a dramatically different medical environment. We will not have a limitless supply of medications. There will be little to no laboratory or radiologic testing available. What we do have cannot be wasted and must be carefully utilized based on impact to the patient. Our providers will receive a primer on practicing in our clinics as well as treatment guidelines. It is our expectation that this will be reviewed prior to coming on the trip so that we can provide continuity for our patients in terms of the way in which diseases are diagnosed and treated. Providers new to Haiti will be practicing alongside physicians experienced in the region.

PHOTOS

We encourage bringing cameras with you. After your trip, it is often hard with only words to convey to others exactly what you experienced. Photos and video are a helpful way to share your experience; however, **you must practice respect and good manners when taking photos**. You would probably not want a tourist walking into your neighborhood and taking pictures of your neighborhood, your house, your kids, or you, unless they first had your permission. Haitians want the same respect you would request, so please ask approval before taking pictures. If you show them the camera and say "Photo OK?" they will understand what you are asking. Most of the time you will receive a gracious smile and nod; sometimes they'll even go get the rest of their friends and family so you can photograph them too. But if they don't want their picture taken, it will be obvious by their reaction. If they decline, politely say "Mesi" and put the camera away.

APPROPRIATE RESPONSE WHEN ASKED FOR MONEY, ITEMS, OR INFORMATION

Because of the centuries of poverty and the many years of foreign aid in Haiti, you can expect to frequently hear "Hey blan, give me one dollar/your watch/your hat/etc." We want to be compassionate, but having foreigners randomly giving handouts over the years has created problems in Haitian society, so we don't allow our team

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members to randomly give things away. We realize it is sometimes extremely difficult to say no when you are face to face with extreme poverty, especially when it's children or the elderly asking. We understand this can be a tough request, but we ask that you consider CHI's long-term efforts and acknowledge that when our team members give things away in public, it can cause several problems. It can create significant safety issues for the receiver of the gift – we've seen children and the elderly beaten and robbed by others who saw or heard about them receiving something. It can also create security problems for our Haitian staff and partners, after the team leaves. Additionally, it can increase a mindset of entitlement to handouts, rather than encouraging an attitude of self-reliance. If saying no to a request, be polite but direct. Phrases like "maybe later", or "I'd like to, but I can't", or "I don't think I can help right now" can sometimes be received as a "yes", and provide false hope. A simple "no", is all that is needed. Always let your leader know if someone's requests become excessive or they make you feel unsafe.

Generations of poverty have caused some Haitians to accept a "degaje pa peche" (making it work isn't sin) attitude when it comes to getting something. Therefore, some Haitians will intentionally manipulate your emotions to try to get food or money or try to take things that aren't theirs. We obviously don't condone this, but realize they or their family may be hungry and they might view you as a way to alleviate that for a short time. Most of us have never been in a situation anywhere close to the level of poverty and suffering they endure on a daily basis so be patient before judging their actions.

You will likely be asked for your address, phone number, email address, Facebook info, etc. We suggest you not provide this information, as it is frequently shared with other Haitians you don't even know and it will likely be used to ask you for money after you've returned home. If there is someone you meet who you want to correspond with, check with your leaders and they will give you advice. You can always reply with a polite "No, I have been told I can not share that".

ART

Haitian artisans are very talented and it is easy to find inexpensive, colorful hand made paintings in Haiti. There are sculptures and carvings in both wood and stone. There is typically opportunity to purchase souvenirs, so bring a little extra cash in small bills. Bartering is the norm and US currency is widely accepted. As a general rule, never take the first price offered. Rest assured, you cannot cheat the merchants. They will never sell you anything for less than they paid. You'll end up paying more than a Haitian would, but it's a great price for what you're getting. We also recommend that you have some spare cash for emergencies. You won't find ATM's where we work.

MISCELLANEOUS

Haiti is the most densely populated country in the western hemisphere. Haitians typically do not have the 'personal space' issues that lots of Americans have. Whether riding in the back of a truck or sitting in church, you will often be elbow to elbow with someone and they will not think a thing about it. They are generally a "touchy" culture so handshakes, hugs, cheek kisses, pats on the back, etc. are very commonplace. The children often like to grab your hand on a walk or rub your arm. Don't be bothered by this – it is normal Haitian culture.

RECOMMENDED IMMUNIZATIONS

Most of what you need, you probably already have. It is recommended that you have an updated Tetanus shot (within the last 10 years), as there is a fair bit of tetanus in Haiti. Everyone also should have Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, MMR (measles, mumps, rubella), diphtheria (often part of the tetanus shot), pertussis (may be part of the tetanus shot if you've had it in the last 2-3 years), and varicella (if you haven't had the chicken pox) vaccines. You probably don't have a typhoid vaccination, which you should have for Haiti. This requires a booster every 2 years. Most people would also recommend getting the meningitis vaccine, which you may or may not have gotten depending on your age. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) also recommends that you complete the rabies vaccine series prior to leaving for Haiti but our teams do not routinely (if ever) get it. Finally, **everyone needs to take some sort of malaria**

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prophylaxis. You don't want to experience malaria first hand. Malaria in Haiti is still sensitive to chloroquine. You should see your doctor or visit a travel clinic at least 2 months prior to your departure to make sure that you have everything that you need. You can look at the CDC's website for more info - <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/haiti>. Talk to your healthcare provider or travel clinic about what is best for you. In addition, you should bring some mosquito repellent with DEET to help prevent malaria and dengue fever.

RECOMMENDED READING

1. **The Big Truck That Went By: How the World Came to Save Haiti and Left Behind a Disaster** by Jonathan M. Katz. On January 12, 2010, the deadliest earthquake in the history of the Western Hemisphere struck the nation least prepared to handle one. Jonathan M. Katz, the only full-time American news correspondent in Haiti, was inside his house when it buckled along with hundreds of thousands of others. In this visceral first-hand account, Katz takes readers inside the terror of that day, the devastation visited on ordinary Haitians, and through the monumental--yet misbegotten--rescue effort that followed.
2. **Mountains Beyond Mountains** by Tracey Kidder. An easy to read and entertaining, providing a quick background to those new to Haiti.
3. **Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed** by Jared Diamond. An interesting comparison between Haiti and the Dominican Republic (the Eastern 2/3 of the island of Hispaniola).
4. **Haiti: The Tumultuous History, From the Pearl of the Caribbean to Broken Nation** by Phillipe Girard. Excellent overview of Haitian history.
5. **Why the Cocks Fight: Dominicans, Haitians, and the Struggle for Hispaniola** by Michele Wucker. Offers insight into the complex and controversial relationship between Haiti and the Dominican Republic.
6. Commentary on the problem with short-term aid work. Every team member should read this and then ask how we can defend the Community Health Initiative - http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/07/04/AR2008070402233_pf.html.
7. An excellent commentary on aid work and our perceptions of it. An important read for you to reflect on your own perspectives and motivations - <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/13/AR2007071301714.html>