**Facts about Haiti**

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**Geography**

Haiti occupies the western third of the island of Hispaniola between the Caribbean Sea and the north Atlantic Ocean, sharing a border with the Dominican Republic. It occupies an area just slightly smaller than the state of Maryland. The terrain is mostly rough and mountainous. Extensive deforestation has led to large-scale soil erosion.

**Climate**

Having a tropical climate, Haiti is hot and humid most of the year. In areas where the mountains cut off the trade winds, however, it can be dry and desert-like. Winter is a great time to visit. When visiting in their summer, please note that it will be very hot.

**Population**

About 9 million people live in Haiti, 3 million of which live in the capital city of Port-au-Prince. The average life expectancy is 61 years. Two out of every three Haitians is under the age of thirty.

**Economy**

Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere with 80% of its population living under the poverty line and 54% in abject poverty – even more since the earthquake. More than two-thirds of the population do not have formal jobs. The basic unit of currency is the gourde. Five gourdes make one Haitian dollar and the current exchange is about 41 gourdes to one American dollar.

**Languages**

Primarily French and Haitian Creole.

**Religion**

Roughly 50 % per cent of Haitians are Roman Catholic while 40 % of those also practice voodoo. Approximately 42 % are Protestant with 10% of those also practicing voodoo.

**History**

In the 1700s, Haiti was one the wealthiest French colonies in the Caribbean. Black African slaves were imported by the thousands to work on the sugar, tobacco and coffee plantations. In the late 18th century, however, Haiti's nearly half million slaves revolted under Toussaint L'Ouverture. In 1804, after a long and violent struggle, Haiti became the first black republic to declare independence. Afterwards though the people could not revive the economy and the result was a collection of small subsistence farms that still exist today.

Haiti has been plagued by political violence for most of its history. The Haitian people endured a series of U.S. occupations and then a period of rule by brutal dictators. Currently there is a democratically elected president and parliament as well as a United Nations presence.

**Important Info**

**Health & Immunisations** The Centre of Disease Control does have the following recommendations for Aussies travelling to Haiti.

**Recommendations on the website:**

**Malaria**

Tetanus/Diphtheria Vaccine

Typhoid Vaccine (injection or oral)

Medication for malaria prevention (usually Chloroquine)

Hep A Vaccine

Hep B Vaccine

BOOSTRIX, TYPHOID, and two DOXYCYCLINE and CHOLLERA is essential.

Malaria is transmitted by mosquitoes. Applying insect repellent to both skin and clothing can reduce the risk of acquiring malaria. The most effective repellents are those containing DEET. Chloroquine should be obtained through your family physician. The usual adult dosage is 500mg. once a week and should be taken on the same day each week, seven (7) days apart. The medicine should be started one (1) week prior to departing for Haiti and should be continued for four (4) weeks after returning home.

**Traveller’s Diarrhoea**

The most common cause of TD is usually a bacterial infection with E. coli. In general, the CDC does not recommend taking antibiotics to prevent TD, but Pepto-Bismol tablets, 2 tablets four times a day, can be taken to help prevent it. (Buy these everywhere in the USA on the way through).

**Staying Healthy**

* Wash hands often with soap and water / hand sanitiser
* Drink only bottled or boiled water, or carbonated drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes.
* Eat only thoroughly cooked foods or fruits and vegetables you have peeled yourself.
* Take your malaria prevention medication before, during, and after travel, as directed.
* Protect yourself from insects. Apply AEROGARD (or similar) sparingly at 4-hour intervals.
* To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry. Do not go barefoot.

**Dress Requirements**

* Expect humid conditions and very hot temperatures in summer. The air does not cool down much at night –but may be cooler in the mountains.
* Sleepwear should be modest. Certain circumstances, such as trips to the restroom at night, (and to the pit toilet in Bouvier), will make modest clothing a necessity. Night clothes should not be worn to breakfast or while outside the sleeping room / tent.
* Jewellery should be kept to a minimum. No one should bring or wear expensive jewellery/watches.

**Ladies:**

* We wear shorts below the knees (cut-offs) and jeans and track pants, stretch pants etc.
* Sleeveless shirts are permitted. Be careful where you wear spaghetti straps. Low-cut shirts should not be worn.
* For church, dresses or shirts should have short sleeves.
* Swimsuits should not be bikinis.

**Men:**

* Men may wear shorts or jeans. Shirts must be worn at all times or Singlets are ok while working.
* For church, men should wear pants / jeans, a short-sleeve button-up shirt, and shoes.

Following these guidelines is important not only for the mission's reputation, but also because it impacts how the local people will perceive you.

**Travel Info Packing** Check with your airlines (we all have more than one carrier so check with them both) what your luggage limit is. Each passenger should be allowed **2 checked bags** and **1 carry-on.** (With some airlines: The first checked bag is free but there is a $30+ fee for the second bag. Please check this out thoroughly.) You can also bring **a personal item** (small backpack, purse, etc.) All shampoos, shower gel, etc. should be placed in zip-top bags in case of leakage, only one in your carry-on, others in checked luggage.

**Entering Haiti**

On the plane you will be given an immigration form. For "Reason for Visit" mark "Pleasure, Recreation". For the address you will be staying, write **53, Waney 87, Carrefour, Port-au-Prince, Haiti (W.I)**

Do not indicate that you are undertaking any relief / missions work at all. Leave blank the claim area of the form.

Upon entering the airport, stand in the lines for immigration with your passport and immigration form ready to be stamped. Next, move on to the baggage claim area and get a baggage cart (cost is about $2), collect your luggage and, after we are all through, and together, proceed to the customs line with claim tickets in hand.

When going through the customs line with your baggage, do not offer any information. When your bag has been checked by a customs officer, close the bag up and put it back on your cart. There will be a lot of men in the baggage area outside trying to help with your bags. Please do not accept their help. They are very insistent, but a smile and firm ‘no thank you’ is all you need.

Keep your eyes on all of your personal belongings at all times. When out in public, never leave any of your bags unattended. Reggie and the mission staff will be waiting for us outside the airport and will drive us to the mission in Carrefour.

**Life at the Mission and at Bouvier**

The mission / church is located in Carrefour, about 45 minutes from the airport. Teams stay at the mission / church. Reggie will assign your room where you sleep.

**Water and Electricity**

Running water and electricity are both precious commodities in Haiti, so you should be careful to use both sparingly. Showers should be kept short at the mission. (There are no showers up the mountain in Bouvier so we take our own camp showers). There is a toilet at the mission (but only a pit-toilet at Bouvier). They have toilet paper.

You should NEVER drink, or even brush your teeth, with the tap water. Bottled water will be provided for you. There is no hot water in the showers.

**Living Quarters**

We have beds at the mission. You will need full bedding (blow-up or travel bedding) at Bouvier.

Be sure to keep all snacks in airtight containers or packaging so as not to attract unwanted visitors (cockroaches, mice etc.)

**Health and Safety**

Passports and any large quantities of money should be locked up always. Keep your valuables (cameras, phones, etc.) very close by or locked up. Do not show money in public.

Do not walk barefoot.

Wash hands or use hand sanitizer often.

Drink plenty of water.

Eat only the food provided for you by the mission – or bought in supermarket/restaurants that have been approved.

Never leave the mission compound without an approved escort, and telling someone where you are going. Do not attempt to exchange money for Haitian currency – Reggie will go with you and help you.

Please do not invite street children into the mission to eat or play. This is for your safety and out of respect to the staff that have belongings there. If someone is hungry ask your host and they will facilitate help. Please play with the children at Bouvier or the Love Orphanage as much as you wish!! They love it!

**Sunday Mornings** You are welcome to attend the local church service on Sundays, you do not have to if you do not wish to. In Bouvier, we have many opportunities after / before meals where we share and pray, all welcome again.  **THE ADDRESS IN CARREFOUR IS: Light for Living International Ministries**

**53, Waney 87, Carrefour, Port-au-Prince, Haiti (W.I)**

**(509)3783-6438 - (509)3443-1182 (Haiti)**

**(305)396-8466 (International) (314) 271-5356 (Fax)**

**liflim.haiti (Skype)**

**email: liflim.haiti@gmail.com / pastor@liflimhaiti.org**

**Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/liflimhaiti**

**Website: www.liflimhaiti.org**

**Donations and Charity**

It is such a privilege to journey with you to Haiti, to serve these gorgeous children and families in Carrefour and Bouvier, and bring hope and love and God’s blessings. Your time, effort, airfares paid, and your own personal donation for the land content is so much. Thank you! You are amazing! We are asking everyone in the team to contribute $1000 each. This covers cost of all our food and transport on the ground, as well as a major contribution to the cost of materials for the build. This even includes the hiring of donkeys and paying those that will carry our gear. Payment in instalments is ok. Any problems, please talk to us. We would never be able to do this without you! Thank you so much.

It is strongly advised that you do not give money, food, clothing, toys, etc. away without it first being discussed with Reggie. It is very likely that people will ask you to give them things. Make no promises to give or send them anything, because they will be counting on that more than you could imagine. Be aware that if you give your address or e-mail address to a Haitian, they will often see you as a benefactor and later ask you for financial support. It's often best to politely refuse. Do not give anyone your phone number.

**Communication**

While cell phone use and e-mail are common in Haiti, the technology is not as reliable as in Aus. There is no phone for visitors to use at the mission, only personal cell phones, and you should not ask to use them. Your own personal cell phone will probably not work in Haiti unless you have International Roaming (John and I do). We advise you to tell your loved ones they may not be able to talk with you on the phone while you are in Haiti – unless you have international roaming.

There is a computer with internet access at the mission and the team leader will send an e-mail home to team members' family members to let them know of their safe arrival. After that, team members are free to try using the computers, but again, the connection is not always reliable.

**mergencies**

If there is an emergency back home, and you don’t have international roaming, your family/friends may try contacting you through Cheryl’s mobile: +61408570690. Calls to my number should be made only in emergency situations. If there is an emergency situation in Haiti, every effort will be made to reach the nominated person in your family – as stated on your form.

**Earthquake While We Are There**

***During an Earthquake*** Drop, cover and Hold On. Minimize your movements to a few steps to a nearby safe place and if you are indoors, stay there until the shaking has stopped and you are sure exiting is safe.**If Indoors**1. DROP to the ground; take COVER by getting under a sturdy table or other piece of furniture; and HOLD ON until the shaking stops. If there isn’t a table or desk near you, cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building. 2.Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as lighting fixtures or furniture. 3.Stay in bed if you are there when the earthquake strikes. Hold on and protect your head with a pillow, unless you are under a heavy light fixture that could fall. In that case, move to the nearest safe place. 4. Do not use a doorway except if you know it is a strongly supported, load-bearing doorway and it is close to you. Many inside doorways are lightly constructed and do not offer protection.. 5.Stay inside until the shaking stops and it is safe to go outside. Do not exit a building during the shaking. Research has shown that most injuries occur when people inside buildings attempt to move to a different location inside the building or try to leave. **If Outdoors:** 1. Stay there. 2. Move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires. 3. Once in the open, stay there until the shaking stops. The greatest danger exists directly outside buildings, at exits and alongside exterior walls. Many of the thousands of fatalities from the 2010 Haiti earthquake occurred when people ran outside of buildings only to be killed by falling debris from collapsing walls. Ground movement during an earthquake is seldom the direct cause of death or injury. Most earthquake-related casualties result from collapsing walls, flying glass, and falling objects. **If in a Moving Vehicle** 1.Stop as quickly as safety permits and stay in the vehicle. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses, and overhead wires.2.Proceed cautiously once the earthquake has stopped. Avoid roads, bridges, or ramps that might have been damaged by the earthquake. **If Trapped Under Debris** 1.Do not light a match. 2. Do not move about or kick up dust. 3. Cover your mouth with clothing. 4. Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can locate you. Shout only as a last resort. Shouting can cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust. **Final Thoughts** Always try to be willing to give and take and to maintain the spirit of unity and harmony in the group. We are a team, and if anything at all, you feel, needs to be talked about, or altered – in what we are doing, or how we are going about it – please always share your thoughts with us all. We will need everyone’s wisdom on this.

**Personal Info. This Sheet is for Your Own Records**

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

 (as it appears on your passport)

Home Address:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

City:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ State:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ PC:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Mobile:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Passport #:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Travel Insurance Details: (Company, Policy Number, International Phone Contact): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Emergency Contact Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Relationship:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ E-mail:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any health concerns?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Blood Type: \_\_\_\_\_\_ Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

List any medications you are now taking: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**What to Bring**

 **Passport**

 **Two copies of the first two pages of your passport** (one for us, one for you)

 **Travel Insurance papers – two copies** (one for us, one for you)

 **ESTA papers – two copies** (one for us, one for you) – this is required for transit through America, and is filled in and paid for/ instantly attained online before you go. Go to the ESTA web page.

 **Clothing** (see guidelines on first page)

 **One nice outfit if you would like to attend their church** (see first page)

 **Shoes, trekking shoes/boots, and/or sandals** (comfortable for working and walking) **work boots** (optional)

 **Thongs** (to be worn in living quarters and showers)

 **Sleepwear**

 **Swimsuit**



 **Rainproof Jacket**

 **Sunglasses and/or hat**

 **Sunscreen\***

 **Insect repellent\*** (extra-strength with high levels of DEET is recommended)

 **Toiletries\***

 **Sunnies**

 **Personal medications** (prescriptions, pain reliever, Imodium)

 **Small torch (+ batteries)**

 **Phone and charger with adaptor for Haiti** (same as America)

 **Bath towel and washcloth**

 **Bedding** : blow-up mattress and sleeping bag

 **Small travel pillow and pillowcase**

 **Earplugs** (The nights can be pretty noisy.)

 **Snacks** (for your own personal use)

 **Camera and charger and adaptor**

 **Wet wipes and/or hand sanitizers**

 **Zip top bags – largest size** (optional – great for dirty clothes and dirty shoes in your bag)

 **Spending money**

**OPTIONAL**

 **Small tent** If you would like your own privacy up at Bouvier.

 **Laptop and charger and adaptor**  **Pepto-Bismol tablets** (buy these as you come through America-plan on taking 2 twice a day to help prevent traveller’s diarrhoea)  **Refillable water bottle** (we can buy these is Haiti)  **Books/ Bible/ Journal**

\*Keep in mind that the Transportation Security Administration (www.tsa.gov) allows you to carry up to three-ounce size containers of liquids, creams and gels that fit in ONE quart-size, clear plastic zip-top bag through security checkpoints. Larger size containers, as well as any aerosol cans, should be placed in a large zip-top bag in your checked luggage.

**Important Reminders**

* Pack your photo ID, medicine, prescription, cash, keys, jewellery, electronics, film and cameras in your carry-on baggage — not your checked baggage.
* If you are carrying gifts on board, make sure they are unwrapped for easier security clearance. All carry-on baggage is subject to inspection by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).