

Preparing for Medical Mission in Peru

General Information

Please read the following information and checklist carefully and consider the wisdom that has been gathered from years of traveling to Peru and abroad. Please be diligent concerning the health precautions but do not be so frightened that it causes you to say home or be ineffective while on your trip. If you are prepared physically and spiritually, you will be blessed!

You will be impressed with the warmth and generosity of the Peruvian people. You will also notice some cultural differences that may require some adjustment on the part of the Americans. Team members need to expect last minute changes to itineraries and greet each change in plans with grace.

About MEPI (Mission Evangelica Pentecostal Independente)

MEPI is a Bible School started by Bill and Carlene Pepper (Beth's parents). Its mission is to train pastors to bring the gospel to remote tribes in the jungle area of Peru. The school is in the city of Iquitos and is home base for many of the mission trips to the surrounding villages. The accommodations are dorm style with women upstairs and men downstairs. Laundry is available if needed. WiFi is available but the signal is often fickle and does not always support complicated online activity. The bible school is in session from mid-January through mid-March and again from mid-July through mid-September. If your trip falls during one of these seasons you will be able to interact with the students who come from all over the surrounding area. It is truly a blessing to hear the stories of sacrifice and dedication from these young pastors-in-training.

Costs

Vaccinations	This will vary by need and insurance coverage
Air Travel	\$800-1200
Room and Board	\$90/day
Project Funding	\$500/week
Spending money	personal discretion – but you will want to have some for blessing the people you meet and for souvenirs, etc

Preparing for your Trip

6-12 months prior to trip

Passport- If you do not have a current passport you will need to work on this first. Applications are available at <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/apply.html>

Be sure that the expiration date is at least 6 months prior to your scheduled return date.

Vaccinations – many of these should be covered by insurance as preventive care. Check your specific policy. Most are available at your usual healthcare provider, pharmacy or local health department

- Hepatitis A (2 vaccinations 6 months apart)
- Hepatitis B (3 vaccinations 0, 1 month, 6 months)
- Tdap booster (every 10 years)

Travel Clinics: Some of the more specialized vaccines are only available from travel clinics. You can contact them to determine what your needs are and what the projected cost will be

Sindicuse Travel Clinic at WMU <https://wmich.edu/healthcenter/clinic/travel>

Ottawa County Health Dept. Holland <http://www.miottawa.org/health/OCHD/Imms.htm#travel>

Vaccines:

- Typhoid (oral live virus every 5 years, injection inactive virus every 2 years)
- Yellow Fever (one time)
- Malaria prevention: Malarone, doxycycline (your usual health care provider can prescribe these)
- Prescription traveler's diarrhea medication
- You will need all childhood immunizations per your provider
- Please note these are **CURRENT** recommendations, check with your provider

8-12 weeks prior to trip

Plane Tickets: Start searching for best prices. Most flights will originate from Chicago or Detroit. You will likely be flying through Miami or Dallas into Lima. From Lima, you will fly directly to Iquitos. Travel usually involves an overnight flight.

4-6 weeks prior to trip

Credit Cards: VISA is accepted in some places in the city.

Cash: Bring fresh, new, unmarked \$100 bills only. It will be exchanged for local soles. The newer the bill looks the better the exchange rate.

Phone: Check with your carrier for options to use your phone internationally. Both AT+T and Verizon have international plans.

Travel Insurance: Faith Ventures is an inexpensive way to have some peace of mind in the event of a medical emergency. Their coverage includes emergency care and transportation home. Cost is around \$50 and is good for one year.

Spiritual Preparation

Prayer: Begin now to prepare your hearts for serving the children of God in Peru. The culture may be very different but the spiritual need is the same – to know the love of God. You will be challenged by the conditions, the culture, and the weather so be prepared with an extra supply of grace and patience.

- Message:** Begin to prepare your testimony. You will be asked to share: either one on one, small group, or in a church. We will work with your comfort level on how you share. You will need approx. 5-10 minutes, including translation time.
- Journal:** You will definitely want to bring a journal to record your feelings and experiences.

Getting Ready to GO!

Accommodations: Most teams are based at MEPI in Iquitos. Bible school is in session from mid-January through mid-March and mid-July through mid-September. Team members have the opportunity to meet the students and staff, get to know them, encourage them and be blessed by them.

All food is prepared with “safe” water. Bottled water is available at the bible college and on all trips.

MEPI has dorm-style rooms with bunk beds. Men’s quarters are on the first floor and women’s dorm is upstairs. WIFI is occasionally available but it can be fickle, do not depend on it.

Money: Cash for project money, room and board and personal spending money should be in \$100 bills. The bills should be clean without any tears or marks. This can greatly impact the exchange rate. The exchange will take place at MEPI shortly after arrival. Cash is needed outside the city. You will want to carry your cash in a money pouch. This is a pouch that fits under your clothing. They can be purchased at many local stores.

Credit card can be used in the city of Iquitos. VISA is best.

Important Items to carry for travel:

- Passport- Must have this on your person at all times
- Also bring a Photo Copy of Passport
- Plane tickets
- Address for MEPI: Academia Biblical Peruana; Avenida La Marina 2218, Iquitos, Peru

Packing List:

Miscellaneous:

- Bible
- Notebook/Journal/Pens/Pencils
- English-Spanish Dictionary or translation app
- Backpack
- Money Pouch
- Umbrella
- 110 to 220 volt converter
- Small flashlight and batteries

- Bring a YETI, Hydro Flask, (This keeps beverages cold all day) or a personal refillable water bottle
- Battery operated fan/batteries
- Cooling towel

Clothing:

Women: summer clothing, capri pants, skirts, sun dresses, blouses, shirts (no shorts for church services)

Men: long shorts, t-shirts, short sleeve buttoned shirts, (pants, belt, collared shirt for church services)

Laundry facilities are available at MEPI

- Trail running or light hiking shoes for traction on muddy trails
- Shower sandals
- Rubber boots
- Light rain gear
- Hat
- Sun glasses

Personal care:

- Sunscreen
- Chapstick
- Bug Spray
- Lice Protecting Shampoo (Lice Shield) or like brand
- Wet wipes/hand sanitizer
- Toilet paper (portable)
- Personal toiletries (deodorant, toothbrush, paste, body wash)
- Band-Aids, antibiotic ointment, hydrocortisone cream

Medications:

- All personal medications
- Allergy meds (Benadryl, Claritin, Zyrtec, Allegra)
- Ibuprofen, acetaminophen, antacids
- Imodium (loperamide)

Snacks and Food

- Special dietary needs, please bring snacks to accommodate your special dietary needs, MEPI cooks will do their best to accommodate that.
- Personal snacks (dried fruit, nuts, jerky, protein bars, etc)
- Gatorade packets (or similar) to add to bottled water

ITEMS TO GIVE A WAY IN PERU: (New or gently used)

- Baseball caps
- Jewelry
- Scarves
- Beanie babies
- Stuff animals
- Used clothes and shoes (Small to Medium) (All age groups)
- Dum Dums (big bags – suckers)
- Jolly ranchers
- Eye glass cheaters
- Examples of American Snacks they like: Pringles, Cheetos – but bring anything
- Used tablets, cell phones, or lap tops – Please clear of info and unlock
- Fingernail polish
- Makeup
- Tylenol, advil, ibuprofen, cold medicine
- Essential oils
- Any used prescription eye glasses
- Sunglasses