

GROUP TRIP GUIDE

CASAS

P O R C R I S T O

Dominican

For questions, please contact our team coordinators at questions@casaporcristo.org or 915.778.0046.

QUICK GUIDE

3-6 Months Prior

- Apply for passports.
- Read this Dominican Republic Group Trip Guide.

30 Days Prior

- Check with your team leader to find out your missionary, lodging, and family information.
- Pray for the recipient family.
- Submit your disclosure of risk form to your team leader.
- Submit your medical release form to your team leader.
- Submit any necessary information to your team leader so he/she can purchase your travel insurance.

PACKING LIST

- Travel documents (passports, etc.)
- Tool belt or nail apron
- Work gloves
- Protective eye wear
- Long work pants (no capri pants or shorts on work site)
- Work shirts (t-shirts)
- Sturdy closed-toed shoes or boots & flip flops
- Hat or bandana
- Insulated water container
- Sun block
- Chap stick
- Bible
- Soap, shampoo, & other toiletries
- Bathing suit (one-piece for ladies) & beach towel
- Insect repellent
- Hand wipes
- Feminine hygiene products (tampons are difficult to find)

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hammer (no smaller than 16 oz.) | REQUIRED TOOLS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carpenter's pencil | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25 ft. tape measure | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utility knife | |

- *Earplugs (for sleeping)
- *Flashlight
- *Wet wipes
- *Knee pads

→ **These items
aren't mandatory
but can be helpful.*

DO NOT PACK

- Tank tops or sleeveless shirts
- Torn pants
- Hair dryers, curling irons, and hair straighteners
- Shorts shorter than knee length (no cheerleading/running shorts)
- Tight fitting clothing (yoga/spandex pants)

30 DAYS PRIOR

Disclosure of Risk & Medical Release Form

You must fill out a Disclosure of Risk & Medical Release Form before you enter into the Dominican Republic. We now collect this form digitally. You will receive an email with instructions on how to fill out this form. Your form is due 30 days prior to your trip.

Food Allergies

Submit your food allergies to your team leader.

Missionary, Lodging, & Family Information

Check with your team leader to access a trip profile page link containing information about your assigned missionary, Dominican lodging, and family. We will send it to your team leader no later than 30 days prior to your trip.

Travel Insurance

Your team leader will purchase travel insurance (see EMERGENCIES section for details) on your behalf and will print the ID cards to keep with you while traveling. Submit any necessary information to the team leader from your church/organization.

TRIP DETAILS

Arrival & Departure

Your Casas missionary will contact your team leader before your trip to introduce themselves, go over expectations for the week, and talk about your airport pickup. All team members must be present at the time the team is scheduled to be picked up from the airport. We will pick you up from the airport at your scheduled arrival time and drop you off in time for your departing flight.

Additional Ministry Opportunities

Although our main goal is to serve God through building homes for families, we welcome you to participate in additional evangelistic projects. See our [Spiritual Outreach Guide](#) or contact Joshua Crabbs, Dominican Republic Field Director, for assistance at 915.778.0046 ext. 70 or jcrabbs@casasporcristo.org.

Animals

It is important that you do not feed or touch the animals in the Dominican Republic. Many of them carry diseases and have the potential to bite or scratch.

Attire

Please bring clothing that is modest and appropriate. The following clothing items are prohibited: tank tops, cutoff shirts, torn pants, shorts shorter than knee-length (no cheerleading/running shorts), tight-fitting clothing (no leggings or yoga/spandex pants). On the work site, everyone must wear long pants and closed-toed shoes for protection. You may wear modest, knee-length shorts whenever you are not on the work site.

Cell Phones

Talk with your carrier to see if you will have service in the Dominican Republic and what charges you may incur. Your Casas missionary will have a cell phone with service in the Dominican Republic in case of emergencies.

Cultural Sensitivity

Casas por Cristo exists to open the door for local pastors and churches to share the love of Jesus Christ by serving. The Dominican church culture is generally more conservative than yours. Please be sensitive to the desires of the pastors you are here to serve. Our pastors have asked that our teams refrain from purchasing or consuming alcohol and tobacco, dress modestly, and respect the facilities. Ask your Casas missionary for more specific information about your assigned pastor/church.

Dedication

Plan with your team how you would like to dedicate this home. We will provide a Spanish Bible, keys, and a plaque. This will be a great time for your team, the sponsoring pastor, and the recipient family to speak with one another, present gifts, and pray together. Check out our [dedication sample outline](#) for details.

Devotions

Reflecting on each day is an important part of your experience. We have a [devotional guide](#) available online to print for your trip. Plan a time each day for a group devotional and reflection.

Documentation

Passports are REQUIRED for all team members! If you plan to travel with minors without parents, please see the US Customs & Border Protection's [recommended documentation](#).

Excursions

Check out our [Dominican Republic Excursions](#) to view a list of excursion options. Please let us know what you'd like to do.

Flights

You are responsible for purchasing airfare for your team. Secure your flights to and from Cibao International Airport in Santiago. **It is mandatory that you arrive and depart as a team** as we will only make one trip to the airport to pick you up and drop you off. You should arrive Sunday between 7:00 am and 10:00 pm. Book departing flights the following Friday or Saturday between 9:00 am and midnight. As soon as you have made your flight arrangements, please submit your itinerary to our team coordinators. If you fly into or out of Puerto Plata, you will be charged an additional \$200 per bus (30 people per bus) per trip (\$400 round trip per bus). If you fly into or out of Santo Domingo, you will be charged an additional \$250 per bus per trip (\$500 round trip per bus).

Gifts for the Recipient Family

If you would like to buy a gift for the family, we recommend food or the following gifts, which can be purchased in our [online store](#): dining room set, pedestal fan, stove, full-size bed, and twin-size bunk bed. While toys for children are very nice (crayons, bubbles, books, etc.), most families also have more pressing practical needs. **We have been asked by our Pastors Committee in the Dominican Republic NOT to give monetary donations to the families. Please respect this request.** If you have questions about other items that may be appropriate gifts, call us. We would be happy to advise you. We have found that the best time to give gifts to the family is during the dedication.

*Dominican customs agents look for illegal importation of goods. Please pack your gifts for the family with your personal belongings, in a suitcase or travel bag, not in trash bags or store bags.

Immigration & Entry Forms


DIRECCION GENERAL DE MIGRACION
 TARJETA INTERNACIONAL DE EMBARQUE • DESEMBARQUE
 INTERNATIONAL EMBARKATION • DISEMBARKATION CARD

SOLO PARA VISITANTES -NO RESIDENTES- / ONLY FOR VISITORS

LLENSE FIRMEMENTE EN LETRAS DE MOLDE / PLEASE PRINT FIRMLY

Nombre Completo: Smith
 Full Name: _____ Apellidos / Surname: John
 Nombres / Names: _____

Fecha de Nacimiento: 31 / 10 / 79 M F
Day / Day Mes / Month Año / Year Sexo / Sex

Lugar de Nacimiento: USA
 Place of Birth: _____

Nacionalidad / Nationality: USA
 Ocupación: Pastor
 Occupation: _____

Estado Civil / Marital Status: Soltero(a) Single Casado(a) Married

Dirección Permanente: 1234 South St.
 Permanent Address: _____ Calle y No. / Street and No.

St. Louis MO USA
City / City Estado / State País / Country

Zona Postal / Zip Code: 63000

Dirección en Rep. Dom.: Calle Las Mercedes #48
 Dominican Republic Address: _____ Calle y No. / Street and No.

Villa Bisono, Navarrete, Santiago

Puerto de Embarque: STL Vuelo No: AA123
 Port of Embarkation: _____ Flight No.

Puerto de Desembarque: STI Vuelo No: AA2365
 Port of Disembarkation: _____ Flight No.

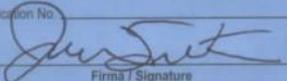
Motivo de Viaje / Purpose of Trip:

Recreo / Pleasure: Negocios / Business: Convención-Conferencia / Convention-Conference: Estudio / Study:

Visita Amigos y/o Parientes / Friends and Parents Visit: Otros, Especifique / Other, Specify:

Estadía / Stay, Tiempo / Duration of Stay: 7 days

No. Pasaporte: 123456789
 Passport No. _____

Cédula No./Identification No.: _____

 Firma / Signature: _____

(SOLO PARA USO OFICIAL / ONLY FOR OFFICIAL USE)

OBSERVACIONES: _____

Each **individual** must complete this form and present it to the customs desk agent along with your passport.

Immunizations

We do not require any immunizations; however, we do recommend current Tetanus and Hepatitis A & B immunizations. You may check the CDC website to see what they recommend for travel to the Dominican Republic.

Lost Baggage

If your baggage does not arrive, please see the airline and give them the following information.

- Dominican staff phones: (809) 543-3235 - Josh Crabbs, (809) 284-1442 - Argenis Disla, (809) 223-7816 - Ian Dugger, and (829) 657-8888 – Nan Hammel.

Meals, Transportation, & Lodging

Casas por Cristo will arrange your [meals](#), transportation, and lodging in the Dominican. The cost will be reflected on your team's invoice to be paid with the rest of your final trip fees 30 days prior to your arrival (15 person minimum). The cost can also be found on our website. There is an additional fee if you are staying longer than the typical 6 or 7-day trip.

Merchandise

You may purchase Casas souvenirs (t-shirts, hats, mugs, etc.) from the Casas store located at our office in Navarrete. You can also shop online on our [website](#). US dollars, Dominican pesos, and credit cards are accepted.

Money

In the Dominican Republic, the currency is called the Dominican peso. The US dollar is **not** accepted in country. Exchange your money state side at a bank before your trip or at the airport. Your Casas missionary will also exchange money for you at the beginning of the week.

Personal Belongings

Don't bring anything to the Dominican Republic that you would be heartbroken to leave without. We recommend keeping anything of value with you at all times (money, passports, jewelry, etc.).

Project Time Frame

You should allow **three to four full days** for the project. Every work site has unique challenges, so it is important that you allow yourself enough time to finish the project.

Recipient Family

We do not require that the recipient families participate in the building process

beyond having the site prepared. However, many families are eager to help but are shy and feel like they would be in the way. Make every effort to include your family in the building process. Some families will prepare meals for teams to show their gratitude. These families make extra efforts to ensure that the food is safely prepared.

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program

We recommend that your team leader enroll your group for free at [STEP.state.gov](https://step.state.gov) to receive travel and security updates about your destination, and to help the US government reach you in an emergency.

Spanish

The primary language spoken in the Dominican Republic is Spanish. We encourage you to learn some Spanish phrases beforehand to be able to speak with your family.

Support Your Missionary

In order to keep the cost of our mission trips low, our missionaries raise their own salaries to serve at the ministry. Each missionary depends on gifts from churches and dedicated individuals to cover their salaries. Changing a family's life this week could not happen without your effort and sacrifice. It also could not happen without your financial support of our missionaries. At the end of your trip, encourage your missionary by giving a donation and consider joining their monthly support team.

Team Members

For the best building experience, we recommend 15 to 25 people. Visit our website for the [team composition guide](#) to determine the optimal number of people for your trip. The work will include pouring concrete, building walls, and installing metal roofing, electrical, siding, windows, and a door. Each of these tasks has at least one element that everyone can perform. Skilled laborers are not needed.

Team Shirts

Team shirts feature your team's name alongside Casas' unique design and include both the year and location you serve in. 15 shirt minimum with FREE SHIPPING to the US (\$20 shipping to Canada). No proof provided. The team name you registered with will be used for print unless otherwise specified. Purchase your team shirts in our [online store](#).

Time Zone

The Dominican Republic is in the Atlantic Time Zone but does not follow daylight savings time. When establishing meeting times, we will refer to this time zone.

Water

Tap water in the Dominican Republic is not purified to American standards. To avoid getting sick, please drink only the purified water that Casas will provide for you at your work site and lodging.

Weather

The weather in the Dominican Republic varies from 70 to 100 degrees year-round. Rain is a common occurrence, and a light rain jacket is recommended.

Your Casas Missionary

One of our trained missionaries will be with you 100% of the time you are in the Dominican Republic to lead and live with your team for the week. He or she will teach, supervise, and ensure safety and quality. We take care of the details so that you can focus on building and serving. Most of our missionaries have a basic understanding but are not fluent in Spanish. Our missionaries are here for you and your group and will work to accommodate your requests. Read a brief bio about your missionary on the [missionaries page](#) of our website.

EMERGENCIES

Casas por Cristo Office Number: 915.778.0046

Please leave our office number 915.778.0046 with your families and friends at home in case of an emergency where they would need to contact you while you're out of the country. Even if it is after business hours, they will reach one of our missionaries who will assist in relaying their message and provide any necessary follow-up.

Emergency Number In The Dominican: 911

If an ambulance is needed in the Dominican, dial 911.

First Aid Kit

Your Casas missionary will have a basic first aid kit. We recommend that you also bring a first aid kit to treat minor medical incidents throughout your trip.

Medical Treatment

In case of a medical emergency your Casas missionary will evaluate the severity of the injury. For minor medical issues (dehydration, minor scrapes and cuts, food-related sickness, etc.), the team member will see the local doctor, Dra. Petra Pena, in Navarrete, Villa Bisono, Santiago, Dominican Republic at Centro Medico (GPS: 19.556808, -70.863013). For more serious injuries, the Casas missionary will call the international insurance your team has purchased and take the injured person to Santiago De Los Caballeros to receive treatment at a larger medical facility, HOMS (GPS: 19.436122, -70.661062) or Union Medica (GPS: 19.459283, -70.680169). The team member will be accompanied by a Dominican field missionary while another Casas missionary attends to the needs of your team. The injured team member will be sent back to the US as early possible.

Travel Insurance

Your team leader must purchase travel insurance for you and your teammates. We require the [International Assurance Travel Medical Plan](#) through Insurance Services of America and Azimuth Risk Solutions. We offer an [Explanation of Travel Insurance Coverage](#). Prior to your departure, your team leader will print your travel insurance ID cards to keep with you while you travel in case of an emergency. If you need assistance from the insurance company, please contact Adam Bates, Vice President, at 800.647.4589 or adam@missionaryhealth.net.

Safety

Your team's safety is of the utmost importance to us. We have been working diligently since our inception in 1993 to ensure that we have a number of fail-safes in place regarding personal safety and emergency situations. Read our [Risk Plan](#) for more details.

US Embassy Santo Domingo

Sometimes, in spite of careful planning, things still go wrong during a trip abroad. Contact the US Embassy for help with emergencies.

US Embassy Santo Domingo

Av. Republica de Colombia #57

Santo Domingo

Dominican Republic

Phone: (809) 567-7775

DOMINICAN LODGING

You will stay at one of our facilities for the duration of your trip. We will email your team leader the link to your trip profile page containing details about your lodging no later than 30 days prior to your arrival.

Bathrooms

All toilet paper should be thrown away in the trash can. Do not place it in the toilet.

Showers

All of our accommodations have a shower. However, many of them do not have hot water. We ask you to take military showers: get wet, turn the water off, soap up, and then turn the water back on to rinse off.

Sleeping

Sleeping arrangements vary by facility. A bed, pillow, sheets, blanket, and towels will be provided.

Typical Schedule

Day 1

Arrive at the airport, exit customs, and walk outside to meet your Casas representative and get on the bus. Arrive at your accommodations and enjoy a simple sack lunch/dinner in case you haven't eaten prior. A short orientation will be given

Days 2 - 4

- 7:00am – Breakfast
- 7:30am – Head to worksite
- 4:00pm – Return from work
- 6:00pm – Dinner
- 10:00pm – Lights out

Day 5

Choose one excursion option for your team. You might be responsible for purchasing your lunch. Leave after breakfast, return late afternoon, and have dinner at your accommodations.

Day 6

Early morning: go to the airport. Time will be determined by your flight back to the U.S. **If doing the alternate 7-day schedule, you will arrive day 1, workdays 2-5, go to the beach day 6, and depart day 7*

WORK SITE

Construction Process

The house you will be building will have a concrete foundation followed by 2"x4" framed walls. The outside of the house will be covered with wooden lap siding. The inside of the house will have electricity, and 1/4" plywood wall paneling. The roof is framed with 2"x6"s then covered with corrugated metal roofing.

Preparedness

Be sure to arrive at the work site with all of the equipment that you will need. You will need to take a positive attitude, sunscreen, water bottle, and tools.

Stay in a Group

Your team leader and your Casas missionaries should know where you are at all times. Your team should stay together as a group at all times.

Tools

Casas por Cristo provides the majority of the tools you will need, **but you do need to bring the required tools on the packing list.** You and your team are responsible for the tools we provide. If tools break due to normal wear and tear, we will replace them. However, if they are lost or neglected, your team will be responsible for the replacement costs. The Casas toolkit is equipped with the following power tools: cement mixer, drill, power saw, and generator, if necessary. You are welcome to bring any additional tools or nail guns. We have found that extra battery-powered tools are more helpful than corded tools. Your team may have to load and unload all of the tools multiple times every day.

Work Site Bathroom

There is a bathroom facility of some sort at each work site. However, some may be more primitive than others.

Work Site Safety

The two most frequent work site injuries are debris in an eye and dehydration. If your Casas missionary asks you to do something that you are unable to perform, please ask him or her to reassign you to another task. Please take the following precautions.

- Wear eye protection at the work site.
- Drink one gallon of water per day.
- Wear sunscreen or protective clothing to prevent sunburn.

C A S A S *Por* C R I S T O

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