

overseas travel with crs

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



HOW DO I FIND INFORMATION ON SAFETY AND HEALTH CONDITIONS ABROAD?

The countries available to visit are preselected with safety first in mind. Catholic Relief Services has a very robust security team in the United States that monitors conditions in the countries we serve. During your pre-trip communications, we will share vaccine requirements and any health concerns you need to be aware of in the country you are visiting. If at any point in time, our security team in the United States or overseas feels conditions are not safe, we will cancel or postpone the trip. In the event something should happen, both CRS, the U.S. Embassy and local authorities will provide layers of safety and security. Your safety is our top priority.

CAN YOU ACCOMMODATE TRAVELERS WITH SPECIAL DIETS?

We can usually accommodate special dietary requirements, but be sure to note this on your traveler information form so we can plan for your meals. In most cases, the food you eat will be familiar to you. A cultural experience you may treasure—and is a fun part of the trip—is sampling local cuisine. CRS chooses where you eat to ensure quality and sanitary conditions are met. Water will also be provided by our staff in locations where drinking water isn't safe to consume.

CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS THAT I CAN EXPECT?

CRS books comfortable, well-located accommodations with private bathroom facilities. We aim for 3- or 4-star hotels according to Western standards. Any exceptions to this rule will be communicated to you individually.

WILL MY HEALTH INSURANCE COVER ME WHILE ABROAD? IF NOT, HOW DO I GET HEALTH INSURANCE?

Don't assume that your insurance will cover you while abroad. We recommend that you check with your policy provider to see what they will and won't cover. In addition, CRS will purchase a policy for medical evacuation

insurance on your behalf from SOS International. In case of emergency, this policy will guarantee that you will be evacuated for medical reasons to obtain the care that you need. The average price for these policies range from \$60-\$180 per person and the cost will be added to your post-trip invoice.

WILL WE BE TRAVELING IN THE CAR FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME?

One of the best parts of traveling with CRS is the rare opportunity to see diverse parts of a country both within the capital city and in more rural areas. There are some itineraries that include daily drives of 3 to 4 hours, but stops will be included where available to allow for breaks. These drives are a true CRS experience and offer a chance to bond with the staff you are traveling with as well as the CRS guests in your group. Not all trips include these long drives; it depends upon the country you are visiting.

WHAT IS A TYPICAL DAY LIKE WHILE TRAVELING WITH CRS?

Every trip itinerary is unique to the country and program you are visiting. Our staff will show you as much CRS programming as we can but will also include the chance to meet with local government officials and Church partners. You will also be given the opportunity to have Mass where you are visiting. Often, the CRS programming is in rural areas and may require overnight stays in more remote settings, but will still meet our basic accommodation standards. While visiting CRS programs, you will have the fantastic opportunity to meet with CRS staff, as well as beneficiaries and CRS partners. This is a highlight for many travelers and a unique experience when traveling with CRS.

WHAT CLOTHING SHOULD I PACK FOR MY TRIP?

We always recommend packing as light as possible; however, the specific requirements for your trip will vary widely depending on where and when you are traveling. The comprehensive briefing book that you will receive prior to departure will include a suggested packing list. The packing list is trip specific and based upon the experience of our country staff. In addition, this topic will be discussed

on a group call prior to the trip so you can speak directly with our staff overseas regarding what you'll need.

ARE YOU INCLUSIVE OF TRAVELERS WITH DISABILITIES OR PHYSICAL AILMENTS?

Yes, absolutely anyone is welcome to travel with CRS. Often, meeting with the people we serve will take place in rural areas where walking is necessary, or there can be long days that are physically taxing. We ask that you please include on your traveler information form any physical conditions that may affect your ability to get around. This will help our overseas staff so we are able to address any conditions that may require special attention.

DO WE ALL MEET AT THE SAME AIRPORT TO TRAVEL TO OUR CRS DESTINATION?

Our main goal is to make sure you have the best experience while traveling with CRS. Therefore, we do not want to add unnecessary stops at airports that may not logistically make sense for you. There are often only a select number of flights arriving in a country, so you may be on the same flight as other travelers when connecting through an international city. We do strive to arrange arrivals in groups so that CRS staff responsible for transportation can consolidate airport runs. The flights you are on are ultimately your choice, and we will accommodate your schedule as needed.

SAMPLE TRIP ITINERARY*

- DAY 1:** Arrive in country in capital city.
Welcome dinner for travelers who have arrived.

- DAY 2:** Visit with CRS staff in local CRS office.
Possible meetings with Church partners and government officials.

- DAY 3-4:** Visit CRS programs in the field.
Opportunities to meet with beneficiaries, local staff, dignitaries and Church partners.

- DAY 5:** Possible tourist excursion to experience the country or region.
Travel back to capital city for a farewell dinner.

- DAY 6:** Departures back to the United States.

*Please note that this is just a model of what most trip itineraries will look like. There are circumstances where day(s) in the field are either longer or shorter and will be adjusted depending on the programming available in the country you're visiting. There is travel sometimes by car for 3 to 4 hours and occasionally in-country flights.

If any physically challenging activities or circumstances will be present during your trip, the coordinator will share this in advance. This will give you the opportunity to evaluate your ability to participate. Your trip coordinator is available to speak with you about any concerns you may have.

CRS is fortunate to have several travelers willing to share their experiences about traveling with CRS. Please visit crs.org/travel to read more about their personal stories and the impact these trips have had on them.