CFCA AWARENESS TRIPS

trip information

*The following information is for **2014** trips. The dates and trips to specific countries change from year to year depending on interest, the political situation within the countries and the ability of CFCA projects to host an awareness trip. A detailed schedule and additional information will be sent one to two weeks prior to departure in the pre-departure packet.*

COLOMBIA

Trip Dates: May 24-31, 2014 (Antioquia, Cali, Cartagena and Quibdo projects)
June 15-21, 2014 (Bogota project)

Trip Size: 12-25 participants

Register for the trip that corresponds with your sponsored friend's project. Please register by 60 days in advance to reserve your spot. If you still wish to register after this date, contact a CFCA trip coordinator regarding availability.

Trip Fee: $600

Food, lodging and in-country ground transportation are included. Airfare is **not** included.

On your trip to Colombia you may do some or all of the following activities:

- Be welcomed by the local CFCA staff who will be your hosts for the week, ensuring that your visit is enjoyable
- Spend time with your sponsored friend and possibly the family
- Visit the homes and communities of CFCA sponsored friends and their families, where you will learn about their joys and challenges
- Visit the cosmopolitan mountain city of Bogota, or visit Medellin, known as Colombia's business center, and the colonial city of Cartagena.

Entry and Exit Requirements

A passport valid for at least six months beyond the end of your intended stay is required to enter Colombia. U.S. citizens do not need a visa for a stay of 60 days or less. When departing from Medellín on a domestic flight, an exit tax of $5 must be paid, in cash. When departing from Cartagena on an international flight, an exit tax of $36 or more may be required. Be prepared to pay it in cash. All or a portion of this exit fee may be included in your airline ticket. *All fees are subject to change.* While in Colombia, travelers should carry their passport or a photocopy of it at all times. Participants who will be traveling with a minor should contact a CFCA trip coordinator for additional information.

Airport and Travel Arrangements

Make your airline arrangements only after your registration is confirmed and you receive the CFCA trip coordinator's written instructions for scheduling your flight. In the meantime, we strongly encourage you to research airfares with a travel agent, the airlines or via the Internet. The Florida-based agency, Vista Travel, is familiar with our programs and schedules and may be contacted regarding airfare at (800) 537-5066.

The first and last dates listed for each trip are the days that travelers will depart from and arrive back in the U.S. Participants of the Bogota trip will fly into and depart from Eldorado Airport (BOG) in Bogota. CFCA staff will meet all travelers at the Bogota airport who arrive by 9 p.m. on June 15. Depart from Bogota on June 21.

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Airport and Travel Arrangements (Cont'd.)

Participants on the May 24-31 trip will first fly into **Jose Maria Cordova Airport (MDE)** in Medellín, then travel to Cartagena midweek. Because of the distance from the airport and safety reasons in Medellín, participants must arrange to arrive in Medellín before 7 p.m. on May 24. **The CFCA staff will meet all travelers at the Medellin airport who arrive on May 24 before 7 p.m. Do not accept offers of transportation from anyone other than our CFCA team.** Once confirmed, participants must book a flight from Medellín to **Rafael Nunez Airport (CTG)** in Cartagena as instructed in the confirmation letter. After spending time in Cartagena, the group will depart from Cartagena for the U.S. on May 31.

Accommodations and Food

All trip participants will stay in simple accommodations, typically hotels. Married couples and families will have private rooms. Individual participants will be assigned a roommate. Running water for showers is readily available, but it may not be heated. The project will provide bottled water. **Tap water is unsafe for drinking.** Alcoholic beverages are not included in trip fee.

Participants will eat simple meals that reflect the local cuisine. All food is prepared with purified water. All meals will be eaten with the group. Do not purchase food from street vendors. Meals are often served at a later hour than most Americans are accustomed to eating. We recommend bringing snacks such as dried fruit and nut mixes, raisins, granola bars, etc., as you may want something to eat between scheduled meals.

No electrical converter or adapter is necessary. The electrical current in Colombia is within the same range as in the United States, and the shape of the plugs is the same. Diagrams of the outlets are available at www.electricaloutlet.org.

Climate

Weather in Colombia is relatively consistent throughout the year. Normal temperatures include lows in the 40s with highs in the upper 70s, although this may vary according to the altitude. Bogota's altitude is 8,000 feet above sea level. It can be very cool there, with an average temperature of 57 degrees. Medellin's altitude is 5,000 feet above sea level and has an average temperature of 75 degrees. There is significant rainfall throughout the year. Be prepared with a raincoat. Cartagena is located on the Caribbean coast and is very hot and humid. Participants should be aware that minor tremors may occur. The group travels along winding, mountainous roads, which can cause motion sickness.

Health/Medical Preparations

Contact your medical doctor or local health department for immunization recommendations based on your health history. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/travel has country specific recommendations regarding immunizations. You may also contact them by phone at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). CFCA staff members are not qualified to offer advice on immunizations.

You should also consult with your medical insurance company prior to traveling to confirm whether your policy applies in a foreign country. **If your policy does not cover emergency expenses such as medical evacuation, we urge you to consider the purchase of temporary travel insurance.** Many insurance plans, including Medicare, do not cover treatment outside of the U.S. You may find further information on travel insurance through a travel agent or through research on the Internet.

Because this trip travels to high altitudes, travelers should be aware of the risks of altitude illness and how altitude can affect certain medical conditions.

Currency Exchange and Handling

The local currency is the Colombian **peso** (COP). Your lodging, food and in-country ground transportation are included in the trip fee. You should bring additional money for the purchase of snacks and souvenirs, and to cover entry/exit fees. You should not carry bills in denominations greater than $20 because they may be difficult for local banks or vendors to exchange. Do not bring torn or severely worn currency. You can bring U.S. dollars into the country. You will be provided with an opportunity to exchange money upon arrival either at the airport, at the lodging, or another method. Traveler's checks are not recommended, and ATMs are not readily available.