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.*

EL SALVADOR

Trip Dates: July 12-19, 2014
Oct. 4-11 2014

Trip Size: 12-30 participants

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: $500

Includes food, lodging and in-country transportation. Airfare is **not** included.

On your trip to El Salvador, 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
- Observe the beauty of volcanoes and Salvadoran landscapes
- Visit the Spanish colonial town of Ataco and a pilgrimage site honoring Salvadoran figures such as Monsignor Oscar Romero and Father Rutilio Grande

Entry and Exit Requirements

A passport valid for at least six months beyond the end of your intended stay is required to enter El Salvador. U.S. citizens do not need a visa for a stay of 90 days or less. **A one-entry tourist card is required to enter El Salvador. The tourist card may be obtained from immigration officials for a $10 fee upon arrival in the country. An exit tax of $32** must be paid in U.S. dollars when departing El Salvador from Comalapa International Airport. This departure tax may be included in the price of the airline ticket. Check with your travel agent or airline. *All fees are subject to change.* While in El Salvador, 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, may also be contacted regarding airfare at (800) 537-5066. This agency is familiar with our programs and schedules.

Trip participants should arrive in **San Salvador at the Comalapa International Airport (SAL)** by 5 p.m. on the first date listed for the trip and should depart from the same airport on the last day listed. **The CFCA staff will meet all travelers at the airport who arrive on the scheduled arrival day. Do not accept offers for transportation from anyone other than the CFCA team.**

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Accommodations and Food

Trip participants will stay the last night in a hotel near the airport. The group will spend the remainder of the week at the CFCA Santa Ana Center. Married couples will stay in private rooms. Other participants will stay in dormitories. There is no air conditioning but there are screened windows in the rooms. Internet access is available. Pillows, sheets, blankets and bath towels are provided. Travelers should bring their own toiletries and alarm clock. Running water for showers is readily available. **Tap water is unsafe for drinking.** Instead, the project will provide bottled water. Alcoholic beverages are not included in the 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 converter or adapter is necessary. The electrical current and the shape of the outlets in El Salvador are the same as in the U.S. Diagrams of the outlets are available at www.electricaloutlet.org.

Climate

El Salvador has a rainy season that lasts from May through October. Rain showers are usually heavy, but brief. Daytime temperatures in the lower elevations are usually between 80 and 95 degrees with overnight lows around 65 degrees. You should bring a raincoat and sun protection. Participants should be aware that minor tremors do occur. The group also 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). According to the CDC, the regions of El Salvador with malaria include areas that will be visited by our trips. CFCA staff members are not qualified to offer advice on immunizations.

You should 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 a 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.

Currency Exchange and Handling

In El Salvador, the currency used is the **U.S. dollar**. It is not necessary to exchange money. Your lodging, food and in-country 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. Traveler's checks are not recommended, and ATMs are not readily available.