



Dominican Republic Country Packet

Updated February 2017



Maranatha in the Dominican Republic

In 1979, a hurricane devastated the Dominican Republic, destroying many structures. The next year, volunteers with Maranatha helped to rebuild homes in the country, kicking off the start of a long history between Maranatha and the Dominican Republic. In 1992, Maranatha returned to the Dominican Republic for a major effort called Santo Domingo '92, a project to build 25 Seventh-day Adventist churches in just 90 days. More than 1,200 volunteers participated, and the effort revolutionized Maranatha's approach to project construction. Santo Domingo '92 also changed the Dominican Republic; the new church buildings ignited remarkable growth in the country's Adventist membership.

By 2002, the Adventist leadership in the Dominican Republic asked Maranatha to return for yet another church construction effort. This time, Maranatha built 50 churches. Many of them were to serve daughter congregations of churches built ten years earlier.

Volunteer Opportunities

In the Dominican Republic, Maranatha has already completed many churches throughout the country as well as a large Education and Evangelism Center in Barahona, Dominican Republic. Future Maranatha projects will focus on One-Day Churches, most of them completed with concrete block walls. Volunteer projects typically combine construction with community outreach in the form of medical clinics, evangelism, children's programs, painting, and other community outreach endeavors. However, the details of each project vary, depending on the volunteers, availability of opportunities, and needs of the local church.

Project Funding

The local church is responsible for providing the land and labor to excavate the site. Maranatha has agreed to raise funds for each church they provide in the Dominican Republic. These funds are provided by donations from individuals, churches and school groups, and businesses. If you or your team is interested in helping to sponsor a church in the Dominican Republic, please speak with Maranatha for more information.

Dominican Republic Overview

The Dominican Republic (also known as the D.R.) is a beautiful tropical country located on eastern part of Hispaniola Island in the Caribbean Ocean. The western side of the island is Haiti. The landscape has sandy, white beaches and lush green mountains that make it the second most popular destination in the Caribbean after Puerto Rico. Visitors flock to the island to indulge in fancy resorts and year-round golf courses.

Yet a look beyond the tourist attractions reveals a nation with a history that is not so picturesque. Originally, the Taíno tribe inhabited the entire land mass, but the indigenous people quickly disappeared after the arrival of European explorers. Christopher Columbus discovered the island for Spain in 1492, and in 1496 planted the first expatriate settlement in what is now Santo Domingo. That original settlement is preserved and considered to be the oldest city in the New World. Immigrants from Africa and France also settled the island. After Spain ceded the western third of the island to the French, which later became Haiti, the remaining land became the Dominican Republic, which gained independence in 1844. The new Dominican population is diverse and displays a very warm Hispanic culture. Tourists can still see traces of the many different influences in local customs and architecture. Spanish remains the official language of the country.

The Dominican Republic has the second largest economy in Central America and the Caribbean. Agriculture exports have long been an important part of the country's economy. Local sugarcane fields have provided the world with sugar for centuries. Other important crops are coffee, cotton, cocoa, tobacco, and rice. However, in recent years service jobs have taken the top spot in the Dominican Republic economy. With many gorgeous beaches and adventure options, it is no wonder that tourism contributes a very important source of income. However, in the rural areas of the country, poverty continues to be a problem, particularly near the Dominican-Haitian border, and unemployment numbers remain high.

Culture

The blend of African, European, and Taino ancestry gives the Dominican Republic a unique culture. Spanish architecture is evident in areas of Santo Domingo, particularly in its cathedrals and cobblestone streets. Colorful art and music make their mark in Dominican fashion. Much of the local artistry is dedicated to the religious history of the island.

The most common traditional dish is called "La Bandera" or in English, "The Flag." It is made with stewed meat, rice, and red beans, and it is often served with fried plantains. Another common food is boiled green plantain, called mantu. A special dish, often prepared for holidays, is pasteles de hojas, which are packets of a starchy dough filled with meat, vegetables and spices then wrapped in banana leaves.

Another important part of Dominican culture is baseball. The sport is a source of national pride. Almost 40% of professional baseball players in the U.S. are from Latin America, and most of those are from the Dominican Republic. Don't be surprised if you find kids and adults playing baseball in every corner of the neighborhood.

Geography and Climate

The Dominican Republic is the most physically diverse country in the Caribbean. Santo Domingo, the capital, is the largest city in the Dominican Republic and the economic and cultural heartbeat. But outside of the urban city, the Dominican Republic is much more rural. The island has dry deserts, lush beaches, mangrove lagoons and sprawling farms. The Dominican Republic even boasts the five highest peaks in the Caribbean.

The Dominican Republic enjoys tropical weather year round. The island weather is warm and humid, with scattered clouds and rain. Most places in the country are in the upper 80's year-round, although it may feel hotter than that because of the humidity. The rainy season is May through October, and hurricanes are most likely to occur in August and September.

Cultural Sensitivity

Maranatha's volunteer experience includes meeting new people and learning how to serve them. Every culture has a unique view of the world. It is important to enter another culture with humility, respect, and understanding of their traditions. Sometimes you may observe something in the Dominican Republic that will be very different from what you're accustomed to. It does not make it wrong—just different. Be respectful and consider their perspective.

Being sensitive to a culture also means being respectful to micro cultures, such as Adventism, within a larger culture. Adventists in the Dominican Republic tend to be more conservative than Adventists in the United States or Canada. We try to be sensitive to this by dressing as modestly as possible. Pants and cap sleeves are preferred to shorts and tank tops. For church activities, women need to have skirts or dresses reaching past the knees, and men need to wear ties and closed-toe shoes, especially if they are involved in platform activities

Facts & Figures

Capital:	Santo Domingo
Nationality:	Dominican
Population:	10.3 million
Poverty:	34.4%
Unemployment:	15%
Languages:	Spanish
Education:	87% literacy
Life Expectancy:	77.8 years old
Work Force:	4.9 million
Religion:	95% Roman Catholic
Economy:	Industry: telecommunications, tourism; Exports: Sugar, coffee, tobacco
Currency:	Dominican Peso
Time Zone:	Atlantic Time Zone: UTC/GMT-4 hours

Planning a Project

Partnering with Maranatha

There are many reasons to plan a project with Maranatha. After nearly 50 years of laser-focus on construction-oriented mission projects, the organization has this process mastered.

- **Maranatha has a great track record.** From local church members to church officials to volunteer team leaders—everyone recognizes that Maranatha is reliable and gets things done. We know that the details are important. Maranatha will always have your worksite prepared and support you in creating a successful project for your team.
- **Maranatha provides local support.** It is a huge help to have someone at your location, before your arrival, to scout out details and make arrangements for your group. Once your group arrives our volunteer support person will be around to help as a translator and navigate the inevitable bumps in the road.
- **Maranatha provides quality construction support.** You don't have to be a construction expert to build a project with Maranatha. Our qualified crew will prep the project site before you arrive, and they will stay to teach and assist the volunteers throughout the project. You won't just build a church or school—you will do it right!
- **Maranatha office support is available as you plan.** Kim Haas is the group project specialist at Maranatha. She is available for questions and resources as you plan your project and work with group members.
- **Maranatha is an independent organization but we work hand-in-hand with church leadership around the world.** Every Maranatha project in the Kenya has been selected by the local Adventist conference and approved by the division as a priority for growth. That means that your project will have the full support of the larger church.

Accommodations

Most leaders of Maranatha projects in the Dominican Republic choose to have the group stay in a hotel. While there are many places with varying comfort and price levels, you should expect a rather simple hotel. There are also a lot of retreat centers in the Dominican Republic that offer many of the same amenities as hotels at a cheaper rate. They often have dorm rooms with bunk beds.

Check with the project packet or your group leader for specific information regarding bed linens, towels and washcloths, hot water, air-conditioning, Wi-Fi availability, and eating facilities.

Excursion Options

The Dominican Republic is full of great options for relaxation and fun. The beautiful beaches are world-renown, and the island offers a variety of activities, from windsurfing to historical museums. Maranatha's projects are mostly in the Santo Domingo area. Within Santo Domingo there are 27 national landmarks for people interested in history, and there are many local attractions within three hours of the city.

To find the best excursion for your trip, try searching online. Look for peer ratings on various activities through sites like Trip Advisor. Guidebooks published by Lonely Planet or Frommer's are also good places to start.

Attractions

Cabarete | The beach at Cabarete is considered one of the top destinations in the world for windsurfing and kite boarding. You'll find plenty of shops and kiosks that rent equipment and offer lessons. Cabarete is 2 ½ hours north of Santo Domingo.

Colonial Zone (Santo Domingo) | This small town, located within the larger city of Santo Domingo, is a UNESCO World Heritage site. This well-preserved, walled-in relic claims to be the oldest permanent settlement in the "New World."

Los Haitises National Park | This beautiful park is known for its mangroves and is accessible only by boat from Samana island. Many recommend a guided kayak tour of the area where many bird species dwell. Inside the caverns you can see ancient paintings. Inland, there are great places for hiking and horseback riding.

Los Tres Ojos | This local landmark in Santo Domingo is nicknamed “The Three Eyes” because of the three open-air limestone caves that have created a series of three lakes, fed by underground rivers. It is currently one of the most visited attractions in the country.

Malecon (Santo Domingo) | This strip of hotels and restaurants along the beach is a popular place to walk or meet with friends.

Punta Cana | This is considered one of the most beautiful and popular beaches in the Dominican Republic. Punta Cana is located about 2 ½ hours east of Santo Domingo.

Saona Island | This small island off the southeastern coast of the Dominican Republic is 14 miles long and features some of the most beautiful white sand beaches in all of the Caribbean. Besides the ocean and skyline, you may enjoy seeing many species of wild birds, dolphins, turtles, sharks, and manatees.

Samana Whale Watching | The Samana Peninsula, on the northern coast, is one of its largest tourist attractions. You can arrange boat tours off the coast to view humpback whales swimming and playing near the water’s surface. Whale season is January through March.

Foreign Cash and Money Exchange

The Dominican Republic uses the Dominican Republic Peso, and it has an exchange rate of approximately 43 pesos to \$1 USD (August 2014), depending on where you make the exchange. Any cash you bring should be in new, unmarked U.S. dollar bills.

You can exchange money in or outside the airport at a bank or an exchange booth. There is an exchange booth before immigration and another one before customs at the airport; both have lower exchange rates than what you might find in the city. There are banks near the information booth at the welcoming area; but there may long lines. Often times your project coordinator will exchange money at a simple, rounded rate of 40 pesos to \$1 USD.

ATMs will allow you to withdraw pesos directly and will probably give you the best exchange rate. There are ATMs in the airport, but they can be hard to find and unreliable outside the airport.

Credit/Debit Cards

While some establishments accept credit and debit cards, it might be easier to use cash while traveling through the country. If you do use a credit or debit card, expect a 5% - 12% surcharge for international use. Be careful when using your credit card in public; never let it out of your sight. It is wise to let your credit card company know in advance the dates you will be in the Dominican Republic so they don’t block your card when you use it in a foreign country.

Traveler’s Checks

Traveler checks are not widely accepted, and commissions can be high.

Electricity

The standard current in the Dominican Republic is 110-120 volt AC (same as the United States and Canada). The standard outlets have two vertical prongs of the same height (Type A). Three prong plugs, with the ground prong, are uncommon. Plug adapters from three-prong to two-prong can be found at many stores like Walmart or Home Depot for about one dollar. Electrical surges and outages can be common. You should use a surge protector for expensive appliances and computers.



Laundry

Most cities and large towns have full service laundromats. Many hotels also provide laundry service but often charge per item of clothing, which adds up pretty fast. You can also choose to do your laundry by hand at no additional cost.

Communication

Cell phone service is available in Santo Domingo and in most cities throughout the island, but rural areas often experience limited service. Local cell phones can be purchased for about \$40-60 USD, and you can reload minutes to call locally and internationally for reasonable rates. You can also buy a SIM card for your unlocked device. If you choose to use your own phone service, check international rates and service areas since international roaming and data charges can be very expensive.

To call the Dominican Republic from the U.S., enter the number as you would to any other U.S. number. Dial 1+ area code (809, 829, or 849) + the local number.

To call the U.S. from the Dominican Republic, dial as you would to any other U.S. number. For example, to call the Maranatha office you would dial 1 (916) 774-7700.

You can also communicate with loved ones at home through free smart phone and computer apps such as WhatsApp, Viber, FaceTime, and Skype. WiFi is available at hotels and restaurants throughout the country and Internet cafes are also popular.

Time Zone

The Dominican Republic is located in the Atlantic Time Zone UTC-04:00. When the United States is on Daylight Savings Time, the DR is three hours ahead of Pacific Daylight Savings Time and the same as Eastern Daylight Savings Time. When the United States is on Standard Time, the DR is four hours ahead of Pacific Standard Time and one hour ahead of Eastern Standard Time.

Restrooms

Public restrooms are few and far between in the Dominican Republic, so you should take breaks at your hotel or restaurants. Western-style flush toilets are the norm in most places. But toilet paper usually goes in the wastebasket, not down the toilet.

Weights & Measures

The Dominican Republic officially uses the metric system, but in some areas you will find pounds and gallons used as well.

Travel

Airports

The two main airports in the Dominican Republic are the Las Americas International Airport in Santo Domingo (airport code SDQ) and the Punta Cana International Airport, used for visiting the beach areas on the east coast (airport code PUJ).

The airport you will most likely use on a Maranatha project is Santo Domingo. A variety of direct flights connect to the Santo Domingo airport through hubs in the United States and Central America. Popular airline carriers connecting to Santo Domingo include American, United, Delta, Copa, Jet Blue, and Spirit.

Entry and Exit

Passport | All U.S. and Canadian citizens must present a passport valid for at least six months from your scheduled return date. If you do not have a passport, U.S. citizens can apply at any U.S. post office or online at <http://travel.state.gov>. Canadian citizens can apply online at www.passport.gc.ca. It can take up to two months to complete the entire process; plan accordingly to give yourself enough time to receive your passport. You can expedite the process for an additional fee. Passport photos can be taken at the post office, FedEx office, Costco, or Walgreens.

Entry Requirements

- Valid Passport
- Entrance Tax Upon Arrival: \$10

Entrance Tax | Tourists are permitted to travel in the Dominican Republic for up to 60 days after paying a U.S. \$10 entrance tax upon arrival at the Santo Domingo airport. In order to extend a visit to the Dominican Republic, the tourist has to go to the offices of the Dirección General de Migración at the airport and pay for an extension.

Citizens of other countries should consult the Dominican embassy or consulate in your home country for entrance requirements.


For additional information regarding U.S. entrance procedures in the Dominican Republic visit: <http://travel.state.gov/>

Immigration and Customs Process

On the airplane to Santo Domingo, you will receive two forms that need to be filled out for processing at the airport. The immigration card will ask for information such as your name (use the name on your passport), passport number, flight number, and address where you will be staying in the Dominican Republic. Be sure to consult your project packet or your group leader for this address, prior to departure. You will also receive a customs form requiring much of the same information.

After you exit the plane in Santo Domingo, you will be directed toward the immigration stands. As you approach, you will see manned booths to the right of the room, where you pay the entrance tax before passing through immigration. The fee is \$10 and must be paid in U.S. currency. Please bring new, unmarked bills to make this transaction. One person can purchase enough of these for a group or family, so there's no need for everyone to stand in line. You can also pay this tax using the automated machines just to the right of the tax booth lines, but you must have individual \$10 bills as the machine only processes \$10 bills, one at a time. You will receive a receipt either from the agent at the booth or the machine; you will need to show this receipt at immigration. **If you stand in the immigration line before paying the tax you will be sent back, so don't get in line until you have paid the entrance fee and received the receipt.**

After you pay the entrance tax, go through immigration, where they will take your entrance tax receipt, stamp your passport, and check your immigration form (keep that with your passport while in the Dominican Republic). Make sure you say that you are a tourist. If you say you are coming to "work" on a Maranatha trip, it can cause confusion; they may believe you need a work or business visa for your travel in the country. After passing through immigration, proceed to baggage claim, gather your bags (you can use the free luggage carts), and go through customs, where they will take your customs form. After that, you will proceed to the welcome area and down the ramp. You can meet up with the rest of your group.



DIRECCION GENERAL DE MIGRACION
 TARJETA INTERNACIONAL DE EMBARQUE • DESEMBARQUE
 INTERNATIONAL EMBARKATION • DESEMBARKATION CARD
 BIGLIETTO INTERNAZIONALE DI IMBARCO • SBARCO
 ВИМТРАЦИОННАЯ КАРТОЧКА

SOLO PARA VISITANTES - NO RESIDENTES / ONLY VISITORS / SOLO PER VISITANTI / ТОЛЬКО ДЛЯ ПОСЕТИТЕЛЕЙ

**LENESE FIRMEMENTE EN LETRAS DE MOLDE / PLEASE PRINT FIRMLY
 RIEMPRE IN STAMPATELLO / Заполните твердо БУКВАМИ**

Nombre Completo: _____ Apellidos / Sumame Cognome / Фамилия
 Full Name _____
 Nome Complete _____
 Полное Имя _____ Nombres / Name / Nome / Имя _____

Fecha de Nacimiento: _____ Sexo / Sex / Пол _____
 Дата рождения: _____

FORM No. 001-2008 AUTORIZADO POR LA DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE CONTABILIDAD GUBERNAMENTAL

DECLARACIÓN ADUANERA DE INGRESO O SALIDA DE PASAJEROS No. 28297413
 CUSTOMS DECLARATION FORM FOR ARRIVAL / DEPARTURE

NOTA 1: La presentación de esta declaración es obligatoria para todo pasajero que salga o ingrese a la RD. La declaración de informaciones falsas o incompletas puede originar penas de prisión, multas, de mercancías y de privación de libertad, conforme al artículo 200 de la Ley 3489, del Régimen de Aduanas, y el Artículo 8 de la Ley No 72-02 Contra el Lavado de Activos. Esta declaración debe ser firmada donde se indica.
 NOTE 1: This declaration is mandatory for all passengers entering or leaving the Dominican Republic. Declaring false or incomplete information could cause penalties of seizure of values, merchandise or arrest, in accordance with article 200 of the 3489 Customs Law and Article 8 of the 72-02 against the money laundering. This declaration must be signed where indicated.

Utilice letra de molde por favor / Please print

1. Fecha: DD / MM / AA / YY / 2. Ingreso / Arrival 3. Salida / Departure

4. Nombre completo: _____
 Full name: _____ Primer Nombre / First Name _____ Segundo Nombre / Middle Name _____

Primer Apellido / First Surname _____ Segundo Apellido / Second Surname _____ 5. Apellido de Casada / Husband's Surname _____

6. Fecha de nacimiento: DD / MM / AA / YY / 7. Nacionalidad: _____
 Date of birth: _____ Nationality: _____

8. No. de Pasaporte / Passport No.: _____ 9. ¿Reside en República Dominicana? SI/Yes NO
 Do you live in Dominican Republic?

10. Dirección en la República Dominicana: _____
 Address of where you will be staying in Dom. Rep.

11. Medio de transporte: Aéreo/By air Terrestre/By ground Marítimo/By sea 12. País de origen o destino: _____
 Means of transportation: _____ Country of origin or destination: _____

13. Empresa transportista: _____ 14. Número de viaje/Trip No.: _____
 Transportation Company: _____

15. ¿Trae consigo, o en su equipaje, una suma de dinero (en efectivo o Título Valor) mayor a US\$10,000.00? SI/Yes NO
 Do you have in person or in your baggage (cash or checks) over US\$10,000.00?

16. En caso de respuesta afirmativa a la pregunta anterior (15) favor escribir la cantidad: _____
 If the answer to the previous question (15) is yes, please write the amount: _____

17. Tipo de moneda o título: Type of currency or checks: _____
 RD\$ US\$ € Otros (especifique) other (please indicate)

NOTA 2: Las siguientes casillas deben ser llenadas únicamente por personas que ingresan a la República Dominicana
 NOTE 2: The following boxes must be completed only by persons arriving to the Dominican Republic.

18. Número de familiares que viajan con usted? Number of family members travelling with you? _____

19. ¿Trae consigo, o en su equipaje, animales vivos, plantas o productos alimenticios? SI/Yes NO
 Are you bringing with you, or in your baggage, live animals, plants or food products?

20. ¿Trae consigo, o en su equipaje, mercancías sujetas al pago de impuestos (ver instrucciones al dorso)? SI/Yes NO
 Are you bringing with you, or in your baggage, merchandise subject to payment of taxes? (Please see instructions on back of this form)?

21. DETALLE DE MERCANCIAS SUJETAS AL PAGO DE IMPUESTOS / DETAIL OF GOODS SUBJECT TO TAX

Descripción de Mercancías Description of Goods	Valor en Dólares Value US\$	Para uso de aduana solamente For Customs use only

Nota 3: En caso de que la cantidad de artículos sujeto al pago de impuestos exceda las casillas reservadas en el ítem 21, consulte con un Oficial de Aduanas para que le asese con el llenado del Form. 003-2007 "Declaración Única-Aduanera".
 Note 3: In the event that the amount of articles subject to taxes exceed the boxes provided at item 21, consult with a Customs Officer to be advised on completing the Form 003-2007 "Customs Standard Declaration".

Declaro y juro de conformidad con la Ley y ante la autoridad competente, que los datos declarados en el presente formulario son ciertos y exactos, y me someto a las sanciones que la ley establece al comprarse cualquier inexactitud u omisión en las informaciones ofrecidas.
 I declare and swear in agreement with the Law and before the appropriate authority that the information declared in this form is true and correct and that I will surrender to the sanctions established by the law in the event of my provision of inaccurate or false information.

Firma del viajero/Traveler's Signature _____

Diseño: Departamento de Organización y Muestreo

3. Durante el mes de diciembre de cada año, y hasta el día 7 del mes de enero, se permite la importación libre del pago de impuestos, de regalos (artículos, electrodomésticos, ropa, etc) por un valor de hasta US\$1,000.00 (mil dólares) para todos aquellos ciudadanos dominicanos que tenga más de seis meses residiendo en el exterior.
 Note 4: Cuando el pasajero trae consigo o transporta en efectivo y/o Título Valor, una suma superior a los US\$10,000 (Diez Mil Dólares), también deberá llenar el Formulario No. 36-74 Declaración de Tránsito de Efectivo y/o Instrumentos Monetarios.

Note 4: When a passenger brings in person or transports currency or checks of a value over ten thousand United States Dollars (US\$10,000) he must also complete Form No. 36-74 Declaration of Transit of Currency and/or Monetary Instruments.

In-Country Transportation

If you are leading a group project with Maranatha, we can help your group reserve a private school bus, coaster bus, or tourist coach for your transportation needs.

Many international rental companies have a presence in the Dominican Republic. You can reserve and pick up rental cars, trucks, and vans at the Santo Domingo airport through rental agencies such as Avis, Expedia, Budget, Hertz, and Alamo. However, many times vehicles are given on a first come first serve basis, regardless of reservations.

The roads around major cities in the Dominican Republic are usually good, but take care with merging traffic and watch for potholes. Before driving, familiarize yourself with local laws and traffic norms. Roads between smaller towns are not usually paved. It is not recommended to drive at night. If you plan to drive yourself, Maranatha recommends obtaining an International Drivers Permit before traveling.

Taxis in the Dominican Republic are relatively cheap, but some can be unreliable and unsafe. We recommend that when traveling by taxi in large cities, you look for “tourist taxis” outside hotels and the airport. They can be a little more expensive, but they will respect international driving standards better. Taxis do not have meters; instead they usually have a preset fare to your destination. Make sure you agree on the fare before entering the taxi and request that the driver does not pick up additional passengers during the trip.

There is also a reliable bus system, as well as crowded Carros Públicos that stops anywhere to pick up more passengers en route; however, Maranatha only recommends using these forms of travel if you are an experienced international traveler. The trains in the country are used primarily to transport sugar from the cane fields.

Traveling with Minors

Minors under the age of 18 are welcome to join projects to the Dominican Republic. Maranatha requires that at least one adult travel with every four minors, ages 14-17, and that an adult travel with every minor, age 13 and under. Minors traveling without both parents or legal guardians must carry a notarized consent form. You can find this form and complete instructions on the Maranatha website, under Volunteer Opportunities and Resources. The Dominican Republic does not have any additional entrance requirements for minors.

Health, Safety, and Security

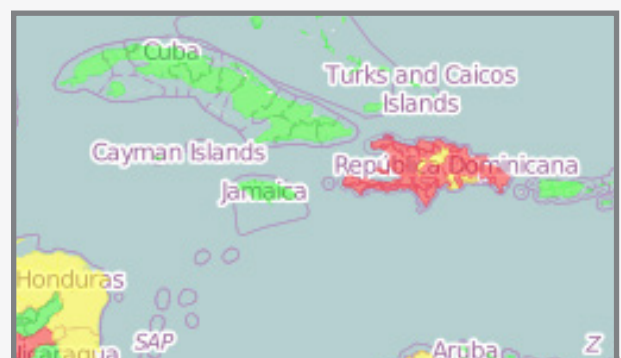
For more detailed health guidelines for international travel, see our first time traveler’s guide.

Vaccines and Medications

The only vaccine required by Maranatha is a current tetanus vaccine. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends many other vaccines such as hepatitis A and B, typhoid, and an oral antimalarial drug. More information is available at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/>. Maranatha recommends that you schedule a consultation with a travel clinic doctor, prior to travel, to talk about medical precautions for your trip to the Dominican Republic.

Malaria and Mosquitoes

Malaria is a life-threatening parasitic disease transmitted primarily by mosquitoes. Although Santo Domingo isn’t at high risk for malaria, because the disease is present on the island, Maranatha suggests you speak with a medical professional regarding malaria prevention options. There are different oral medications that can lower your risk of contracting malaria. Each has different side effects and dosages, so speak with a travel clinic doctor before making a decision on whether to take a certain medication. Malaria can be treated effectively early in the course of the disease, but we recommend that you avoid it altogether.



[CDC Interactive Malaria Map](#)

Red = malaria present everywhere. Yellow = presence of malaria varies. Green = area with no known malaria.

Mosquitoes and other flying insects can also carry a variety of other diseases such as dengue, zika, and chikungunya. Personal precautions are strongly recommended to lower the risk of being bitten. Bring a bug repellent with a 30%-50% concentration of DEET. Wear long sleeves, long pants, and closed-toe footwear when possible. Avoid areas of standing water and do not spend a lot of time outside during dusk and dawn.

Zika

Recently the Zika virus has been spreading around Central America and the Caribbean. This mosquito-borne disease acts very similar to a hard-hitting flu with symptoms lasting about two weeks. There is currently no vaccine or treatment for the disease and the CDC has issued a Level 2 warning. This warning does not suggest that you postpone all travel, but it does urge travelers to take heightened precautions to avoid being bitten (see recommendations above). This virus is still being studied, and information is continuing to be released. There are currently no known long-term effects; however, there does seem to be a link between the virus and possible birth defects in babies born from women who were infected during their pregnancy. The virus can remain in a woman's body for approximately eight weeks and in a man's body for approximately six months, and it can be spread through physical contact. If you or your partner is pregnant, think you might be pregnant, or trying to get pregnant in the next six months, Maranatha recommends speaking with your doctor to determine if you should travel.

Preventative Health

In general preventative measures are the best way to avoid becoming ill during your time in the Dominican Republic. Food should be properly washed and cooked. Use only purified water for drinking and brushing your teeth, and avoid ice cubes at restaurants. Wash your hands regularly. Wear sunscreen and mosquito repellent while outdoors.

Medical Care in the Dominican Republic

Santo Domingo has fairly modern clinics and hospitals. In general, private clinics are safer and cleaner than public hospitals. There are also Adventist run pharmacies, clinics, and a hospital in and near Santo Domingo. Maranatha will have identified several medical care locations near the project locations that we believe are safe for our volunteers. If you are leading a group to the Dominican Republic, be sure to ask Maranatha project support to show you the clinic location closest to your housing and work sites.

Travel Safety

Maranatha will not knowingly send volunteers to an area that is of elevated risk. We consistently monitor security alerts from the areas where we are working and we consciously avoid high-risk regions. However, it is important for you to take responsibility for your own personal safety while traveling. Here are some ways you can start. For a more detailed list of tips and Maranatha insurance information, be sure to read our International Traveler's Guide. While we do take precautions, there is nothing we can do to guarantee safety. We can only place our trust in God's hands.

- Avoid traveling at night or alone.
- Dress conservatively and keep a low profile.
- Avoid marginal areas of cities, alleyways, and crowds of people.
- Use caution if you are approached on the street by strangers, including vendors.
- Leave valuables, both expensive and sentimental, at home.
- Don't leave your personal belongings unattended, especially in open sight. Consider using a money belt or concealed pouch for passports, credit cards, and cash. Keep your purse or bag in front of you, held with a tight grip.
- **US Department of State:** Register your travel with the U.S. Department of State by enrolling with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program. The U.S. government will then contact you in case of an emergency, natural disaster, or civil unrest. They can also be a point of contact for family emergencies. You can also check for security updates prior to your departure.

- **Travel Guard:** The AIG accident insurance provided to Maranatha volunteers provides access to security updates and other resources. You can access this resource by using the policy number provided to you in your information packet or by a Maranatha representative once your volunteer group is confirmed.

Maranatha Insurance

Maranatha mission projects are construction projects where people can get hurt. Accident insurance is essential. It is not possible for Maranatha to analyze everyone's insurance policy to see whether it is current and the coverage is in effect at the location of the mission project. For that reason, all volunteers will be covered by accident insurance, coordinated by Maranatha, from the time they arrive at the project until their departure. This is a secondary policy, which means all claims will first be processed through your primary policy. This policy covers accidents only and does not include illnesses or other medical coverage. For more information about project insurance, contact Maranatha.

Communication

Promoting Your Maranatha Trip

You may contact Maranatha's marketing department for materials to help you promote your trip to Kenya. There are DVDs and printed materials available for your convenience. Contact Maranatha for more details.

Also, when discussing this mission trip with your team and while promoting it to your church or school, please be sure to mention that you are partnering with Maranatha! We hope that you will help to spread the word about our mission to spread the Gospel through construction.

Contact Information

United States Embassy:

Av. Republica de Colombia
#57
Santo Domingo
República Dominicana

Canadian Consulate:

Av. Winston Churchill 1099
Torre Citigroup en Arcópolis Center
piso 18
Ensanche Piantini
Santo Domingo
República Dominicana

Maranatha Volunteers International:

990 Reserve Drive
Suite 100
Roseville, CA 95678
Telephone: (916) 774-7700
Fax: (916) 774-7701