FAMILY HUMANITARIAN
CULTIVATE. EDUCATE. ELEVATE.

FAMILY HUMANITARIAN

EXPEDITION GUIDEBOOK

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CONGRATULATIONS

Are you ready to BE THE CHANGE by serving the global community and by enhancing the lives of others as well as your own? We are excited to have you as a participant in our Family Humanitarian expeditions! You will have the unique opportunity to work alongside your family in meaningful service while having once-in-a-lifetime spiritual and cultural experiences, making friendships and memories that last a lifetime. These expeditions truly can change your life forever! This handbook should help you prepare for the amazing, life-changing adventure you are about to take and offer some valuable guidelines.

Family Humanitarian expeditions combine the following for an unforgettable experience:

1. Humanitarian Service
2. Cultural Experiences
3. Relationship Building

When you balance meaningful service with fun, eye-opening cultural experiences and then top it off with deep, lifelong relationships, you have the adventure of a lifetime!

HUMANITARIAN PROJECTS

Our expeditions provide opportunities for meaningful service which is of immense value to others. The problems of the global community are complex, and there is no magic bullet to immediately get rid of poverty. With that said, at Family Humanitarian, we plan our expeditions to include 2-5 hands-on projects as well as workshops where training and knowledge transfer take place. These projects have been suggested by local community leaders because of the needs in their area.

Projects can include:

- Clean water projects
- School Construction projects (school structures, bookshelves, desks, school kitchens, and libraries)
- Community Education

Regardless of the specific project, we will be teaching skills, building confidence and hope, mentoring, aiding in community projects, and engaging in manual labor. Service, as you know, changes lives and entire communities for the better. One of the best parts is that the service will also change you! Travel time to serve in the rural villages is extensive. As you travel remember that it is part of the work, the sacrifice of self, to bring love, hope, and joy to rural parts of the world where many humanitarians are not willing to travel.

Every project is carefully chosen. It must be sustainable and village-driven. You will learn that we required villages to have skin in the game for any project to be approved and funded. The expeditions participate in a very small part of the big picture. Our in-country team ensures that projects continue and are completed after the expedition departs.

CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Each expedition includes a cultural experience that is unique to the country. Ghana has unique tribal villages to visit, traditions to learn, singing and dancing to participate in, and handmade crafts, art, and clothing to purchase. We will immerse ourselves into the culture for an amazing experience. Our in-country directors are locals who will be withus the entire time. Often, we are introduced to their families and taken to their villages. We aren't just "tourists." We are considered "friends of the family." You will never forget the many stories you will hear as you learn more about the culture on an intimate and personal level.

RELATIONSHIPS AND SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

The work we do as families and as a team is meant to be a celebration of people. Part of the experience is to celebrate the beauty, diversity, and individuality of the African people – collectively and individually. As you listen to their stories, you will come to LOVE them. They each struggle differently through their unique hardships and uncertainties. Take the time to SEE THEM! They are each different and uniquely beautiful. Like us, they also experience happiness and sadness as well as ups and downs. We will embrace and love them because just like us, they are God's children. You will become lifelong friends with many children, families, and communities.

Similarly, you will build and strengthen relationships within your family and with your fellow expeditioners. The expedition provides many opportunities to work shoulder to shoulder and to share heart-felt and spiritual experiences. Sometimes the best part of the day is during our daily sharing time when you can reflect on the day and realize the miracles you have witnessed and the spirit you have felt. It's only natural that your family bonds will strengthen and that the friendships you make on the trip will deepen and forge lifetime connections. The relationships you form and strengthen with family, with fellow expeditioners, and with the beautiful people of Africa will be one of the most rewarding parts of the expedition.

EMBRACING YOUR EXPEDITION

Culture shock is real! Plan to step out of your comfort zone and step into “going global.” Just plan on the unexpected…often! Understand that some things just can’t be planned for and that flexibility is key. Practice telling yourself that whatever happens, “it’s all part of the experience.”

Humanitarian expeditions in some of the world’s poorest countries are as challenging as they are rewarding, but there are things that need to be considered and balanced. The following section is designed to help you enjoythe journey more and embrace the unknown and unexpected. Although you may not have to embrace all the following – be prepared! Simply have fun and enjoy the ride!

EMBRACING ALTERNATIVE HYGIENE

Cold Showers and roadside “squatting” may or may not be part of your expedition. Ifthey are, they will add priceless value to your “go-global” portfolio. A great memory of any developing country wouldn’t be complete without at least one hilarious tale of slipping, sliding, or miss-shooting.
Embrace it rather than resist it. Trust us – these are the stories your kids and grandkids can’t wait to hear!
Squatter Toilet Tips: Squat as low as you can to hit the target and avoid balance mishaps (and pray your leg muscles will hold you!). Not all our expeditions are this drastic regarding hygiene, but consider yourself warned. Bottom line…Enjoy it and learn to appreciate local culture. You’ll have plenty of shiny, clean porcelain seats to sit on when you get home. If your room is without air conditioning or a fan, don’t be surprised, and realize that although there will likely not be a lot of variety in food, we are doing our best to find food service providers who understand our food standard needs.

EMBRACING THE JOURNEY (ROADS)

Roads…those kinds we have in the USA…well, you aren't going to see many of them in Africa. Instead, brace yourself for bumps – potholes, speed bumps, and unpaved roads. To ease the "journey" a little, always carry water and some small snacks like nuts or granola bars (in case the trip takes longer than expected – which is likely). Always carry wet wipes and hand sanitizer, and make friends with the other passengers. We do our best to provide the highest quality and safest transportation in private vans, but at times, transportation may take some getting used to. This is one of those things totally out of our control. If you look out the window, you'll be glad you aren't sitting side-saddle with five others on a motorcycle.

EMBRACING THE "CUISINE"

Did you know that in some countries in Africa, utensils are optional (or in other words, you might not get them!)? And even funnier is that sometimes you won't know exactly what you're eating! As part of our expeditions, we will do our very best to provide all meals through good-quality and safe restaurants or private cooks. (We will request silverware!) Typically, food includes toast, eggs, and fruit for breakfast and meat, rice/potatoes, and a veggie for dinner. Be conscious of waste, and don't take more food than you will eat.

Street food can be some of the best food you will ever have, but it can also be the worst. A parasite in your street food will keep you on the squatter for 24 hours, so probably don't eat it! Consider words like "gross" or "disgusting", and replace them with non-offensive words like "different" and "unique". Remember to ALWAYS drink bottled water. If you do feel a rumble in your tummy, start your antibiotic instantly. Trust us, the longer you wait the worse it will get.

Remember that a culture is highly defined by its food, and people are proud of their cuisine. Please always show love and appreciation. If you're given something, know that it was a huge sacrifice for them to make and offer it to you – accept it with humility and gratitude, and just say an extra prayer for them as well as its health benefits.

EMBRACING COMMUNICATION/LANGUAGE

Charades anyone? Many Africans know English, but some don't, especially in the villages. No worries – we will have a translator nearby or you can do your best by pointing, acting out, or using a calculator to show how much you are willing to pay when shopping. By the way, don't be embarrassed about this – just learn to laugh at yourself and remain calm and happy even if communication is difficult. We will teach you muzungus (white people) a few phrases on the trip.

EMBRACING A "NO GIFTING POLICY"

As you know, in a developing country (avoid using the term "3rd world country"), there is extreme poverty. Because of this, you can expect to be approached by beggars who will ask for money. You, as a Westerner, present a temporary solution to their problem – MONEY! The general rule is to quickly, politely, and respectfully move away and not give money. Why? As hard as this is (especially when it is a small child or a mother with a child in her arms), you must remember that if you do decide to give your money, you are teaching incorrect principles. You are teaching that it is okay to ask for handouts. Your money will go further if you use it for the planned expedition projects that can truly make a difference in the lives of those in the community. We firmly believe in teaching a man to fish and in empowering and creating independence rather than giving him a fish, which ultimately leads to dependence. As your expedition leaders, we have spent a lot of time researching projects that support SUSTAINABLE humanitarianism and support local communities without encouraging the begging/dependence culture. The very best thing we can do for these beautiful people is to teach them and to give them opportunities to help themselves and their communities.

EMBRACING BARTERING

You will have opportunities on your expedition to purchase goods from local merchants. First rule – no matter what price they offer, always be respectful and courteous! If you choose to barter, please ask the local expedition leaders what you might expect to pay, asking for a range in pricing. Fair or not, as a foreigner, you will always be expected to pay more than a local, but that doesn't mean you can't get a bargain through bartering. On the other hand, don't be afraid to say no if you really aren't interested. Just firmly state you are not interested and walk away. Because we will be shopping in poor areas, keep in mind that you don't need to barter so low that they aren't making any money. The goal is to pay a price that is fair to everyone! It's a good thing to support local economies by buying their products. Our in-country director will always be happy to help you barter and purchase something.

EMBRACING BEING PATIENT

Nope - you're not in Kansas anymore! Nothing in Africa happens without a painfully long wait (UGH!). When you realize there's absolutely nothing you can do about it, you can embrace it by visiting with your fellow travel mates, reading a book, people-watching, or taking a few extra photos. We will do our best to have travel vans there on time and food ready at the time expected, but despite the best efforts of the in-country team, the locals have a very difficult time understanding the value of timeliness. If villages are left waiting for you because lunch was served late, don't worry, they aren't stressed about it, and you don't need to be either. It's all part of the experience – and you'll come home with more patience – a great quality to have!

COUNTRY INFORMATION

COUNTRY INFORMATION: GHANA

Capital: Accra
Population: 32+ million
Area: 92,098 sq. Miles
Languages: English (official), with over 80 other regional/native languages
Government: Democratic Republic

Overall, Ghana is a safe country in which to travel. As with most countries, crime is generally present in the larger cities and is mostly non-violent towards tourists. Ghanaians are known for their hospitality and friendliness, which enhances the overall safety experience for visitors.

ABOUT GHANA EXPEDITIONS
https://www.familyhumanitarian.org/expeditions/ghana

CURRENCY

The currency of Ghana is the Ghanaian cedi, abbreviated as GHS, which is roughly $1 USD = 15 cedis.
To verify current exchange rates, visit:
https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1&From=USD&To=GHS
You can exchange money at the airport or a local bank, but the easiest way to exchange money is to use a debit card at the ATM in country to retrieve cash. Some US banks will also allow you to order foreign currency before you leave the USA.

ELECTRICITY

Electricity is generally available; although it is not uncommon to have electricity down for periods of time or forhotels to shut it down for several hours at night. Extra batteries or battery packs are helpful for cameras/phones and other electronic equipment. **You will need an outlet adapter** to convert to a standard US plug. Ghana primarily uses plug types G and D. Should you wish to bring hair dryers, curling irons, etc. it is best to bring one that is dual voltage for international travel. You can also bring a converter to adapt other electronics from their 230v system to the 110v US system.

WEATHER

In Tamale, June to September is milder than the rest of the year, but still very warm. You can generally expect highs up to 95 degrees and lows around 70 degrees. Summer is also considered the rainy season, with up to 6 inches of rain in July.

PRECAUTIONS

While theft is more of a problem in cities rather than in the villages where we serve, take appropriate precautions by ensuring that you keep your money and passport in a hidden place, such as a money belt under your shirt or hidden in your baggage. Do not leave your belongings unattended. Keep cameras on a strap, and don’t walk or travel by yourself alone or after dark.

EXPEDITION LOGISTICS

Visit www.familyhumanitarian.org for in-depth details about all aspects of the expedition.

EXPEDITION FEES

A deposit of $500 is due at the time of registration and will be applied to the total expedition fee. The expedition fee covers food, lodging, and transportation during the expedition as well as training materials and costs for the construction projects. It also includes the price of the day trip to Mole National Park. Expedition fees are mostly tax-deductible. For more information, visit the link below: https://familyhumanitarian.org/expeditions/ghana/

Costs that are the responsibility of each expeditioner include airfare and associated taxes, any travel on your own, document costs including passport, visa (approximately $100), immunizations ($200+ for yellow fever), and medical evacuation insurance. Meals will be provided, but any meals eaten outside of the group will be the responsibility of each participant.

We recommend that you bring cash (or a debit card to get local currency) for souvenirs and for any additional personal expenses you might incur.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Visit https://www.familyhumanitarian.org/registration/ for deadlines to cancel.

TRAVEL DATES

Each participant is responsible for their own transportation to Tamale. From the US it is recommended to book your flight to Accra and then a separate domestic flight from Accra to Tamale. For travel dates, visit https://familyhumanitarian.org/expeditions/ghana/

PRE & POST TRAVEL

Expedition participants are free to organize their own travel before or after the expedition.

TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

For detailed information, visit https://www.familyhumanitarian.org/faqs/

PASSPORT OR VISA (if applicable)

A current passport is needed to travel internationally. The expiration date should be no less than 6 months **after** the end of the expedition. A VISA is also required for travel to Ghana. For VISA purposes, you are a tourist and will apply for a tourist VISA. It is a good idea to apply for your VISA about 8 weeks prior to departure. The application process will require you to mail your passport to the Ghana Embassy in Washington, DC. Once you have the needed information from Family Humanitarian and your Yellow Fever vaccination, you can begin applying for your VISA by using this link: https://ghanaembassydc.org/visa/. Further information will come with your expedition packet.

CHILD AFFIDAVIT

A notarized Child Affidavit form may be needed if a child is traveling with only one parent or a guardian. You will keep this with you when you travel.

TRAVELER'S INSURANCE

Trip cancellation insurance is recommended but not required to cover unforeseen circumstances that may arise and cause unexpected delays or flight cancellations. We recommend shopping for travel insurance, including medical evacuation insurance, at travelinsurance.com.

MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE

Due to the lack of medical services in remote areas, Family Humanitarian **requires** all participants to purchase a minimum of $25,000 in medical evacuation insurance and upload proof of this insurance to your registration. Medical evacuation insurance is a standard part of travel insurance. **Family Humanitarian is not responsible for the cost of medical care, or any damage incurred during or because of a Family Humanitarian expedition.**

TRANSPORTATION

Once in Tamale, Family Humanitarian will arrange to pick up participants at the airport and arrange all other transportation needs during the expedition.

If you travel in the country on your own before or after the expedition you will coordinate transportation (including airport transfers) to meet your needs.

LODGING & SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

While in Tamale, Family Humanitarian has arranged local Hotel accommodations. (Do not expect the hotel to be like home, but there will be beds, clean linens, and running water.)

FOOD & WATER

Meals during the expedition will be provided by Family Humanitarian and willbe prepared locally. Precautions will be taken to ensure that US-standard sanitary practices are observed. Remember that food is a precious commodity, and ensure that you are not wasteful. Ensure you wash your hands and/or use hand sanitizer before you eat or put your hands near your mouth. You will want to use hand sanitizer frequently throughout the expedition.

If traveling on your own, ensure that the food in restaurants is well-cooked and served hot. Fruits and vegetables with a peel are safest. If you desire to venture out and eat other fruits and vegetables, ask whether they have been rinsed with purified water.

Take precautions with the water in East Africa by using bottled or filtered water only, even for brushing your teeth. Family Humanitarian will provide bottled water, most often in large containers used to fill your personal water bottle. Please do not use this bottled water to clean your body. If traveling on your own, also take precautions that the ice is made from purified water. Ensure that you drink throughout the day to avoid dehydration.

SHOWERS & RESTROOMS

Showers and flushing toilets will be readily available at all hotels. In the villages during the day, restroom facilities will likely not be available, and you may experience your first squatter here. It is a good idea to always carry toilet paper or wipes with you during the day.

PROJECTS

About 8 weeks before the expedition, each expeditioner will be sent an expedition-specific packet that contains detailed information on the projects for each expedition.

Keep in mind that we are there to help, that sometimes requires patience with the villagers as well as other expeditioners. We're there to both work to help the villagers improve their circumstances as well as to take moments of downtime to connect with and learn from them, play games, etc. Hard physical labor is secondary to the love and hope that we bring.

SUNDAY SERVICES

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saint Sunday worship services will be held for those who wish to attend.

COMMUNICATION

While you may not always be in cell phone range, in the event of an emergency, your family can contact you using WhatsApp or can reach out to Family Humanitarian via email or phone number on our website to get in touch with you. You will likely have access to wi-fi for most of the expedition. You can check with your cell phone provider regarding international plans. Data cards for your phone can also be purchased in-country very inexpensively.

HEALTH - MEDICATIONS AND IMMUNIZATIONS

This advice is not meant to replace a consultation with your physician or doctor. This is simply a guide to help you understand the requirements and recommendations listed by the CDC. Please visit your physician or learn more by visiting the CDC website.

Routine Vaccinations: Please be sure that you are up to date on your routine vaccinations. These vaccines are necessary for protection from diseases that are still common in many parts of the world, even though they rarely occur in the United States or other developed countries. If you are not sure which vaccinations are routine, look at the schedule on the CDC website. **The Yellow Fever vaccination will be required and costs about $200 and you will need to show proof of your vaccination by a valid yellow fever inoculation card upon entering the country. This will also be needed to apply for your visa. You will also need to take some form of malaria prevention pills. The most common choices are Doxycycline and Malarone – you can get these from your doctor or travel clinic and discuss which would be your best option.**

In addition to bringing any medications you take regularly, recommended medications include the following medications listed below. Consult with your physician to ensure that none of them interfere with the medications you are currently taking. It is recommended that you bring enough medication for the length of the expedition, as well as extra in case of emergencies. Due to the limited availability of medication in developing countries, don't plan to rely on purchasing them in-country. Also, consider keeping them in their original containers to prevent problems with customs.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS:

- Azithromycin or Ciprofloxacin (highly recommended) for traveler's diarrhea. Although we do our best to make sure the food we serve is cooked to US standards, there is usually at least a few people on each trip who get some traveler's diarrhea. If you start this as soon as your tummy rumbles, it should stop the growth of the problem, and you should only be sick for a few hours.
- Malaria prophylaxis (required). We also sleep with mosquito tents provided at the hotels, but generally don't see mosquitoes due to the very dry climate.
- Ambien or any sleep aid (optional) to combat jet lag and unfamiliar noises.
- Zofran (optional) for nausea due to the road conditions. Those who are prone to car sickness should bring something to address potential problems.

NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS:

- Imodium for traveler's diarrhea (highly recommended). This will help with symptoms, but the antibiotic listed above will end the problem.
- Benadryl or Tylenol PM (optional) for a sleep aid if you don't have access to Ambien.
- Ibuprofen (optional) for minor aches and pains.

ATTIRE

Ghanaians, in general, are very modest. Expeditioners, particularly females, are urged to wear pants, long skirts, or long shorts. (Please no crop tops or short shorts.) We don't recommend bringing expensive clothing; the red mud may stain clothing. Quick dry, athletic/performance-type clothing is ideal.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Family Humanitarian's code of conduct during expeditions includes no use of alcohol, smoking, or drugs, as well as the wearing of modest apparel.

ENGAGING WITH THE LOCALS

Consider bringing pictures of your family, nail polish, picture books, bubbles to play with the children, equipment to play sports games (soccer, football, jump rope, etc.), simple puzzles, or instruments to share music. Playing a simple game of tag, showing them a new dance, or learning words from their languagecan be good ways to connect. Encourage the locals to share something important to them – a dance, music, or making a local craft.

GIFTING POLICY

To ensure we don't create a handout mentality, we have a policy of no gifting (even small things like candies, crayons, or stickers). Our goal is to create relationships and friendships rather than being looked to for handouts. This also prevents the problem of some villagers receiving things that others do not, which can create bad feelings. However, if you have items that you would like to donate to the community (such as sports equipment or school supplies) or have large quantities of items you'd like to donate, contact Michaela Shirley at michaela.s@familyhumanitarian.org to discuss.

Also, please do not make promises to the villagers for work opportunities, scholarships, etc. If you would like to help the villagers in any way, please work through Family Humanitarian Leadership.
For more information, visit https://www.familyhumanitarian.org/faqs/.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Visit https://www.familyhumanitarian.org/faqs/ for things to expect on the expedition.

WHAT YOUTH CAN EXPECT

Youth can expect to have an amazing cultural experience as they work and play alongside their parents and the local villagers. This expedition is sure to be a grand adventure that most youth will love.

JUST REMEMBER: Things in Ghana move on Ghana time!

Things tend to move more slowly and less efficiently than you may be accustomed. Unexpected delays and changesin plans are common. Expect the unexpected! Flexibility will make your experience much more enjoyable. We can learn to go with the flow from their culture.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

For other questions, visit the FAQ section at https://www.familyhumanitarian.org/faqs/or contact Carrie Kirk at carrie.k@familyhumanitarian.org

PACKING TIPS

1. **Pack as lightly as possible.** You will be responsible for handling your luggage during any transfers or excursions.

2. **Bring a pen to fill out the arrival customs forms on the plane**. Grab a few extra forms to fill out and have ready before you depart the country.

3. **Make a copy of your passport picture page and put it in your suitcase** (expedites replacement of a lost passport). Also keep a digital copy of all important documents.

4. **When you check in for your domestic flight, check your baggage through to the final destination.** Be prepared to show your international e-ticket. You should not be charged the domestic baggage charge (luggage on domestic connections to international flights usually do not incur a baggage charge). We recommend that you keep your baggage claim tickets in an easily accessible place.

5. **Pack a carry-on bag** with a change of clothing for each family member as well as medications and other essentials just in case your luggage doesn't show up with you. It can take a while for it to catch up to the group.

DO NOT BRING

- Expensive jewelry or watches
- Expensive clothing
- Chocolate; it melts

TO DOS

FORMS & REQUIRED INFORMATION

Please be sure to log back into your registration form and complete all additional paperwork **no later than 60 days before departure**.

VACCINATIONS & IMMUNIZATIONS

Be sure to **secure your Yellow Fever Vaccination (and inoculation card) as soon as possible and Malaria Prophylaxis** before departure.

Participants from countries other than the United States should check with their consulate to ensure there are no other restrictions that apply.

PASSPORT AND VISA

Please make sure your **passport is current and expires more than 6 months after the last day of the expedition.**

Apply for your VISA for Ghana with sufficient time to receive it before departure. Be aware that you will be required to send your passport to the embassy in Washington DC.

*Please note that vaccination requirements could change.

PACKING LIST

Be sure to check the weather forecast prior to departure to ensure appropriate packing. It is wise to think in **layers** when preparing for a service trip abroad. Highs most days could be up to 95° F. Lows are generally 70° F. Rain, especially thunderstorms, are possible. It is recommended that all volunteers pack as light as possible for your convenience and to conserve space during transport to our destination village. Please check with your airline regarding luggage allowances. Bringing a bag for dirty clothes throughout the expedition is also recommended.

One golden piece of advice: Keep a clean change of clothes inside a bag during the entire expedition so that there is a fresh outfit to wear upon your return home. There are often opportunities to have laundry done for a small fee or to wash out clothing in the sink (a travel pack of laundry detergent can come in handy).

Quick-dry clothing is recommended. Any athletic, quick-dry, wicking type of clothing is very helpful, but the purchase of new clothing is not necessary. Consider packing clothing that could be donated upon departure.

You will want to gather items to engage local village children – they love nail polish, bubbles, balls, jump ropes, games, storybooks, etc. Remember, we have a no-gifting policy. We do not leave items with individuals, but the items you bring may be donated to village leaders or schools under the direction of the in-country coordinator when we leave. DO NOT BRING candy for handing out. We have even found crayons and coloring books to be difficult, as there are usually more children than supplies. Avoid items that are best used by individuals, not groups.

The expedition packet that you will receive approximately two months prior to your expedition will include a packing list of recommended items for your trip. Please contact Carrie Kirk at carrie.k@familyhumanitarian.org for specific needs or concerns.

We look forward to seeing you

on the expedition!

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