

history

Haiti was discovered in 1492 by Columbus who brought slaves from Africa to the island to serve the French who decided to settle there. Haiti was the first country in history to have a successful slave revolt resulting in the slave's independence. Unfortunately, because this was unheard of in any other country, and other Europeans and the US didn't want the same thing to happen to their countries, the event was hushed and the French charged Haiti for their "lost property." At a time when Haiti should have been growing its economy and developing as a free country, it was imprisoned by its debt to France. Meanwhile, Haiti faced a streak of ruthless leaders throughout the 20th century who not only continuously robbed Haiti, but increased its poverty level through poor plans for infrastructure, roads, a government or laws. Ultimately Haiti's state was weakened, making the country even more tragically endangered after the January 12, 2010 earthquake.

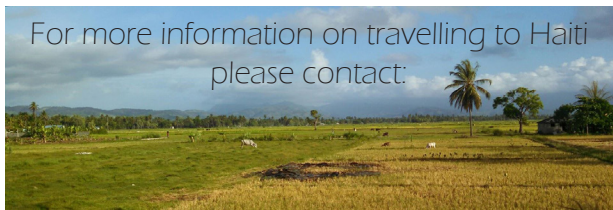


religion

There are two main religious practices in Haiti, Vodou and Christianity. In early Haitian history, slaves were forced to practice Catholicism which led them to integrate their African Folklore into the symbols of the Catholic Church. Today, approximately 80% of Haitians are Roman Catholic and 16% are Protestant. Many Haitians practice both Vodou and another religion. Many missionaries who visit Haiti see Vodou as a negative practice, without taking the time to learn about the religion or understand its cultural ties to Haiti.



Haiti is a country of great beauty and of great poverty. Unfortunately, the latter is the message imprinted on any average, news-watching individual. Many people know Haiti as "the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere," but few know it as a mountainous Caribbean island with dazzling beaches, busy cities and a joyous, laughter-filled culture. The rest of this brochure will expand upon these factors of Haiti, preparing any traveller with the basic information for understanding Haitian culture, etiquette and travel survival skills, all from the perspective of two 19 year old humanitarians who have spent the last two summers there.



For more information on travelling to Haiti please contact:

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Special thanks to Charity Hoffman for all the beautiful photographs!

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-Clothes for hot weather. Don't assume that you shouldn't dress your best. You should wear clothing that you feel comfortable in. Some women prefer dresses and skirts in the hot weather, but if you will be moving a lot and climbing in and out of high vehicles, it might be a good idea to have shorts as well. Be modest.
 -Snacks that will sustain you if you won't be eating a meal for a while. Good things to bring would be nuts or granola bars

to provide you with protein if you don't have access to a meal for a period of time. Chocolate will melt.
 -Good walking shoes, either sandals or sneakers. note: in the cities it is extremely dusty
 -Small battery powered fan
 -Bug Spray and Sun Screen
 -Cash, if you're going for a shorter duration

packing-list



food

tains. If you visit the beach, you can often order fresh fish. Water is sold on the street in little, plastic bags. They are cold and can be purchased 3 for 5 goud (about 10 cents) In Petion Ville, at night you can purchase "ji blende" - a type of smoothie filled with different fruits. A common Haitian meal, at any time of day, is spaghetti with ketchup, onions, and spices.

Haitian food is tasty and uses a lot of spice. Food you will find is white rice and bean sauce, rice and beans, mushroom rice, Creole sauce, chicken, smothered vegetables, fried pork, pickled cabbage, stew, and fried plan-

transportation

Tap Tap - informal bussing system in the back of a pick-up truck. Be prepared to be squished into a seat with as many people that will fit, and don't wait for the tap-tap to stop when you expect it to, your "mesi" or tapping, is its signal to stop.

Moto - short for motorcycle. 3 times the price but will get you there in half the time. Where a helmet to ensure your safety

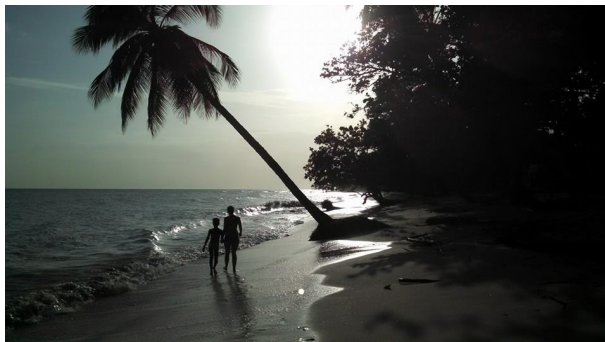


If you are a first time traveler to Haiti and you'll be there with a group, it is likely that you will be transported in a bus, SUV, or other large vehicle capable of fitting a lot of people.

Don't let the bad traffic scare you. It's something that your driver deals with every day and can handle.

money

Although all physical money is measured in Goudes, vendors will ask for "dollars" meaning Haitian dollars. 1 HD= 5 G



technology

If you are in Port au Prince, you can find a way to get internet. You can go to an internet cafe. If you are staying in a hotel, it might have internet. You can choose to use a Hot Spot, but if you are outside of a big city, it can be difficult to find internet. Don't forget to bring an international cellular phone that can travel in Haiti if you believe that you'll need it.

Many foreigners who live in Port-au-Prince don't speak Creole. Even if you only learn a few words and phrases of Creole, you will allow people to feel much more comfortable with you. If you don't speak Creole, there are plenty of ways to communicate with people! Smile! Say Bonjour! Be kind and kindness will be returned. A lot of children and even adults like having their picture taken and being shown the result. Be sure to indicate your camera and say "photo" beforehand to make sure everyone is ok with it, then snap away and have fun. Play games with the kids, be cheerful and let yourself go. With strangers, try to keep it positive

even if you're a little confused. Depending on the setting, interactions with strangers can warrant different things. It's best to ask the leader of your trip which etiquette is most appropriate. Don't give direct hangouts. If you have something you would like to donate, talk to your trip leader about what would be the best way to benefit the community.

social interaction



Common Words & Phrases

Good morning/hello Bonjou
 How are you? Koman ou ye?
 I'm fine Mwen byen
 I'm great Mwen anfom
 What's your name? Koman ou rele?
 My name is Mwen rele...
 I'm happy to meet you Mwen kontan we ou
 How much money? Konbyen lajan?
 Where? Kikote?
 What time is it? Kile li ye?
 I'm hungry Mwen grangou
 Goodevening Bonswa
 Goodnight Bon nwi
 Foreigner (get used to hearing it) Blan