

TRAVEL DAY CHECKLIST: GETTING FROM HERE TO THERE

The joys of exploring a new place ~ but first you need to get there!

Below we provide some tips to help ensure that your travel goes smoothly. Please review the information and avoid some potential travel pitfalls.

PRE-TRIP

1. Check the tickets – once you receive your flight information, please check the names on the e-tickets!

- Count the number of travelers
- Compare the names on the list to the names on the passport copies you've collected. The airlines require name on the ticket match the passport. If the names don't match you could have problems at the airport!

What if I don't? Once, a student was ticketed under the first name of "Alex", but his passport said "Alexander" – when he checked in at the airport that airline agent balked at the discrepancy. Getting him permission to travel with his group required several (begging) phone calls to Delta.

- If there are students that have booked their own flights, request a copy of the flight itinerary from the family and check to make sure it matches the group's dates and flights exactly.

What if I don't? A student whose father booked her flight separately arrived at the Seattle airport excited to join her class mates in the check-in line. When she got to the agent, it was discovered that her father booked her on a flight on the wrong day. Much angst, and two days later, she finally joined her group in Costa Rica—an \$800-dollar lesson for the family.

2. Talk with your group members about what and how to pack for the journey:

- Support students to pack only what they need in an appropriate bag for the trip. (Remind students they are responsible for carrying their own bags throughout the trip). Students / parents should review the packing list, and relevant TSA and airline guidelines before packing.
 - What you can and can't bring: www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/whatcanibring/all and carrying liquids: www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/liquids-rule
 - Be aware of the baggage allowance and checked bag fees (consult your airline's website for current information)

What if I don't? A student who doesn't pack with care risks delaying the group going through security and customs and risks having items confiscated at security.

3. Re-check your flight departure info a few days before traveling:

- Airlines are notorious for changing flight times and flight numbers. Please check your flights for updated departure times AND return times around 48 hours prior to departure. It is **your** responsibility to confirm your flight times—EcoTeach does not do this on your behalf.

What if I don't? Risk missing your flight! One group didn't check for updated times, and the airline had bumped up the departure time by one hour. While everyone made it on the plane, it was a last-minute dash.



4. Set a meeting place & time on the day of departure:

- Make sure everyone is clear on the meeting place and time. Most airlines recommend you arrive at the airline ticket counter approximately 3 hours prior to flight time.

What if I don't? One student assumed that "meeting at the airport at 7:30" referred to an evening meeting and was surprised when a classmate woke him at 8:00 AM asking why he hadn't arrived at the airport. Needless to say, he missed his flight.

AT THE U.S. AIRPORT

1. Check in as a group: Ask someone at the counter how they want to check in your group:
 - Sometimes they have you get in line and check in with various counter agents
 - Sometimes they assign a particular agent to check in your group
2. Go through security as one group: Make sure everyone is together approaching security and do a count at the departure gate. Make sure students take care with passports and boarding passes.

ARRIVAL IN COSTA RICA

- Every traveler must complete an immigration form upon arrival, which will be distributed by the flight attendants—it's helpful to have a pen handy! See the sample form on the following page. You can review the form with your students prior to travel or everyone can fill out a copy of the form and bring on the plane so passports can stay safely packed away.
- Exit the plane and follow the flow of travelers towards passport control. Cell phones and cameras cannot be used in the passport control area. Each traveler will go through passport control individually, and then proceed to the baggage claim area. The group should reassemble in the baggage claim area prior to going through customs.
- Travelers are required to put their luggage through an x-ray machine as they leave customs. Most travelers will be able to go through customs directly. Occasionally, customs agents will want to inspect the items travelers are carrying.
- After exiting the customs area, you will exit into a hallway which flows directly out of the building. This is the only exit for international flights. Expect that there will be many people crowding around the exit. Look for your guide holding an EcoTeach sign.

LEAVING COSTA RICA

- Your guides will drop you off in front of the airport.
- Head inside to your ticket counter, to check in and pay for checked baggage if needed.
- Proceed through security as a group and head to your boarding gate. Time might allow for some last-minute souvenir shopping!

ARRIVING BACK IN THE USA

Note: In some US airports, arriving travelers answer immigration and customs questions electronically. On your returning flight, you may still receive a paper form either because the airport you are arriving at has not yet made the change, or as a precaution in the event the kiosks are offline.

- After exiting the plane, follow the flow of travelers towards passport control. Cell phones and cameras cannot be used in the passport control area.
- Each traveler will go through passport control individually, and then proceed to the carousels to pick up their checked bags, if any. The group should reassemble in the baggage area.
- Once you exit the customs area, you will need to re-check your luggage that had been checked to your final destination. Follow signs to "Connecting Flight" or similar; you will need to go through TSA security lines before heading to your connecting gate.

Sample Costa Rica Customs Declaration Form

**DECLARACIÓN DE ADUANA
CUSTOMS DECLARATION**

Todo pasajero o jefe de familia que ingrese al país debe llenar una Declaración de Aduana, con letra legible / Each arriving passenger or responsible family member must provide the following information (please use print type)

Primer Apellido / Family name: Segundo Apellido / Apellido de Soltera / Mother's / Maiden:

Nombres / Given Name: Nacionalidad / Nationality:

Pasaporte / Passport: Otros / Other: N° Doc. / No. Doc.: Sexo / sex: M F

Fecha de Nac. / Date of birth: / / Medio Transporte / Means of transportation: Aereo/Air Terrestre/Ground Marítimo/Sea

N° de Vuelo / Flight number: Nombre de la Empresa / Airline / Name of the company:

Pais de Residencia / Country of residence: Pais de Procedencia / Country of origin:

Dirección Prevista / Foreseen address:

N° de Familiares que Viajan con Usted / Number of family members travelling with you: Cantidad de Equipaje / Pieces of baggage:

Visitó en el extranjero granjas, mataderos, áreas de cultivo, plantas de proceso de alimentos o similares. / Have you been in a close vicinity to livestock, food processing plants, agricultural regions, etc., prior to your travel. SI / YES NO

Trae animales, vivos, plantas o productos alimenticios. / Are you bringing live animals, plants or fresh food. SI / YES NO

Trae productos químicos, farmacéuticos, sustancias o residuos tóxicos, armas, municiones o explosivos. / Are you bringing chemical agents, pharmaceutical products, toxic substances or residues, arms ammunitions or explosives. SI / YES NO

Trae consigo más de US\$ 10,000.00 ó su equivalente en otras monedas, en efectivo, títulos valores, u otros instrumentos financieros. / Are you bringing currency or financial instruments over US\$ 10,000.00 or foreign equivalent. SI / YES NO

En caso afirmativo, indique monto y llene el formato correspondiente / If you answered yes please indicate value and fill the adequate form.

Ha disfrutado en los últimos 6 meses de exoneración de tributos / Have you been granted any tax exemption in the last 6 month. SI / YES NO

Ha permanecido fuera del país al menos 3 días / Have you remained out the country for at least 3 days. SI / YES NO

Trae mercancías distintas del equipaje (ver instrucciones al dorso) / Do you bring merchandise other than your luggage (refer to reverse) SI / YES NO

En caso afirmativo, describa las mercancías e indique el valor de las mismas / If you answered yes please list all the items that you declare and indicate their value.

Cant. / Amount	Descripción / Description	Valor / Value (\$)
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Valor total / Total value (\$)		<input type="text"/>

Declaro y juro que los datos consignados son ciertos y que he leído las instrucciones contenidas al dorso de la presente Declaración. / I declare under oath that the information I have provided is true and that I have read the instructions on the reverse side of this form.

Fecha / Date: / / Firma / Signature: _____

Dia/Day Mes/Month Año/Year