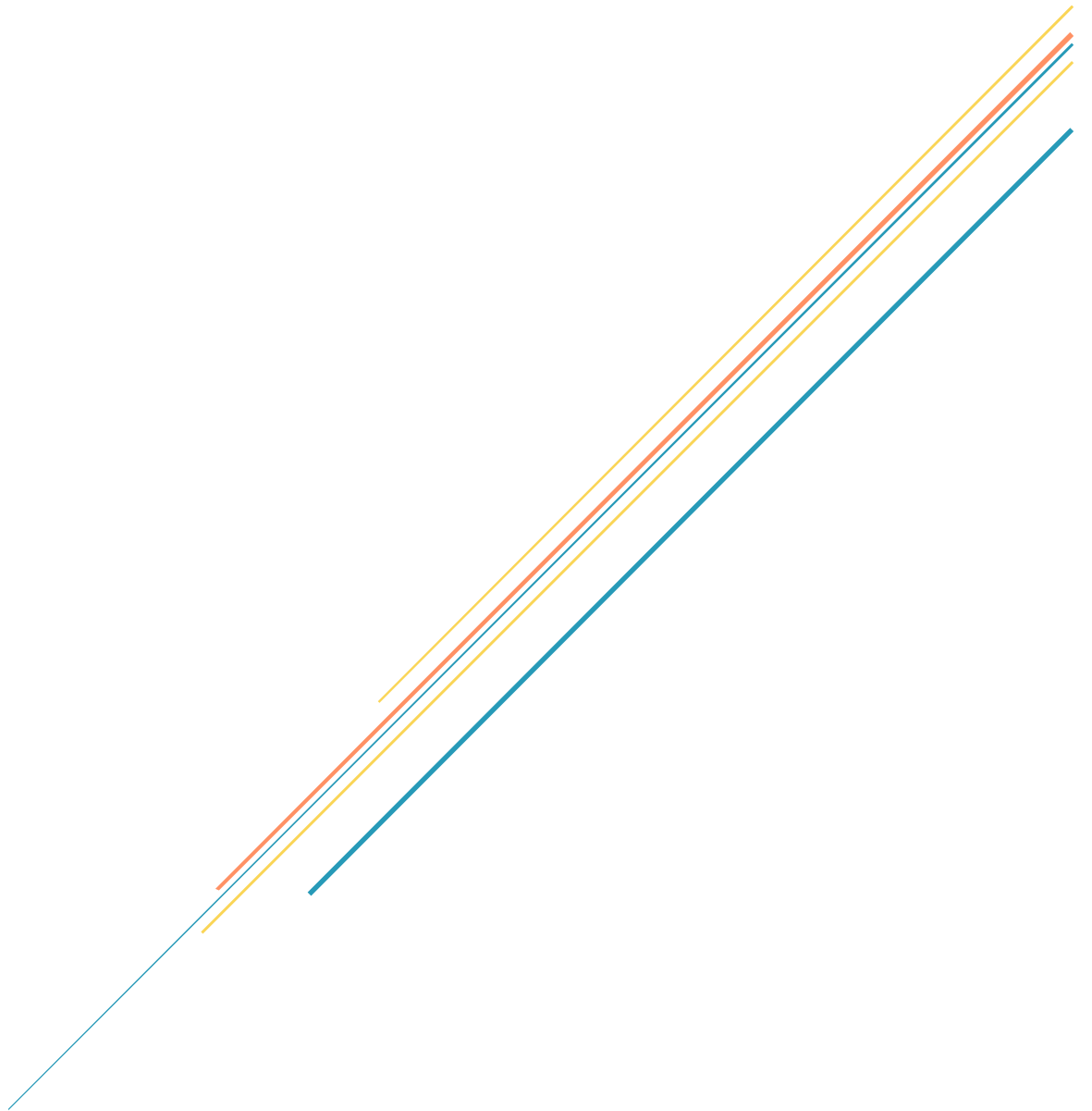


PROJECT INFORMATION PACKET

Ecuador: La Costa 2021



Amigos

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AMIGOS DE LAS AMERICAS

WHAT IS AMIGOS?

AMIGOS is a leader in international youth development, creating a world in which young people realize their full potential as leaders and global citizens. We provide extraordinary opportunities for youth to design and lead projects in collaboration with U.S. and Latin American peers and partner organizations across the Americas. Our strong partner network, built over 50 years, enables authentic engagements in communities across the region.

Since its start, AMIGOS has operated continuously in various countries in Latin America, including Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean. Currently, AMIGOS works in seven countries in Latin America (Costa Rica, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Uruguay) and the U.S. running youth leadership programs. AMIGOS always works through partnerships with local organizations and with members of host communities in Latin America and the U.S., with projects led by young people.

VISION

A world where all people are lifelong leaders sharing responsibility for our global community.

MISSION

Amigos de las Américas inspires leaders through authentic service and immersion experiences.

VALUES

- **Safety First and Always:** We prioritize the health and safety of AMIGOS volunteers above all.
- **Youth Leadership:** We believe in the capacity of youth to become leaders for positive change.
- **Transformational Outcomes:** We strive to transform volunteers and communities in measurable ways.
- **Community-Led:** We create socially and environmentally conscious partnerships through collaboration with communities throughout the Americas.
- **Diversity Throughout:** We promote diversity of volunteers and stakeholders and work to break down barriers.
- **Respect:** We maintain respect, transparency, and high standards in everything we do.

DIVERSITY

To realize the AMIGOS vision and mission, we believe in the power of every voice and the wisdom of diverse voices. AMIGOS embraces universal diversity, including:

- race

- nationality
- ethnicity
- socio-economic status
- religion
- age
- gender
- sexual orientation

AMIGOS seeks to include:

- different life experiences
- belief systems
- abilities
- opinions

throughout its work and aspires to eliminate barriers to inclusion and participation.

AMIGOS' Board of Directors and Convention of Chapter Presidents adopted this as the organization's official diversity statement in June 2012.

HISTORY

AMIGOS was founded on the principle that young people can change the world. In 1965, a 29-year-old pastor from Houston, Texas named Guy Bevil led a team of teenagers into rural Honduras to support in the fight against a growing polio epidemic. Serving communities in remote areas of the country, this group of 181 youth and 36 adults helped protect people from the crippling disease and established friendships that crossed borders. This service had a bold impact on the lives of these young people and, as a result, they returned more mature, culturally aware, and inspired to continue serving communities at home and abroad.

The AMIGOS model of developing critically engaged young leaders remains highly beneficial to youth today. AMIGOS programs have evolved to be more responsive to the changing priorities of host communities and inclusive of young people across the Americas. Today, our projects cover a broader array of activities in health and education and focus on building skills in youth of both the United States and Latin America. More than 30,000 alumni have carried on the passion and commitment that started over 50 years ago. Our successful history supports the belief that young people have the power to rise to any challenge and make a difference.

HISTORY OF AMIGOS IN ECUADOR

AMIGOS began working in Ecuador in the 1970s implementing vaccination programs and public health initiatives. In 1999, AMIGOS worked in the provinces of Tungurahua in central Ecuador and Imbabura in northern Ecuador. From 2010-2015, AMIGOS began a new youth entrepreneurship theme in Cotopaxi, Ecuador. In 2016, the project moved to Chimborazo, Ecuador. In 2017, AMIGOS opened the GAP program in the city of Cuenca where we operated year-round. Finally in 2019, for the first time AMIGOS, we began the first Summer Immersion program in Cuenca and Santa Elena.

We are very excited to come back in 2021 to this amazing and magical place. This program combines our years of knowledge in the country and approach to community involvement with our rigorous safety measures for COVID-19. We have worked to build strong ties with the new organizations and look forward to working with them for years to come.

WORK AREA DESCRIPTION

Ecuador is one of the most geographically and culturally diverse countries in the world and is home to the world's only snow-capped mountain on the Equator. The capital city, Quito, is situated amongst the beautiful Andes Mountains. The country is divided into distinct regions each with a unique climate, history, culture, and environment. In 2021, AMIGOS will be working within the provinces of Manabí and Santa Elena.

Santa Elena is Ecuador's newest province (less than eleven years old) and one of its poorest. Home to thousands of subsistence fishermen, Santa Elena is renowned for its beautiful coastline and rich waters. With temperatures ranging between 75-90 degrees year-round and a vibrant yet laid back attitude, Santa Elena, or la península as locals call it, has enticed visitors for years. Surfers from around the globe have been flocking to its northern beaches for decades.



Manabí is a province in central coastal Ecuador. Its capital is Portoviejo. Manabí has the largest Ecuadorian seaport, in Manta. As well as many small fishing villages. Manabí coast is rich with stunning beaches and striking rocky shorelines. In fact, it offers amazing sunsets that you will enjoy. A popular activity is whale watching. Especially during the summer mating period, from June to September. Indeed, this is the best most visited time. Another popular activity is surfing.

Something exciting to note, is that this will be the first time that AMIGOS will be working in Manabí. Inside the province our participants will be visiting the fabulous beach cities of Bahía de Caráquez and Puerto López.

GEOGRAPHY, CULTURE, FOOD, CLIMATE, & TRADITIONS

GEOGRAPHY

The Manabí & Santa Elena province are both located along the coast with beautiful beaches and natural landscapes to explore. With little difference in altitude, this area has uniformity of climates and environment. However, there is some variation with the tropical forests in the north and the desert plains in the south. This territory is made up of fertile plains, hills, sedimentary basins, and low elevations. Here, rivers run through from the Andes to the Pacific Ocean.

CLIMATE

These provinces are characterized by two types of climates: a hot, dry climate and a humid, tropical climate. The temperatures range from 77 degrees Fahrenheit to 96.8 degrees depending on the relief and altitude.

CULTURE & TRADITIONS

The Manabí & Santa Elena provinces are known for many festivals and celebrations. Some of them are related to religious celebrations and others to historical events. In all the celebrations, the costumes, decorations, and music showcase the styles of the Ecuadorian coast and the pride of the people. Some of the most important traditions are:

El Carnaval – Carnival is celebrated in February during a long, four-day holiday with attendance from tourists who are visiting nearby beaches. In Salinas, La Libertad, Montañita and other areas, people organize parade fairs, the election of the Queen of Carnival, and concerts with national artists. During the celebration, people play in the water and in carioaca (cotillion foam) throughout the streets and on the beach.



Semana Santa (Holly Week) - This celebration is part of the liturgical calendar and is highly respected. During Holy Week, processions and masses are held to commemorate the path that Christ traveled when he was captured and crucified.



FOOD

Although Ecuador is small, its gastronomic diversity exceeds its borders. Every region of the country has its own distinctive dishes. Below are typical foods of the Ecuadorian coastal region. These dishes include different types of seafood and the famous green banana.

Bolón de verde: This is a very popular dish that uses a roasted or fried banana that is then mashed into a ball. Cheese, pork rinds or both (usually called mixed bolón) are then added.



Encebollado: This is a signature dish on the coast of Ecuador. It consists of a broth made of fish and other ingredients like cassava, tomato, onion, peppers, lemon, and herbs.

Ceviche: Ceviche is a soup dish that contains a variety of seafood with lemon, chili pepper, cilantro, pepper, onion, and herbs. It is usually served with popcorn (canguil), toasted tortillas (tostadas) or plantain chips (chifles).



RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

We encourage you to learn more about Ecuador by looking into these resources.

[General Information About Ecuador](#)

<https://www.elcomercio.com/>

El Comercio - El Comercio is Ecuador's most widely read newspaper.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jzB0YVBUOs&t=111s>

Youtube - Geography Now, the Ecuador episode is very informative.

<https://www.state.gov/countries-areas/ecuador/>

US Department of State - Countries & Areas – Ecuador.

<https://ec.usembassy.gov/es/>

U.S. Embassy and Consulate in Ecuador.

[Online Articles/Current News Sites About Ecuador](#)

https://www.ecuadorexplorer.com/html/about_ecuador/about-ecuador-2.html

Ecuador Explorer

[Recommended Books About Ecuador](#)

The Ecuador Reader: History, Culture, and Politics

Carlos de la Torre and Steve Striffer

Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America

John Charles Chasteen

Culture Shock! Ecuador: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette

Nicholas Crowder

Culture and Customs of Ecuador

Michael Handelsman

Millennial Ecuador: Critical Essays on Cultural Transformations and Social Dynamics

Norman Whitten

The Panama Hat Trail

Tom Miller

Cañar: A Year in the Highlands of Ecuador

Judy Blankenship

Ecuador: Culture Smart (The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture)

Russel Maddicks

The Queen of Water

Maria Virginia Farinango & Laura Resau

[Recommended Movies About Ecuador](#)

Crude

Joe Berlinger

Que Tan Lejos

Ricardo Gonzalez, Cecilia Vallejo, Tania Martinez, and Pacho Aguierre

Vengo Volviendo

Gabriel Hernández and Isabela Rodas

With My Heart in Yambo

María Fernanda Restrepo

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC LANGUAGE

Every country has its own set of idioms, mannerisms, and phrases. No need to worry though; your Spanish will serve you very well this summer and will allow you to communicate with different stakeholders.

Below is a list of regional vocabulary that you should try to learn:

<i>Spanish/word</i>	Definition
<i>Chévere</i>	Commonly used to say “cool” or “nice”.
<i>Simón</i>	It is an informal way to say “Yes”. Ex: - ¿Vas a venir? – Simón.
<i>No sea malito</i>	Expression used after asking for something. It could be used for asking for more time or patience while doing something
<i>Acolitar</i>	It could mean help doing something, and/or giving something.
<i>Esfero</i>	Commonly used word for pen rather than “pluma” or “bolígrafo”.
<i>No más</i>	“No más” after the command form of a verb means “go ahead” and do whatever the verb is. For example, “come no más” means “go ahead and eat”. “Sigue no más” means “go ahead and keep on going”.
<i>¿Mande?</i>	The Ecuadorian way of asking “what” or “come again”. It is almost exclusively used instead of “cómo” or “qué”.
<i>Guineo</i>	It is used in the coast of Ecuador instead of “banano”.
<i>Harto</i>	Used to express a big quantity of something, synonym of “mucho”.
<i>Pana</i>	Commonly used to refer to a good friend. Ex: “David es mi pana”.
<i>Pilas</i>	It is used to highlight that a person is intelligent, attentive or smart.
<i>Chuta</i>	An interjection, something like “darn”. Ex: “Chuta, se me rompió la camisa”.

AMIGOS HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER PROGRAM 2021

PROGRAM GOALS AND PILLARS

All AMIGOS programs and project areas are different! They are uniquely designed to fit the needs of our volunteers, partner agencies, host communities, and the regions we work in. However, all programs are designed to meet 3 goals and uphold 5 pillars:

Program Goals

1. Develop young people's personal leadership capacities.
2. Strengthen young people's commitment to community engagement and service.
3. Increase young people's cross-cultural capacity and competence.

Program Pillars

1. Training and Curriculum

Volunteers build their leadership and community development skills through hands-on training. All programs include leadership, community service, and cross-cultural humility training. Volunteers have a hands-on training throughout the experience.

2. Language and Cultural Immersion

Volunteers are immersed in the culture and language of their host country by interacting with locals in the pod, collaborating with partner agency members, and participating in cultural activities and excursions.

3. Community Service

Volunteers learn about design-thinking and begin to think through the design of a service project that they will carry out upon arriving back home.

4. Mentorship

Every volunteer is mentored by a staff team member and receives personalized feedback on their development as a leader throughout their experience.

5. Reflection and Continued Engagement

Volunteers are guided through various reflection activities during their experience. Upon successful completion of a program, all alumni are encouraged to climb our leadership ladder to continue building their leadership skills as members of our project staff teams, our training teams, or through other opportunities.

ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER

As you prepare for the adventure that lies ahead, think about your role as an AMIGOS, as a member of a team, and group of fellow peers. How do you hope to integrate into the group while also learning about the local culture?

Keep in mind that sometimes it may be hard to find tangible benefits to your experience throughout the trip, because it won't be easy. However, your primary role as a volunteer on our programs is to **LEARN** about the local culture, to **PRACTICE** your Spanish with fellow group members and locals, to **SUPPORT** the work of your partner agency through your volunteer service work, to **FACILITATE** group activities, to **SHARE** your passions and to serve as a **CATALYST** for change and multi-cultural understanding.

You are a:

- Community action promoter
- Representative of your home community and your country
- Representative of AMIGOS
- Representative of your partner agency
- Guest in a foreign country and community
- Organizer, motivator, facilitator, role model, student, and friend
- Spanish-speaker
- Humble human being – you're going to discover that there is much more to learn than we have to teach. Be open to learning all that you can, and let your local contacts share their experiences and wisdom with you!

PROJECT SPECIFIC INFORMATION

PROJECT THEME

This project will be developed on the Ecuadorian Coast specifically in the provinces of Manabí and Santa Elena. One of the most important objectives of the program is to understand and expand our knowledge about two very relevant issues for this region: disaster recovery and climate change.

Through visits to areas where these problems are most pertinent, the participants of this project will understand more about the importance and conservation of natural resources, specifically marine resources, to ensure the well-being of the community. At the same time, they will hear from different organizations and local people about the challenges of climate change and its implications on people's lives.

Visiting a city on the Ecuadorian coast affected by various natural disasters will undoubtedly help us to better understand the aftermath of a natural disaster, what effects it has on the communities, and what the needs of the affected populations. It is inspiring to see the resilience of the cities that have been badly hit and how they have worked to rebuild.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

REVA

R.E.V.A. is a network formed by students and professionals committed to the current environmental issues facing the planet. It focuses on the impacts of climate change and the generation of solutions to mitigate them. It was founded in 2018 by a group of friends who were determined to create significant changes and today is gaining traction in the national and international space.

Fundación COASE (Conservación Ambiental Santa Elena)

The COASE Foundation (Conservación Ambiental Santa Elena) is a private non-profit organization formed by a team of interdisciplinary professionals, natives, and residents of the province of Santa Elena with experience in environmental issues. They facilitate the processes of socio-environmental improvement, generating competencies and local capacities through actions, projects and programs that guarantee the sustainable development of the province of Santa Elena. In addition, they promote scientific research in search of solutions to existing environmental problems.

Tierra BellBaum

Tierra BellBaum is an organization that conducts agroecological practices which are necessary for present and future generations. Tierra BellBaum is a project that, together with its collaborators and visitors, grows every day and is nourished by astonishment, errors, and satisfactions. They are permanently connected with a land treated with respect, a land which inspires us to share its fruits.

Rio Muchacho

Rio Muchacho is a 10-hectare organic farm and ecological center, located in a valley in the center of the Ecuadorian coast. It is 40 minutes north of the Ecological City of Bahía de Caráquez and 15 minutes from the popular beach of Canoa. In line with their vision and mission, they have created a unique ecological space for their visitor where they can relax, learn, and explore in a tranquil environment of abundant and diverse nature, far from resembling the typical impersonal and inauthentic tourist attractions.

GENERAL PROJECT CALENDAR

Days	Activities
Day 1 - 2	<p>Arrive to the airport in Guayaquil. Spend 1 night at a hostel in Guayaquil.</p> <p>Enjoy Guayaquil warm weather while you have breakfast. Travel to Bahía de Caráquez. Get settled at hostel to start briefing.</p>
Day 2 - 13	<p>Bahía de Caráquez: Briefing + Quarantine: Briefing activities, outdoor fun, 2 COVID tests (day 5 & 10), icebreakers, team building and group tone setting.</p> <p>Volunteers will stay in a 10-hectare organic farm and ecological center. Here participants will develop environmental related activities with them.</p> <p>Will visit Bahía de Caráquez, a city that has been impacted by multiple natural disasters.</p> <p>Participants will also discuss and debate with a local environmental youth group about the links between the environment and natural disasters.</p>
Day 13 - 15	<p>Puerto López: Road tripping along part of the "Ruta del Spondylus" - Visit Spend "Machalilla National Park".</p>
Day 15 - 20	<p>Participants will travel to Santa Elena (Ayangue).</p> <p>Will meet with organizations and hear from them about the challenges of resource extraction and climate change.</p> <p>Volunteers will also enjoy the beach.</p>
Day 21	<p>Fly out of the Guayaquil airport!</p>

POSSIBLE EXCURSIONS

Machalilla National Park

Machalilla National Park is named after the ancient people who once lived along this stretch of the Pacific Coast. The park was created to protect several unique habitats including the endangered tropical, dry forest, the desert-like islands just off the coast, and stunningly long stretches of beach.



Corazon Island

The islands of Corazon and Fragatas are located close to the outlet of the Chone river, offshore from the cities of Bahia de Caraquez and San Vicente. The refuge protects the remaining mangrove habitat that is within this estuary. The area is a resting and nesting site for seabirds and shorebirds among which we find an important colony of frigatebirds.



Lobería and the Chocolatera

Lobería and Chocolatera are both located in Puntilla Santa Elena Coastal Marine Faunal Production Reserve.

Lobería: Lobería is a beautiful beach in the Pacific that is home to sea lions and is a place where you can relax in the warm climate while taking in the ocean views.

Chocolatera: Chocolatera is a cliff where you will be able to feel the strength of the sea as the waves break against the rocky coastline.



PACKING LIST

You should bring clothes you already have from home and are comfortable wearing! You do not need to purchase a whole new wardrobe. Bags can get lost on their way to Ecuador. Please remember to pack any essentials; including a change of clothes, toiletries, and prescription medications, in your carry-on luggage to tide you over should that happen.

Please be sure to read to entire packing list and all the extra tips. Remember that you will be living in a tropical and humid climate. You will be on or near the coast with warm to hot temperatures. **Note: Ecuador is on the equator and the sun is very strong. Always wear sunscreen even if it is cloudy outside. Pay special attention to the suggested quantities.** If you have questions while you are packing, please do not hesitate to email us: amigosprogramas@amigosinternational.org

Clothing

- 1 pairs of jeans
- 2 pairs of work pants that you don't mind getting dirty (good for hikes and for excursions)
- 2 pairs of shorts,
- 1 pair of sweats, or yoga pants for exercise or for hanging around the house
- 5 comfortable t-shirts for working outside and/or exercising
- 1 nice shirt (polo, blouse, button-up, or t-shirts)
- 1 skirt or dress (if desired)
- AMIGOS polo
- 1 warm fleece jacket
- 7 pairs of underwear & socks
- 2 bras (if desired)
- 1 set of warm & conservative sleepwear
- 1 set of lightweight sleep wear for a warmer climate
- 1 pair of comfortable closed-toed shoes/tennis shoes
- 1 pair of hiking boots
- 1 pair of flip flops
- 1 pair of rubber sandals (e.g. Tevas, Chacos, Crocs, etc.)
- 1 swimsuit

All Volunteers Should Bring

- 1 waterproof rain jacket (should fit over warm fleece jacket)
- 1 bottle of sunscreen (SPF 30 or greater)
- 1 hat with a brim (a baseball hat is fine)
- 1 reusable water bottles (1 liter—two 1-liter water bottles if not bringing a LifeStraw)
- 1 [LifeStraw Waterbottle](#) (highly recommended)*
- 1 mosquito net and hanging supplies (refer to Required Immunization and Medication List)

- 1 pair of garden/work gloves
- 1 bottles of mosquito repellent
- A day bag/small backpack for carrying stuff on short trips
- Thermometer and basic first aid kit
- 2 washable face masks
- Prescription medications (if applicable)
- Toiletries: soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, shampoo, conditioner, razor, deodorant, hairbrush.
- 1 washcloth and 1 towel (quick drying is recommended)
- Luggage Locks (these are useful for independent travel)
- Spanish-English dictionary
- Health, Safety, and Travel Guidelines
- Project Information Packet (this packet)
- Money & ATM card
- Passport & two copies of the first page of your passport
- COVID negative test results
- Plane tickets, if applicable, and confirmation codes for e-tickets

- Recommended Items**
- Small, inexpensive camera and extra batteries or charger
- Journal & pens
- Small photo album with extra pictures of yourself or your family to give away
- Umbrella
- Sunglasses

- Optional Items**
- Reading books (limit 2 - you can trade books with others)
- Board games & cards
- Multi-vitamins

**LifeStraw water bottle information from website:

- Protects against 99.999999% of bacteria (including E.coli, Salmonella), 99.999% of parasites (including Giardia and Cryptosporidium), 99.999% of microplastics, chlorine, organic chemical matter, dirt, and, and cloudiness; improves taste
- Long-lasting membrane microfilter lasts up to 1,000 gallons (4,000 L) and the activated carbon filter lasts up to 26 gallons (100 L) of water with proper use and maintenance
- Durable and BPA-free, independently lab tested to meet drinking water protocols established by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and NSF International/ANSI
- 22oz and 1L capacity. Every fill avoids single use plastic bottled water! Easy to use, easy to clean bottle and cap are dishwasher safe once the filter is removed.