

PLEASE READ!

This document will answer many of your questions as you prepare for our trip. This is a great deal to absorb, but please read it all the way through and don't hesitate to ask questions. Thank you!

About our leaders

Ezra Teshome, Ben Abe, Dave Weaver, and Ralph Munro have led groups of Rotarians to Africa for many years. Ezra and Ben came to the United States from East Africa and are now successful businessmen in the Pacific Northwest. Both now devote a good deal of their time and talent to projects that benefit those less fortunate. Because they are so well respected in Ethiopia and Uganda, it is possible for our group to participate in activities unavailable to most tourists and travelers.

Ralph and Dave have been to Uganda and Ethiopia many, many times. We are grateful for their assistance with the planning and development of the trip.

Much of the information you receive will be distributed through Jan Nutting. If you have questions or concerns, please send them to Jan at jannutting2@comcast.net and she will send them on to the appropriate person for response. Jan also has traveled to East Africa a number of times and her family now includes four amazing Ethiopian daughters.

Every person working on the coordination of this trip is doing so out of love for the people of Africa and commitment to the goal of defeating polio once and for all. We are all volunteers with busy families and demanding jobs, so your patience is sometimes required and always appreciated.

As we travel, please remember to be flexible. There will be changes and some surprises – there always are! - and sometimes it just is not possible to stick to a schedule. Our friends in Africa work under difficult conditions, and the electricity, phone service and internet connections we all take for granted are not always available. It can take a very, very long time to check in to a hotel in the more remote areas, and twice as long to check out. The less hurried pace in Africa will give you time to stop and realize how many wonderful advantages we enjoy as Canadians and Americans.

We hope the following information will be helpful as you prepare to travel with us. Again, we are happy to help with individual questions and will respond to your inquiries promptly.

Joining the Team

Although we would love to travel with everyone who applies this year, that will not be possible. The number of travelers must be restricted to ensure a safe and productive experience for everyone. Once we have reached the maximum number for the group, we will add names to a waiting list. Thank you for understanding.

The value of this trip to Ethiopia

First, the fact that our group travels so far every year to assist during National Immunization Days demonstrates that we care. Although there are many serious diseases affecting the people of Ethiopia, our focus has been on polio and we will continue this work until polio is eradicated.

Second, our presence and encouragement mean a great deal to the Ethiopian Rotary Clubs. We support them in their many efforts to improve the lives of the people of Ethiopia – we work together on water and library projects, provide much-needed donations and supplies, and assist with the polio vaccination project.

Third, we visit the country's leaders, fostering international friendship and talking with them about the importance of polio immunization.

Finally, few Americans have traveled to Ethiopia. You will learn so much in our week together, and you will return home to teach and inspire others. You will undoubtedly find a project that tugs at your heart, and you will be passionate about raising awareness and finding a way to help. You will make lifelong friends, both among your fellow travelers and among the Ethiopian Rotarians who provide a warm welcome and a wonderful week. Each of you will gain a level of understanding impossible to achieve without a hands-on experience.

Those of us who have traveled with Ezra, Ben, Dave, and Ralph in the past have been changed forever. We appreciate our privileges and blessings much more than ever before, and our priorities are very different when we get back home.

Polio immunization information

The Ethiopian health service has worked very hard since the polio vaccination campaigns began several years ago, but to be sure that polio is eradicated forever we will support the immunization campaign again this fall.

Our group will be accompanied by health workers in the field. Sometimes we walk from house to house, sometimes we immunize at schools or health centers, but always we meet wonderful people and go away knowing that the children we've helped to immunize will never feel the pain of polio.

Travel

If you have questions about flights to Ethiopia and Uganda, please contact Ben Abe. Ben's contact information is as follows:

World Travel Center and Safaris

1127-1/2 34th Ave.
Seattle, WA 98122
Phone: 206-328-2677
Fax: 206-322-1901
E-Mail: cancoya@aol.com

Ben will book the majority of the group on Ethiopian Airlines flights. You may, of course, make your own travel arrangements if you prefer. Please note: **If Ben does not make your travel arrangements, you must be certain that we have your flight information.** The group will be met by our trip leaders and local Rotarians, and if you arrive separately we will need to arrange for you to be brought to the hotel.

APPROXIMATE TRAVEL COSTS

Airfare – Ben will arrange a group rate for those traveling with the team. Information about airfare and flight times will be distributed soon.

Lodging – Hotel rates at nicer hotels in Addis are comparable to those at hotels in the US. We will stay at the Hilton Hotel. Ezra will negotiate the best possible rate, which last year was about \$95 per night for a single person and approximately \$115/night for two persons sharing a room.

Ezra will make all hotel reservations in Addis and the outlying areas for you.

Accommodations in outlying areas are small local hotels, which will probably run US \$60 - \$75. Some of the little hotels are better than others, so you will need to remember that you are having an adventure and will have some great stories to tell when you get home. Keep in mind that even the most humble hotel by our standards is far more luxurious than anything the average Ethiopian person will experience in his life.

Food – A breakfast meeting will be held each morning. All travelers must attend the morning meetings; the leaders will brief you on the activities of the day at that time.

You will be responsible for the costs of most meals, which may be eaten on the road or at a restaurant. Some dinners may be enjoyed at the homes of

our Ethiopian hosts. Please expect to pay for any alcoholic beverages you enjoy on this trip.

Shopping – Be sure to take extra cash for the wonderful shopping opportunities you will encounter – you’ll feel good about giving local businesses a little boost.

Visas – Visas are required for each country you intend to visit. Information about visas is included in the ‘Passports and Visas’ section below.

Travel Inoculations – Please contact your doctor or travel clinic to determine which vaccinations are needed. Important: The cost may be significant, and most medical insurance will not pay for travel vaccinations. The Centers for Disease Control recommendations for Ethiopia and Uganda may be found here:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/ethiopia>

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/uganda>

In-country costs in Ethiopia and Uganda – You will contribute **\$500.00** for the time spent in Ethiopia and, if you travel on to Uganda, an additional **\$475** for the week there to ensure that our visit is not a burden on our African hosts, to cover the costs of bus and van transportation, and to pay the expenses of our wonderful Rotaract companions. **Payment for these costs is due when your participation is confirmed.**

Passports and visas

Please check your passport one more time to be sure it is valid for six months after the date of return from the NID (valid until at least June 2018).

You will need a visa for each country you visit. In the past, travelers have been able to obtain visas on arrival in Ethiopia, but that practice will be discontinued in the future so we encourage you to purchase your visas well before you travel. **You will receive a separate message regarding purchase of visas.** Ben will be happy to coordinate the visa process for you and we will distribute forms and instructions soon.

Travel Insurance

- All travelers must obtain travel insurance that includes coverage for medical evacuation. You may purchase this insurance through Ben Abe or through an agent of your choice. Please be prepared to offer proof of insurance prior to departure.

In addition, all travelers must send a completed hold harmless form with original signature prior to traveling. We cannot allow any exceptions.

Baggage allowance

- Please check with the airline just before traveling to obtain the latest baggage requirements. At the time this was written, travelers were allowed two bags weighing no more than 50 pounds each. Fees and restrictions vary. Please note: There are weight restrictions for bags carried on international flights. Please be sure the bags you plan to carry on weigh no more than 15 pounds.
- If you wish to donate supplies for organizations in Ethiopia, please consider bringing school supplies and educational posters, first aid kits, or soccer balls and a needle and pump.
- If you have additional room in your luggage, please let us know. Supplies have been collected for use in orphanages, schools, and hospitals, but sending them by mail is extremely expensive. It would be wonderful if you could carry them to Ethiopia and Uganda.

First aid, medical, and personal care items

- Be sure you have received all the **immunizations** required by Ethiopia and Uganda and recommended by your doctor or travel clinic.
- **Bring malaria medication prescribed by your doctor or travel clinic. It is very important that you obtain the medicine and take it as directed.**
- Your doctor may choose to prescribe an **antibiotic** for you to take along – you probably won't need it, but it's wise to be prepared.
- Take your **prescriptions** in their original bottles, and make a list of the prescriptions you have with you. Carry the list separately so your medications can be replaced if necessary.
- Carry your **health card** (showing the immunizations you have received – proof that you have received a Yellow Fever vaccination is required for entry into Uganda from Ethiopia) with your passport.
- Take plenty of **insect repellent**.
- You will need **sunscreen, sunglasses**, and maybe a **hat** – Ethiopia boasts 13 months of sunshine!
- **Toilet paper** – don't bring the big cushy rolls, but see if you can find the little travel kind. You'll be very glad you have it.
- **Pepto Bismol** – just in case.
- **Antiseptic wipes** – there are lots of places you can't wash your hands.
- **Bring a towel**. Hotels in remote areas may not provide towels at all, and some hotels furnish tiny, tiny towels. We had quite a towel adventure one year...ask Dave Weaver to tell you the whole sordid story.
- **Soap, shampoo**, etc. – some hotels may provide them, but hotels in outlying areas probably will not.
- **Listerine** – you can't rinse your toothbrush in tap water!
- **Lip balm** – preferably with sunscreen. Sunburned lips are no fun.
- BE SURE to check with your airline for current restrictions on carry-on items.

- You may not be able to use curling irons and hair dryers in outlying areas. We'll all look equally mussed.
- You will want to bring adapters if you're hoping to use electricity, but please remember that electricity is not always available in outlying areas.
- **Please note: the elevation in Addis is 8,000 feet above sea level. Allow time for your body to adjust.**

Clothing

- Temperatures in Ethiopia will be similar to Seattle's fall weather, with warm days and cool evenings. The rainy season will be over when we arrive, but you will want to **take a light jacket**. Normally the days are about 75 degrees – very nice.
- Most of the time we will wear light shirts and jeans or casual slacks. Be sure to have long-sleeved shirts for mosquito protection in the evenings.
- Choose clothing that will not show the dirt. Most roads are unpaved, you will get dusty, and it may be difficult to do laundry.
- Most folks in East Africa are very modest. **Shorts and short skirts are not worn by our group in Ethiopia**, as they may be perceived as disrespectful.
- You will need at least one sport coat or semi-dressy outfit (business attire). Some Addis Rotary groups take their groups to various embassies and dressy restaurants, and we will probably be able to visit the presidential palace, as well.
- Many women have found that long skirts are wonderful for staying covered when making rest stops in areas without bathrooms.
- It's VERY important to have comfortable shoes – wear the most comfortable shoes you own. You will be doing a great deal of walking.

Miscellaneous things we were glad we packed:

- Flashlight – very useful when the electricity goes off.
- Batteries – it may be hard to get them in Ethiopia.
- Journal
- Camera – Polaroid cameras are fun to take because the people you will meet love to have photos of themselves. Ralph said you can find Polaroids at Goodwill and other second-hand stores for next to nothing. The film is not so cheap, but worth every dollar. Be sure to take everything you will need for your camera, since there are not many places to purchase batteries, cards, etc
- Energy bars – it's nice to have a snack handy.
- Small pack to take on day trips – you won't want to drag everything everywhere you go.
- Business-type cards with your e-mail address – you will want to keep in touch with the friends you make in Ethiopia.
- Zip-Lock bags are good for all kinds of things.
- Personal first aid kit with lots of Band-Aids and antiseptic salve.

Currency

- Plan to carry cash. The hotel in Addis offers a safe. Very crisp, new-looking \$100 bills printed recently (get the newest bills available) give the best exchange rates and sometimes are the only ones accepted.
- There are few cash machines. Purchasing with Visa or MasterCard is possible in some areas, but don't plan on it. (Hotels in Addis will usually accept a bank card, but hotels in outlying areas are not likely to do so.)
- Bring a little bit extra for shopping – you will find wonderful things.
- Consider bringing enough money that you can donate for the project of your choice. Travelers have bought desks for schools, mosquito nets for areas where malaria is a threat, and a group of Hawaiian Rotarians paid for a well that serves an entire village.

Gifts for hosts and kids

- Please consider taking a laptop computer (no more than 3 years old) to donate. Although laptops are common in the US, for most Ethiopian students a laptop is an impossible dream. Laptops donated by Rotarians have helped many Ethiopian students to succeed.
- Probably the very most enthusiastically received gifts are deflated soccer balls, a pump, and soccer uniforms. Local schools often will donate used uniforms, and they are a huge hit in both Ethiopia and Uganda.
- Small gifts of American food are great for host/hostess gifts.
- You might take little trick-or-treat sized boxes of raisins to hand out along the way. So many of the kids we encounter are hungry, and they love dried fruit.
- Students of all ages enjoy pencils and pens. School supplies are badly needed and sincerely appreciated.
- **Please do NOT bring candy** - most of the kids you will see have beautiful teeth, and that is largely because they don't have sugary treats. And **please do not bring items that would not be safe for small children** (nothing sharp or breakable).
- It is not practical to bring books because of their weight.
- Postcards with photos of North American scenes are inexpensive gifts for adults and children alike. Most Ethiopian children have never seen a whale or a bear or the Space Needle.

Eating in Ethiopia

- Ethiopian food is wonderful. Many of our meals will be pre-arranged by local Rotary Clubs, but some meals will be on our own. When we are on the road, we often find cafes or restaurants along the way. It is a good idea to bring snacks from home in case you get hungry between times.
- To avoid an upset digestive system, **it is vital that you refrain from drinking local water**. Bottled water is widely available.

- **Use good judgment about eating food offered by gracious village residents or sold on the street.** Translation: if you eat food from a villager or street vendor, you could well spend the next few days regretting that decision. **IF YOU GET SICK, PLEASE NOTIFY THE TRIP LEADERS IMMEDIATELY.** They will do their best to make you comfortable and determine whether help is needed.

Transportation

- Our usual mode of transportation in the Addis area will be by bus or van. The roads are rough, the traffic is crazy, and we bounce around a lot. The countryside is amazingly beautiful and the people are very friendly.

Language

- English is taught in the schools, so many of the people (particularly children) you meet will speak English. Amharic is widely spoken, and we are accompanied by Rotarians and Rotaract kids who will help with translation as needed.
- We will visit schools, and you will have an opportunity to help teach in a classroom for a short time if you like. You may talk about your community or any topic you think would be of interest. Classes are quiet and respectful, and you will be very well received.

One last note

Our leaders will do their very best to ensure that we are safe and have a meaningful experience in East Africa, and we need to be flexible and cooperative to make it all work. As Ralph will remind you, this is definitely not a leisurely vacation trip – you will be exhausted and dusty at the end of the day, but you will know without a doubt that your presence in Ethiopia truly made a difference.