



MISSION TEAM TRAVEL INFORMATION





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INTRODUCTION

Buyamba, Inc. welcomes all teams who are interested in serving on a short-term missions visit to God Cares Primary and Secondary Schools. We certainly appreciate your support of this worthy ministry and your willingness to serve the orphans and needy children at God Cares. Pastors Bethuel and Florence Dongo look forward to hosting any team that wishes to travel to Uganda. They appreciate your generous help and labor of love and would like to assure you of Uganda's government stability.

However, travel to Africa does require some preparation. We offer full support in answering the myriads of questions that teams have when considering a mission to Uganda; from questions on travel information and immunizations to food and lodging and many other pertinent bits of information. We will even avail ourselves to conduct in-person team briefings, when possible, or can do so via telephone conference. For your convenience, we have compiled this "Mission Team Travel Information" handout, which covers detailed information, tips and FAQ's to assist team leaders in preparing your teams for travel and as you answer God's call to His Great Commission.

SCHEDULING YOUR TRIP

If your church, school or group is interested in scheduling a short-term missions trip or would like further information about serving the children at God Cares School, contact Degna Horton at degna@ugandabuyamba.com or call (805) 405-6431.

Individuals interested in serving an extended or long term mission may also contact Degna Horton for further information and availability.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

PASSPORT: You will need a current U.S. Passport book to travel to Uganda. We do advise that you make at least 2 extra copies (one to keep at home and the other to take with you on your trip, should your original passport be lost or stolen). Team leaders might insist on keeping an extra passport copy for each of their members in their possession. We also suggest that you travel with at least 2 extra passport photos.

VISA: A visa is needed for entry to Uganda. The cost is \$50 USD for single entry (valid for three months from the date of arrival). Teams may purchase their Uganda visas through the Ugandan Embassy in Washington D.C prior to arriving. Go to <http://www.ugandaembassy.com> for more information. Smaller teams of 10 or less members may choose to purchase their visas at Entebbe Int'l before clearing Immigration. The cost is \$50 USD and needs to be purchased with bills that are dated 2001 or newer. It is highly recommended that teams use actual fifty dollar bill denominations if purchasing visas at Entebbe. Don't expect them to have change for you if you purchase your visa at the airport.

FLIGHT INFORMATION

BOOKING: Tickets can be purchased with your travel agent. We recommend Leveta Thompson at Class Act Consultants. She specializes in booking travel for mission teams. She can be contacted at (800) 453-8382 or by email at levetathompson@yahoo.com.

Prior to booking, please confirm your proposed dates with us. Once you have booked your flight please forward that information to Degna Horton at degna@ugandabuyamba.com as soon as possible.

FLIGHT TIME: It is a long flight to Uganda (about 22 hours of travel at minimum, depending on your choice of airline carrier and ticketed route). Please encourage your team members to wear comfortable, loose clothing and be sure to drink lots of water throughout your flight. Staying hydrated can help reduce susceptibility to illness.

BAGGAGE/CARRY ON: If possible take clothing that you are willing to leave in Uganda for those needing clothing: students, staff, and missionaries. Put a change of clothes, toiletries and important medication in your carry-on. In other words, be prepared in the event your luggage does not arrive with you at Entebbe so that you will have something to meet your immediate needs.

Most airlines allow two 50 lb. bags per passenger (U.S. passengers), plus a carry on. However, airlines are continually revising their baggage policies. Please verify the current baggage weight and dimension allowances with your airline. Rubbermaid tubs (or other brands) are convenient to pack for traveling and great to leave at God Cares' Schools for additional storage, as they keep rats and bugs out. We recommend taking an inventory and numbering each bag. The team leader should have a copy of these numbered bag inventories with him/her for easy reference, should Ugandan Customs desire to conduct a search of a specific bag or suitcase.

CUSTOMS: You must pass through a customs booth before you will see anyone in the main lobby of the airport. Please be courteous, but **do not volunteer any information that they do not ask.** Example: When the customs agent asks you if you have anything to declare, ask, "Like what?" Let him list the things. Tell him that you are in his country to do missions work with God Cares School.

TRAVEL MEDICAL INSURANCE

Though we hope no one traveling to Uganda will ever need medical care, we do recommend that team members purchase travel medical insurance. **Check the following sites for free and reasonable coverage quotes:**

www.travelinsurance.com

www.hthtravelinsurance.com

www.totaltravelinsurance.com

IMMUNIZATIONS

The Yellow Fever vaccine has been the only immunization, requiring documentation, for travel to Uganda. **All visitors must be prepared to present a yellow fever certificate to the Uganda Immigration officials upon landing at Entebbe Int'l Airport.**

Besides the Yellow Fever vaccine, the U.S Health Dept. also recommends Hepatitis A and B (if working with or near blood) and Typhoid. Prescription anti-diarrhea pills (usually Cipro), for traveler's diarrhea, are also strongly recommended. With regards to obtaining immunizations in preparation for travel, there are many "Travel Doctors" around the country. However, the county public health departments offer the most inexpensive immunizations. **It is recommended that all immunizations be completed at least 3 weeks before your departure to Uganda.**

Malaria is a serious disease that can be fatal. There is no immunity to it. However, there are also precautions as well as treatments in the event that you might contract malaria. In order to prevent malaria it is advised that you take the following precautions:

- Keep well covered, especially from dusk to dawn.
- Use mosquito nets.
- Use insect repellents with a high concentration of deet.
- Take anti-malarial drugs before you come and after you leave.

Health professionals will discuss your anti-malaria drug options when you go to receive your immunizations. However, we recommend Malarone (www.malarone.com) for anti-malarial medication.

U.S EMBASSY REGISTRATION

Please register online with the embassy before traveling to Uganda. When an emergency happens, or if natural disaster, terrorism, or civil unrest strikes during your stay in Uganda, the embassy or consulate can be your source of assistance and information. By registering your trip, you help the embassy or consulates locate you when you might need them the most. Registration is voluntary and costs nothing, but it should be a big part of your travel planning and security.

Team members can do so at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. Choose "Register my Trip" on the right hand side of the page, choose "New Short Term Traveler", fill out the form, and click "Continue".

The U.S Embassy in Uganda is located near God Cares School at:
Plot 1577 Ggaba Road,
Kampala, Uganda.
Tel: 0414 259 791/2/3/5 **Fax:** 0414 259 794
Website: <http://kampala.usembassy.gov/>

TRANSPORTATION

Pastor Dongo will arrange for your transport to and from the airport, as well as all other transportation needs while you are in Uganda. For planning purposes, he will give teams an estimate of these costs as they do fluctuate with gasoline prices. The school is about a 40 - 45 minute drive from the airport.

SPENDING MONEY AND CURRENCY EXCHANGE

The Uganda Schilling (USH) is the country's national currency. The rate of exchange for the Uganda Schilling tends to vary between 1,700 – 2,100 USH to \$1.00 USD, averaging around 1,850 USH.

When traveling to Uganda, it is strongly recommended that visitors travel with U.S currency in \$100 bills for the best conversion rates. These bills should be issued in 2001 or later (e.g. 2001, 2002, etc.) and be free of noticeable blemishes (i.e. pen marks, stamps, writing, etc.) Bills issued earlier than 2001 will either be refused or accepted at a much lower conversion rate (~1400 currently)

Alternatively, if you have a Visa debit card, you may use it at most of the ATM machines in Kampala. If you plan to do this, please inform your bank that you will be traveling to Uganda so that they don't put a hold on your account due to foreign withdrawals, and expect additional fees attached to your withdrawals. If you have a Bank of America account, you can withdraw money at any Barclays Bank free of fees.

Remember: \$100 bills issued in 2001 or newer are recommended.

Currency Converter (USD to USH): [Yahoo Finance](#)

ACCOMMODATIONS / FOOD / WATER

ACCOMMODATIONS: Accommodations are made and confirmed for all teams prior to their arrival in Kampala. Pastor Dongo works with several nearby Christian guest houses and hotels for reasonable rates. Most of these properties are located within walking distance to the school. Teams can average approximately \$20 - \$25 per day for lodging for each team member (\$30/couple). Breakfast is included in these rates. **Mosquito nets** are provided for each bed along with linens. However, it is advised that teams bring their own linens and towels.

FOOD: Teams can budget about \$20.00/day for lunch and dinner. Bottled water is also included in this estimate. Lunch is prepared daily at the school for the teams. Dinner is sometimes prepared as well. However, teams are able to have dinner at recommended local restaurants within the daily budget. Team members are advised to drink and brush their teeth with bottled water ONLY.

COMMUNICATION

Teams have access to a nearby internet café. Rates are very affordable. Phone cards are also easily purchased as well as SIM cards for your global phone. To use your phone in Uganda, it must be at least a tri-mode phone with the GSM frequency of 900 and/or 1800 MHz. Keep in mind that most phones in the US are locked. Please contact your provider for an unlock code or search the internet to purchase an unlock code. Skype service is also available at the café but it is slow. A phone will be provided for your team leader upon arrival to assist with communication while in Uganda.

WHAT TO WEAR

Kampala temperatures are an average of 80-85°F with high humidity. However, it can get cool in the evenings. A light sweatshirt or cardigan is recommended. Since it can rain regularly, a lightweight, hooded raincoat can be handy.

We recommend that women wear dresses and skirts long enough to cover the knees while sitting. However, jeans and t-shirts are perfectly acceptable for those engaging in manual/hard labor (construction or agriculture). In order to respect the Ugandan culture, girls should refrain from wearing shorts in public, even at God Cares Schools. Modesty is the rule of thumb for all female team members. Please refrain from wearing mid-drifts, tops with spaghetti straps or visible bra straps.

Men should wear trousers (not jeans) and a collared shirt for church and all important occasions. Shorts and jeans are for work in construction or agriculture, teaching P.E., relaxing, and informal occasions.

Closed toe shoes are also recommended but sandals or thongs are fine to wear at the school as long as members are not engaging in construction. Remember to apply DEET to your clothing, arms and legs before leaving your room in the mornings.

Please remember that you are a guest in Uganda and that the Ugandans dress very formally. For example: Someone that digs a ditch will wear office style clothing to work and change once he arrives at his place of employment. He will work all day in work clothes, but changes back into dress clothes to travel home—even if they are walking! Most teams find the Ugandans very smartly dressed. If you have any questions please ask the team coordinator.

TIME ZONES

Uganda is 3 hours ahead of Greenwich time, 8 hours ahead of Eastern time, 9 hours ahead of Central time, 10 hours ahead of Mountain time, and 11 hours ahead of Pacific time.

Please note: these times are not including Day Light Savings time. Uganda does not practice Day Light Savings. Therefore, summer teams traveling to Uganda can expect the time difference to be 1 hour less than the above stated times (e.g. Uganda is 11 hours ahead of Los Angeles during the winter and 10 hours ahead during the summer).

SEASONS

The dry season is typically from December through February and July. The wet season is typically from March through June and August through November.

GIFTS

- ALL gifts must be routed through the social worker's office whether the gift is for a child or an adult.
- Please do not give anything to the children without first speaking with the social worker. Gifts for our kids are a blessing, but can also promote a beggar mentality we wish to avoid among the children. If a child asks you for something, a strong "no" is imperative to the request.

DO's and DON'Ts

- Do show our children love and affection; it is something they may never receive from their homes.
- Do make conversations with our children. They love hearing about the U.S. and sharing about their own lives.
- Do use discernment in displaying possessions. (iPods, iPhones, Blackberrys, etc.) You have more material possessions than they are used to.
- Do be prepared for people to stare at you.
- Do expect to be called “fat”. “You are very fat” is a compliment!
- Do expect people to yell “mzungu” at you. It’s an African word meaning “white person”.
- Do expect to see men in Uganda holding hands. They are just friends.
- Do greet people you meet. It is good to shake hands with everyone you’re introduced to.
- Don’t create an invitation for temptation. (e.g. leaving belongings unattended)
- Don’t give the children things in front of other children unless you are intending to give them all something. Outgoing children get many gifts from visitors while shy children often get nothing.
- Don’t believe every story a child tells you.
- Don’t take any child outside the school compound without written permission from the social worker or the headmaster.
- Don’t move around alone if you are a woman. Within the compound of God Cares Nursery and Primary School, it is fine for women to walk from place to place by themselves.
- Don’t move from the hotel or guest house unattended at night. During the nighttime, thieves and drunken people are walking around. Therefore, it is not safe.
- Don’t give your contact information to anyone other than the social worker’s office or Pastor Dongo. If you want to find out the needs of a child/family at our school, the social worker is the most informed person regarding this information. It is against Buyamba policy to directly correspond with children or their families.
- Don’t take photos of government buildings (e.g. U.S. Embassy) or police officers

SPONSORSHIPS

It is the sole responsibility of Buyamba, Inc to oversee the Buyamba Orphan Sponsorship Program. When teams visit they see the great need and desire to assist us in securing sponsors for the unsponsored kids. Any team member may begin to sponsor an unsponsored child at God Cares. They simply need to meet with the social worker at the school, fill out their personal information and the name of the child, and then take the child’s photo with them. The school’s social worker will communicate that information to Buyamba, and we will add you to our sponsorship database. You will begin to receive our newsletter and be billed monthly. However, we humbly ask that teams not take any photos of children back to the U.S to attempt to secure sponsors. Though we appreciate your kindness and willingness to help in this area, such action can result in erroneous record-keeping and multiple sponsorships of these children. However, if any team member desires to introduce the Buyamba Sponsorship Program to his/her home church, with the intent to host a sponsorship drive, please contact Julie Dimas at (805) 558-0089 or email julie@ugandabuyamba.com. We will be happy to assist you in any way and will send the necessary materials to you (promotional DVD, photos, brochures, and “new sponsor” registration forms).

WHAT TO PACK

DEET is a MUST when traveling to Uganda. It is the most effective mosquito repellent. **Here is a suggested packing check list:**

- Passport
- Yellow fever immunization card
- Malaria and anti-diarrhea prescription pills.
- Toiletries (soap/toothbrush/toothpaste/lotion) etc
- Sunscreen
- Hand sanitizer
- Deet
- Bounce fabric softener sheets (it supposedly deters mosquitoes).
- Comfortable summer clothes-jeans and T-shirts. (bring a dress/skirt for Sunday Service for the ladies, a shirt and pants for the men)
- Closed toe shoes (sneakers preferably when we are working/walking and at the Safari).
- Light sweater/cardigan for night time
- Rain coat (optional ... but it does rain)
- Flashlight (as the electricity is turned off sometimes at night)
- Uganda uses 220 electrical outlets. We use 110 here in the U.S. Bring a converter.
- Any snacks you enjoy eating (fruit bars/energy bars/peanut butter/jell etc)
- Camera
- A lock for your suitcase. You will need to lock up your valuables at the guest house or hotel any time you are away.
- Small backpack or a fanny pack--to carry some of your valuables with you at all times.
- Bath towel
- Small emergency first aid kit
- Your own spending money--preferably in \$100.00 bills (2001 serials and above)

Often, teams will want to empty their suitcases and leave their clothes behind for kids at God Cares. What a wonderful gift and demonstration of love. We humbly thank you! ☺.

SAFARI

On occasion, teams may request to participate on a safari tour. Interested teams must contact Pastor Dongo well in advance of the scheduled trip so as to secure reservations. The cost of a safari trip varies depending on the number of days, number of people and park(s) visited. Safari trips can range from \$150 - \$600 per person. This cost includes transportation, accommodations, tour fees and food. Water and other drinks are usually not included, however. A deposit will be needed for your reservations.

Note: Teams will need to plan for allowing a minimum of 3 days for a safari trip.

MORE INFORMATION?

We trust that this information will serve as a helpful resource for your short term mission to Uganda. For further information, please contact Degna Horton at (805) 405-6431 or email degna@ugandabuyamba.com.

FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions)

What can I expect with regards to lodging accommodations?

The lodging is quite comfortable and each property includes breakfast in their daily room rates. Pastor Dongo hand-picks the lodging and you can rest assured that you will be comfortable.

Are the bathrooms indoors or out?

Yes, the bathrooms are all indoors at God Cares Schools and the church.

Is there electricity?

Yes, Uganda is wired for 220V electrical. You will need to bring a converter to use your electrical appliances. However, you can expect some periodic power outages.

Is there hot/running water?

Yes, you will be able to take daily showers. But please refrain from drinking the tap water. We recommend using bottled water when brushing your teeth and rinsing your mouth.

What is the food like?

Very delicious! Teams will eat lunch at the school and sometimes dinner too, if so desired. You can expect to eat rice, a type of flat bread, ground provisions (vegetables), and your choice of beverage is usually bottled water. And for dessert?? The best pineapple you will ever taste. Teams should only eat at the restaurants recommended by Pastor Dongo to ensure freshness. Teams can expect pizza or continental cuisine for reasonable prices at these restaurants.