

FAQs

Where will we be staying?

While your group is in the DR, your home base will be in the middle-class neighborhood of Elio Franco, where we maintain a group house with sleeping quarters for male and female leaders and participants, enough flush toilets and showers to accommodate everyone, and a spacious, enclosed patio in the back for meals, trip meetings, and dance parties! The front of the house opens onto a wide, quiet, dirt street—great for playing with neighborhood kids—with a small convenience store only a short walk away, where you can buy ice cream and other local treats. If you want to get super fancy, the GPS coordinates are 18°32'23.5"N 69°52'14.0"W

Where will we be working?

Your group will be working in a batey outside of Santo Domingo. The Batey Foundation has established positive relationships and carried out infrastructure projects and other development work in three different communities and is branching out into a fourth.

- **San Luis** is the first community where we worked. It is located at 18°33'04.2"N 69°47'48.1"W
- **Yabacao** is a smaller, more rural batey which we visit occasionally. It is located at 18°35'10.2"N 69°46'59.7"W
- **Naranjo**, where we built a second community center, has been a focal point for public health outreach. It is located at 18°33'39.6"N 69°46'46.5"W

Who will we be spending time with, besides the members of our group?

Leyri Garcia, The Batey Foundation's In-Country Program Manager, will be with your group for the entire trip. Additionally, TBF has a decade-long partnership with Friends Around the World, a Dominican NGO that promotes community service and cross-cultural exchange, so FAW's director, Albert Ramos, will also be with your group for the duration of your stay. Depending on scheduling, it's likely other FAW and TBF staff will be joining the fun as well. Lastly, TBF and FAW have strong connections in both the neighborhoods where we live and the communities where we work, so you can count on a constant stream of fun, welcoming people always stopping by.

How do we travel around while we are in the Dominican Republic?

Get ready for the *guagua*! *Guagua* is the term for basically any van or bus of almost any size in the Dominican Republic. We have a van for smaller groups and a bus for larger groups. These vehicles

are always driven by FAW staff. *Guagua* rides are great opportunities for sightseeing, so keep the windows open! Also, there is always street music, so if you are not yet familiar with *merengue*, *bachata*, and *salsa*, you will be soon enough!

Do we really only need to bring what is on the packing list?

YES! The Batey Foundation and Friends Around the World have every other consideration covered. Each bedroom is equipped with bunk beds, mattresses, mosquito nets, and a fan. It is warm at night so usually a set of sheets is all you need. If you are an especially cold sleeper, maybe bring a light blanket.

Will we have a cell phone that works in-country, and will it be with the group at all times? Is there service where we stay at night?

TBF and FAW staff all have cell phones. In the event of an emergency, trip leaders can use these phones to communicate with their organizations stateside. We strongly encourage communication to run from the trip leader to your organization/school, on to your parents, and back down the chain. Parents should know that they are *highly discouraged* from contacting the trip directly. With an ever strengthening global cell phone network, more and more participants' phones work internationally. However, TBF trips are *cell phone free* for participants!

Will we have internet access so that we can contact home and let our families know we've arrived safely?

Our In-Country Program Manager, as well as the FAW staff, have laptops with internet access and will be making daily updates to TBF's Facebook page throughout your trip in the Dominican Republic. Parents and families of participants should follow TBF on Facebook, as this is the easiest way to receive updates about the trip.

What behavior is not tolerated by The Batey Foundation and could result in the dismissal of a participant at their own cost?

TBF aims to run safe and fun trips. To this end, first and foremost, all TBF trips are alcohol-free. Additionally, any threatening or violent behavior directed at a fellow participant, TBF/FAW staff, or community member is not tolerated. Lastly, any behavior not tolerated by your partnering organization will likewise not be tolerated.

Do we need to bring any other special equipment, like water filters or pocket knives?

Nope! Bring only the items on the packing list. TBF and FAW provide all the tools necessary for construction, and the group house is fully-equipped for cooking and cleaning. Delicious, treated, potable water is always available, so there is no need to bring water filters or any chemical water treatments. Also, leave the pocket knife at home. There is simply no need for it.

What are we going to eat while we are in the Dominican Republic? Will food be prepared in a sanitary manner? Will participants help make meals?

Breakfast is always fresh fruit, cereal, and yogurt, with the addition of eggs, bacon, and pancakes on different days. Lunch is either eaten at the house or at the worksite and will be make-your-own sandwiches: PB&J, meat, and cheese options will be provided, as well as chips and cookies. Dinner is traditional Dominican fare, such as *pollo y arroz con habichuelas*, Dominican potato salad, *empanadas*, etc., so participants should be ready to step out of their culinary comfort zones. But don't be scared! The food is absolutely delicious! Participants should communicate any food allergies or dietary restrictions to their trip leaders and record these on the trip registration form.

Students will help with breakfast every day and with lunch sometimes, depending on scheduling. Dinner is prepared by a hired cook. FAW and TBF staff are trained in proper food preparation and sanitation. All fruits and vegetables without peels are washed in a bleach solution, dishes are soaked in a bleach solution after washing, and all cooking/flat surfaces in the kitchen are sprayed and wiped with a bleach solution.

Can The Batey Foundation accommodate my dietary needs?

TBF works hard to ensure that participants have a positive experience, and to this end will take every measure possible to accommodate participants' dietary needs. However, due to food-access and the cooking supplies available in the Dominican Republic, TBF may not be able to fully accommodate all food allergies and restrictions. So please be forthcoming with any and all special dietary needs so that we can be adequately prepared in advance. That said, there will always be a vegetarian option provided at every meal.

Should everyone in my group register with the State Department's STEP program?

Absolutely. This is a precaution in case there is a natural disaster or significant civil unrest and the US government needs to evacuate its citizens.

We will be at the worksite for part of the day, but what happens during the rest of our time in the DR?

Each afternoon provides a great opportunity for a *siesta* followed by some form of cultural immersion, be it a trip to the beach or a tour of the colonial city. You can also anticipate evenings of dance lessons, at least one opportunity to practice those newly acquired dance moves, and structured reflections to process our shared experience.

Which other schools and organizations have you worked with in the past?

The Batey Foundation has partnered with multiple high schools, including The White Mountain School, the Tilton School, Profile High School, and White Mountain Regional High School, all in New Hampshire. The Batey Foundation has also worked with Innovation Academy Charter School in Massachusetts and the Tahoe Expedition Academy in Truckee, California, as well as with Plymouth State University and the Social Work Department at The University of New Hampshire.

What else should I know that I don't even know to ask about?

Our house has electricity...most of the time. The distribution of electricity in Santo Domingo is a long and complex story. The house is equipped with an inverter and battery system so that we can run the lights if the power goes out at night. The inconsistency of electricity may be an adjustment for some participants.