

Travel Notes #1 (Airport Talking Points)

Most info on page 1 assumes your team will be flying on COPA through Miami (MIA)-Panama (PTY)-and Manaus (MAO). Make sure you bring all your team's travel documents with locator numbers.

FIRST LEG

- Ask the team to gather about 30 minutes before boarding at the departure gate.
- Do headcount
- Thank your team and do introductions if needed
- Decide on accountability partners, 4 per group, which is easier for a quick count all week.
- Passport check - take a picture of your passport photo page
- Confirm everyone is on the team's WhatsApp thread
- Airports outside the US do not accept cash, just credit or debit cards
- Start hydrating now

IN MIAMI

- You are on two separate tickets: 1. Your city of origin to Miami, and 2. Miami to Panama to Manaus.
- Therefore, you will have to get your checked bags in baggage claims coming and going through Miami (but not in Panama)
- After baggage claims, go outside the secure area but not outside of the actual terminal/concourse.
- Inform the team there is a long walk to Concourse J, but they can rent a luggage cart if needed.
- COPA check-in will not likely open sooner than 3 hours before departure, but you will need to be there as soon as they open
- Get the team in line at COPA check-in, then find an agent to clarify you are in the correct line for a large team (sometimes they will expedite)
- Ask the team to ensure they receive BOTH boarding passes for their upcoming flights.
- International flights usually start boarding an hour before departure, so ask your team to meet at the gate an hour and fifteen minutes before departure.

IN PANAMA

- Do NOT leave the security area or go to baggage claims; your checked bags will go all the way to Manaus.
- You will likely be able to go straight to your next boarding gate
- With more extended layovers, ask the team to meet at the gate at least an hour and fifteen minutes before departure
- You will have a second boarding pass and passport

IN MANAUS

- Meet at the restrooms just before entering immigration
- Don't recommend drinking from fountains; water bottles will be given outside security
- If asked in Immigration the purpose of your visit... **"Tourism" or "Vacation"**
- Pick up a checked bag and wait for the entire team before heading to Customs
- If asked in Customs (seldom happens) about supplies in a checked bag... **"It is a donation to Central Presbyterian Church in Manaus."**

MISCELLANEOUS

CHECKED BAG FEES

- American Airlines will charge for your checked bags on departure and returns unless you have AA status (charge more if over 50lbs or a second checked bag)
- AA status means you're signed up for their frequent flyer program and have reached a level that allows you to receive at least one free checked bag (go to aa.com with your frequent flyer number to check your status level and benefits)
- Some status levels allow several other passengers on the same locator number to get free checked bags.
- Determine who has AA status on the same locator number in advance to save checked bag fees (they will need to check in together)
- You can also go to aa.com to prepay for your checked bag and save some money
- If your COPA locator number is part of a group, you should not be charged a checked bag fee
- if your locator number is not part of a group, anticipate \$50 each way
- Consider asking someone on a group roster without a checked bag to take it for a free check-in

IF RUNNING LATE OR MISSING A FLIGHT

- Send a runner from your group who's a great communicator to plead your group's case at check-in or the departure gate.
- If you realize you are going to miss a flight, make sure the airline knows so your team will not be a "no show" and lose all potential credits (AA and COPA do not have a responsibility for your missed flight due to being late on another airline)
- If you miss a flight on your way to Brazil, share this info with the team's WhatsApp group, so our staff in Brazil will know you will not arrive as scheduled.
- The best way to handle a missed flight is to talk to an airline agent in person, so make it to the airline ticketing gate ASAP.
- Also, if missing a flight during the day, call Brenda at 214-725-5907
- If missing a flight after hours, contact HighPoint's after-hours help desk at 866-715-9763 (have all locator numbers for the team in hand)
- Always remain calm. Your team will watch your reaction and follow your lead.
- Travel challenges are often part of a mission trip, so don't miss what God is doing during the interruptions. Lean into the fact he is always working for his glory and our good.

IF ARRIVING IN PANAMA ON A US CARRIER

This info only applies on the rare occasion that you do not arrive in Panama on COPA.

- Check in advance to see if anyone on your team is fluent in Spanish so that they can help the team at check-in and security in Panama.
- Go to baggage claims, then through immigration (see notes 1 and 2 below)
- Immigration may ask for a Yellow Fever vaccination card (required if the final destination is Panama)
- If you don't have a Yellow Fever card, make sure you and all team members have note 1 below in Spanish on their phone
- If customs ask about the supplies in your checked bag, have note 2 on your phone
- Go to COPA check-in (see checked bag fees above)
- Go back through security and to the boarding gate with your passport and boarding pass.

TWO STATEMENTS TO HAVE IN SPANISH ON YOUR PHONE

1. Having a Yellow Fever card is also helpful, but this note in Spanish about being in transit should do the job. Panama requires proof of Yellow Fever vaccination for entry, and they assume you're leaving the terminal to stay in Panama.
 - **Estoy en tránsito a Brasil y no me quedo en Panamá. Estoy recibiendo mi maleta para volver a facturar a Manaus, Brasil. No tengo ni necesito una tarjeta de Fiebre Amarilla para Brasil. gracias**
 - Here's what it says...I am in transit to Brazil and not staying in Panama. I'm just getting my bag to recheck to Manaus, Brazil. I do not have or need a Yellow Fever card for Brazil. Thank you!
2. Getting bags re-checked in PTY typically takes a minimum of 2 ½ hours. In customs, they will go through every bag while you are there. So have a note in Spanish in each checked bag that says
 - **"Estos suministros no son para reventa, sino donaciones para una misión a la gente del río Amazonas en Brasil".**
 - This is saying..."These supplies are not for resale, but are donations for a mission to the people of the Amazon River in Brazil."