



First Timer Guide to Mexico Rancho Casitas

BIENVENIDOS AMIGO!

We are going to have a great time serving the Lord in Mexico. Glad you can come!! Here are a few reminders...

Why do we go to Mexico? Simply, to bring **GLORY** to God by demonstrating the love of Christ to the Mexicans and to ourselves in **EVERYTHING** we do. This includes building loft houses, providing medical and dental help, painting, playing with kids, and simply the way we interact with each other. What a privilege it is!!!

1. Where and When to Meet: If you are coming with a group from a specific church, please contact that church's coordinator. If you have signed up as an independent and/or are coming along on a Trinity Church trip, **be at Trinity Church by 5:00 pm. Friday** for weekend trips so we can pack and leave by 6:00 pm. We should return Sunday afternoon or evening depending whether you go to the *La Bufadora*, other projects, sight seeing or just head straight home. Return times to southern California are greatly affected by wait times at the border and Tijuana traffic which are unpredictable.

2. Appropriate Dress: We want to be sensitive to the different cultural practices in Mexico. **Dressing modestly is key** - for guys and gals. Avoid sleeveless shirts, exposed midriffs, short-shorts, tank tops, exposed tattoos, and pierced body parts (except ears



for women.) Gals are encouraged to bring one long skirt or dress for ministry activities such as passing out gifts, speaking, attending church, or working with kids. However, long pants or modest shorts are okay for painting and construction activities. **Bring old work clothes you could paint in and get dirty.**

RANCHO CASITAS RATES

Rate Category	Weekend Fri – Sun 4 meals	Daily* 1 night 3 meals	Camp Work Proj. Groups**
Adult	\$18	\$12	free will offering
Child (10 years old and under)	\$12	\$8	free will offering
Family Max***	\$60	\$40	free will offering
No Meal Groups – Lodging Only (they provide own food)	\$5	\$2	\$0
Meal pro-rates (declined meals—to eat in town—or extra meals will be credited/charged per	Breakfast \$3	Lunch \$3	Dinner \$4

***Daily Rate:** Use daily rate to calculate stays longer than Fri-Sun and pro-rate for number of meals not served.

****Camp Work Proj. Rate:** is for groups who work exclusively on camp improvements, and do not do a village outreach project.

*****Family Max Rate:** Families may choose to pay family rate, which ever is cheaper. Family is defined as Father and/or Mother plus dependents living in same household.

If you are coming with a church group, please pay your church's group coordinator, who will pay HoM collectively for your group's attendance. Your church may have set fees higher than those posted above to cover other program costs.

If you are an independent registrant, please make a check out to Hands of Mercy and send to P.O. Box 7818, Redlands, CA 92375-0808 or bring payment on your trip and deliver to Rick Carter or his designee. Checks are preferred but cash can be accepted.

The rates for Rancho Casitas are designed to make a cross-cultural mission experience as affordable as possible. If finances are preventing you from serving, please contact your group leader or Hands of Mercy.



GETTING THERE

4. Transportation: Carpooling is recommended with caravans of 3-4 vehicles to Mexico. If you need transportation, please contact your group coordinator. Independent registrants call 909 499-6734 for arrangements. Downloaded a map to Rancho Casitas at handsofmercy.com/nuts. Trucks, SUVs or cars with good ground clearance are recommended for the 9-mile dirt road drive out to camp.

5. If Driving: Please get car insurance- issued by a Mexican insurance company- before you leave. The Mexican police do not recognize American auto insurance. You can get it through the San Ysidro Chevron: (619) 428-3963. Ask for the Trinity church discount. The cost is between \$20 and \$25. Use your credit card and they will fax the insurance form to you. Or have it faxed to Rick Carter at Hands of Mercy's fax: (909) 798-3830 before 3:00 pm the day we leave. Use 8:30pm Friday to 8:30pm Sunday as the time period in Mexico. Be sure to keep your insurance form in your vehicle.

Also, bring 12-15 one dollar bills and change for toll road fees. "ALTO" means, "STOP." Drive CAREFULLY. The roads there are narrow and crowded. Speed limits are posted in kilometers per hour (inner dial of numbers on most speedometers). Be careful to observe posted limits, which can sometimes seem ridiculously low. Local police take advantage of these slow zones.

6. Under 18? Anyone under the age of 18 without an accompanying parent or guardian needs a permission form. Be sure to keep this form with you even if you "trade cars." You must have this form on your person coming back through the border. Please download and print permission form at handsofmercy.com/nuts.



WHAT TO BRING

7. Picture ID: Adults 18 and over: bring picture ID (drivers license, etc.). For people ages 15-17 **NOT** with parent in vehicle: bring picture ID if you have it (driver's license, or school ID).

If you don't have picture ID, you must bring your birth certificate.

Ages 14 and under **NOT** with parent in vehicle: you must bring **birth certificate** (Generally, if parent is in the vehicle with a child, ID is not necessary.) If parent is not present, a form signed by both parents and notarized is required. This form may be downloaded from handsofmercy.com/nuts.

Passports tend to speed process, if you have one. If not a U.S. citizen, be sure to bring appropriate forms: green card/Visas/Passports. Starting in 2008, passports may be required for land border crossings back into the U.S.

8. Don't Forget: Sleeping bag, pillow, flashlight, water bottle (additional water will be provided), work clothes, hand tools, warm jacket, towel, toiletries, and Bible. (Also, while in Mexico avoid drinking tap water, brush teeth with bottled water or purified water provided and DO NOT flush toilet paper, etc.) Guns and knives are strictly prohibited in Mexico.

9. Hungry? On the way down to Mexico on Friday, we will stop at In-N-Out Burger on Mira Mesa Blvd. off I-15 around 8:30pm so you may want to eat before that. This is the first rendezvous point if you get separated from the group on the way down.



MISCELLANEOUS

10. Pocket Money: Bring a little cash for food while traveling and gas money to pay your driver if you are a passenger. You may also want to bring a few \$1 bills to help pay the tolls. Dinner Saturday night is provided by camp but some groups choose to visit a local taco bar after the build or on the way home. About \$5/person is all that's needed for a taco run.

11. While at the Ranch: Conserve water as much as possible: short showers, don't let spigots run. Different containers to separate trash: organic scraped into slop buckets, metal and glass to be recycled, plastic and paper to be burned.

12. Phone in Mexico: We will be staying at Hands of Mercy's host camp (Rancho Casitas) just south of Ensenada near El Zorillo – hot showers, bunk beds, good food, etc. The number for Rancho Casitas' satellite phone from U.S.: (909) 748-1274. Camp does not have cell service. Out going calls from camp are not permitted aside from emergencies. Emergency contact: Dir. HoM Mexico, Danny VanNes (personal cell) (909) 499-3185, or Rick Carter (909) 499-6734

Any Change in Plans? For example, if you are bringing a friend that we do not know about (or can't come yourself, etc.). Please, please let us know ASAP!

If you have any other questions, please call Rick Carter at 909 499-6734.

Looking forward to serving together.