



7 THINGS TO NEVER DO ON A MISSION TRIP

1. Don't be loud and obnoxious.

Going to a new place you've only seen in photos is exciting. With each novel experience, you might feel like snapping a few selfies and voicing great delight. It's important to remember that while this is an experience for you, it's another Monday for the people of your host culture. Express excitement without causing a disruption.

2. Don't forget to use local currency.

It will feel natural to convert local prices into your country's currency when shopping overseas. This is fine as a reference point, but keep these calculations to mental math. When making a purchase, be sure to refer to prices in the local currency and use local tender.

3. Hold back exaggerated facial expressions

When experiencing new dishes, smells and sights, be mindful of your nonverbal expressions. A wrinkle of the nose or a wide-eyed stare will show disrespect and stunt new relationships. Learning about your host culture before you go, will help you avoid being "shocked" on your mission trip.

4. Avoid comparing everything to your home country.

Your cultural lens will inform your assessments of your host culture. Avoid categorizing the unfamiliar as "strange" or "weird." Instead, notice differences and celebrate them when you can.

5. Don't expect locals to speak your language.

It's okay if you are not fluent in the local language before your mission trip. Instead, prioritize learning key phrases before your leave, and take every opportunity to practice your language skills with locals. Avoid expressing frustration when a street sign or conversation is lost in translation.

6. Leave the "clever" t-shirts at home.

When packing your suitcase, remember to bring clothing that is culturally appropriate. Ask yourself, "What does a person of my age and gender wear in my host culture?" T-shirts with tongue-in-cheek messaging or attention-grabbing outfits are better left in your closet.

7. Don't do it for the Instagram post.

Capturing photo memories of people and sights is a great way to collect mementos of your experience. However, respect the privacy of local people by asking before you share an image or story online. Photos should be taken within the context of relationship and in a way that highlights the dignity of the subject. Never take a picture of a child without a caregiver's express consent.

