

Travel Notes #1 (Airport Talking Points)

Most information on page 1 assumes your team will be flying on Copa through Miami (MIA) to Panama (PTY) and Manaus (MAO).

FIRST LEG

- Make sure you bring all your team's travel documents and can quickly access each team member's locator number.
- If you're flying on two tickets with United/Copa, **ask United to check your bags all the way to Manaus.** You will need to request this for each different locator number for your team.
- Copa isn't as good about doing this on the return from Manaus, but ask before checking the team anyway, and have all locator numbers ready.
- Ask the team to gather about 15 minutes before boarding at the departure gate.
- Do headcount
- Thank your team, and do introductions if needed
- Select four accountability partners per group for easier tracking throughout the week.
- Passport/Visa check - take a picture of your passport photo page and of your visa
- Confirm everyone is on the team's WhatsApp thread.
- Remind the team of their acceptance of the AO code of conduct, which prohibits the use of alcohol, tobacco, and vaping from now until the end of the trip.
- Airports outside the US typically do not accept cash, just credit or perhaps debit cards
- Start hydrating now

IN MIAMI

- You are on two separate tickets:
 - 1st is your city of origin to Miami (MIA)
 - The second ticket is from 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)
- Luggage carts are available for rent by credit card in the baggage claim area
- After baggage claims, go outside the secure area, but not outside of the actual terminal/concourse.
- Inform the team that there is a long walk to the South Terminal/Concourse J, to check in at COPA.
- The COPA check-in will be across from entrance number "30"
- 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
- If your layover is longer than 4 hours, you will need a plan to watch the checked bags while the team rotates to go eat.
- Get the team in line at COPA check-in, then find an agent to clarify that 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 fifteen minutes before boarding time (not departure time)
- You will need a second boarding pass and a passport ready
- Restaurants accept credit cards, but not cash
 - Recommend Vista Corona (4th floor of terminal 2, only accessible by elevator) with free wifi and hammocks, but need to order to hang out there
 - They request a reservation for large groups of over 10
 - Guy Fieri restaurant between terminals 2 and 1
- **ON RETURN FLIGHT ONLY:**
 - About 1 ½ hours before departure, you will be required to leave your departing gate's seating area for Copa to set up security
 - No food or drinks are allowed through the portable security they will set up at your gate, so warn your team not to make drink purchases to bring on the plane.

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 about the purpose of your visit in immigration,... **"Tourism"**
- 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 (charges 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](https://www.aa.com) with your frequent flyer number to check your status level and benefits)
- Some status levels allow multiple passengers with the same locator number to receive 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 visit [aa.com](https://www.aa.com) to prepay for your checked bag and save 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, please share this information with the team's WhatsApp group, so our staff in Brazil will be aware that 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.

- **When checking in with United in the US, ask if they will check your bag all the way through to Manaus (MAO)**
 - Even though you have two tickets, they code-share and can do this for you if you are willing.
 - Make sure you ask for each locator number your group may have
 - Ask when returning to Manaus to check all the way to your final destination in the US
 - They are not obligated to do this since you have two tickets, so be nice regardless
- 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 (this is a luxury, not a necessity)
- If bags are not checked to Manaus (MAO) 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 asks about the supplies in your checked bag, have note 2 on your phone

- Go to the COPA check-in
- 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 helpful, but this note in Spanish about being in transit should suffice. 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 may go through every bag, so have this note in Spanish in each checked bag...
 - This is saying..."These supplies are not for resale, but are donations for a mission to the people of the Amazon River in Brazil."

Print and place in each checked bag... Is this were we want to have it? Do we need it?

"Estos suministros no son para reventa, sino donaciones para una misión a la gente del río Amazonas en Brasil".

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