

Short-term Orientation Manual
Revised January 2024



| | |
|---|-----------|
| Welcome to the Team | 2 |
| Preparing Yourself for Africa | 2 |
| <i>Visa requirements Benin</i> | |
| <i>Travel insurance</i> | |
| <i>Preparing yourself physically</i> | |
| <i>Vaccinations and malaria medications</i> | |
| <i>Preparing yourself spiritually and emotionally</i> | |
| Policies that Apply to You | 4 |
| <i>Child Protection Policy</i> | |
| <i>Communication and media use</i> | |
| <i>Safety precautions in project countries</i> | |
| <i>Dress code</i> | |
| What to Bring | 7 |
| Fundraising | 9 |
| <i>Ideas for raising money</i> | |
| Returning Home | 10 |
| Country Profile: Benin | 11 |

Welcome to the Team:

Thank you for giving your time, energy and resources to join with us to help overcome injustice for children in West Africa who are at risk of abuse, neglect or being trafficked.

For those we serve, your choice to be present in their lives means the world to them. The families and children you meet will make a lasting difference on your life. We are glad you are here!

Rebecca Pratt
President and Co-founder

Visa Requirements for Benin:

The Benin visa application form is online. A staff member will guide you through this process one week before your departure.

You will need the following documents in hand for your visa application:

- Valid passport that cannot expire within 6 months of your trips return date
- Flight itinerary
- Proof of yellow fever vaccine

You will need to submit your International Certificate of Vaccination (yellow fever) form. You **must** carry it in your passport. Without it, you may be denied entry into Benin.

Travel Insurance:

Orphan Relief and Rescue requires that you purchase travel insurance for the entire duration of your trip. Coverage must, at minimum, cover up to \$50,000 for a medical evacuation. **Talent Trust** (<http://www.talent-trust.com>) is a Christian travel insurance agency who offers a 20% discount to Orphan Relief and Rescue groups. **A staff member will guide you through this process two weeks before your departure.**

Preparing Yourself for Africa:

Preparing our bodies for travel is a requirement to make sure that we can be productive and healthy in Africa. Begin a healthy physical, spiritual and emotional routine as soon as you know you are going to travel overseas. The longer you are on this routine, the healthier you will be.

Preparing Yourself Physically:

Consult your doctor before going overseas, particularly if you have a health condition. Make sure all of your childhood immunizations are up to date.

Exercise for at least 30 minutes, three times a week to help build stamina. Don't underestimate the effects of a hot, wet African climate!

You may consider starting a daily multivitamin. Consult your doctor or another medical professional for advice.

Drink lots of water. This will prepare you for drinking a lot in Africa, as well as helping your body detoxify itself naturally. While in Africa, you should always have a water bottle with you in order to drink constantly throughout the day. This can't be overstressed: *water is your key to good health!*

Make sure you are getting plenty of sleep at night. Try to establish a routine of going to bed and waking up at the same times each day—you will likely get a deeper, more restful sleep.

Vaccines and Malaria Medication:

Make an appointment at a travel clinic for a consultation with a medical professional to discuss your health and immunization needs before traveling to Africa. You should plan a visit to the Travel clinic at least 6 to 8 weeks prior to your scheduled departure date.

Yellow fever vaccine is **required** to enter Benin.

Make sure you are up to date on CDC vaccine recommendations for Benin.

Travelers going to Benin are recommended to take prescription medicine to prevent malaria. Depending on the medicine you take, you will need to start taking malaria medicine multiple days before, during, and after your trip. Talk to your doctor about which malaria medication you should take.

When you have all the required immunizations, you will be given a yellow card to keep a record of those immunizations. Keep your yellow immunization card in your passport. Benin will not let you in the country without this vaccine card.

Preparing Yourself Spiritually and Emotionally:

First and foremost, expect to grow spiritually and emotionally. While you are going with plans and expectations, there are great things in store for you personally.

Take time for personal renewal on a daily basis with God (*e.g. meditating, reading, prayer, journaling, walking—be creative*). Once you arrive in Africa this becomes even more important. Get used to the idea of processing the day's events, successes and challenges because this will help you with culture shock and the overwhelming needs you will encounter. If you're not sure where to begin, the book of Ephesians (*in the Bible*) is a great place to start.

You need to have a teachable heart when preparing for Africa and when you are in Africa. Being teachable means that you are constantly learning. Prepare to learn from Africa and Africans, as well as to share your experiences.

Leave your personal issues at the airport. If you are distracted or burdened, you will have a hard time being present with others. If you feel prompted to deal with something or someone, be quick to deal with it.

Practice keeping short accounts with others. When you offended someone or have been offended, practice resolving these things directly, in love, and moving on. Communication eases, and often prevents, conflict.

Relying on your community or personal support group will help you prepare and debrief from the trip. If you feel comfortable, ask people to commit to pray for you while you are traveling.

Policies That Apply to You:

During your time in Africa with Orphan Relief and Rescue, **you are required to abide by certain key policies—specifically related to protecting the children we serve.** Please read the policies below and feel free to ask any questions you might have. For more information and details, you may ask for a copy of ORR's Employee Handbook.

Child Protection Policy:

Orphan Relief and Rescue believes in the innate value of every child. Specifically that each child is a unique and irreplaceable creation of God, regardless of race, culture, gender, age, disability, religion, or political persuasion. ORR believes strongly that every child should be protected, nurtured, and loved; advocated for and not exploited; respected and valued as human beings.

Orphan Relief and Rescue opposes all forms of child abuse including: physical, sexual, verbal, mental, emotional, and neglect.

All board members, staff, volunteers, and guests of ORR are expected to abide strictly by this policy. Any violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, including possible dismissal and pursuit of legal action when applicable.

Communication and Media Use:

All ORR communications, internal and public, irrespective of the medium (print, electronic, video, etc.), **should portray the dignity and inherent value of the individual child and the community**. One way to do this is to include the first name of children portrayed, both to identify each as an individual and to enhance continuity as each child grows and thrives with ORR's programs. Last names should not be used to protect the children from potential predators.

Communications should not reveal the specific location of a child unless necessary, and then only without express consent from the child and his or her guardian.

Communications should never identify by name or location any child that has been abused.

Photos or video footage should not be taken around any orphanage or children's home without the express consent of the person in charge, nor without explaining the intended use of such communications. ORR staff and visitors taking photos and video footage should at all times respect the privacy and dignity of the children, caretakers, and community they are portraying. Capturing media should come after building a relationship, not before.



Rule of Thumb:
*build a
relationship
before taking
photos/videos*

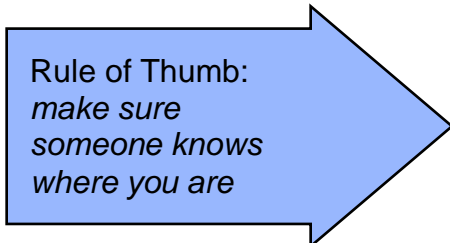
Communications portraying children should, as much as possible, be constrained to children that have benefited from ORR's programs, except where those communications represent the general nature of the community or country.

Please consult with the ORR Team Leader before taking photos of children or orphanages for reasons other than for personal use.

Safety Precautions in Benin:

Dire circumstances often create potentially dangerous situations, and so our work will often lead us into areas in which we must take precautions and be wise. These guidelines are not designed to limit or frighten you, but to make every team member responsible for the safety of themselves and of the whole team.

Some general circumstances to be avoided: traveling in unfamiliar areas or traveling alone, particularly at night; large crowds, particularly in a crisis or mob situation (*e.g. political rally, sports match, traffic accident*); exposure of valuables or cash.



Rule of Thumb:
*make sure
someone knows
where you are*

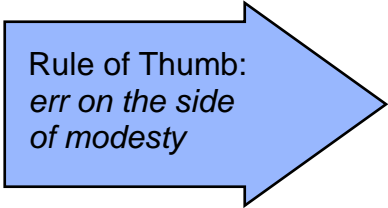
All Benin staff should carry a phone with them and be available to call at all times. If you expect to be out of range, advise the ORR Team Leader in advance. Continued unavailability by phone will be treated as disregard for your own safety and your team.

Female staff are asked not to drive or walk alone at night except when absolutely necessary, and only after informing the ORR Team Leader.

Consult with the ORR Team Leader on other local issues and dangers upon arrival, such as ocean undercurrents, political upheaval, etc.

Dress Code:

Team members are asked to dress modestly and professionally, according to the generally accepted practices of the culture in which they are working. Standards will necessarily be higher when in public than privately among the team, and during work hours than during leisure hours. More specific expectations and boundaries may be laid down by your ORR Team Leader or U.S. Supervisor, if necessary; however, if in doubt, please ask in advance and err on the side of modesty.



Rule of Thumb:
*err on the side
of modesty*

What to Bring:

Key Documents:

- Passport & Visa (keep a photocopy of both separate from your original copy)
- Yellow card immunization record
- Anti-malaria medication
- One credit card (if you get stuck in Europe)
- Spending money (for souvenirs, eating out, etc.)
- Tickets & Itinerary
- Phone numbers of emergency contacts
- Medical insurance & travel insurance
- Clothing: weather is hot (90 degrees and humid), so you will mostly need light clothing for hot weather. The evenings sometimes have a cooler breeze, if it rains. Everything is dusty, so bring clothing you that could get ruined.
- One light jacket (evenings or for cold airplane)
- 1-2 Long Sleeved cotton shirts in the evening (to keep the mosquitos off)
- Swim suit (no bikinis, unless you have a shirt to cover your body)
- Socks (3 or 4 pair)
- Tennis shoes
- 1 pair of sturdy sandals (don't recommend walking around in flip flops)
- Flip flops (shower shoes)

Ladies:

- Bring capris or light pants (only to be worn inside the orphanage safe home)
- At least 3 to 4 below the knee skirts with a slip (culturally offensive to see above the knee or shape of a women's legs)
- Tank tops need to be at least 1 inch thick (no spaghetti straps because culturally offensive)

Men:

- Bring lightweight pants
- Couple collared shirts

Toiletries and Extras:

- NO MOSQUITO NET NEEDED – this is provided
- 2-20 European outlets (will need an adapter to plug in any electronics)
- Pillow
- Twin bedding is provided, but if you prefer your own set feel free to bring it. There will be a fan in the room. Light blanket if you get cold easily.

- 2 light towels (because takes a while for things to dry – quick drying towels are ideal)
- Washcloths
- Small flashlight
- Sunglasses
- Small Bible (if you have one)
- Journal
- Lots of underwear
- Water bottle
- Ear plugs
- Sunscreen (30+)
- Hat
- Mosquito repellent (your preference – recommend taking Garlic and Vit-B complex while on the trip to help deter mosquitos, but will NOT repel them)
- Triple antibiotic anointment
- Hydrocortisone or anti-itch cream
- Pepto-Bismol (pill form)
- Anti-bacterial gel (hand sanitizer)
- Sleep aid to help with jet lag
- Ziploc bags (help to keep things from spilling in your bag)
- Tylenol/Ibuprofen
- Personal toiletries (toothpaste, shampoo, soap, etc.)
- Protein bars/beef jerky/nuts (at least enough for 1 snack a day)

Possible Gifts:

- Wind up flashlights (not battery operated)
- Children's book or sweet kids' movies in French (nothing scary, about magic, or Voodoo - do not bring Disney's the *Princess and the Frog*)
- Nail polish and manicure stuff
- Deflated soccer balls with a pump
- Games for the kids in French (playing cards, Go Fish, Old Maid)
- Frisbees and yard type games
- Kid pencils and stickers

Fundraising:

To fund a project, we sometimes ask team members to raise a certain amount for a project they want to be involved in. Some cannot raise anything towards a project—it's hard enough just raising enough funds to be able to come on the trip. Others are able to raise thousands. There are no prizes or pressure—whatever you can do just makes a difference in the lives of those we serve. The more we raise, the more we do. Money has never been the criterion for you to make an impact in these children's lives. It is all in what you feel compelled to do.

Ideas for Raising Money:

Create your personal (or team) [Online Fundraising Page](https://donate.orphanreliefandrescue.org/trips) (<https://donate.orphanreliefandrescue.org/trips>) through Orphan Relief and Rescue's website.

More Ideas:

- **Promise Auction:** ask people to offer their services—cook a meal, a handyman for a day, babysit for an evening, etc. We have found that approaching local businesses for things to auction also works well like hairdressers, restaurants, football tickets, signed football items, one night's stay at a local hotel, spa packages, gift baskets, date night at the movies, dinner at a local restaurant, etc.
- **Sponsored activity:** get pledges for you to swim, bike, run or walk 5 miles.
- **Fashion show using local retailers:** ask your local fashion retailers to lend the clothes and book a venue. Ask friends to model the clothes and charge an entry fee. The retailer gives a good commission on items sold, and it's free advertising for them!
- **Sharing the vision:** people like to give when they have personal contact.
- **Company matching:** companies have charitable funds they use to sponsor or match their employees' charitable work.
- **Local media:** contact your local newspaper and tell them what you are doing. They love pictures and articles of local people with a desire to help orphans. Your experience is of interest to your local radio and news, so just contact them!
- **Boat trips:** some have hired a large boat and invited friends to a party.
- **Schools:** schools love to know what you are doing. They can do a coin drive in their community.
- **Churches:** if you are able to share the vision local churches, they may support you.
- **Local fire station:** ask your local fire station if they will do a sponsored car wash.
- **Movie night:** invite your friends to see a movie and get them to bring a donation.
- **Church house group lunch:** meet together for lunch and take an offering for the project after the presentation.
- **Yard or eBay sale:** a good opportunity to clear out stuff!

- **Local Shops:** Wal-Mart, Lowe's and others often give donations of money or items for charity auctions. Just go in and ask!

Returning Home:

After the trip, many folks struggle to adjust to normal life. What you experience may be profound and change your worldview significantly. This takes time to process.

The things you see may put life in perspective, particularly the contrast of our affluent lifestyle with the poverty and simplicity of the communities where we work in Benin. Some struggle with guilt or want to say that others should feel guilty. These are natural feelings, but you shouldn't feel guilty. Remind yourself that others haven't seen what you have seen. Give yourself time to digest the many experiences of your trip before making big decisions.

Your perspective on life may change, but treat your new perspective as a fresh start, an opportunity to live out God's potential for you. You will likely be forever changed.

You will always be a part of the Orphan Relief and Rescue community, so please stay in contact. We also encourage you to stay involved, in whatever way you decide. Remember that God's priorities for you have to do with *being*, not *doing*.

Country Profile: Benin

Despite being one of Africa's most stable democracies, Benin is one of the poorest countries in the world and remains underdeveloped. Due to its unique history and geographical shape, Benin is said to be "the key to Africa". Similar to many West African nations, Benin was heavily affected by the trans-Atlantic slave trade and Colonialism and in many ways is still working to repair their culture, economy, and identity. Historically, Benin is the birthplace of the Voodoo religion, and it is still very much a part of the culture today. Poverty is a daily struggle for many with 51.6% of the population living on less than \$1 per day. Overall national literacy is below 40%, and it is not uncommon for girls to be denied an education.



Capital City: Porto-Novo

Size: 43,483 square miles; slightly smaller than Pennsylvania

Population: 10 million

Average Life Expectancy: 59 years

Median Age: 17.3 years

Official Language: French

Religion: 50% Indigenous (Animism, Vodun), 30% Christian, 20% Muslim

Climate: Tropical, hot and humid in the south and semi-arid in the north

Government: Multi-party Democratic

