



# MINGA HOUSE

Non-Profit Organization – Founded in 2014

NIT: 900867100-4

## What is MINGA?

*“Minga entails a collaborative work system that dates back to the Incas. It refers to the commitment, contract or work agreement between two or more people. The word minga also stands for meeting or reunion.”*

## Welcome, Minga House Foundation Volunteer!

Thank you for volunteering with Minga House Foundation and with our partner organizations! You will love visiting beautiful Colombia’s Eje Cafetero (Andean Coffee Region)! You will have a great time immersed in Spanish and Colombian culture. Hopefully, the following planning tips may be helpful.

**Choosing arrival AIRPORT:** First, be sure to choose **PEREIRA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**, and not the Manizales Airport. Why? Because the smaller Manizales Airport has delays often or cancels flights due to visibility conditions. Pereira airport is more likely to have flights on time. You will need to have Minga House Foundation’s invitation letter with you when entering Colombia as well as proof of your departure date.

**Airport PICKUP:** Optional: You may ask us to arrange for airport pickup by one of our preferred vendors, or you may reach Minga House in Chinchina on your own. Let us know what you choose to do. Airport pickup typically costs \$130,000 via Taxi (Approx \$40 USD). If you choose to venture on your own from the Pereira airport, you will first need to take a taxi from the airport to the Pereira bus terminal, then you would take a public bus from Pereira to Chinchina. Upon arriving to Chinchina simply go to the Bolivar Park downtown and Minga House Foundation is right there! It’s easy; you’ll see. **What’s my recommendation?** The least expensive, most flexible, most secure solution, and quickest way to reach your bed so you can rest is to have my nephew pick you up at the airport! He is also one of our team leaders. JAIDIBER ‘McGyver’ CASTANO WhatsApp +57-321-627-4124

**MONEY:** If traveling via Bogota or Panama City, exchange your money there. The Pereira airport is much smaller and often does not have their exchange operating; and in Chinchina there is only one exchange site and it is typically at a less favorable rate. We strongly advise you to ensure your ATM card will work by informing your bank prior to your travels to Colombia. You never know when you may need emergency cash.

**PHONE:** We advise that you explore with your existing cell phone provider if you have roaming service in Colombia. Download key phone apps such as **WhatsApp** and **Google Translator**.

**PACKING: Pack important gear in your “carry-on bag!”** (Always plan for the worst; in case your luggage is delayed or lost): Pack one change of clothes, light rain gear, hat/cap, sunglasses, insect repellent, sunscreen, a rugged water bottle, your favorite snack bars, and required work-related gear (for example if you are participating in a health professions role have two sets of scrubs, hand sanitizer, stethoscope, and blood pressure cuff), and swimsuit.



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More info about our **RECREATIONAL OPTIONS**: You may also download travel guides on our website: <https://www.mingahouse.org/travel-guides.html>

**DONATIONS:** If you would like to bring any donations, the following are the items that are most needed and in order of preference: DO NOT bring medications, as we have Health Department and Customs restrictions. Consider 'weight' as a key factor in choosing your donations. Chances are that it is wiser to bring more 'lighter' things instead of fewer 'heavier' ones. Items needed include:

- Laptops – Just ask your family and friends if they have a spare working laptop or tablet.
- Multivitamins for children, pre-natal, adults, and the seniors
- Dental care supplies: Toothbrushes, toothpaste, dental floss
- Small toys, frisbees, deflated balls (used OK)
- Baby & Children's clothes (used OK)
- Stickers (sheets of small size; able to share & split apart among all the children)
- School supplies (crayons, pencils, coloring books)
- Pregnancy test kits (dollar store)
- Supplies: Hand sanitizer, antibacterial soap, pill separators, and plastic name tag covers.
- First-Aid kits: Antibiotic cream, bandages, ice packs, gauze, adhesive tape, band-aids
- Hard-to-find food items: Chunky peanut butter, jalapenos, honey-mustard, & other favorites!
- Diagnostic Medical Gear: Temple Touch Thermometers, Otoscopes, Finger Pulse Oximeters, Glucometers & strips, Stethoscopes, Pressure Cuffs, and Batteries (AA, AAA, CR-2032).

**SMOKING & DRUGS:** Minga House Foundation facilities are 100% non-smoking & no-drug zones

**PET ALLERGIES:** We do have a cat (Are you allergic?). We are able to relocate the cat during your stay, if it's an issue for you. No problem. Please let us know. Good housekeeping keeps the issue under control.

**INSURANCE:** It is mandatory to purchase Liability Risk Insurance to work on most volunteer roles (Cost: \$13-39 USD/mo based on the health risk is within your chosen volunteer role). You probably already paid for it when you paid for your volunteering program. Remember, Liability Risk Insurance (ARL) is not health insurance. While it is not required for you to show medical insurance, we do recommend you carry it.

Keep in mind that this is an adventure and as such, itineraries may change due to unforeseen circumstances or newly found opportunities. What is most important is that you bring your best attitude, much flexibility, tons of curiosity and lots of empathy; plus lots of heart!

Your **PROGRAM LEADER** will be STIVEN LOPEZ, Social Programs Director: WhatsApp +57-310-452-3454

See you soon!

***Glen G. Galindo***

Glen G. Galindo, M.Ed.

Founder & President



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## The Colombian government requires you to show **departure tickets!**

Booking only a one-way ticket can propose some issues when entering Colombia due to the fact that the Colombian government officials at the airport during your point of entry will want you to have PROOF of your future departure within your legal stay period expires. Tourists may initially enter for 90 days and easily extend to 180 days. Minga House Foundation participants must have an 'invitation letter' on hand which will have exact dates for entry and departure. You must have proof of how and when you plan to depart to match those dates on that letter provided to you by Minga House Foundation. If you are determined to only purchase an entry one-way airline ticket to Colombia, we recommend a few options that will allow you to provide a departure date to enter Colombia without any problems.

**Option 1: BUS:** There is a bus that goes from Bogota, Colombia to Quito, Ecuador and is a potential option to show documentation as to your exit. Purchase ticket using credit card. [BusBud.com](http://BusBud.com) is a reliable company often used in this situation that is directly in partnership with major bus companies in Colombia/Ecuador (Copetran, Expreso Brasilia, Bolivariano, Berlinas del Fonce, Rapido Ochoa, Fronteras). Once you enter Colombia safe and sound, return to the Bus Bud website to cancel your bus ticket reservation and requesting a full refund. **REMEMBER**, to always read the details and fine print on your ticket, as well as the terms and conditions. You must have proof of this bus ticket purchase with you during your initial flight to Colombia.

**Option 2: PLANE:** Buying a refundable plane ticket is more reliable when entering Colombia in comparison to a bus ticket, but you must consider that is a larger purchase. Use credit card. You must have proof of this bus ticket purchase with you during your initial flight to Colombia.

- <http://bestonwardticket.com/#how-it-works> (great explanation!)
- **Bestonwardticket.com** – \$7.99 (USD) is all you need to pay and you have a refundable ticket ready to be used! (**RECOMMENDED SITE**)
- **Flyonward.com** – Slightly more expensive site with a cost of \$9.99 (USD)
- **Orbitz.com** – Refundable tickets if cancelled within 24 hours of purchase. 100% of the price is refunded. Reliable and established company known to have a good customer service support.
- **Returnflights.net** – Free service if you need a refundable return flight. Vvery easy and quick to use.

**REMEMBER**, there is a small risk when purchasing these refundable tickets, as they are essentially not actual plane tickets. The companies only 'hold ticket placements temporarily' while you cancel them. But you have to follow the strict instructions accurately if you wish to receive your refund. Many travelers use these websites to avoid the trouble of purchasing round-trip tickets. Remember, when you attempt to enter Colombia, they will ask to see how you plan of departure upon completing your legal stay. You need proof on hand of either a round-trip ticket, or one of the bus/plane options outlined above.

**What's the easiest plan?** Purchase round-trip tickets from your desired arrival date to a few days after the school year ends in December. You would need to modify your then employment VISA status to either back to a tourist status or obtain a new working contract with a new employment VISA extension.