



MINGA HOUSE

Non-Profit Organization – Founded in 2014

NIT: 900867100-4

MingaHouse.org

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 our partner organizations! You will love visiting beautiful Colombia’s Eje Cafetero (Andean Coffee Region). You will be learning immersed in the language and culture while serving the community and will be having great deal of fun doing so. Hopefully, the following planning tips will make your experience even more rewarding. Be sure you read the **Getting Ready to Go Guide** and the **Orientation Guide** linked to our website.

AIRPORT: First, be sure to choose PEREIRA 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. Upon arrival to the Pereira airport go through immigration and then customs. Declare you are coming to the Coffee Region as a TOURIST, and do not represent yourself to be a volunteer or intern as it will only complicate things unnecessarily (this requires a special visa for a longer period of stay; unless you are actually coming to intern at a university, of course). You will need to have Minga House Foundation’s address handy during your trip as customs will ask you where you are staying (see footnotes).

IN-COUNTRY TRANSPORTATION: Optional: You may arrange with Minga House staff for a private taxi to pick you up at the airport and bring you to Minga House Foundation for 120,000 COP paid directly to the taxi driver. The taxi driver will have your contact information, flight info, your picture, and will be waiting for you at the gate. If you did not ask us for an airport pick up, or if you are already in Colombia and are taking a bus directly to Chinchina, we can easily guide you to Chinchina using WhatsApp. From the Pereira airport, you will first need to take a taxi to the bus terminal and then a public bus from Pereira to Chinchina. Upon arriving at Chinchina, simply go to Bolivar Park downtown and Minga House Foundation is right there! It’s easy; you’ll see.

MONEY: If traveling via Bogota or Panama City, do your money exchange there as the exchange service at the smaller Pereira airport is not always operating, and in Chinchina the exchange rates are lower or may simply not be available. \$2-300 USD will be sufficient to cover your meals and going out for a 14-day stay. 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.

VISITOR EXTENDED STAY FEES: You are officially a tourist if your stay is less than 45 days and do not have to pay an **extended stay tax**. Then, if you do stay longer than 90 days you will be charged approximately a \$50 USD fee upon exiting the country. If you decide to stay longer than 180 days you will need to ask for an extension to your tourist VISA. We can help you with that process.

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



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PACKING: Pack important gear in your “carry-on bag!” (Always plan for the worst; in case your luggage is delayed or lost): It has happened to 1 out of 100, it has happened. 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 in the health professions have two sets of scrubs, swimsuit, hand sanitizer, stethoscope, blood pressure cuff).

DONATIONS: If you would like to bring any donations, especially if you’re participating in a health role, the following are the items that are most needed and in order of preference: DO NOT bring medications, as we have Health Dept restrictions. Consider ‘weight’ as a key factor in choosing your donations. Chances are that bringing more ‘lighter’ instead of ‘fewer heavier ones’ you may be able to help more people.

- 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).

IMPORTANT: Minga House facilities are non-smoking & no-drug zones; and we have a cat & dog (allergic?). You will be asked to provide proof of emergency medical insurance coverage. If you do not have coverage for Colombia, you will have to purchase some under our umbrella policy costing you \$5-10 USD/mo based on your volunteer role. Provide our contact info to your emergency contacts. Download WhatsApp and connect to all our team ASAP so you travel well connected. Questions?

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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; lots of heart!

See you soon!

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