

SOLES4SOULS

Turning shoes and clothing into opportunity

TRAVEL POLICY

About Us

Since 2010, our travel leaders have taken over 210 international trips and more than 2,600 Soles4Souls volunteers all over the world to help distribute shoes to children. Our focus is to provide footwear to those in need while spending time merging cultures and building relationships. By doing so, travelers take part in bringing hope, health and happiness to children around the world through the gift of shoes. In Haiti and Honduras, travelers will get the chance to experience our micro-enterprise program, bringing our mission full circle.

Our typical trips are 5-days in length, with the exception of Guatemala, which are 6-days in length. The first and last days are predominately travel days, arriving and departing midday. The rest of the trip is full of meaningful service work and cultural immersion activities with an emphasis on our micro-enterprise program.

Everywhere we travel, we work with local partners. Accommodations will be provided by our partnering organizations. All meals and filtered drinking water will be provided. Meals and accommodations will be safe and hygienic, but basic, and are described in more detail in the travel packet.

S4S shall arrange for the following:

- Coordinate and attain ground transportation in-country
- Arrange for lodging in country
- Provide supplies, a water bottle, and over-the-counter medications for common, non-acute illnesses and injuries;
- Arrange for breakfast, lunch and dinner and safe drinking water/beverages during the trip
- Coordinate your participation in shoe distributions to locals
- Provide international insurance that will benefit travelers in the event of a medical emergency while traveling in-country with Soles4Souls, including medical evacuation coverage. Pre-existing health injuries are not covered.

Flights

Booking international and domestic flights are the responsibility of the traveler. If requested, Soles4Souls can assist with booking flights for a nominal fee. A Soles4Souls Travel Coordinator will communicate flight dates, preferred flight times, and may provide recommendations on additional flight details. Travelers should not book airfare until their Travel Coordinator has given

Information Gathering

Emergency Contact Information

Soles4Souls records travelers' emergency contact information and carries this information while in-country.

Allergy/Medical Conditions

It is imperative that travelers notify their Travel Coordinator before their trip of any serious health conditions, allergies, or dietary restrictions.

By obtaining this information in advance, the Soles4Souls Travel Coordinator is able to plan the trip logistics, considering all food/health limitations of the travelers, and be better prepared for possible emergency situations.

All travelers should bring routine prescriptions, glasses, contacts, solution, bug spray, sunscreen, and a small first aid kit. Please see our travel packet for more information. S4S Travel Coordinators are CPR certified and familiar with first aid - they will carry a full medical kit in case of emergency.

YouLive to Travel (YouLi) Platform

Soles4Souls utilizes the trusted platform, YouLi, for all group trips. This platform allows us to streamline our registration process and effectively collect information and documents from travelers. Travelers have access to their profile through a unique link where they can complete tasks, upload documents, and make payments. Travelers can use YouLi to track their activity leading up to the trip as well as view itinerary developments and additional travel resources. This all-in-one platform streamlines communication between Soles4Souls and the traveler and conveniently keeps the traveler informed throughout the entire process.

Protecting personal information

Personal information will never be disclosed to parties other than YouLi and is safe and secure on their platform. Soles4Souls collects personal information via the platform to contact travelers, send pre-trip materials, and use in case of an emergency while traveling. Please click [here](#) to read YouLi's Security Policy and [here](#) for their Privacy Policy.

Documentation

The Soles4Souls Travel Coordinator carries all emergency documentation on him/her in-country, including a copy of all travelers' passports and flight information, as well as the travel insurance policy and emergency contact information.

Travel Agreement/Liability Form

The Travel Agreement is between Soles4Souls, Inc. (S4S) and the traveler. It is intended to be a legally binding contract that sets forth all rights and obligations relating to the Trip and includes language that releases S4S from certain types of claims and liabilities. Travelers must agree to all of its terms and conditions before they will be allowed to participate on the Trip. Travelers should read it carefully and make sure they understand each term before signing.

Passport

All travelers are required to upload a copy of their passport to their profile on YouLi. Travel Coordinators will print a copy and carry with them in-country. If a traveler does not have a passport, or if their passport will expire within six months after their travel dates, they need to visit the State Department's website to apply for or renew their passport. Standard processing time for a first passport is minimum 6-8 or more weeks, and routine passport renewals are estimated 2-3 weeks. We encourage travelers to take care of this as soon as possible.

Photo ID

If travelers are traveling with Soles4Souls within the United States, they need to upload a copy of their drivers license or valid I.D. Please note that every air traveler 18 years of age and older will need a REAL ID-compliant drivers license, state-issued enhanced driver's license, or another acceptable form of ID beginning October 1, 2021.

Information Dissemination

Leading up to the trip, Soles4Souls will provide the travel participants with all emergency contact information, which includes but is not limited to:

- The Soles4Souls Travel Coordinator's cell phone number
- Soles4Souls' headquarters phone number
- In-country U.S. Embassy contact information

All of this information is contained in the Country Travel Packet and/or emails leading up to the trip. This Travel Packet – containing vital information about the trip details (housing, transportation, food, internet/cell, etc.) – is to be treated as our pre-trip departure training material. It is vital that all travelers review in depth leading up to the trip.

It is also the responsibility of the travel participants to provide this information to their emergency contacts.

Communication

Soles4Souls purchases international phone plans for all Soles4Souls Travel Coordinators. Should there be an emergency, we are able to contact all appropriate in-country and U.S.-based individuals. The in-country Soles4Souls team regularly keeps in contact with the Soles4Souls headquarters to update them on the team status. Additionally, the Soles4Souls Travel Coordinator will send a quick email to all emergency contacts once the entire team arrives in-country on the first day, again providing his/her cell phone number in case of an emergency.

For every destination where Soles4Souls travels, we have an in-country partner who helps us coordinate the activities for the shoe distribution trip. This individual(s) is either native to the country or has lived there for approximately 7+ years. We take pride in the opportunity to support the local economy through this partnership, while also having a trustworthy partner who knows the lay of the land and knows the cultural norms to help us speak to others with respect.

Safety & security

Strong Leadership

Soles4Souls has established partnerships that allow our teams to travel with a fully bilingual local partner and translator(s) throughout the duration of our trip. They are our “eyes and ears on the ground.” Not to mention, all of our Soles4Souls Travel Coordinators have at least 5-10 years of international travel experience. This strong leadership coupled with local knowledge builds a foundation for successful and safe trips.

STEP Program

We register all travel participants and their emergency contacts with the U.S. State Department’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) program, which tracks in-country current news and events and lets all parties know if there is an emergency during our time in country. Should an emergency arise, the U.S. embassy knows that (1) we’re in the country and (2) where we’re staying to better assist our team during the emergency.

Travel Insurance

Soles4Souls carries full medical and evacuation insurance coverage on all travelers, should something happen outside of our control. This allows our team members to seek medical treatment or leave the country quickly, if necessary.

Awareness of Surroundings

This is a responsibility of all parties. We ask that all travel participants stay with the group at all times, keep an eye on their belongings and leave all valuables at home. Most importantly, we ask that the travel team in its entirety trust and follow the Soles4Souls Travel Coordinator’s instructions. This Travel Coordinator is trained to monitor risk and see to the safety and health of all travelers.

Gifts

Travelers will see many people they want to help, but please remember sometimes helping hurts if it is not done correctly. We ask all of our travelers not to indiscriminately hand out food, money, sweets, supplies, etc. as it oftentimes encourages begging and other issues. As with anywhere, gifts should be given as a true expression of friendship, appreciation or thanks. If travelers do want to give money, please only give it when a service is performed or item purchased, and do not overcompensate.

Photography

We encourage travelers to bring their camera, as they will have lots of opportunity to take some great photos during the trip. Feel welcome to take photos with the children during shoe distributions. In fact, we encourage travelers to take the extra minute to show them the photos they’ve taken with them – they’ll love it. We request that travelers ask for permission before

Intentionality

The Soles4Souls teams will not mindfully go anywhere or do anything that jeopardizes travel participants' health & safety. Travelers can trust their trained and equipped Travel Coordinators who know the area and organizations that are being visited.

Emergency protocol

In an emergency, the Soles4Souls Travel Coordinator's first responsibility is to safeguard the immediate wellbeing of travel participants. The Soles4Souls Travel Coordinator should take appropriate steps to assure the immediate safety and wellbeing of the participants, including obtaining prompt and appropriate medical attention, embassy intervention and/or police protection.

As necessary, the Soles4Souls Travel Coordinator should notify the in-country U.S. Embassy or Consulate about the emergency, and follow whatever procedures they may suggest or require. At this time, the Soles4Souls Travel Coordinator will designate a primary and secondary assembly point and instructions to said locations, should the team become separated.

When all has been done to assure the travelers' immediate well-being, the Soles4Souls Travel Coordinator should gather all critical information and contact a member of the Soles4Souls Executive Team. The Soles4Souls Executive(s) should be contacted first by phone, with communication by e-mail used as a last resort. If no one can be reached on the Soles4Souls Executive Team, the Travel Coordinator should contact a colleague on the Leadership Team. At this time, the Soles4Souls team will decide what course of action to take.

Next, the Soles4Souls Travel Coordinator should encourage travel participants to contact family members and/or other concerned parties as soon as possible to advise them of the situation. Depending on the severity, the Soles4Souls Travel Coordinator will help facilitate such contact either via e-mail and/or call/text.

During an on-going crisis, the Soles4Souls Travel Coordinator will keep the Soles4Souls Executive(s) updated on a regular basis.

Acceptance of risk

Traveling in developing nations is much riskier than traveling within the United States. While S4S has taken reasonable and prudent measures to reduce foreseeable risks, it cannot eliminate all risks. The risk of personal injury, death and property damage is increased by factors such as geographic and climatic conditions, forces of nature, hygienic standards, disease, biomedical hazards, infrastructure problems, crime, and civil unrest or terrorism. In addition, medical services or facilities may not be readily available during portions of the Trip and, if available, may not be equal to standards in the United States.

Travelers' choice to participate in the Trip is knowing, voluntary, and made for their personal enjoyment. They understand that participation in the Trip involves inherent risks and dangers of accidents, rescue operations, emergency treatment, property loss or damage, serious personal and bodily injury, death, and severe personal and economic losses. These may result not only from their own actions, inactions, or negligence, but also from the actions, inactions, or negligence of others, or the condition of the facilities, venue, transportation or equipment. In other words, Soles4Souls

Reservation of Rights

S4S reserves the right to cancel the Trip when, in its sole discretion, it determines that it would be advisable to do so. S4S also reserves the right to alter the Trip itinerary once in-country.

Medical Preparation

S4S cannot recommend medical precautions appropriate for each individual. Travelers are solely responsible for being in sufficient health to undertake the Trip and for taking all appropriate medical precautions, including consulting with their health care practitioner to become familiar with the biomedical hazards that they may encounter on the Trip and to obtain the appropriate means of medical prevention or mitigation. Please refer to the website www.cdc.gov to see what general medical precautions and immunizations are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Contact your local travel clinic with questions.

Refund/Cancellation policy

Cancellation by you

In the event that you cancel your Trip more than 60 days prior to the departure date, you may apply your balance, minus your deposit and all previously incurred expenses by S4S for your trip participation, to another trip.

In the event that you cancel your Trip less than 60 days prior to the departure date, you may apply your balance, minus your deposit, all previously incurred expenses by S4S for your trip participation AND a \$500 cancellation fee, to another trip.

Rescheduled trips must occur within 12 months of your cancellation date otherwise your payments will be counted as a tax-deductible gift to S4S. Note that all deposits are non-refundable and non-transferable. All cancellations must be emailed to S4S at travel@soles4souls.org.

Cancellation by S4S

In the event that S4S has to cancel the Trip due to unforeseen circumstances, S4S will provide a full refund (including deposit) or ideally transfer funds to another trip within 12 months of the cancellation. S4S will not be responsible for reimbursing any expenses you may have incurred in preparing for your Trip. The only exception would be airfare expenses booked by you or S4S on your behalf. In that event, S4S will reimburse you for the airline change fee up to \$200. Note: in the event that you booked your airfare prior to receiving approval from the S4S trip leader, S4S will not reimburse any of those costs.

Soles4Souls reserves the right to cancel the Trip for any reason beyond the control of such party, including, but not limited to, war, civil disturbance, terrorism, issuance of U.S. State Department or other relevant advisory, transportation strikes and acts of God. In such an event, Soles4Souls shall provide a credit for a similar future tour, or mutually agree with the other party to an alternative resolution of the matter.

Economic, Environmental & Social Responsibility

Economic Impact

Since 2010, our travel program has generated over 1.8 million in economic impact, contributing to the local economies where we visit and serve. The majority of expenses for each trip go into the local economy, which includes meals at local restaurants, partner and translator fees, new shoes, local accommodations, excursions, transportation services, and money spent by travelers at local shops and cafes. Our travel program can help provide essential goods like shelter, food, and education. Calculate your impact here.

Social Responsibility

For Travelers: Our trips aim to empower all individuals traveling with us to engage and transform the world. We achieve this by introducing travelers to a new culture and a new perspective, which will foster their growth as givers, learners, leaders and global citizens.

For every country we travel to, communities and citizens will benefit from relationships established during the service trip as well as direct assistance provided by the program in the form of shoes and assistance with any other special projects.

Environmental Responsibility

By providing people with shoes we are not only helping improve people's lives but we are helping the environment by reducing excess shoes going to waste. Our organization cares about the impact we have on our environment and on people so we ask during travelers' time on their trip to care just as much about the new environment we are in as they do the people we are there for. We ask to make sure travelers are being careful with where they put their trash, how much trash they are using, and how they are treating the accommodations they are being provided. The Soles4Souls Travel Coordinator will provide pointers on how to do this while in-country.