

# Preparing for Departure

All circumstance cannot be anticipated but this information will help you to be better prepared for your journey

Travel Tips:

## **Bring a Good Attitude**

Today's security will occasionally test the patience of every person in the airport, and security personnel are not likely to be charitable toward someone with a bad attitude. Cooperation from all involved is going to be essential. You will be safer, and more likely to get where you want to go, if you bring a good attitude to the airport.

## **Arrive At Least Two Hours before Check-In**

Officials have requested that all travelers arrive at the airport fully two hours before departure to accommodate substantially increased security measures. With a large group, it is usually beneficial to arrive 3 hours earlier.

## **Carry-On Restrictions and Prohibitions**

You can expect severely restrictive carry-on rules. Carry-on luggage may be searched with extreme scrutiny, to the extent that you may be asked to empty all the contents of your bag, and certain items may be confiscated. Pack your carry-on in such a way that you will not worry about it if it becomes checked luggage. All liquids must be under 3oz. and placed together in a zip-lock bag.

## **Traveling in Today's World**

Always keep your passport, photo ID, and extra cash and/or credit card on you. It is better to have a backup in case something happens and you are stranded. Always keep a one-week supply of necessary prescription medications with you in your carry-on when traveling. Have the team leader carry a photocopy of everyone's passport.

## **Baggage Matching**

Baggage matching, quite common in Europe and the Middle East, was almost non-existent in the U.S. This has changed. The tactic requires that every bag checked in be matched to the specific passenger (you will be required to identify your luggage), and that no bags are loaded onto the plane until each passenger is on board the plane. This, along with pre-flight cabin checks, may make for considerable delays after you've already boarded the plane. Tag your luggage with good quality ID tags before leaving for the airport. Place your name, address and destination address inside the bag along with telephone contact numbers.

KEEP YOUR CHECKED BAGGAGE TAGS WITH YOU! THEY WILL BE STAPLED TO YOUR TICKET ENVELOPE. MAKE SURE YOU DO NOT ACCIDENTLY THROW THEM IN THE GARBAGE!

### **BEFORE YOU PACK & AS YOU TRAVEL:**

- a. Does your team have the Team Insurance information? Do not leave without it. Most health insurance plans do not cover you while you are out of the country. At best, they won't pay for medical evacuation should you become ill or hurt, and need to be moved to better facilities. The travel insurance through AGWM MAPS is required.
- b. For the trip, you'll need your documents handy (passport, tickets, etc.). Please do not put these in your carry-on. It is best to use one of the document pouches that hang around your neck and can be concealed by clothing, to carry your passport, credit card and cash. Most have 2 pockets.
- c. It would be a good idea to prepare a very general packing list WITHOUT values for each bag. Place a copy in the luggage and keep one with you in case of loss. This doesn't need to be detailed; it should say enough to show that you're not bringing in stuff to sell. For example: Personal effects, clothing, books, toiletries, etc. At the top of the packing list put your name, address, address of destination and contact telephone numbers.
- d. It is recommended that you pack in your carry-on a day's supply of clothing and all prescription medication in case your luggage is delayed or you experience an unexpected overnight delay on your way over. Please do not bring any expensive jewelry. Carry only essential toiletries. Do not pack scissors, nail clippers, letter opener, fingernail file, knife or cutter of any kind in your carry-on or briefcase. If it has a sharp point, they will keep it. Scatter any tools in various checked bags.
- e. If the airline delays your travel, it is usually required to take care of all stopover expenses including hotel, meals, and telegram / telephone call to advise of change in arrival schedule. Please contact us if a delay happens. If you send the e-mail addresses of the team member's family and other contacts before you depart the US, we will let them know what has happened and how you are.
- f. It is suggested that you bring 1 1/2 times your planned need of any prescription medications. Keep your medication with you in your carry-on. Medications should be in current, dated, prescription bottle. Please do not bring any medications in plain containers or the wrong container. You may lose them at a customs check.
- g. Each person should carry a copy of their passport in a separate location from the original, an emergency list that shows your name, medications that you are currently taking, allergies to medication, blood type, family doctor contact information, and family members contact information. The list should contain any information that could be important in case of accident or sudden illness. Make copies of your passport and emergency contact list.
- h. During your trip, never leave your luggage unlocked or unattended. Use the buddy system and take turns watching the luggage for each other during waits at the airports.
- i. In Europe, the restroom will usually be called WC (water closet), or simply by Toilet. The door may be propped open so look carefully at the ID on door before entering. In some cities in Europe, you may discover that there is not a separate room for men and women in some establishments.

- j. Carry approximately 20 one-dollar bills (should be the new style and in good condition) with you when you depart. They are accepted at most international airports and will come in handy when you want to purchase a coke or snack, or need to give a tip. BUT...for Moldova, bring only CLEAN, UNTORN bills, 10s, 20s, 50s, or 100s.
- k. Purchase snacks before packing. Pack larger amounts in your checked bag. You will enjoy the snacks during your stay. Pack enough in your carry-on for the journey. Food is expensive in airports and the snacks come in handy. In the summer be careful of candy and snacks that are heat sensitive.
- l. You may want to buy a bottle of water to carry with you after you go through security. On the plane they will normally provide a sufficient amount of water. The more water you drink several days before the trip and during the trip, the better you will feel when you arrive. Most jet lag is actually dehydration. Avoid caffeine as much as possible before and during the trip.

### **IF YOU MISS YOUR PLANE:**

Before you leave, check with the travel agency and see what advice they give; if you do miss your plane, you will be placed on standby status for the next available flight. If it is the airline's fault, you may have to get red in the face to get them to provide for any lodging, meal needs, and transportation and general expenses. **Please inform us ASAP of any changes in plans!**

**AFTER YOU LAND IN Moldova**, you will go through three areas:

1. **Passport Control:** Not a problem unless you lose your passport. There will be a bus that meets you at the plane. It will shuttle you to the door of the airport, where you will then line up to go through passport control. Often the lines are long and it may take awhile but do not worry. They know you cannot speak Romanian or Russian, so just smile and hand them your passport. **You do not need a visa, just your American passport.**
2. **Baggage claim:** You will recognize this area, so just wait for your bags. Unless you need help, tell the attendants "no" (we will help you when you get to the lobby). If they help you, we need to give them a tip. If luggage is missing, go directly to the lost luggage office by baggage claim area and report it. You will need your end of the bar-coded luggage tag, which is usually stapled to your ticket. Do not fret; usually missing luggage arrives the next day. It has happened before.
3. **Customs:** You have nothing to declare. This is where the packing list may come in handy. If you are asked what is in any of the bags, just say they are all personal effects for your trip. They may want to inspect the contents, in which case you should show them the packing list when you open the bag. Be sure that it is accurate. We have had very little problem with people entering, even with large amounts of luggage. You will put them on a belt to go through one last x-ray machine. Then you can head out to the lobby!

## LUGGAGE & EXCESS LUGGAGE

**THE FOLLOWING IS GENERAL INFORMATION RELATED TO LUGGAGE AND EXCESS LUGGAGE. Airlines are not the same.** Check with your travel agent or airline about their specific requirements. If you are changing airlines overseas, you should check the requirement for both carriers. Some overseas carriers don't allow as much in pounds or size for checked or carry-on luggage.

**The US standard per ticket is** normally two free checked bags; maximum 50 pounds each, depending on the carrier and destination. **BUT there are recent airline changes, so verify!**

- One carry-on bag is also allowed. It must fit under the seat or in the overhead bin with a 20 pound weight limit. If your valuables, prescription medication, cosmetics, toiletries, one day's change of clothing, etc. are in your carry-on, it is best not to fudge on size. They may take it from you and check it before you board. Because you have always carried that carry-on does not mean that it will be acceptable today.

**Mark Your Bags:** Be sure that each bag has a nametag that is securely fastened. The tag should include your name, stateside address, and telephone number. Use one of the nametag holders that cover the tag and are not easily opened. Guard against a stranger easily securing your home address as they watch you leave the country. Place inside the bag, your name, address in the USA, telephone number, address at destination, contact person and telephone numbers. Include a copy of your passport and an inventory list. Keep the list general (personal items, toiletries, clothes, shoes, hair dryer, etc.) and do not include dollar values. Carry a copy of the inventory for each bag with you as well. If your bag is lost this list will be important. Mark your bags so that they are easily recognized. When you are in the luggage pickup area, many bags may look like yours. It's much easier if you are looking for the yellow band that you placed around each bag, or the safety orange reflector ribbon that you tied to the handle.

**Lost Luggage:** If one or more of your bags does not arrive with you, go immediately to the claims office and file a loss claim for the luggage. Do not exit the claim area. Once you are on the other side of customs it will be difficult to prove that you did not exit with the luggage. You will be asked how to contact you and need to know where you will be staying. They will deliver the lost luggage to you when it arrives. Often the AGWM missionary can arrange to have someone pick the bag up for you.

## Money

When considering how much cash to bring for miscellaneous expenses and souvenirs, \$150 is an average amount to suggest. Big shoppers may want to bring more, while those not planning to do too much shopping could bring less. The conversion rate of the US dollar to the Moldovan Lei does not change regularly. Please do not be concerned about getting the local money. We will help you do that once you get here and get settled in.

Also, do not convert all of your money at one time. Please do your best to secure clean, unwrinkled and unmarked bills. The exchange places prefer these, though the others will be accepted.

Finding a place to exchange money is not a problem. **Please do not plan to use traveler's checks or credit cards.** Traveler's checks are not accepted at all or anywhere. Even where they do accept credit cards, it is not always safe because theft of credit card numbers is very common here. ATM's are also available. Please bring no more than one credit card and keep it in a secure place with your cash or passport. Make sure you have the phone number and credit card number written down in a secure place. These will be needed if you need to call the company to report a theft or loss.