



NPH USA
Raising Children. Transforming Lives.



VISITOR'S GUIDE: NPH DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

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Country Overview

Google

The D.R. is a land of contrasts and a living museum. Santo Domingo, or "La Capital," is a collage of cultures, a vibrant heart that fuels the entire country.

Area: 18,815 square miles
– slightly more than twice the size of New Hampshire

Population: 10,734,247
(July 2017 estimate)

Languages: Spanish,
English widely spoken

Only 52% of students complete the 8-year primary level of school.

Climate/Environment

- The climate is tropical maritime with few changes in temperature, which average from 81°F (28°C) to 87°F (31°C)
- Rugged mountains and extremely fertile valleys with the lowest point at -150 feet and the highest at 10,420 feet
- Natural hazards include hurricanes, flooding and drought
- Deforestation and soil erosion are issues

A Brief History

The island of Hispaniola was explored and claimed by Christopher Columbus on his first voyage in 1492. It became a springboard for Spanish conquest of the Caribbean and the mainland of America. Spain recognized French dominion over the western third of the island in 1697, and it became Haiti in 1803. The eastern two-thirds of the island, by then known as Santo Domingo, sought independence in 1821. However, it was conquered and ruled by the Haitians for 22 years. In 1844, it attained independence as the Dominican Republic (D.R.).

The Dominicans voluntarily returned to the Spanish Empire in 1861. Two years later they launched a war and restored their independence in 1865.

Decades of unsettled, mostly non-representative rule followed, capped by the dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, who ruled from 1930 until his assassination in 1961. Juan Bosch was elected president in 1962, but was deposed in a military coup the following year. In 1965, the U.S. led

an intervention during a civil war sparked by an uprising to restore Bosch. Joaquín Balaguer defeated Bosch in a 1966 election. For the next 30 years, he maintained a tight grip on power. International reaction to flawed elections forced him to end his term in 1996. Since then, there have been regular competitive elections in which opposition candidates have become president. Former President Leonel Fernández Reyna, who served from 1996-2000, was elected to a new term in 2004 after the passing of a constitution amendment allowing presidents to serve more than one term. He has since been re-elected to second consecutive term.

The current administration faces many challenges, both engrained in the country's system, and self-inflicted. Many administrations have been described as allied with corrupt businesses and government officials who perpetuate a patronage system that is different from Trujillo's rule in name only.

Below: Puerto Plata from the air, Martin LeRoy/WikiCommons; local beach, NPH International





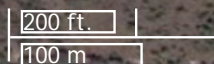
The NPH Home

Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos (NPH, Spanish for "Our Little Brothers and Sisters") Dominican Republic opened in 2003. Designed to resemble a small town, *Casa Santa Ana* is about 40 miles east of Santo Domingo in San Pedro de Macorís. It is situated in the middle of two extremes: poor migrant sugar cane farmer settlements (*bateys*) and professional U.S. baseball leagues. The site features 50 acres of land, school (kinder to 11th grade), farm, greenhouse, chapel, playgrounds, basketball court, baseball and soccer fields, and 12 "family" homes that can accommodate a total of 300 - 500 children.



Casa Santa Ana

1. Baseball and soccer fields
2. Secondary school
3. Primary school
4. Volunteers' home
5. Office
6. Church
7. Girls' homes
8. Visitors' homes
9. Greenhouse
10. Farm
11. Kitchen
12. Gardens
13. Boys' homes
14. Clinic
15. Staff homes
16. Warehouse



Google



Daily Life

Highlights

- The vocational school, which opened in September 2016, offers technical careers in cabinetmaking, handicrafts, shoemaking, sewing, clay, and music.
- A Montessori program was launched in 2016. While not part of the national curriculum, NPH decided to add it in order to provide the highest quality of education possible. A special education program was also launched.
- With the use of our greenhouse and other farmland, we are able to produce organic vegetables to feed our children. Many youth participate in the planting and cultivation of the crops.
- Baseball is immensely popular in the Dominican Republic, including at the NPH home. NPH's baseball field was built and improved by *Lindos Sueños*, a community outreach program of the Boston Red Sox.

Responsibility

Responsibility is one of the most important values that NPH tries to instill in their children. This is why each child is expected to not only be responsible for him or herself, but to contribute to the family. This includes doing traditional chores such as washing clothes, cleaning common areas and serving food. Everyone knows how much effort goes into caring for their home and all the people who live there.

After graduating from high school the *pequeños* give back to the home in a year of service job. Then, if the student decides to go to university with the help of NPH, they give another year of service after graduating from university.

Community Outreach

Fr. William B. Wasson, founder of NPH, believed in raising children to share with others. As a result, all of the NPH homes assist people in their communities in a variety of ways.

NPH Dominican Republic's outreach programs include:

- Building latrines in nearby *bateyes* (low income settlements)
- Providing basic supplies to the poor
- Offering vocational education to unemployed adults

Typical Day at Casa Santa Ana

5:30 a.m. Wake up, chores and breakfast
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. School
1:00 p.m. Lunch
4:00 p.m. Chores, homework and play
6:00 p.m. Dinner
8:00 p.m. Bedtime

Godchildren

If you sponsor a child at NPH, arrangements will be made for him/her to spend time with you during your visit. Please contact your regional office if you are interested in becoming a Godparent.

Special Homes

- *Casa San Marcos*, a newly built special needs home, was designed to fit the needs of all our children, especially those in wheelchairs. It has multiple therapy rooms, including a therapy pool, and an alarm system in case of emergencies. The home is large enough to house up to 20 children and their caregivers.
- *Casa Santa Maria*, also referred to as the "Haiti House," is a community service program for children with cancer. These children are referred to the program from NPH Haiti's St. Damien Pediatric Hospital. The children and a parent stay in the home while receiving radiation therapy in the capital, Santo Domingo.



Travel Tips



Time Zone

Atlantic Standard Time
UTC/GMT -4 hours
(1 hour ahead of Eastern)



When traveling abroad, we recommend enrolling in the U.S. Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). This free service helps the U.S. government know where citizens are, so they can notify and assist them in case of emergency. To enroll, visit <http://step.state.gov/step>



The goal of the trip is to have fun, experience the culture of the Dominican Republic and meet the inspiring children of NPH. Each traveler has so much to share with this great family and so much to learn. We hope that each visitor grows from their interactions with the children we support, just as your visit helps them to do the same.

Entry Requirements

A valid U.S. passport is required to enter the Dominican Republic (D.R.). A visa is not required for U.S. citizens; however, a tourist card entry fee will be included in the cost of your airline ticket.

Vaccinations

Before traveling to the DR, please consult your physician and visit www.cdc.gov/travel

Transportation

- For group trips organized by NPH USA, transportation will be provided by NPH.
- Do NOT hitchhike under any circumstances.

Accommodations

Lodging varies depending on trip package. See specific trip information or consult the coordinator for details.

Bathroom Etiquette

It is not possible to flush toilet paper in most Caribbean countries due to the poor plumbing systems. Toilet paper and all sanitary products must be thrown in small waste baskets next to the toilet. **DO NOT flush toilet paper or sanitary products while visiting the NPH home.**

Bring travel toilet paper, or a small packet of facial tissues on day trips. Tissue is not always available in public bathrooms.



Please read NPH International's Visitor Policy and Guidelines, sign the form and return it to your trip coordinator.

Water

DRINK BOTTLED WATER ONLY. At the NPH home, tap water has been treated with chlorine and is safe to use to brush your teeth and wash your dishes, but please help conserve.

Food

While at NPH, we will eat just like the children and staff at specific times:

- Breakfast: 6:00 a.m.
- Lunch: 1:00 p.m.
- Dinner: 6:30 p.m.

Food at NPH is NEVER wasted. If you are unsure you will like what is being served, ask for only "un poquito" (a little), and if you cannot finish, please offer it to one of the kids.

While on day trips, we will eat in restaurants where we are sure that food will be safely prepared.

All visitors are welcome to bring snacks to share with the group. Be sure to bring things that can withstand heat and preferably are individually wrapped.

Electricity

Electrical outlets are 120 volt/60 hertz, so no adapters are needed. Electricity at the home is donated by a local power company and it is

Travel Tips *(continued)*

provided periodically throughout the day. Generally this is in the morning, in late afternoon and late evening, but there is no set schedule. Stored electricity provides limited power when there is none from the city. Please help conserve power by turning off unused lights.

E-mail & Phones

There are nearby Internet cafés for e-mail and phone calls.

Clothing

Comfortable, broken-in walking shoes are a must! The days can be hot, so light clothing – shorts, slacks, cotton T-shirts, sandals and/or running shoes – is appropriate. The children copy the models they see so please follow the following rules:

- Shorts and skirts should reach to the knee.
- Straps on shirts must be at least 3 fingers wide.
- Torn, transparent, very tight or provocative clothing is not allowed.
- Earrings and piercings are not allowed for men. For women, one earring per ear is acceptable.
- All tattoos should be covered.

Currency and Credit Cards

The Dominican monetary unit is the peso, indicated by the symbol RD\$. There are one- and five-peso coins, while paper money comes in denominations of 10, 20, 50, 100, 500 and 1000 pesos.

ATMs offer a good exchange rate and are easy to use. Major credit cards are widely accepted, but please remember that fraud is an issue all over the world, so you should be cautious.

Tipping

Most restaurants and hotels automatically include 10% service charges. However, since wages are low, additional tips are very much appreciated. Hotel guests can leave 1 or 2 U.S. dollars per night for the cleaning staff.

Safety

Outside the gates of NPH, we recommend that you never go alone anywhere. Be vigilant in regards to your surroundings. While at the home, we will be in a very safe and controlled environment. However, it is important to remember to watch your personal property. Our children have come from very different backgrounds and while NPH tries to help them realize that they are safe now, many of them are still in survival mode. They are not malicious, but for many, taking is the only way they have ever survived.



See page 9 for
emergency contact
information.

PLEASE DO NOT
give children your
address, e-mail or
phone number
even if you are
their sponsor.

Terms to Know

Good morning/afternoon/evening! -
¡Buenos días/tardes/noches!
See you later! - *¡Hasta luego!*
How are you? - *¿Cómo está?*
Fine, thank you. - *Bien, gracias.*
Please - *Por favor*
Excuse me - *Permiso*
Do you speak English? - *¿Habla inglés?*
Yes - *Sí*
No - *No*
Thank you - *Gracias*
You're welcome - *De nada*
How old are you? - *¿Cuántos años tiene?*
How much is this? - *¿Cuánto es?*
More - *más*
A little bit - *un poquito*
House - *casa*
Home - *hogar*
School - *escuela*
Backpack - *mochila*
Office - *oficina*
Kitchen - *cocina*
Water - *agua*
Food - *comida*
Rice - *arroz*
Beans - *frijoles*
Spoon - *cuchara*
Fork - *tenedor*
Cup - *vaso*
Plate - *plato*



NPH-Related

Pequeño/a - literally "little," but it is the term used for all NPH children
Tío/a - literally aunt or uncle, but at NPH it is a caretaker
Fr. Wasson - *Padre Wasson* (Founder of NPH)
Padrino - Godfather (Sponsor)
Madrina - Godmother (Sponsor)
Ahijdo/a - Godchild
Hermano/a Mayor - Older brother/sister - the term for a former pequeño/a or graduate of NPH



Suggested Packing List

Clothes

- Lightweight travel clothes - there is no laundry facility, but you can hand wash!
- Jeans/shorts/travel pants - your preference
- Comfortable shoes for walking - tennis shoes or something with closed toes
- Poncho/lightweight rain jacket
- "Bug off" clothing - REI or Ex Officio (if sensitive to mosquitoes)
- One "nicer," but still casual outfit

Remember to dress conservatively. No visible undergarments; nothing torn, ripped or too short.

Toiletries

- Hand sanitizer
- Shampoo/Conditioner
- Soap (we recommend a pack of disposable face cloths that have soap in the fibers. They work as soap and a washcloth.)
- Toothbrush/paste
- Deodorant
- Razor
- Earplugs
- Soap for washing clothes (if you want)
- Suntan lotion
- Insect repellent
- Small packet of facial tissues
- Travel toilet paper

Medicines

- Personal prescriptions (can be hard to get or expensive outside the U.S.)
- Pepto Bismol/Immodium
- Advil/Tylenol/Excedrin
- Cipro/antibiotic for travelers' diarrhea
- Benadryl/Hydrocortisone
- Bandages/Neosporin
- Emergen-C/cough drops

Personal Items

- Pillow
- Umbrella
- Water bottle
- Camera/Charger
- Fly paper
- Sunglasses
- Flashlight (plus extra batteries)
- Travel alarm clock (if desired)



We often leave pillows, towels, sheets and dinnerware for the home to keep after we leave.

Snacks/Food

While we encourage everyone to eat the food provided (it is tasty), if you are worried about not liking the food, or getting enough, consider packing some pasta or another substitution for a meal, just in case. In addition, you may also want to bring:

- Granola bars/fruit bars/popcorn/snacks to share
- Gatorade packets (it is easy to get dehydrated)
- Good ground coffee and sugar to share

Other

- Passport
- Two copies of passport and credit card information: leave one copy at home
- Pictures of your family to show kids (great conversation starters!) and/or postcards

Do NOT Bring

- Expensive or irreplaceable jewelry or other valuable items
- Flashy gifts





Gifts

Visitors often ask what items they can bring for the children. Following are some suggestions.

Clothing and Shoes

- Underwear
- Socks
- Sandals

Education/Arts & Crafts

- Books in Spanish
- Coloring books
- Colored pencils and crayons
- Glue and tape
- Scissors
- Construction paper
- Play-Doh
- Yarn and pipe cleaners
- Beads
- Stickers

Toys & Games (for every age group)

- Card games
- Board games
- Jigsaw puzzles (100 pieces max.)
- Marbles

Sports Equipment

The kids spend most of their time outside, so think of items that require little or no maintenance and can be shared by everyone!

- Balls
- Jump ropes
- Air pumps with extra needles

Hygiene

- Feminine products
- Shampoo
- Soap
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes (for kids AND adults)

Health Care

- Vitamins
- Bandages
- Neosporin
- Tylenol

These items are always needed in the clinic. Please contact us if you are interested in donating other medical supplies.

Other

- Barrettes and hair accessories
- Inexpensive plastic jewelry
- Batteries of various sizes are always needed and easy to transport

When in doubt . . .

Bring things that NPH needs or wants, and that get depleted. If you are still unsure, ask!



PLEASE DO NOT

- Bring candy or small items to randomly pass out. This can result in hurt feelings among children who do not receive anything.
- Bring expensive gifts, such as music players, video games or jewelry. This may unintentionally create feelings of jealousy and cause problems for that child.
- Give gifts directly to the children. Give them to the home's Visitor Coordinator or a staff person.
- Give money to anyone at the home. This can cause confusion about how it will be used and will not qualify for a tax deduction under U.S. law. Please make all donations through NPH USA.

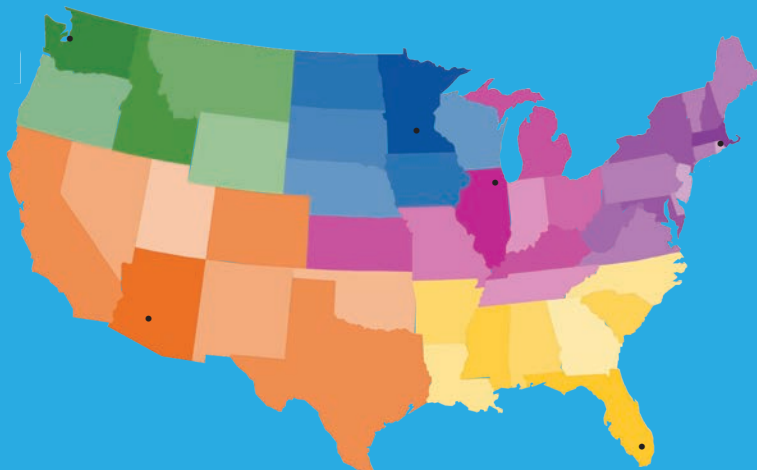
REMEMBER, YOUR VISIT IS A GIFT!

Neither NPH nor NPH USA want the children to associate your visit with material items. The best thing that you can bring is you! All your kind words, thoughts and affection are going to be the most lasting gift. Building relationships is the most valuable thing you can offer!





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Contact Information

We suggest you leave this information as well as your flight and hotel details (if applicable) with your emergency contact.

National NPH USA Office

134 North LaSalle Street
Suite 500
Chicago, IL 60602-1036
Toll-free: 888.201.8880
Fax: 312.658.0040
info@nphusa.org

NPH USA, Federal Tax ID #65-1229309, is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that supports the homes, healthcare and educational programs of Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos.

Regional Offices

Northwest

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1800 112th Avenue NE
Suite 308-E
Bellevue, WA 98004
Phone: 425.646.3935
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infonw@nphusa.org

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8925 East Pima Center Parkway
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Scottsdale, AZ 85258-4407
Phone: 480.967.9449
Fax: 480.967.9288
infosw@nphusa.org

Upper Midwest

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Minneapolis, MN 55413-2500
Phone: 651.482.1703
infoupm@nphusa.org

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GET CLOSER
nphusa.org

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