

AMAZON TRIP GUIDE

Justice & Mercy International

Welcome to the JMI EXPERIENCE

Welcome! The Lord awaits you in the Amazon. You will recognize Him in the eyes of everyone you encounter. Thank you for prayerfully considering becoming a part of the ministry happening in the Amazon and seeking how God might want to use you in this special region. You are very much needed! We encourage you to read all the information in this trip guide.

JMI AT A GLANCE

Justice & Mercy International exists to mobilize the Church to make justice personal for the poor, the orphaned and the forgotten people of the world.



JMI'S Core Values



SCRIPTURE

In all things we seek to honor Jesus Christ and love those we serve according to His word.



THE CHURCH

We believe God intends to use the Church to care for the poor, orphaned, and forgotten. Therefore, JMI seeks to partner with churches and pastors in order to accomplish our mission wherever possible.



STEWARDSHIP

We believe that every resource (financial and otherwise) entrusted to us is also a gift from God and must be managed with the highest level of integrity and accountability.



PEOPLE

We believe all people are valuable because they are made in the image of God. Therefore, we believe the giver and the receiver are equally blessed through our work.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO *Make Justice Personal?*

Making justice personal is caring for the individual God has placed in front of you, whether that person is physically standing in front of you or halfway around the world. As believers, we are tasked with being stewards of Biblical justice, replacing shame with honor as we serve the Kingdom of God. The need is overwhelming, but you can make a tremendous difference by focusing on the need in front of you.

*“Provide justice for the needy and the fatherless;
uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute
Rescue the poor and needy; save them from
the power of the wicked.”*

- Psalm 82: 3-4





PURPOSE OF MISSION TRIPS:

JMI is unique in its approach to trips. Core to our organization's mission is the ongoing, lasting relationships that are built between our national staff and the indigenous populations we serve. Because we invest in these staff who minister on the ground 365 days a year, the purpose of our mission trips is to come alongside to support and encourage this ongoing work. While our mission teams play a key role in being the hands and feet of Christ to the ends of the earth, we're simply joining in the wonderful work God is already doing in the Amazon. Our mission trips make justice personal for all involved, and we are honored to have you join us.

When helping hurts

It's important to keep our purpose of "coming alongside" at the forefront of our minds and our hearts' posture as one of service. As we travel through the villages, it's natural to want to fix perceived problems or offer handouts. But unfortunately, this can end up doing more harm than good. The most valuable resource you are bringing on this trip is the love of Christ. Give it generously and boldly, while trusting that God will continue to meet the needs of every person He wants JMI to help through our work.



Our Ministry in Brazil



Justice and Mercy Amazon (JMA), JMI's Brazilian non-profit, exists to make justice personal for the poor by educating, equipping, encouraging and caring for the Amazon River people. We equip by offering pastoral training, children's ministry training and other opportunities at the John Paculabo Center, JMA's conference center located two hours by boat from Manaus on the Rio Negro. As we educate, equip, and encourage, we also care for the acutely vulnerable by providing for basic needs, such as food, clean water, crisis care, access to medicines and medical care, and as on-going support for children with special needs.



Our Jungle pastors conference is at the center of all we do. We train and equip these precious pastors and wives, and care for their villages and people. Whether it's the need for a local school, a new children's library, lights for the village, caring for a child with special needs, emergency food aid during the rainy season, or a children's sponsorship program, JMA seeks to provide for these communities with the resources they need through the village churches of the pastors we serve. On our hammock boat trips, we bring much-needed encouragement by traveling to these villages, gathering the people together for medical and dental clinics, singing, soccer games, small groups, activities for the children and visits to individual homes. In all things we seek to honor Jesus Christ and love those we serve according to His Word.



WHAT TO EXPECT

The Amazon River of South America is the world's longest river (about 4,000 miles) and the lifeblood of the world's largest ecosystem, spanning two-fifths of an entire continent. It is home to many animals and plants that dwell in its lush, evergreen environment.

As you travel up and down the Amazon, Solimões and Negro Rivers, you will see long stretches of uninhabited waterways connecting remote villages, towns, and isolated homes along the banks. You will spend time in these remote villages encouraging and bringing the Good News of Jesus.



Our Ministry in the villages often includes:

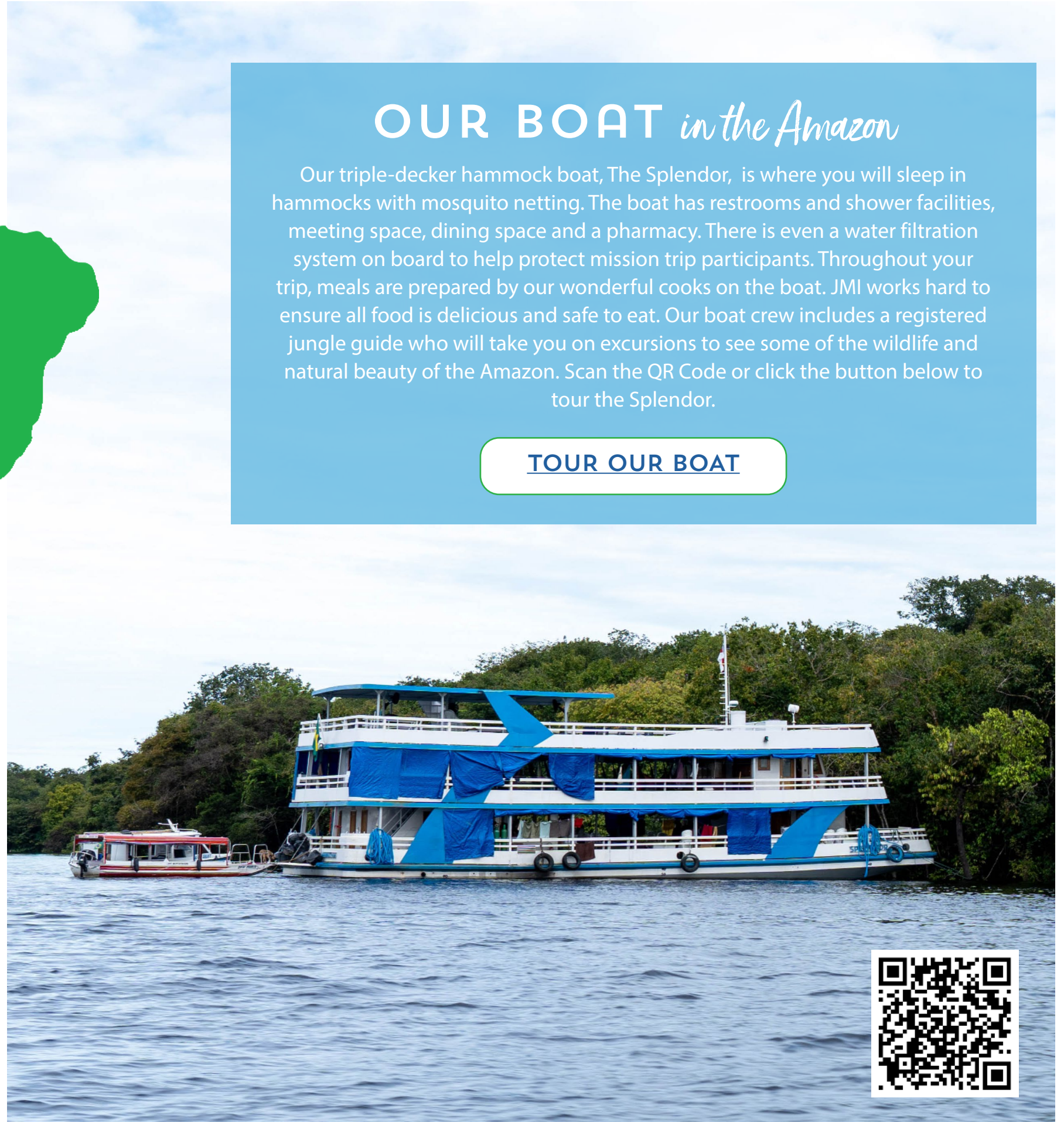
- Training—offering conferences or clinics in order to impart certain knowledge or skill sets (pastoral, medical, educational, etc...)
- Medical and Dental Care
- Construction Projects build a new school, library, or house, etc.
- Vacation Bible School style day camps in villages
- Evangelism & Discipleship
- Home visits to encourage and pray for villagers

**We love to use the individual gifts on the team. Let us know if there is something specific you could bring to the team.*

OUR BOAT *in the Amazon*

Our triple-decker hammock boat, The Splendor, is where you will sleep in hammocks with mosquito netting. The boat has restrooms and shower facilities, meeting space, dining space and a pharmacy. There is even a water filtration system on board to help protect mission trip participants. Throughout your trip, meals are prepared by our wonderful cooks on the boat. JMI works hard to ensure all food is delicious and safe to eat. Our boat crew includes a registered jungle guide who will take you on excursions to see some of the wildlife and natural beauty of the Amazon. Scan the QR Code or click the button below to tour the Splendor.

[TOUR OUR BOAT](#)





SAMPLE *daily schedule*

- Quiet time
- Breakfast
- Team devotional time
- Ministry in the villages
- Back to the boat to eat lunch and rest
- Ministry in the villages
- Back to the boat for dinner
- Church service in the village or sightseeing
- Team debrief
- Bedtime

**The JMI team takes care of all logistics and travel arrangements for your team and works alongside you to plan your trip, including the ministry on the ground.*

HOW TO PREPARE

Passport

No visa is required for travel, but everyone must have a valid passport. If you need to apply for a passport, allow a minimum of six weeks for processing your application. You'll want to begin the process as quickly as possible. Scan the QR code below or [click here](#) for more information. The expiration date on your passport should be *at least six months after the dates of your trip.*

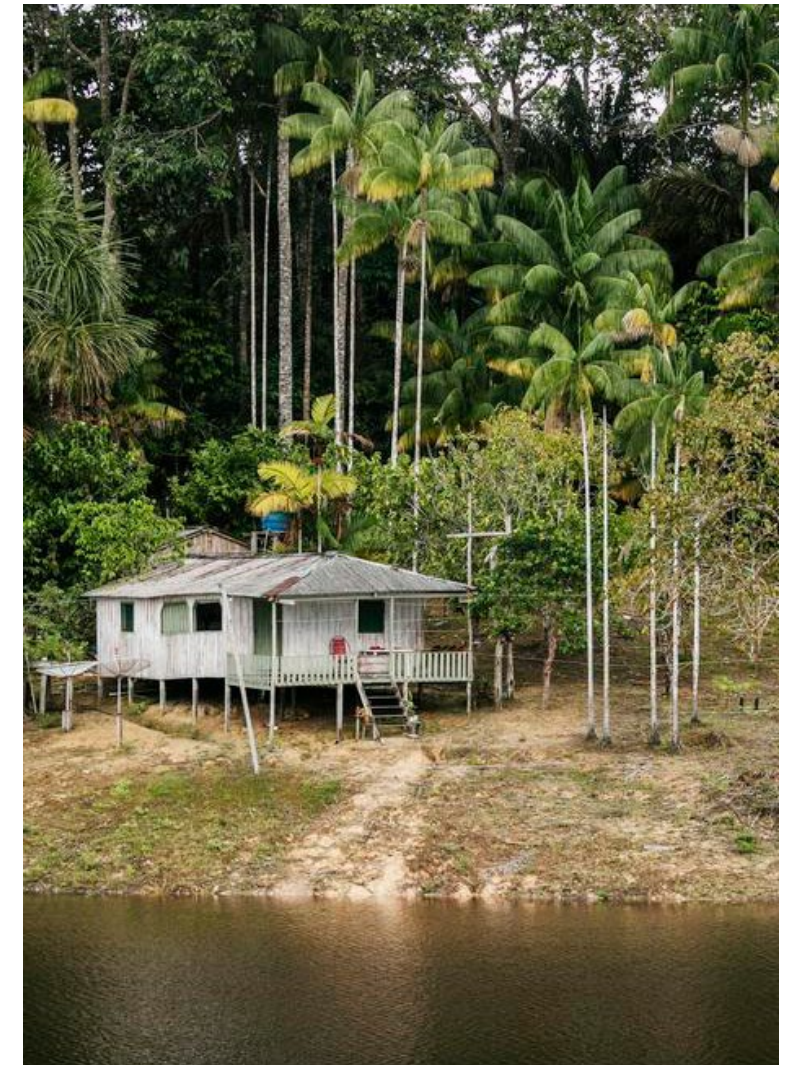
Immunizations & Vaccinations

JMI strongly advises you to consult your physicians and the CDC website before your trip to determine your health risks, needed vaccinations and medications, and general ability to tolerate the conditions of the Amazon. Be sure your routine vaccinations are up-to-date.

Physical Fitness & Pre-Existing Medical Conditions

It is inadvisable to attempt a trip to a third-world country if you are in poor health. If you have a pre-existing physical condition that requires special monitoring, specific diet or refrigeration needs, or a predisposing fragility to your condition that could potentially deteriorate quickly, please consult your physician before committing to travel.

Our travel agendas always require a considerable amount of walking, often over uneven roads and terrain in hot and humid weather. In addition, our schedule calls for long days with little rest. Taking chances with your health may impair your opportunity to enjoy your time away and impact your entire team in accomplishing its objectives.





Insurance

JMI has a robust travel insurance policy that covers everyone on a JMI trip. The policy offers medical coverage while out of the country. If you would like additional trip interruption insurance we suggest TravelSafe and you can contact them [here](#).

Travel Tips

- Never leave a bag unattended, even for a few minutes. Don't assume someone from your group will watch your bag. Do not touch an unattended bag.
- Never accept anything from someone you just met, even if it's a helpless mother with toddlers or an elderly gentleman with a walker.
- Never talk about contraband, guns, bombs, or other weapons, jokingly or otherwise. These subjects are taken very seriously by airport security in all countries.
- Have your boarding pass and passport readily accessible when you approach the security check-in area and board the plane.
- Remove computers from carry-on luggage and place them in a tray along with your phone, shoes, coins, and metal objects. Liquids, gels, and aerosols must be placed in quart-size, Ziplock bags and must not exceed 3 ounces each.

Safety Tips

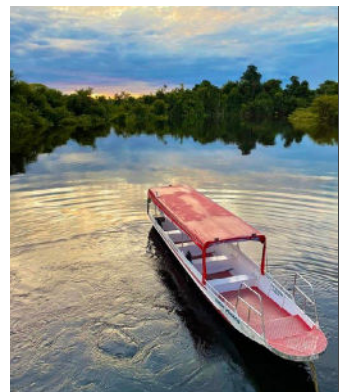
Any trip poses some safety concerns; however, it is JMI's goal to keep you as safe as possible at all times. Be aware of your surroundings, NEVER leave the group and go anywhere alone. Always go in at least groups of 2 or 3 as advised by your trip leader.

Conditions of food and water are the leading cause of illness in travelers. Follow these tips for safe eating and drinking:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially before eating. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand gel (with at least 60% alcohol).
- Drink and brush your teeth with bottled or boiled water. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes.
- Make sure food is fully cooked, best if still hot. Food served on the boat is safe to eat, but do not eat food given to you in the village.
- To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry, and do not go barefoot.
- Clean your water bottle every day with alcohol.
- Avoid biting your nails as it can introduce foreign bacteria to your system.
- Don't handle animals unless given permission by staff (especially dogs and cats) to avoid bites and serious diseases including rabies and plague.
- Report any illness or injuries to your JMI team leader.

Money Matters

You will only need money for meals in the airports, to buy souvenirs, and to tip the crew if you would like (cash is best for this). Everything else is covered in your trip price. Our JMI/JMA staff will be available to assist you in making your transactions. No need to bring Brazilian currency (R\$-reais) with you. It's best to bring new US dollars and a credit card. It's always good practice to let your bank know you are traveling internationally to avoid issues. Be conscious of who may be watching you when handling money, and keep money and valuables in a safe place at all times.





USEFUL *words & phrases*

Hello - Olá; Oi
Good Morning - Bom dia
Good Afternoon - Boa tarde
Good Night/Evening - Boa noite
Goodbye - Tchau
Please - Por favor
Thank you - Obrigado (a)
How are you? - Tudo bem?
I am fine, and you? - Tudo bem, e você?
My name is... - Meu nome é ...
What is your name? - Qual é seu nome?
Jesus Loves you - Jesus te ama
I love you - Eu te amo
How old are you? - Quantos anos você tem?
How much is that? - Quanto é isso?
Where is the bathroom? - Onde é o banheiro?
Boat - Barco

PACKING

You are allowed one checked bag for your personal belongings. You should also bring a backpack-type carry-on that has a change of clothes and any essentials (toiletries, medications, etc.) in case your bag is delayed or lost.

Always carry a copy of your passport and itinerary. Shorts are appropriate, but must be to at least your mid thigh. Dress modestly and be comfortable. It's hot in the Amazon! Don't bring fancy jewelry or things that you would hate to lose.

PACKING LIST

- ☐ Passport
- ☐ Copy of passport
- ☐ Copy of itinerary
- ☐ Cash for souvenirs (new bills)
- ☐ Tips for the crew (\$20-\$100)
- ☐ Credit card/Debit Card
- ☐ Drivers license
- ☐ Health insurance card
- ☐ Carry on luggage with one day of extra clothing + toiletries
- ☐ Bible & journal
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Raincoat
- ☐ Flashlight/headlamp
- ☐ Camera (if desired, your phone is fine)
- ☐ Electrical adapter (just to fit the plug; same current as U.S. and outlets are available on the boat; hotel plugs sometimes require converter)
- ☐ Water bottle (for refilling)
- ☐ Gatorade/electrolyte packets
- ☐ Backpack
- ☐ Personal pillow
- ☐ Sheet (or travel blanket)
- ☐ Towel (lightweight/quick dry)
- ☐ Plastic bags for dirty items
- ☐ Shampoo & conditioner
- ☐ Soap
- ☐ Deodorant
- ☐ Personal first aid kit with Imodium/ Cipro/Advil/bandaids, etc.
- ☐ Hand sanitizer/Antibacterial wipes
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Insect Repellent (with deet)
- ☐ Underwear & socks
- ☐ Light Pajamas
- ☐ Shorts (no short shorts!)
- ☐ T-shirts
- ☐ Lightweight long sleeve t-shirt for nighttime/excursions



- ☐ Light pants for nighttime/excursions
 - ☐ Outfit for church (long pants or skirt to your knees)
 - ☐ Tennis shoes/Hiking boots and high socks for jungle hikes
 - ☐ Sandals/flip-flops
 - ☐ Boat shoes (only worn on boat)
 - ☐ Swimsuit (modest)
 - ☐ Hat
 - ☐ Sunglasses
 - ☐ Battery pack/chargers (as needed. You can charge electronics on the boat)
- * Other suggested items, but not required.**
- ☐ If you have your own hammock feel free to pack it, but one will be provided for you on the boat
 - ☐ Lightweight bag to transport belongings to the changing room/ shower
 - ☐ Clamps to hang items (heavy duty/sturdy)
 - ☐ Carabiners & bungee cords to hang stuff
 - ☐ Hand held fan
 - ☐ Tide pen & laundry detergent- laundry is available if needed for a few items
 - ☐ Nicer outfit for dinner in town/excursions
 - ☐ Ear plugs
 - ☐ Travel mirror
 - ☐ Snacks—granola bars, gum, etc.
 - ☐ Books (for down time)
 - ☐ Pictures of family and friends to share in villages
 - ☐ Malaria Meds (if desired)

[Click here](#) or [scan the QR Code below](#) to watch our Amazon packing video!



BRAZIL

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

There are a few things to know about Brazilian culture that can keep you from being thought of as “the ugly American!” In short, it would be impolite and inappropriate for any team member to be critical of, or belittle any of the people or things we will encounter. This age-old advice is still the best: “If you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything at all.” In all we do, we want to be gracious and correct any bad impressions of who Americans are. More than that, we want to represent the equality of all people under the only Kingdom that ultimately matters... God’s Kingdom.

The family is the foundation of the social structure in Brazil and forms the basis of stability for most people. Families tend to be large and are the base for social networks and assistance in times of need. Brazilians tend to touch people more and keep a closer distance to people than Americans do, so be prepared to hug, be hugged or even kissed on the cheek.





WHEN HELPING HURTS

As Americans, often our first instinct is to “fix” problems. When we go to a country that is not as resource-rich as our own, we often feel guilty and want to help by giving money or things. Sometimes we do this because we truly want to help people. But if we are honest, sometimes we do it to make ourselves feel better. The bottom line is that throwing money at a problem does not always help. Sometimes it even ends up hurting the very people we wanted to help.

This doesn’t mean that there are no times when providing a resource is exactly the right thing to do. But there are times when it is the exact **WRONG** thing to do. That is why we ask you not to give anything (even gum) to anyone in a village without first talking with one of our JMI staff. Never promise to give a resource (whether money or a specific thing). If anyone approaches you with a need, offer to pray with them about the need and then direct them to a JMI staff person for follow-up.

Also, please remember, we are not the heroes riding in on our “white horses” to save the day. We are not the saviors of these people we will meet along our journey. They need Jesus, not us. Our lives will be as deeply impacted by them as they are by us.

For more on this topic, we recommend reading “When Helping Hurts” by Steve Corbett.

If you have further questions or would like to plan a mission trip to the Amazon with your church, please email us at missions@justiceandmercy.org

HELPFUL VIDEOS

(click on the videos below to watch)

BASIC PORTUGUESE



SPLENDOR BOAT TOUR



A TRIP TO THE AMAZON WITH RHCC



JMI OVERVIEW VIDEO



AMAZON CHILD SPONSORSHIP



