



Preparing for your Adventure Challenge

Overview

In addition to fundraising preparation, you will need to prepare yourself for the adventure portion of your challenge. This will include getting appropriate visas and vaccinations, as well as training physically. There is a lot of helpful information on our website, specifically the “About Us”, and “FAQ”. It is also important to carefully read the Kit List in your welcome packet.

Paperwork and Vaccinations

Your Adventure Challenge trip may require a valid passport and visa.

If your passport expires within the next year, you will need to get it renewed. Getting a new passport, or renewing a passport can take months, so please allow ample time. Check trip FAQ to find out if you need a visa before entering the country.

Vaccinations may be necessary or recommended for certain Adventure Challenge trips. We recommend visiting the CDC website (www.cdc.gov) as well as a travel clinic.

Physical Preparation

All of the Adventure Challenge trips are designed to be physically challenging for anyone in reasonably good shape. It is a good idea to have a medical checkup and begin a physical fitness regime several months before your trip. Although preparations will be made to accommodate different levels of hiking expertise, you should physically prepare yourself as much as possible. Just remember that the more prepared you are, the more you will enjoy your Adventure Challenge. A recommended fitness routine is can be found in this packet.

Medical Kits

Although our staff and guides have first aid training and will be fully equipped with extensive medical kits, it is a good idea to take a personal kit as well. Check your Kit List for specific suggestions for medical kits. Remember to tell your guide about any injuries you sustain while on your trip. Holding up the group for several minutes to address a blister or sore feet is better than allowing an injury to degenerate to the point where you cannot hike. Consult your doctor prior to departure if you have a unique medical condition.

Practical Advice to Keep in Mind Upon Arrival at Your Destination

You will likely be traveling to a different time zone on your Adventure Challenge. When you arrive at your destination, set your watch to the correct local time and try to do things at usual times. Although it is often tempting to sleep after a long-haul flight, if you arrive in the afternoon, stay awake by exploring until an appropriate bedtime. Adjusting your routine immediately will shorten your jet lag and allow you to get the most from your trip.

Culture shock is another element of your trip worth mentally preparing for. Stay in the mindset that your entire daily routine will change on this trip– that’s the point. Don’t try to change your surroundings to meet expectations of life in the U.S.; rather try to experience and enjoy the differences.

Responsible Tourism Policy

Tourism is the largest industry in the world, generating 8.2% of the world’s jobs and 10.4% of its GDP. For many developing countries, tourism supports local economies and serves as the main source of foreign exchange. In addition to the many benefits of tourism (cultural exchange, economic support, and more), tourism can also have a negative impact on local communities including environmental degradation and disturbance of local people’s daily lives and culture. To minimize Adventure Challenges participants’ impact on local environments and communities, we adhere to a responsible tourism policy as outlined in this packet.

Our policy of responsible tourism means that we use local guides, work with locally-owned businesses when possible, guarantee fair wages for all employees associated with Adventure Challenges, adhere to the guidelines of the International Porters Protection Group and encourage the cultural education for all Adventure Challenge participants.

As participants in the Adventure Challenges program, you are expected to adhere to all responsible tourism policies. These policies are described on the following pages.

Educate Yourself about Local Cultures

It is important to have a basic cultural understanding of the area you are traveling to. One of the easiest and most rewarding ways to do this is to learn a few key words in the local language. Small phrases can go a long way in helping you integrate into local communities. Many of the people you encounter on your adventure may not be used to seeing American tourists and care should be taken to avoid offending the local people. Consult Adventure Challenges staff,

other guidebooks, and online sources to find out specifics about your travel destination.

Some of the communities you will be visiting may have a different dress code than you're used to. Generally, it is better to dress more conservatively than you may normally dress, especially if you are a woman. Extremely low-cut tops or short skirts may be considered indecent and can attract unwanted attention from local people. Displays of physical affection should also be kept to a minimum. Limit public intimacy to hand holding, which is an acceptable display of affection in most cultures.

Reduce Waste

Please remove all unnecessary packaging for anything you bring on the trip. It is important to take only what you truly need for your trip. While on your Adventure Challenge, please do not leave any trash behind. Even things that may seem biodegradable (orange peels, for example) may take years to decompose in the environments you are traveling in. Trash left behind can harm wildlife and the delicate balance of the ecosystem. If you must use tobacco products on your trip, please carry all cigarette waste out with you. Cigarettes are not biodegradable and, although small, can have an immense impact on the environment and trails.

Other Environmental Concerns

Conserve water whenever possible. We will provide ample amounts of clean drinking water, so purchasing your own bottles of water should not be necessary and will create unnecessary waste. Please use only biodegradable soap when washing outside. Do your best to stay on designated paths and avoid damaging plant life. When you are on your adventure, try to keep noise to a minimum. It disturbs wildlife and other people who may be in the area.

Responsible Shopping

You may want to purchase souvenirs, food, or other trinkets on your Adventure Challenges trip. Buying local crafts is a terrific way to contribute to the community you are visiting and to obtain a unique souvenir. If you do decide to shop in your destination, there are a few things to be aware of: while bargaining is expected when purchasing items, try to remember that many of the vendors you will be in contact with are very poor and what may seem like a small amount of money to you may be very significant to them. By purchasing from these vendors, you are helping them in the best way you can: by supporting local industry. If you buy something and realize you might have been able to purchase it for less, consider it a part of your contribution to the local community.

Do not buy endangered plants, animal skins, or anything made from shells, ivory, fur, or feathers. Purchasing these things can encourage industries that may damage the environment, and many of them are illegal to bring into the United States.

Do not have any involvement with drugs or prostitution. Not only are these activities illegal, but they also are very harmful to the people and communities involved.

Photography

Many people you will encounter may be sensitive about having their photos taken. Just as you would in the US, ask before you take a photo of someone. Some cultures have beliefs about having their photos taken, and care should be taken to respect these beliefs. Some people may be used to having tourists take their photo and may ask for compensation in return for posing for a photo. Avoid paying children for photos, as it may encourage parents to keep them out of school and keep them begging on the streets.

Dehydration and Sun Protection

It is vital to drink plenty of water during your trip as dehydration is common among visitors to tropical or high altitude locations. Drink at least eight cups of water a day excluding soft drinks, coffee, and alcohol. Also try to add more salt to your diet, as you will be losing salt as you sweat.

Wear SPF 25+ sunscreen every day, even if it seems cloudy out. You are more likely to get sunburned at higher altitudes, even if you can't see the sun. Also, bring a hat and sunglasses to wear during the day.

Animals and Insects

Avoid contact with any animals, even if they appear tame. Animal bites can cause infections or rabies which can become serious or fatal. Also try to avoid insect bites, especially mosquito bites, as they too can carry diseases. Carry bug spray containing DEET (Diethyltoluamide) and use it at dusk and in wet weather. Malaria is one of the more dangerous diseases carried by mosquitoes; consult your doctor to find out if you need anti-malarial medication for the areas in which you will be traveling.

Traveler's Diarrhea

Traveler's diarrhea is very common when traveling anywhere in the world. Although it is sometimes unavoidable the following are some guidelines that will help prevent diarrhea:

- Wash your hands after you use the bathroom and before you eat. Carry wet wipes or antibacterial gel to use before meals.
- Make sure you consume only clean potable water (this includes water used in brushing your teeth). Water provided by your guides will be safe. Alternatively you can buy water bottles with built in filtration systems or water-sanitizing tablets. Also be wary when swimming or bathing in lakes, rivers, and other bodies of water; try not to swallow any water. Avoid still and dirty-looking water, which can be home to parasites. When in doubt, consult your guide.
- When buying bottled water, check that the seal is unbroken, that the sell-by date has not passed, and that there are no algae growing inside the bottle.
- Avoid ice unless you are sure it was made from safe water. This includes ice used to keep food cool as well as ice in drinks.
- It is usually safe to drink tea or coffee, wine, beer, carbonated water and soft drinks, and packaged or bottled fruit juices.
- Eat freshly-cooked food and ensure it is piping hot. Avoid food that has been kept warm.
- For fruits and vegetables, stick to this rule: boil it, peel it, cook it, wash it or forget it!
- Avoid food likely to have been exposed to flies.
- Avoid eating food from street vendors.
- Fish and shellfish can be suspect in some countries, so be careful.

Speak to your health care provider about prescription medications that you can take with you for the treatment of severe traveler's diarrhea.

Information on High Altitude Trekking

This section of the packet will introduce you to the effects of high altitude trekking and the importance of acclimatization (the process of the body adjusting to the decreased availability of oxygen in high altitudes). All of our guides and staff are trained to identify and treat altitude sickness. However, it is still important to read this packet so you will know what physical changes you can expect while trekking at high altitudes. High altitude is generally considered to be any elevation above 5,000 feet, but altitude sickness generally only occurs above 8,000 feet.

Not all changes you will experience as you climb to higher altitudes are abnormal or dangerous. Some normal things you may experience on your trek are: shortness of breath during exertion, faster or deeper breathing, increased urination, awaking frequently at night, and changed breathing pattern at night.

Periodic breathing is a possible condition during high altitude acclimatization. This is a breathing pattern that develops due to the increased carbon dioxide

present in your blood. When experiencing periodic breathing, your usual breathing cycle will slow and you may hold your breath for 10–15 seconds. After the breath-holding period, you will have a brief recovery period of accelerated breathing. Because you can artificially control your breathing when awake, you will most frequently experience periodic breathing while sleeping. Although the effects of periodic breathing may be alarming at first, it is not a sign of altitude sickness and should not be a source of worry.

Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS)

As you ascend to unfamiliar altitudes, your body must acclimatize. If you ascend to the upper limits of the elevation zone your body can tolerate, you may experience AMS. Your “zone of tolerance” will increase as you climb and as your body becomes used to higher altitudes. Symptoms of AMS include a headache accompanied by one or more of the following symptoms: loss of appetite, nausea or vomiting, fatigue or weakness, dizziness or light-headedness and difficulty sleeping.

It is impossible to predict who might be susceptible to AMS because it bears no relation to physical fitness, age, gender, or previous experience. Anyone can get altitude sickness, so tell your guide if you feel ill. Severe health conditions related to high altitude climbing can easily be prevented if you identify AMS when it begins to take effect. Climbing slowly and identifying AMS early are the best ways to avoid more severe mountain sickness.

AMS can be treated with rest, fluids, Diamox, and acetaminophen, aspirin or ibuprofen. Rest is by far the best treatment for AMS, but it can take up to four days before someone with AMS feels completely recovered.

High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE)

Because you are traveling with experienced guides, it is highly unlikely that you or anyone in your group will experience severe forms of altitude sickness. However, it is best to be aware of the risks of high altitude climbing in case of unusual circumstances.

High Altitude Cerebral Edema is frequently a result of a failure to address and treat AMS symptoms. HACE can vary in severity, but at its worst manifestation can result in death. People who experience HACE are frequently confused and may not realize they are sick.

Symptoms and warning signs of HACE resemble that of someone who is intoxicated: the person may stagger or sway as he or she walks and may not be able to reason properly. This lack of coordination is referred to as ataxia. To test if a person has ataxia, ask that he or she walk a straight line, placing one

foot directly in front of the other. If an individual fails to pass this test, there is a strong possibility that he or she has HACE. Descent is essential when HACE is identified. Failure to descend immediately can result in death or serious injury. If a person with HACE descends quickly and to a low enough elevation, he or she should make a full recovery, although symptoms may last for several days.

Remember, the best way to prevent HACE is to identify symptoms of AMS while they are still mild.

High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE)

As mentioned above, it is unlikely you or anyone in your group will experience severe forms of altitude sickness. However, it is best to be aware of the risks involved with high altitude climbing.

HAPE is another form of severe altitude sickness and is defined as fluid in the lungs. HAPE can occur with AMS, but is not technically related and may occur without any symptoms of AMS.

Symptoms of HAPE are: extreme fatigue; breathlessness at rest; fast, shallow breathing; cough with or without frothy or pink sputum; gurgling or rattling breaths; chest tightness or congestion; blue or grey lips or fingernails; and drowsiness.

Although rare, HAPE is most common in young and fit climbers and usually occurs on the second night after an ascent. As with HACE, immediate descent is crucial for the treatment of HAPE. Those with HAPE frequently need to be carried due to extreme fatigue and confusion. One or two days at a lower altitude should be sufficient for a full recovery.

Information about Diamox

Diamox (acetazolamide), a drug often used in the treatment of the eye condition glaucoma, is useful in the prevention of Acute Mountain Sickness. (AMS).

Diamox reduces the headaches of AMS and helps the body acclimatize to the lack of oxygen. It also reduces the incidence of the rare complications of AMS mentioned above.

Physical Fitness Guide

Prepare, prepare, prepare. You cannot overtrain for an endeavor like your Adventure Challenge, and the more fit you are, the more you will enjoy your trip. Climbing, trekking and camping require total body conditioning. You don't

need to set out to pull trucks with your teeth, run six minute miles, or swim the English Channel but you do need to be confident in your body's abilities to respond to what you are going to ask it to do. Getting ready gradually will make the process a rewarding one. If you do not already have a fitness routine, start preparing for your challenge as soon as possible and no later than three months prior to your departure.

Stretching is vital to any workout routine. Ensure that you stretch all muscle groups before and after every workout. Specific muscles that must be stretched are: neck, shoulders, waist, back, arms, hamstrings, quadriceps, groin, calves, and ankles.

Forty to sixty minutes of aerobic work a day, steady at a moderate but challenging pace (running, Stair-Master, swimming, mountain biking) three to five days a week is advisable. If you are using running as your predominant cardio activity, you can increase your distance by 10% per week over your training period to build endurance. If you are sticking to walking or stair-climbing, consider doing so with a weighted pack on your back. Begin with five pounds in the pack and add five pounds of weight each week to your bag.

Weight training is key to developing the muscles you will need to make daily life on your trip enjoyable. Three to four days of lifting a week in addition to your cardio work will complete your program. You can find classes at your local gym if you are unsure about what to do in a weight room. The list below is a good lifting routine:

Squats	Rows
Leg press	Pull-ups
Dead lifts	Shoulder presses
Calf raises	Push-ups
Lat pulls	Ab crunches
Bench press	Lunges

All weight work should not be done in one day. One day should be legs, one day upper body, and one day abs with some extra push-ups/pull-ups.

Rest is an important element to your training. If you do not give your body adequate time to recover, you won't give your body time for the muscles to grow and develop. You will want to be completely rested for your trip. Your fitness should be at its prime by two weeks before your climb. At that point you will reduce your effort levels and rest up.