



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### General FAQ's

**How do Myths and Mountains trips work?** You'll be in great hands. Other than flying in a plane and in the evenings and scheduled at leisure times, you'll almost always be with a local guide unless otherwise specified in your itinerary. When you emerge from the secure areas of the airport, look for someone holding a sign with our Myths and Mountains logo and/or your last name on it.

**Will I have the same guide and driver for the whole trip?** In most destinations, we use local guides who specialize in specific geographic regions, therefore, you'll typically have a new guide when you fly to a different area within the same country. For example, in Peru, you'll have one guide in Lima and another guide in Cusco, the Sacred Valley and Machu Picchu. A couple of exceptions are in Vietnam and Myanmar where you usually have the same guide throughout your trip.

**How do I know what time the pick up for my tour / airport transfer is?** Your local guide will let you know this in advance, either verbally the day before ("I'll see you in the hotel lobby tomorrow at 9 am.") or by leaving a message at your hotel. Often your guide will give you his personal mobile number to reach him in case of an emergency.

**Do I need to reconfirm any of my flights?** For any international flights, it is always a good idea to double-check your flight status 24 to 48 hours prior to departure. Our local guides normally check internal flights ahead of time on your behalf and will alert you if there are any changes.

### Pre-Departure FAQ's

**Why do I need to fill out all these forms?** Our required forms and procedures may seem a bit daunting, but because of our insurance and bond restrictions, we require certain kinds of information from our clients. In addition, it's important we know of any medical or dietary concerns to better assist you, or in case of an emergency.

**Why do you need a copy of my passport?** It allows us to apply for certain visas or other travel documents on your behalf. Sometimes we need it to confirm Galapagos cruises, hotels, or internal flights, etc. It is also very helpful we have a copy of it on file so we can expedite the process of replacing it in case you lose it overseas.

**Where can I purchase travel insurance?** Though it's not included in the price of your trip, we do strongly recommend buying insurance on your own, as pre-paid travel arrangements can be up to 100% non-refundable, even if you cancel for reasons beyond your control. Myths and Mountains has a cancellation policy in place for a reason and cannot make any exceptions. As a courtesy, we do offer a comprehensive insurance package with USI Travel Insurance Services exclusively available to Myths and Mountains clients. *Note that you apply for this insurance on your own, since USI Travel Insurance Services is a separate entity from us.* The premium is based on a formula that multiplies your total trip cost by .065. For more information, please refer to the Preferred Benefits information packet included in your pre-departure e-mail.

**Why do I have to visit my doctor?** We strongly recommend visiting your doctor to ensure that you are healthy enough to fully enjoy your trip. It is also a great time to talk with a medical professional about required

immunizations, altitude sickness, concerns about malaria or other implications of traveling to remote places. You must sign a Medical Waiver form if you choose not to see a doctor prior to departing on your trip.

**Are there any vaccinations I need for this trip?** For legal reasons, we cannot give medical advice to our clients, but the CDC has an excellent website (<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list.aspx>), which offers current immunization recommendations. Please check with a medical professional to make an informed decision on the shots or boosters you will need for your trip.

### Packing FAQ's

**What should I pack?** We recommend dressing in layers and being prepared for various weather conditions. Your pre-departure email package includes a comprehensive and very helpful suggested packing list.

**What's the best website for checking the weather for the area I am going to?** We love [www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com) -- just plug in the name of the city and country.

**What are the weight restrictions for domestic flights and how many bags are allowed?** On most Economy class domestic flights within Asia and South America, you are allowed two bags that do not exceed 20kg or 44lbs TOTAL, plus one carry-on weighing 5kg or 11lbs or less. Please check with your airlines for specific restrictions.

**Do I need to bring a hairdryer?** It is usually not necessary to bring one. If one is not available in your room, the hotel front desk can likely lend you one.

**Do I need to bring an electrical transformer / adapter?** Bring an international converter kit complete with a set of adapter plugs (not necessary in Ecuador). These are available for about \$20-\$30. For more specific information on international plugs and sockets, the following website is helpful: [http://users.telenet.be/worldstandards/electricity.htm#plugs\\_c](http://users.telenet.be/worldstandards/electricity.htm#plugs_c). We also suggest you take battery-operated devices wherever possible and a supply of extra batteries.

### Currency & Tipping FAQ's

**How much money should I bring?** You will need to analyze your spending habits and decide how much extra money to bring for meals not included in your itinerary, alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, gratuities, souvenirs, and laundry. For a ten-day trip, budget at least \$300 per person above and beyond tips for additional expenses. A Rule of thumb: Take half the clothing, and twice the money you thought you would need!

**Cash, Plastic, or Traveler's Checks?** Essentially, cash is still king when traveling overseas. Traveler's checks and credit cards can be a hassle, carry heavy fees, require a passport on your person or are not always accepted by some vendors. Foreign ATM machines may arbitrarily reject your debit / credit card or charge exorbitant transaction fees. Myanmar does not accept credit cards at all and has no ATMs anywhere. We recommend bringing US dollars and changing them into local currency. Call your bank ahead of time to request new US bills in perfect condition, free of rips, tears, and markings. If you are nervous about carrying a lot of money, separate your cash into two packets and put them in different parts of your travel gear. Then hope you remember where you put them! Remember to use hotel safety deposit boxes to store valuables.

**What's the best website for International Currency Exchange?** We recommend [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com) -- it tells you today's currency rate for almost any country. Even better, they allow you to print out a handy little traveler's cheat-sheet for those days you're hitting the local markets for souvenir shopping.

**How much should I tip?** Although tipping is expected by guides and drivers, it is a very personal choice and at your own discretion. The travel industry standard is:

Drivers: \$5 - \$8 per person/per day (less if not with you the entire day)  
Guides: \$10 - \$20 per person/per day (less if half day of touring)

**Do I tip in American Dollars?** In most places, it is acceptable and sometimes preferred to tip in US dollars. If you are on a trek where porters are from local villages (far away from bigger cities and with no opportunity to exchange money), it is best to tip in the local currency. You can also ask your guide which they prefer.

### Communications FAQ's

**How can my family reach me if there is an emergency?** About 30 days before you leave, we prepare a final package with an updated version of your itinerary with emergency and hotel contact information. You'll even have the personal cell phone numbers for our staff to reach us outside of normal business hours. We recommend making copies for your family and friends so they will know how to contact you in case of an emergency.

**What do I do if my international flights are delayed / missed?** If you are still within the United States and your flight is cancelled, missed or delayed, please call our office or our staff (see above) so that we can let our local operators know that your arrival time has changed. Once you know your new flight arrangements, be sure to update us so we can forward the appropriate arrival information to your guide. This way, you'll still be met at the airport, even if you arrive at 3 am instead of 6 pm!

**Will I have Internet access while traveling?** Most hotels in larger cities offer Internet access in your room, business center or in the lobby. In more remote destinations, it may not be as widely available, so be prepared to be cut off from cyberspace for a few days. If your hotel does not offer WiFi, try a nearby Internet café.

### Cultural FAQ's

**What is the appropriate clothing to wear when visiting sacred or religious sites?** Please be respectful of local cultures and traditions. Do cover up bare legs, shoulders or cleavage when you are scheduled to visit temples, sacred ruins, or religious sites. A lightweight sarong or scarf comes in handy for women to cover exposed skin.

**Should I bring gifts for the local children?** We really try to discourage this as it does promote begging. However, in certain cases, such as when one of our clients visits a local school in Peru, we do ask that you shop locally to bring some much-appreciated supplies to the staff and students. Instead of giving out candy or trinkets, why not share photos or postcards of your family, friends and hometown with your new friends? They always seem to be curious about your lifestyle and culture. Sharing smiles and laughs are much more memorable.

**Will my itinerary change?** We always refer to our itineraries as guidelines. Keep in mind that in the spirit of adventure travel, your itinerary can and will unexpectedly change due to weather, transportation hiccups, or logistical glitches. Our guides do their best to make alternative plans if your trip is directly affected by these factors. If you have questions about how your guide handles your itinerary, feel free to contact us at the office by email or phone, or you can always speak with our local operator (check your final documents for contact information).

**Is it safe to drink the water?** In almost all cases, you should plan to use bottled or filtered water to drink and brush your teeth. Most hotels will provide safe water in your room. Although you can easily purchase bottled water inexpensively, we recommend bringing an eco-friendly, reusable water bottle and seizing the opportunity to fill it whenever filtered water is available. A great tip: purchase sterilizing tablets or steri-pens (available at various camping or outdoor enthusiast stores), which is a convenient way to have safe and accessible water.

### Have more questions?

Don't hesitate to call our office at (800) 670-6984 and chat with any of our experienced staff! We want you to be as prepared as possible for your Myths and Mountains adventure, and we always love to share our expertise with you.