

CYM Visitation Program - Tips for Travel ***(Collected over time by those who have travelled)***

General tips

1. Pack so you can dress in layers: add clothing if cold or take off if warm.
2. Carry some cash and a bankcard or credit card for emergencies. Make sure you have your health insurance information with you in case of emergency.
3. Carry a bottle of water and be sure to drink plenty of fluids when you travel. If you have dietary restrictions, carry some sort of snack that can get you through delays at airports or potluck meals that don't fit your needs.
4. Give your complete schedule and contact numbers to at least one person at home in case of emergency. Ask someone at each meeting being visited to serve as a contact person for you while you are there and make sure those numbers are included on that schedule.
5. Pack some reading materials to help with delays and to relax at night when you need to wind down. Many Friends have portable music devices with earphones.
6. Pack a pair of earplugs and a blindfold in case you have to sleep in a room with or next to a loud snorer, or in case you need to sleep in a sunroom or a room without good blinds or draperies.
7. Take a pillow if you have room or your own pillowcase so you have something soft and familiar on which to lay your head at night.
8. A small reading light can be helpful, as is a flashlight for finding your way to the bathroom at night in an unfamiliar house.
9. Some Friends carry something special with them to remind them to stay centered and in the presence of the Divine.
10. Wear comfortable clothes. Carry heavy socks or soft slippers. Many Friends ask their guests to leave their shoes at the front door. If you are going on an extended trip, plan to wash your clothes at a host's home.
11. Take an alarm clock, remember the time zone changes you may have gone through, and set it to the correct time after you arrive.
12. Carry a blank notebook and collect your hosts' names and addresses in it. This helps if you want to get in touch with someone after your return home.
13. Invite hosts to worship with you in their home, especially if they won't be attending worship with you at the meeting, retreat, or workshop.

Plane travel

1. Make all flight plans at a minimum two weeks ahead of when you will be traveling. Plan flights so that you aren't arriving at the last minute and will have time to center and settle before your first meeting. Morning flights have fewer delays.

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2. Travel as lightly as possible. You may have to carry your suitcase a long way or up a lot of steps, so keep this in mind while packing. If you do check your bag, pack a change of underclothes, medications, and toothbrush in a carry-on bag in case your luggage is delayed or lost. Don't ever check a laptop computer: ALWAYS CARRY IT ON WITH YOU, and watch it as it goes through the detector scanning and comes out on the conveyor belt.
3. Old luggage rarely gets stolen.
4. Scissors and other sharp objects are not allowed in carry-on luggage. There are also restrictions on liquids and gels. They will be confiscated if you forget and have them in your carry-on luggage. Check your airline's regulations.
5. Check out the most economical way to get to the airport. For some it will be taking a taxi or shuttle and avoiding parking fees. For others it will be parking in the Economy Parking provided by the airport. Always ask for receipts if you do park at the airport and write down - on something you won't lose - where you've parked so you can find your car when you return home.
6. Check with your airline or airport for their recommendation on how much in advance of your scheduled departure you should arrive at the airport. In general, busy days and times make longer check-in lines, so for example if you are scheduled to leave on a Sunday afternoon it might be wise to allow more than two hours from major airports.
7. Be prepared for random searches of yourself and all luggage including carry-on bags. This may include removing shoes for inspection as well as being patted down. Security personnel will ask to pat down any area of your body that triggers a response from their scanning wand. You may refuse a pat down, but if you do you will not be allowed to board the flight. Those wanting to minimize pat downs should carefully consider the clothes they choose to wear for travel. Wires and snaps in clothing (including undergarments) will often trigger the metal detectors. Avoid belts with metal buckles, and metal watches and jewelry too. (Earrings rarely set off the metal detector.) Sport shoes tend not to have metal braces, and so pass through security more easily than dress shoes or even sandals. Most airline websites have good advice on getting through security quickly and easily.
8. We also recommend that you schedule your arrival to allow yourself plenty of time to become collected and centered before you are scheduled to begin serving the meeting you are visiting. Travelling takes energy. If you are changing time zones, consider whether you can arrive a day or two early, to give yourself time to acclimatize.
9. If you do not personally know the person who is to meet you, travel with a small sign that says CYM, in case your host can't really "always tell a Quaker when they see one." You can also exchange photos of each other electronically, in advance of your travel.
10. Expect to have lots of opportunity to develop patience while traveling on the airlines.

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On the road, and being a good guest

1. Don't get so busy you don't appreciate the beauty of God's earth wherever you travel. Really expect to find that of God in everyone you meet.
2. Yes, there are differences among people and meetings, but often they are not the differences we first expect, and there are things we all have in common.
3. Remember that the harder things are and the more pressed for time you seem to be, the more important it is to have longer time for worship. Open and close with real worship time with your group.
4. Listen and watch for signs of Divine intervention: "it's only a roll of the dice if you aren't listening." You can ask about the history of the meeting, or how your hosts came to Friends. Look for times when you can ask Friends some equivalent of the old query, "How hast the Lord dealt with thee (since last we were together)?" "Kitchen table ministry", or what an older generation called "opportunities" for quiet, searching conversation with short times of worship in the homes in which you visit can be a high point both for you and for those you visit.
5. Find a small Bible to carry with you, or other spiritual reading that helps ground you.
6. Leave things the way you found them in your host's home after a stay. Balance the giving and receiving in someone's home.
7. Take some time to stay connected with those who are at home. Phone, email, Facebook – even letter writing on longer trips.
8. Remember we can't always improve a situation, but we can almost always make it worse. If you see someone's pain remember it is not yours, but parts of it will always seem familiar.
9. It goes without saying that you do not gossip about Friends, their homes, or your accommodations. The difference between gossip and helpful discussion is your intention. Are you telling these things to make a point? to indicate your superiority? or to seek for ways to increase love? Your tact and circumspection can offer a powerful model of right order.
10. Take a small camera just in case you have a chance to get a picture that could be used by the Canadian Friend or on our web pages.