

# Fundación Aldeas de Paz

## IMPORTANT TRAVEL INFORMATION

### Arriving at Caracas Airport

#### Safety

Venezuela is by far safer than other countries in the region. The border with Columbia is far away from Caracas. The Aldeas de Paz home base is in Santa Elena which is located on the south eastern border with Brazil, an extremely peaceful and safe region.

**IMPORTANT:** Santa Elena is a very safe town of about 25.000 inhabitants. It is the regional capital and the heart of the Gran Savannah region which consists of a protected and well guarded national park with numerous security checkpoints all the way through it. We hosted more than 500 volunteers in 6 years and never had any safety related issues in this friendly provincial town. Also the bus trip from Caracas to Santa Elena is absolutely safe and reliable!

**Your international flight should arrive before 12:00 noon, so you can catch the bus to Santa Elena the same day. (3:30 pm and 4:30 pm)** In the airport your first stop will be Immigration where you will show your passport and be given a 3 month tourist entry stamp. (Extendable later on) You will fill one form for customs and another one to be given the tourist entry stamp, so before queuing take them from the travelers desk in the area of immigration. Following Immigration, you will pass through customs and then walk into the main terminal. If you previously booked the pick-up service and after passing through Immigration and Customs, your driver will be waiting for you with a board in his hands showing both your name and the name of his company. Drivers speak perfect English and are extremely helpful, very friendly and patient. However, if you arrive late, the drivers wait for you even for hours and on the bus terminal make sure that everything is ok while assisting you to purchase your bus ticket.

#### Hotels

##### Near the airport:

In case you don't have enough time to make it to the bus terminal in time or you want a slight break from traveling, spend the night in a hotel:

- **Posada Il Prezzano** in Catia la Mar, tel. ++58 +212 - 351 2626; (s/d room with AC, Bs. 200,-/US\$ 36,-)
- **Hotel La Parada**, [http://www.hotel\\_la\\_parada@hotmail.com](http://www.hotel_la_parada@hotmail.com); Av. Atlantida, calle 10, Catia la Mar, tel. ++58+212-3512148; ++58+414-1142228; Fax ++58 +212-3527486 (s/d room with AC, TV cable, airport pickup included: single room Bs. 275,-/ US\$ 50,- /double room Bs. 370,-/ US\$ 67,-)

##### In Downtown Caracas:

A hotel in an excellent neighborhood is:

- **Hotel La Floresta**, <http://hotellaforesta.com>; Av. Avila, Plaza Sur, Altamira, Caracas, Tel. ++58 +212 – 263 1955 (Fax: ++58 +212 - 2674477) email: [hotellaforesta@cantv.net](mailto:hotellaforesta@cantv.net)/[gerencia@gmail.com](mailto:gerencia@gmail.com) (hot water, breakfast incl., safe & clean with AC: single Bs. 235,-/ US\$ 43,- /double Bs. 260,-/ US\$ 48,-)

**Remember, the Pick-Up Services** are also available to help you make your way to a hotel in the city, but also must be arranged in advance. Give yourself at least 2 hours to get from the airport or Posada 'Il Prezzano' to the bus terminal.

# From the Airport to Bus Terminal “Terminal de Oriente”

## 3 Options:

- **Airport Pick-up service** *Recommended!*
- Official Taxi
- Shuttle Bus

### 1. Airport Pick-up Service

If you look for "Peace of Mind" you may want to hire a professional airport Pick-Up Service: After passing through Immigration and Customs your driver will be waiting for you with a board in his hands showing both your name and the name of his company, Drivers speak perfect English and are extremely helpful and patient. They bring you to the bus terminal "Terminal del Oriente" or to the hotel of your choice. "Hanspeter Zingg" even buys the bus ticket in advance and brings the client to the bus.

- 1) **“Hans-Peter Zingg”**; [peterzingg@movistar.net.ve](mailto:peterzingg@movistar.net.ve); [hpzingg@hotmail.com](mailto:hpzingg@hotmail.com) (international call: ++58-414-3228798; from Venezuela: 0414-3228798) This excellent Service company is run by Swiss born Hans-Peter Zingg. Well known Tour-operators use his services and excellent contacts. **Services include:** Airport Pick-up & transfers, Help at bus terminal with ticket purchase, Hotel reservation & transfer. **Prices:** Airport - Bus Terminal: US\$ 40,-; Airport - Caracas Hotel: US\$ 40,-; Airport - Nearby Hotel: US\$ 20,-; Caracas Hotel - Bus Terminal: US\$ 15,-;
- 2) **“Nelson’s Place”**: <http://www.agelvis.com>; [nelven@gmail.com](mailto:nelven@gmail.com) ; [nelsoneas@hotmail.com](mailto:nelsoneas@hotmail.com) Nelson's place is the name international travelers, educators, writers, conference speakers and others have given to a nice and cozy 50 meter suite style apartment in a small family building in the heart of mid-town Caracas, Venezuela, the commercial-business-tourist area of “Sabana Grande”. Nelson is on top of the arrival, making sure that all runs smoothly.. **Services:** Pick-up service & transfers, Bus ticket reservation, accommodation. **Prices:** Airport - Bus Terminal: US\$ 40,-; Airport - Caracas Hotel: US\$ 40,-; Nelson's room is forty dollars US\$ 40 for up to two guests **“All-in package”**: Airport pick-up, transfer and 1 night accommodation, transfer bus terminal and purchase bus ticket: US\$ 110,-

**Important Advice:** Book ahead and give them your complete travel details in your first mail! Make sure you ask for a confirmation of your booking - you can write in English.

### 2. Official Taxi

Another option is to hire an official taxi directly from the airport. Official taxis (with yellow license plate) line-up at the official taxi rank immediately outside of the airport building. Official taxis cost US\$ 35,- into Caracas city, and are safe and reliable. Let them know that you are interested in going to "Terminal de Oriente" (the bus station located on the far side of Caracas).

### 3. Shuttle Bus

Choosing to take a taxi is obviously much more convenient than taking a bus because you don't have to worry about being in a crowded space with a number of fellow passengers for the two hour ride. From the airport there is a shuttle bus that goes into the center of town. Upon entering the terminal, simply ask around for the bus to get to the center of town (it is located outside the domestic flight terminal). In the domestic terminal there is a kiosk that sells tickets for the shuttle, which costs around US\$ 5,-. Though you may have reservations, this is in fact a very safe, cheap and reliable way to get into the center of town. Nevertheless, we do not recommend taking the shuttle after dark. From the final bus stop a taxi ride to the “Terminal de Oriente” will cost around US\$ 7,-

## From Caracas to Santa Elena

### 2 Options:

- **Direct Luxury Bus *Recommended!***
- Flight halfway – Bus halfway



### 1. Direct luxury buses to Santa Elena

The fastest, cheapest, and most convenient way to travel from Caracas to Santa Elena is by bus. Luxury buses are equipped with new, stretch reclining seats, air conditioning, a bathroom, and DVD system. Several companies operate ultra-modern buses to Santa Elena (US\$ 25,-)

The trip passes by much faster than you would expect! Please keep in mind that these buses are much more sophisticated and comfortable than buses in Europe or North America, for example. You can easily relax: the seats are very comfortable and can be turned into sleepers. Movies are regularly shown, and the buses frequently stop for snacks and meals along the way.

It is often not necessary to book a bus ticket in advance. Just get to the terminal to buy your ticket well before the bus departure time if at all possible to make absolutely sure that you will get a seat or use the Pick-up Service to make bus reservations. Three buses are leaving daily from Caracas to Santa Elena. While the 3:30 pm and 4:30 pm buses travel directly from Caracas to Santa Elena, the night bus at 10:15 pm will bring you halfway to San Felix/Puerto Ordaz where you will arrive the next morning early enough to get on the “Turgar” or “Expresos los Llanos” bus (daily at 9:00 am - same Terminal) which bring you directly to Santa Elena.

Bus Departure - Timetable				
Destination:	Caracas to Sta Elena	Sta Elena to Caracas	Caracas to San Félix or Puerto Ordaz	San Felix or Puerto Ordaz to Sta Elena
Name of Bus Company:	direct Bs 130,-	direct Bs 130,-	halfway Bs 70,-	halfway Bs 70,-
“Expresos Los Llanos”	4:30 pm	7:30 pm	10:15 pm	9:00 am
“Expresos Occidente”	3:30 pm	1:00 pm	6:30 pm	7:30 am

### 2. Domestic flight to Puerto Ordaz or Ciudad Bolivar and bus to Santa Elena

Arranging a domestic flight (45min) to Puerto Ordaz or Ciudad Bolivar (1,5h/US\$ 80-120,-/ 16:50pm daily) are alternative transportation options. From these towns, you can catch the bus to Santa Elena (8h/ US\$ 12,-/ 20:15pm daily) or instead, book a small plane (but only from Ciudad Bolivar) to Santa Elena by Rutaca (US\$ 150,- ow) **Airlines:** We recommend you book your in-country flight in your home country with your travel agent or through the internet. **Aeropostal:** <http://www.aerpostal.com>, Tel. 0800 284 66 37; **Rutaca:** <http://www.rutaca.com> **Aserca:** <http://www.asercaairlines.com>, Tel. 0800 648 83 56; **Avior:** <http://www.avior.com.ve>

## On arrival in Santa Elena

### Aldeas de Paz staff will welcome you

We will meet you on the Santa Elena Bus Terminal and bring you to the Aldeas de Paz headquarters. We will ensure that all of your needs are met - from a safe and comfortable place to stay, to unparalleled access to volunteer opportunities and perspectives and insight about the local culture.

## General Travel Tips

### Money

The currency of Venezuela is the Bolivar (Bs) It comes in notes of Bs 50,- 20,- 10,- 5,- 2,- It is best to change about US\$100 into Bolivar before traveling. Strict currency controls remain in place in Venezuela and the actual changing rate is 4,30 Bolivar for 1,- US\$. Bolivar can be obtained through banks and some travel agencies in your country. (You may need to order Bolivar in advance from your local bank) This will enable you to have cash to pay for your bus ticket and to purchase food. In most towns and all major Venezuelan cities, credit cards are accepted in shops and hotels.

### Travel Tip

If you do need to use your card, especially in an ATM, put your card into the machine and press cancel to make sure you get it back before going on to enter your PIN. If it is safe to proceed, cover your PIN so there is no chance of anyone or anything seeing it. Official rates apply: 1,- US\$ = 4,30 Bolivar.

### Water

The water at Aldeas de Paz is okay to drink. However, if you are planning on doing Excursions or going camping, it is advised that you bring water purification tablets or drops.

### Clothing / Footwear

The Cooperative Living House is located on the side of a mountain, about a 35 minute walk from downtown Santa Elena. With this in mind, please pack appropriate clothing and footwear. (Mountain bikes are freely available at the foundations grounds)

### Work Schedule

Each volunteer's work schedule is self determined and depends on what type of experience each person is looking for. All programs are ongoing throughout the year, thus enabling each volunteer to choose what they are interested in and create their work schedule accordingly.

### Climate

In Venezuela, the rainy season and the dry season are not defined any more due to climate changes. No matter the season, the days are warm. At night, it can get fairly cool, so remember to pack one or two sweaters and a couple pairs of pants.