



Have fun.

Expedition
Puerto Rico Post
Maria Rebuild



About your program



Have fun. Help People.®

"There comes a point in a person's life when you start asking yourself: what difference am I making in this world? I decided to put my time into something worthwhile."

-Gayle

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Introduction to Puerto Rico

Thank you for joining us at Globe Aware as we work side by side as equals for the first time in a US territory. Puerto Rico is an archipelago among the Greater Antilles, Puerto Rico includes the main island of Puerto Rico and a number of smaller ones, such as Mona, Culebra, and Vieques. The capital and most populous city is San Juan. Its official languages are Spanish and English, though Spanish predominates. The island's population is approximately 3.4 million. Puerto Rico's history, tropical climate, natural scenery, traditional cuisine, and tax incentives make it a destination for travelers from around the world.



Originally populated by the indigenous Taíno people, the island was claimed in 1493 by Christopher Columbus for Spain during his second voyage. Later it endured invasion attempts from the French, Dutch, and British. Four centuries of Spanish colonial government influenced the island's cultural landscapes with waves of African slaves, Canarian, and Andalusian settlers. In the Spanish Empire, Puerto Rico played a secondary, but strategic role when compared to wealthier colonies like Peru and the mainland parts of New Spain. Spain's distant administrative control continued up to the end of the 19th century, helping to produce a distinctive creole Hispanic culture and language that combined elements from the Native Americans, Africans, and Iberians.] In 1898, following the Spanish–American War, the United States acquired Puerto Rico under the terms of the Treaty of Paris. The treaty took effect on April 11, 1899.

Puerto Ricans are by law natural-born citizens of the United States and may move freely between the island and the mainland.] As it is not a state, Puerto Rico does not have a vote in the United States Congress, which governs the territory with full jurisdiction under the Puerto Rico



Federal Relations Act of 1950. However, Puerto Rico does have one non-voting member of the House called a Resident Commissioner. As a U.S. territory, American citizens residing in Puerto Rico are disenfranchised at the national level and do not vote for president and vice president of the United States, and do not pay federal income tax on Puerto Rican income. Like other territories and the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico does not have U.S. senators. Congress approved a local constitution, allowing U.S. citizens on the territory to elect a governor. A 2012 referendum showed a majority (54% of those who voted) disagreed with "the present form of territorial status". A second question asking about a new model,

had full statehood the preferred option among those who voted for a change of status, although a significant number of people did not answer the second question of the referendum. Another fifth referendum was held on June 11, 2017, with "Statehood" and "Independence/Free Association" initially as the only available choices. At the recommendation of the Department of Justice, an option for the "current territorial status" was added.] The referendum showed an overwhelming support for statehood, with 97.18% voting for it, although the voter turnout had a historically low figure of only 22.99% of the registered voters casting their ballots.

In early 2017, the Puerto Rican government-debt crisis posed serious problems for the government.



The outstanding bond debt had climbed to \$70 billion at a time with 12.4% unemployment. The debt had been increasing during a decade long recession. This was the second major financial crisis to affect the island after the Great Depression when the U.S. government, in 1935, provided relief efforts through the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration. On May 3, 2017, Puerto Rico's financial oversight board in the U.S. District Court for Puerto Rico filed the debt restructuring petition which was made under Title III of PROMESA. By early August 2017, the debt was \$72 billion with a 45% poverty rate.

In late September 2017, Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico causing devastating damage. The island's electrical grid was largely destroyed, with repairs expected to take months to complete, provoking the largest power outage in American history. Recovery efforts were somewhat slow in the first few months, and over 200,000 residents had moved to Florida alone by late November 2017. This has been the worst natural disaster in its' recorded history. Over 500 people died, roughly 80% of its agriculture was lost, the island's power grid was wiped out, 85% of its above ground phone and internet cables, and countless homes were damaged and destroyed. It is going to take years to recover.

Globe Aware reached out to a variety of communities and eventually settled on working with the municipality of Yauco, a community about 80 miles west of San Juan with a population of about 50,000. Founded by Fernando Pacheco on February 29, 1756, Yauco was a center for Corsican immigration to Puerto Rico in the 19th century due to its geographical similarity to their homeland. Corsicans have contributed to many areas of life in Yauco, particularly its coffee-producing agriculture. This has contributed to its nicknames of El Pueblo del Café (City of Coffee), and Los Corsos (The Corsicans). It is also known as La Capital Taína (Taíno Capital) after the native peoples of Puerto Rico. Yauco depends on other crops such as plaintains, oranges and tobacco, and also produces textiles. This area was particularly hard hit. So far, about 1300 houses have been identified which either partially or fully lost their roof. We have set an initial goal of rebuilding 100, which have been selected and appointed by a grassroots committee created for the purpose. Roofs are being constructed of galvanized zinc or plywood and asphaltic felt and shingles supported by a wooden frame (truss) and measure approximately 1200 square feet each. We have hired local engineers and supervisors to lead and oversee the project. No special skills or languages are necessary though we recommend that volunteers are capable of working in a tropical climate. How many roofs are completed per project week depends on how many volunteers are registered, how fast they work, any weather conditions that arise and any changes in materials' availability.



Projects and Expectations

You are being scheduled to work in small teams or roughly four to five each replacing and repairing roofs of modest residential homes. Many families have been living with tarps in place for months and months.

Our program here also partners with the local Rotary Club, the Governor of the District, Jose Lucas Rodriguez, and a variety of engineers.

There have been supply and material shortages that can impact this program. The roofs we will be constructing are generally made of galvanized zinc or plywood and asphaltic felt and shingles supported by a wood frame or truss.



Road closures, weather, and change in supply availability could all mean a sudden shift in projects. We have worked with locals for back up projects in the event any of these circumstances prevents building roofs. It is possible you will be rerouted to help repair schools and community centers and even possibly to chicken coop installation. We ask your understanding. This has been an extraordinary catastrophe for the island and everything from communications to roads to gas availability have meant months of issues to untangle. But your help is desperately needed and appreciated.



Chicken Coop Installation Project

Eggs are an inexpensive, healthy, sustainable source of protein for a family. Chicken coops are relatively easy and inexpensive to maintain and care for. Globe Aware volunteers will provide the materials, install the chicken coops and provide the first chickens and feed for families. By installing a chicken coop for a local family you will not only be contributing to more healthy practices, but many more benefits to the community:

Backyard chickens are healthier: Factory farmed chickens are kept in confined areas and are often fed an unnatural diet with hormones and antibiotics to increase growth quickly and cheaply. The added stress of unhappy surroundings affects the taste and nutrients of the eggs and how many each hen produces.

- Eggs are more nutritious: In contrast to factory farm eggs, those from backyard chickens have 25% more vitamin E, 33% more vitamin A and 75% more beta carotene, not to mention more omega-3 fatty acids than factory farmed eggs.
- Eggs are tastier: Grocery store eggs can take days and even weeks to get to your plate. As time goes by, air seeps into the porous eggshell and affects the nutrients, taste and consistency of the eggs. Fresh eggs should have firmer whites and super white orange yolks.
- Chickens are great for compost: Chicken poop is high in nitrogen which is great for the compost bin and used egg shells can also be used in compost.
- Chickens improve gardens: Chickens are natural foragers so free-range chickens (those not confined to a coop) will scratch the soil looking for bugs like grubs, earwigs, and the same bugs that eat your summer fruits and veggies. Plus, as they turn the soil, it will aerate, breakup vegetations, and accelerate the decomposing process.
- Chickens are great lessons for kids: Local kids and volunteers will learn about the connection to their food and better understand the farm-to-plate chain. Children will love collecting eggs daily and feeding chickens.
- Barter with the neighbors: Many people love farm fresh eggs but are not willing to make the commitment to owning a coop yet. Eggs can be traded with neighbors in exchange for something from their garden. Extra eggs can be sold as a source of income.

Community Facilities Improvement and Maintenance

In Puerto Rico, the church is the social community center and spiritual focus for everyone in the community. For the locals, their church is more than a religious institution, it is a place of gathering and a cornerstone of their daily lives. Locals often ask for Globe Aware's help with projects related to church maintenance and repair, as well as projects helping the elderly or for local schools.



Please remember that concepts of scheduling and organization are not universal. It is best to keep an open mind and not be judgmental when visiting a different culture. Remember that your way of doing things may not be the best way here - the locals usually have a very good reason for completing a task in a certain way, and their priorities are different than ours. Here is an example:

“But Mario, why are we building the fence so close to the river? Surely erosion will cause the fence to fall off the edge?”

“Don’t worry, the foundation is very thick - it won’t fall. Besides, we can’t move it over any more, because the boundary of the soccer field is so close.”

We understand your desire to know as much as possible about the project you will be working on. It is important to understand that projects are often not established until one or two weeks prior, as they are based on factors such as which projects were finished (or not) by the last group, what supplies are available, how many volunteers are in your group, weather conditions, the changing priorities of the community, and can even be modified throughout the week. It is best to approach the experience with an open attitude, knowing you'll be working approximately 6.5 hours a day during the week days, usually concentrated earlier in the day. You will also have a couple of hours of unstructured free time every day. There are typically three to four planned but optional leisure and cultural activities throughout the week. Communicate with your coordinator. If you find the work level is too much, or not enough, he or she will do as much as possible to work with you.

Additional Packing Information

Our program location is in a tropical location and therefore usually very humid and can often be muddy. Pack light very casual and quick drying clothes. Your work clothes may be ruined with paint, cement, or mud. You may want hiking boots or comfortable and sturdy work shoes. Expect narrow, muddy and uneven trails and bring appropriate footwear. You might consider bringing rubber rain boots for the mud, though if you prefer to save the space in your luggage, you can also buy these for \$10 locally. We recommend bringing work gloves that may get dirty, a few snacks and Ziploc bags. Strong insect repellent is essential. Make sure to pack enough clothes to be comfortable, considering sweat, mud, paint, etc. Make sure to pack enough clothes to be comfortable, considering that you may get dirty doing volunteer work. Laundry facilities are available but washing is only scheduled once a week, if necessary, so please pack accordingly.

While the temperatures are usually in the 80s and low 90s, global warming has made conditions less predictable (and more weather extremes) and we have had a stray week or two where temperatures are in the 60s with rain, during which volunteers felt sweatshirts were a good idea, as they were cold without them.

Please note that the packing list is meant as a guideline. There is no single item that you can't live without for one week. Pack what you think you will need to be comfortable, but do not get preoccupied about items that you didn't bring, weren't on the list, etc. Everyone has different opinions about essential items!

You will be provided with one towel for your weeklong stay, but be ready to hang them out to dry each day or bring extras if you feel it's necessary.

- Work gloves
- Sunscreen
- Sun hat
- 2 - 3 Pants for working - note that most locals do not wear shorts so you might feel more comfortable with cotton pants.
- Toilet paper / tissues or wipes (available locally but if you feel you need a particular kind)
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Toiletries and any prescription medication needed
- T-shirts
- Umbrella or rain poncho (may not be necessary - check the weather before you go!)
- Long socks, especially if you are not bringing boots - bring enough socks and plenty of underwear
- Day pack / Small backpack
- Strong money belt
- Camera / memory cards / chargers
- Money / credit cards for personal expenditures
- Travel charger and back up battery in event of any power outage
- Rain or rubber boots
- You may enjoy bringing games or books for free time.

Blankets, towels or a sleeping bag may help you be more comfortable, as the bedding or linens may not be what you are accustomed to. The vast majority of volunteers find the sheets and blankets completely satisfactory and feel that taking up extra luggage space isn't worth the cost or effort, though this is a personal decision. Others have brought "travel blankets" or "sleep sacks" which are much easier to pack.

Gifts / Donations

At the end of your stay, you might feel inclined to give something to community hosts who have been particularly helpful or courteous. In the past, volunteers have given an empty journal decorated with a child's name, or written them a thank you note, sung them a song, etc. People also enjoy seeing simple tokens from home, such as postcards of your hometown, or photos of your family.

Please be aware that bringing donations can also be awkward. In some instances, receiving donations can effect the recipients' pride negatively. This is not always the case. Do try and consider when donating used clothes, particularly those used during the program, if you feel the local community members would actually want them. It is best to discuss donations with the coordinator for these reasons.



There are cases that donations are more readily accepted, however there are often still local cultural nuances that can make the act of giving complicated. In order to preserve pride, please discuss how your donations can be presented with the coordinator. **Please note you are not expected to bring anything.**

Should you decide you do want to bring donations, you may consider: toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, soap, linens, kitchen utensils, flashlights with batteries, children's books, clothing - shoes, flip flops for kids, underwear, t-shirts, socks- , school supplies like pencils, pens, and educational toys or toys that do not require batteries - UNO,

Connect Four, board games, cards, Jenga, Rummikub, dominoes, jump ropes, balls - of any kind especially soccer. If possible used laptops are always a great donation. You may also want to leave behind the items you used during the week - clothes, towels, linens if you brought them.

We discourage giving any more money than you are already giving to the program and community via your program fee. Globe Aware funds are spent on program expenses, as opposed to giving cash donations -- this helps ensure that the money is being spent in meaningful ways. We understand the good intentions of our volunteers. Giving cash out to community members contradicts the goal of promoting sustainability, promotes expectations that foreigners are 'made of money' and can create an atmosphere that begging may solve a community's challenge

We discourage cash donations and distributing money in all of our communities. However, if you feel like giving a gratuity to your coordinator this will be very appreciated though not necessary.

Special Donations

Other very useful donations for families specifically requested that are in short supply following the hurricane are sheets, deodorant, shoes, any dental hygiene supplies, nails, shampoo and conditioner.

Accommodations

Volunteers will be placed in a variety of nearby rented houses, all furnished with hot running water and electricity. Though do note any weather events could temporarily impact their availability. Breakfast will always be taken in this home. Volunteers are housed two to a room, unless they pay a single supplement.

Electricity

There is limited electricity: enough to recharge digital batteries, but not enough to do heavy- duty hair drying. Voltage is the same as the rest of North America, 110V. Electrical outlets take the same plug as in North America, so a prong adaptor is not necessary.



Laundry

You can usually find a local who will wash your laundry for roughly \$10 per load in the middle of the week. In some instance, there are laundry facilities at the site.



Food

BFA simple breakfast is provided at your accommodations each morning, usually incorporating toast, eggs, coffee, juices and cereal. Lunch and dinner will be prepared for the volunteers each day and either catered to the project site or taken community members' homes.

Food is delicious and will include a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as chicken, fish, pork, juice, beans, rice and eggs, and plenty of regional dishes. Keep in mind that in some community homes items such as milk, cheese and large quantities of meat may be seen as luxury items and may not always be readily offered. Vegetarians

and volunteers with food allergies or dietary restrictions can easily be accommodated.

Meals are included when taken as part of the pre-planned itinerary at the accommodations and project site. If volunteers decide to eat in town or want to stop at a restaurant in San Jose, they are responsible for buying the meal. Additionally if the volunteer wants to take a trip somewhere specifically for a meal, they are also responsible for additional transportation costs.

Water

Puerto Rico is one of the few Globe Aware locations where bottled water is not necessary. Puerto Rico's water utility, the AAA, says the tap water was safe to drink about 72 hours after service was restored after hurricane Maria hit and time allowed for the debris accumulated in the dry pipes to be washed away. Additionally, Puerto Rico has some of the best medical facilities in the Caribbean and health standards are comparable to those of the U.S. Unlike most neighboring countries, the tap water is even safe to drink. ...

Weather

Puerto Rico is warm and humid year-round. There are two seasons, wet and dry. The dry season is more accurately described as the less-rainy season. During the rainy season, you are likely to get one shower a day that will last for 1 or 2 hours and then it clears up. As a measure for how locals view their micro-climate, on a rainy day, you might hear them refer to the day as being a winter day, and the next day if it is dry, they will call it a summer day. It is a good idea to carry your umbrella/rain poncho with you as sometimes the rain comes without much warning.



Usually temperatures will be in the high 80s or low 90s during the day and nights can range from mid 50s to low 70s, though the humidity may make it seem hotter or colder. Of course weather conditions the world over can have unexpected extremes, but this can give you a general guide. The lower temps have traditionally been in November and December and the drier hotter months are traditionally in April and May.

To be more specific, from November to February when temperatures can dip into the 50s at night, volunteers have been appreciative to have a few items of cloths to keep them warmer, and some kind of rain jacket as well. It is always a good idea to check the weather online the week before you go so you know what to expect.

Money

There are a couple of banks in the area if you need to make an ATM withdrawal. You should not need much extra money while at the program site, just enough for incidentals such as souvenirs, alcohol or snacks from the local stores. You may also want money to purchase local craft souvenirs. Please also keep in mind that it is much easier to use small bills, as it is often difficult to get change for a small purchase paid with a larger note. It is a good idea to call your bank and credit card companies before you depart and notify them of where you will be traveling to and the dates of your travel so that they will allow charges and/or withdrawals internationally.

Also, take into consideration that one day during the week is usually set aside for an excursion. Various tours are available around the valley and tour operators will accept dollars, but they always prefer cash over credit or debit cards, so please bring extra cash for your excursion day as well (up to \$100 depending on number of volunteers participating and season). The easiest thing to do regarding cash is to simply bring around \$300 with you.

Phone and Internet

Please do not plan to spend a lot of time on the phone or internet during your short volunteer week. We will have a busy and short week to be immersed in the culture. Should you anticipate needing to make calls, your cell phone will generally work, but it isn't a bad idea to check with your provider before you go to purchase an international calling/data plan and make sure you know what is included or not included in it so you don't get any surprises when you come back. Roaming charges, especially for data use, can be outrageous.

Health

You should be up to date on routine vaccinations while traveling to any destination. No special vaccines are required to travel to Puerto Rico. For additional information on travel health in Puerto Rico, please refer to the CDC's website at

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/puerto-rico>

Please be aware that dengue fever, a mosquito-borne illness, is present throughout tropical Central America. It is a good idea to use mosquito repellent with at least 20% DEET at all times.

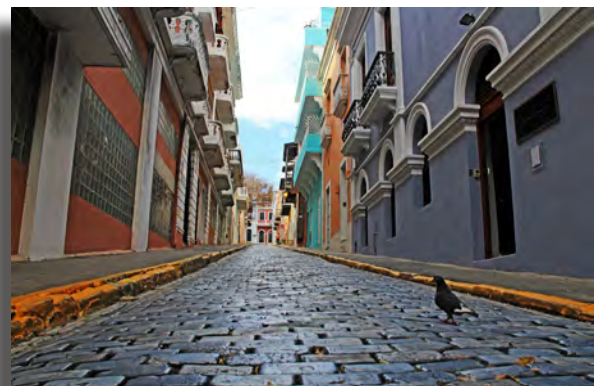
Cultural Note - Greeting a Tico/Tica

Traditional greeting in You can give a firm handshake or you can nod you head, though traditionally men greet their close friends with an embrace. Women greet each other with a brief hug and a kiss on the cheek. Try it and you will make fast friends!

Transportation

The program offers general transportation for most transportation needs. It is intended to be used for the set program itinerary getting volunteers to and from the drop off point,

work projects and 3 to 5 planned but optional standard leisure visits. However, if the group wants to split up during free time going in opposite directions for activities, then additional transportation costs need to be paid for by the volunteers. Note that UBER *does* indeed work in Puerto Rico.



Leisure Activities

Volunteers will have the opportunity to experience several leisure experiences throughout the week. Your coordinator will arrange several of these planned but optional cultural activities, but you will also have some free-time to explore on your own as well.

Excursion to what is known as Gilligan's Island and beach Cooking class Cobblestoned streets of old Colonial San Juan Bosque Estatal De Guanica Nature Reserve Volkylandia Volkswagen Museum Local Farmers Markets.

Your Fellow Volunteers

You will receive a Fellow Volunteer Report attached to our "Ready, Set, Go!" email about 3 weeks before the program starts. It will include information on your fellow travelers, as well as their email so that you can start to get acquainted with them before you leave.

Your Main Coordinator: Miguel Torres

I studied at the Catholic University of Puerto Rico. I was a professor of mathematics for 34 years. I served in the armed forces of the United States and participated in the Persian Gulf war and the conflict in Panama ... I was a mechanic of aviation in the armed forces, I spent 20 years in the Puerto Rico National Guard in the police position military. I am retired from my teaching profession and I dedicate my free time to the things I love like fishing and the sea. I live in the village of Guanica next to the beach in a very quiet place with panoramic view of the Caribbean Sea. I like to travel and adventure I am a very jovial and very happy person. ... I believe in the humanitarian spirit.



Arrival and Meet-Up / Entry Requirements

U.S. Citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents (LPR's) who travel directly between parts of the United States, which includes Guam, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Swains Island and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), without touching at a foreign port or place, are not required to present a valid U.S. Passport or U.S. Green Card. However, it is recommended that travelers bring a government issued photo ID and copy of birth certificate. It also is recommended that you carry proof of your LPR status at all times in the event you are asked to prove your status. This may be in the form of a green card or passport. Hawaii is a U.S. state and therefore passport documentation requirements for U.S. citizens and LPR's do not apply. Entry requirements for non-U.S. citizens are the same as for entering the United

States from any foreign destination. Upon departure, a passport is required for all but U.S. citizens. Questions about requirements for domestic travel should be directed to Transportation Security Administration (TSA). ***TSA can be reached at 1-866-289-9673.***

After you exit the plane, you will then proceed to baggage claim where you will pick up your luggage. If any of your luggage is damaged or missing you should report it to the airline immediately and provide the address where you will be staying, or wait for the next flight as it is likely to come in that flight. If lost or missing baggage will cause a delay in meet up, you should notify us immediately (See Emergency Section for information on how to reach Globe Aware 24 hours a day).

Once you have picked up your luggage (or reported if delayed), you will proceed down another corridor where you will exit the airport. Your coordinator will be waiting with a “Globe Aware” sign at the airport exit.

Volunteers will be picked up at this airport exit between 3 and 4pm on the Saturday the program starts. Please be sure to have lunch before this time as dinner will not be until 6 or 7 p.m. that night.

Safety and Security

Puerto Rico is generally a very safe place, particularly if you are outside of San Juan, particularly La Perla area next to El Morro and Louis Lloren Toores (not on the tourist track). Incidents of violent crime are very rare. Please be vigilant at all times when in San Juan as pickpockets are common, especially in crowded areas. Secure your personal belongings and do not carry your passport or credit cards in easily accessible places. Also it is a good idea to avoid public housing areas, known in Puerto Rico as “caserios”, identifiable by their cement facades and apartment-like balconies. Gangs are a problem in these projects, and activities linked to the drug trade take place often.

You should always be wary of where you leave your belongings, as unattended items may disappear (day packs, cameras, etc). Our accommodations are very safe, but as a precaution in any of our locations, we recommend purchasing a baggage lock and putting all your valuables inside your largest bag and locking it when you leave for your daily activities.

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program is a free service provided by the U.S. government to U.S. citizens who are traveling. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency, keep you up to date with important safety and security announcements, and help your friends and family get in touch with you in case of an emergency. The link to STEP is

<https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>

Global Entry

Global Entry and TSA Pre-Check are a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) program that allows expedited clearance for pre-approved, low-risk travelers within security checkpoints in the United States. Due to sequestration and during busy travel seasons, long lines have been reported at customs and immigration when coming back into the United States. For more information, visit

<http://www.globalentry.gov/>

In Case of Emergency

Remember that Puerto Rico is a US territory. You can inform the Department of State about U.S. citizens affected by the hurricane who require emergency assistance through the following ways:

- U.S. citizens with urgent medical needs and special considerations that have no ability to depart via commercial options should email us at MariaEmergencyUSC@State.Gov. Provide as much information as possible, including:
- Contact information (Cell, Satphone, WhatsApp, etc.)
- Exact location description (provide geo coordinates if possible)
- Medical issues / other circumstances for consideration
- Personal identifying details (Name, DOB, etc.)
- Number of people in group and their personal details
- Call us at 1-888-407-4747 (from the U.S. & Canada), +1-202-501-4444 (from Overseas)
- Domestic Response Information: Please go to FEMA's website, **www.fema.gov**, for information about response efforts in the U.S. territories of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas).
- Evacuees who traveled on U.S. government coordinated transports may contact Accounts Receivable Division in Charleston for information about repayment of loans. **Evacuees can send an email to FMPARD@state.gov, or call from within the U.S. and Canada: 1-800-521-2116. International callers can call 843-746-0592.**

Globe Aware's 24 hour phone line Please note our email is not attended all day every day, so if you have an emergency please use this phone number : (214) 824 4562

Further Readings While no further reading is required, we think it is always nice to have a travel guide book with you to read about the area. Lonely Planet, Eyewitness, Frommer's, Budget Travel, Rough Guides are some of the titles we have recommended in the past. Many people also enjoy reading books like



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