

Dear Pilgrim,

**It is time to start planning for our retreat to Medjugorje.
This guide will help you know what to expect and bring.**

Where is Medjugorje? The parish of Medjugorje is situated among the hills of the southwestern region of Herzegovina, about 600 feet above sea level, and is populated by Croatian Catholics as the region was historically part of Croatia. The parish St. James has been led by the Croatian Franciscan Friars for many centuries.

How is the weather? Summer weather is typically hot and sunny during the day, with cooler evenings. It is good to pack light-weight, comfortable layers, including rain gear.

What is the village like? Medjugorje was once a very simple farming village, and has grown to accommodate the great number of pilgrims. However, the heart of the parish - St. James Church and the faith of the people - has not changed. There are many stores and religious gift shops in Medjugorje as well as cafes and restaurants.

Currency/Expenses? In Medjugorje you may use US \$, Euros or local Bosnian Marks and, in some cases, credit cards. Bring your cash in smaller bills. Cash machines offer local currency. If using a credit or debit card internationally, it is important to notify your bank or card company. Expected expenses include evening meals in Medjugorje (+meals for final day in Croatia), extra snacks & drinks, taxis, tips, donations... about \$50 per day, plus personal shopping. **Please note: **In Croatia (final day), only Euros &/or credit cards are accepted.****

What type of clothing is appropriate? The general dress in Medjugorje is casual. It is not necessary to dress up in church, although you may do so if you wish. Please do not plan on wearing shorts, short skirts or bare shoulders in or near the church as the priests have asked everyone to dress appropriately and respectfully.

Luggage? The airline allows one check-in suitcase weighing no more than **50 lbs.** AND one carry-on bag per person, small enough to fit under the seat, weighing no more than **17.5 lbs.** PLUS a personal item (like handbag). Clearly mark bags with your name, address & phone number. Your unmarked luggage, if lost, may be difficult to locate. All valuables, including electronics, jewelry, medicine, money & documents, should be carried onto plane with you. Your carry-on bag cannot contain any sharp objects. **Any liquids in carry-on must be in containers no larger than 3.4 oz,** gathered in a clear plastic resealable quart-sized bag. Larger liquids are ok in big suitcase.

Travelers Insurance? Purchase of travelers' insurance is optional yet recommended, and can be done through your local AAA or any other travel agency. Options and cost vary depending on personal needs and preferences.

Is there a possibility of encountering danger? In general, the village is safe, although there is always an unpredictable possibility of danger when in unfamiliar surroundings. For your own safety, it is recommended to stay with the group and avoid wandering alone. If separating from the group, please inform your group guide.

What will the guest home be like? The guest homes in Medjugorje are clean, comfortable & welcoming. Guest rooms have private bathrooms & showers. Our guest home is a pleasant ½ mile walk to St. James Church and the town center. Van & taxi rides are also available.

Please remember, you are a guest who has been called to live and experience the message of Our Lady. Part of this message is penance. The families with whom we stay are not wealthy. They do not have all of the comforts that you may have at home. Please accept these sacrifices willingly, with joy and love. Please do not expect more than they are able to give.

Here are some suggestions of what to bring with you:

- COMFORTABLE, WRINKLE-FREE CLOTHING – also wise for the overnight flight
(there are no laundry facilities, but clothing can be hand-washed and hung on the outdoor clothesline)
- COMFORTABLE, CASUAL SHOES – good for walking and climbing
- RAIN GEAR
- PROTECTIVE HAT & SUNSCREEN
- MOSQUITO REPELLANT
- WATER BOTTLE –water in Medjugorje is safe to drink; fountains are available near Church
- MONEY BELT – not necessary, but if you prefer
- PORTABLE ALARM CLOCK or cell phone alarm
- FLASHLIGHT – there are no street lights in some parts of the village
- MEDICATIONS & FIRST AID
- 220 VOLT ELECTRICAL CONVERTER & 2-PRONG ADAPTER
for Europe to use with chargers, etc. – consult salesperson. Our guest home has hairdryers.
- SOAP, SHAMPOO & OTHER TOILETRIES
- SMALL AM/FM RADIO WITH HEADPHONES – to hear English translation of evening Mass
(these radios are available in shops there; some radios may be available to borrow at our guest home)
- CHARGERS/EXTRA BATTERIES
- SMALL BIBLE & JOURNAL
- SNACKS – for your own needs
- CASH in smaller bills – US \$, Euros & local Bosnian Marks are accepted in Medjugorje, though change is usually given in local currency. In Croatia (final night) only Euros & credit cards can be used.

You will receive a lightweight knapsack, convenient for use in Medjugorje.

Please refer to airline website for more detailed information on baggage allowances.

Please set aside what you may have read about Medjugorje

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**Leave all expectations behind and allow Our Lady
to guide you & fill your heart with Her grace.**