

Security Tips for Visitors to Venezuela

In preparation for your trip to the GCFI meeting in Cumaná, Venezuela we would like to share with you some security tips. They are based on common sense and our knowledge of crime in Venezuela, and include some security measures that we hope will prevent you from being a victim of crime while you are in the country. Remember these tips are valid for any country. Please remember that you are responsible for your own personal security. **BE PREPARED. BE DISTRUSTFUL. BE SAFE.**

General Recommendations:

- Keep a low profile
- Avoid wearing expensive or flashy jewelry or watches
- Avoid exhibiting money and cameras in public
- Do not accept any food, drinks, papers or cigarettes from strangers
- Avoid using isolated or lonely ATMs. Do not accept any help from strangers when using ATMs.
- Avoid driving or walking through dark and deserted places
- Always carry your personal documents on you and carry only the money you need
- If you are a victim of a robbery, do not risk your life. Keep a submissive attitude and do what you are told to do.

Recommendations on Changing Money:

- You will likely be approached by strangers asking you to change money at the airport, and you should politely decline their offers
- If you want to change money you should do so at banks that are located in secure areas or at the hotel

Recommendations at the Hotel:

- Do not open the door until you have checked who is at it. Use the peephole. If you cannot identify the person, call the reception desk and ask for help.
- Keep your valuables in the safety box.

Recommendations at the Airport: (Please see traveling recommendations below)

- Do not accept assistance from strangers
- Never lose sight of your luggage and do not trust it to the care of third parties.
- Do not accept any unsolicited offers from taxis or drivers. Be aware that even marked taxis are known to be dangerous. Used only airport taxis.
- If you are approached by an airport security officer, National Guard or other law enforcement individual at any point other than the regular security posts, you should request their identification and take note of their names. Inform them that you must call your hotel. If they wish to search you or to inspect your personal belongings, ask for the presence of witnesses. While responding to their questions try to reach an airline counter or any other information or public counter. If you feel that you are being a victim of

abuse of authority, do not hesitate to request to talk with the agent's superior at one of the regular security posts.

TRAVEL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GCFI 2009 IN CUMANÁ-VENEZUELA.

General Travel Recommendation

Most flights from Caracas to Cumaná leave Caracas in the afternoon so it is advisable that you take an international flight that arrives in Caracas before midday. In this way you can avoid staying overnight near Caracas airport.

Arriving at the Caracas International Airport 'Simón Bolívar' (also referred to as Maiquetia)

1. Fill in the immigration and customs forms correctly. After passing through immigration save your stamped form with your passport as this is required when you leave the country.
2. After you collect your bags from the baggage carousel you will have to show that you have matching receipts for each bag before you can continue to the customs screening and exit.
3. Once you have collected your bags, check if there is a money exchange office open in the baggage hall or customs area. If so, we recommend changing money there. If you are coming to Cumana we recommend that you change a maximum of US\$100, or if you must go to a hotel near the airport that you change US\$150. If there are no exchange offices open in the baggage hall or customs area, you will need to do this in the domestic terminal. It is important that you change this money since only local currency can be used in the country. The official exchange rate is BsF 2.15 to US\$1.00. Note that the ATMs at the airport are not located inside a security area so we do not recommend using them.
4. After you have passed through the customs screening (which involves putting your bags through an x-ray machine), take the **internal passageway which will be on your left to the domestic terminal**. See the attached plan. Avoid walking outside to go between the international and domestic terminals as this is a known crime spot. (**SEE attached diagram**)
5. At the domestic terminal, check in with the corresponding airline for your flight to Cumaná.

How to Get to Cumaná.

1. The best way is by plane from Caracas. There are only two airlines that fly this route, Venezolana (www.ravsa.com.ve) and Avior (www.avior.com.ve). With these airlines your ticket must be paid for at the time of reservation, you cannot reserve and later cancel without being charged for the ticket. Once you know your international itinerary it is advisable to purchase your domestic ticket as far in advance as possible.
2. On weekends there are fewer flights and the airlines generally use smaller planes. Although we are working with the airlines to ensure that there will be enough availability on the weekend before the conference, please be aware of this issue.
3. Large carry-on bags generally have to be checked in for the flight to Cumaná, but we recommend that you keep any valuables on you.

4. After checking in for your flight to Cumaná you will have to pay an airport tax which is currently BsF 27. Try to pay this with small notes.
5. We recommend that you immediately enter the secure Departures Area within the domestic terminal and enjoy the range of cafes and restaurants while you wait for your flight. We advise against leaving the airport during your layover as the adjacent town of Catia La Mar is a known danger spot for wandering tourists.
6. Be aware that at the departure gates in the domestic terminal the flight information shown on the monitor above the gate does not always correspond to the correct flight. **It is worth double-checking with an airline representative at the gate to ensure that you are waiting at the correct gate for your flight to Cumaná.**

Arriving in Cumaná.

1. We ask that you please inform us beforehand of the date and time of your arrival in Cumaná so that we can arrange your transfer to your hotel. If not, you can take a taxi from Cumaná airport (although there are no other services and there are few taxis).
2. Once in the hotel, we will provide you with more information on getting around, recommended restaurants and where to find Money exchange offices and ATMs.

For those without immediate connection to Cumaná (who must overnight near the Caracas airport).

There are few hotels nearby that offer a shuttle service to and from the airport:

1. Hotel Eurobuilding Express (<http://www.hoteleuroexpress.com/>) 5 estrellas
2. Hotel Marriott Playa Grande (<http://www.latinamerica.marriott.com/hotels/hotel-information/travel/ccsap-venezuela-marriott-hotel-playa-grande/>) 5 estrellas
3. Eduard's Hotel Suites and Resort (<http://www.hoteleduardos.net/>) 4 estrellas
4. Playa Grande Caribe (<http://hotelpayagrandecaribe.com/>) 4 estrellas
5. Las Quince Letras (<http://hotel15letras.com/>) 3 estrellas
6. Santiago (<http://www.hotelsantiago.com.ve>) 3 estrellas
7. Hotel Catimar Puerto Viejo (<http://www.hotelcatimar.com/>) 2 estrellas
8. La Posada del Hidalgo (<http://www.posadahidalgo.com/>) 2 estrellas

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