

# PLANNING YOUR TRIP

Planning a Y-Corps trip can seem overwhelming, so we've organized the process into components that will allow you to plan your trip step-by-step and design it as a story that you will share and experience with your team:



## TRIP ARC

The backbone of your Y-Corps trip is the Trip Arc - an intentional agenda that tells a story. When designing your arc, remember T-R-I-P:

### Team

Your team is your audience - make the arc relevant and meaningful to them.

### Region

The region you travel determines the scale and setting of your arc.

### Itinerary

The destinations you serve or visit act as chapters and lessons for your arc.

### Partners

Partners in different cities and regions help determine where you travel.



## ARC SCRIPT

Your arc is put into action through the Arc Script, which provides team staff with the information they will need as facilitators. The script has 4 sections:

### Daily Theme

Each day has a theme that connects the sites of the day and builds into the arc.

### Destinations

Each destination on your itinerary has a set-up and debrief that place it within the larger arc and theme.

### Journaling

Prompts and questions to facilitate daily journaling sessions.

### Roundtable

Prompts and questions to guide your evening roundtable.

## DAILY ITINERARY

There are 5 categories to consider when planning your daily itinerary: Direct Service, Cultural Service, Lodging, Travel and Meals. Every stop on your itinerary will fall into one of these categories to help you organize your agenda for each day:



### DIRECT SERVICE

Direct Service engages students in projects that have an immediate or ongoing impact on an individual, organization, or community.



### CULTURAL SERVICE

Cultural Service provides context to your trip and offers students a deeper understanding of the people and communities they will serve.



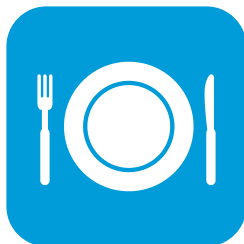
### LODGING

Lodging sites should be as intentional as your service sites. YMCAs provide a national network of potential host facilities, and strengthen the connection your students have to the Y.



### TRAVEL

Travel is the most time-consuming portion of your itinerary, and also the most critical in terms of creating the team dynamic needed for successful service work.



### MEALS

Meals should either adhere to a Y-Corps diet that is simple, portable, and creates a culture of gratitude, or help build a sense of community with local cuisine.



# PLANNING YOUR TRIP

## TRIP ARC

The Trip Arc is an intentional agenda that tells a story. When planning your Y-Corps trip, you have 4 components to your arc – 4 ways to help tell your story, which you can remember as T-R-I-P:

# T

## TEAM

Your team is the audience for your arc, and should be your first consideration when it comes to designing the story you want to tell. Some key questions:

- How are these students connected to each other?
- Do they know each other, and if so, for how long and in what context?
- Is this a trip for returning service trip participants, or new ones?
- Are there common goals they are trying to reach through this experience?
- What shared goal(s) do you want to set for your team?

# R

## REGION

The region you travel through will provide unique destinations and communities to serve as the settings for your arc. In most cases, regional settings lend themselves to framing the larger themes of your story:

- Geographic: Home State Pride, National Parks, Regional Identity
- Historical: Founding America, Founding the Y, Pioneer Trail, Civil Rights
- Cultural: Musical Heritage, Artistic Expression, Literary Tradition
- Socioeconomic: Urban/Rural, Industrial/Non-Industrial, Impoverished/Wealthy
- Current Events: Disaster Relief, Aid Projects, Benefit Events, Places in the News

# I

## ITINERARY

Each destination on your itinerary should serve as a chapter in your arc, providing a lesson or experience that you can build into the larger story.

- Does this destination further the themes and message of my arc?
- What lessons might the team take away from the destination?
- Who do we interact with at the destination? What is the mission of the individuals or groups we interact with, and how does it impact the arc?
- What destinations in the region are essential to our arc?
- Can we arrange destinations in a way that best serves our arc while also providing an efficient traveling experience?

# P

## PARTNERS

Wherever you travel, your relationships and connections to partners in the region offer the best guidance on where to travel and lodge. In some cases, the number of partners in a specific area can determine which region you choose to visit.

- How does each of your potential partners fit into your arc?
- How well do they understand your program and purpose/mission?
- If they are new, how will you help them understand your arc?
- If they have worked with you in the past, how can you emphasize that relationship to your team as part of the arc?
- Can they connect you to additional partnership opportunities in the region?



# PLANNING YOUR TRIP

## ARC SCRIPT

The Arc Script is the narrative of your trip, providing staff with a day-by-day implementation plan for your arc. It shares important information about each destination, how they relate to one another, and how each fits into the arc.

This script is not written in stone – it ensures that you are intentional when planning your trip, but also acts as a living document that can be amended if needed while the trip unfolds.

### **Participate, Don't Anticipate**

This key piece of Y-Corps culture directly applies to your script. Student members of your team should NOT know the trip itinerary or destinations until shortly before they arrive at each stop. The Arc Script allows staff to prepare for destinations without spoiling this element for your students.

## DAILY THEME

Each day of your trip should have a broad theme that links each destination together and ties into your larger arc. The theme can be built around specific destinations (memorials, landmarks, museums, service sites, cities, etc.), types of service performed, or simply a concept or value that you will reinforce at each stop.

As mentioned earlier, your script is very much a living document. Remember that unanticipated situations can present you with themes more relevant to your team's experience than those you had planned.

### **Morning Meditation or Madness**

When time permits, you can introduce a theme through Morning Meditation – a staff or captain-led meditation on a theme or idea – or wake your team up with Morning Madness – Y-Corps games and songs that energize your team.

## DESTINATIONS

While each destination (Direct Service, Cultural Service, Lodging, etc.) should be intentional and reinforce your arc and theme, the bulk of your script will provide introductory and debrief segments that frame the destination. Think of each destination as chapter in your larger story, with the script providing the beginning and end of each chapter.

### **Introduction**

Before arriving at a destination, a pre-assigned staff member will introduce the destination to the team. This introduction should provide background information, explain connections to your team and purpose, and place the destination in the context of your theme and arc.

### **Debrief**

After leaving a destination, the same staff member who led the introduction should lead the team in a debrief discussion on the experience. Your script should contain pre-determined prompts and questions, and also allow for additional questions that arose during the experience.

### **Transitions**

At certain points on the trip, you will want to speak to the team at "transition" points – crossing state borders, entering cities, or passing significant landmarks – that help connect the pieces of your arc.

## JOURNALING

Each day of your trip should have a specific block of time set aside for journaling. Each student should bring his or her own journal or diary. While most reflection on your trip will occur as a team (debriefs after destinations and roundtable), journaling serves as a time for silent, personal reflection.

Journaling sessions should be guided by prompts and questions from staff. These prompts and questions should be part of your script, but can also be drawn from daily occurrences worthy of tying into your theme and arc.

Cultural Service sites (see p. #) are ideal for journaling as they often provide the kinds of spaces most suited for quiet reflection. If you are running short on time, quiet time on the bus is also a suitable space.



# PLANNING YOUR TRIP

## ARC SCRIPT

### ROUNDTABLE

Roundtable brings the team together at the end of the day to reflect on what they have accomplished, what it means, and how they've grown. For those facilitating Roundtable, please consult the [Roundtable Guide \(Appendix A\)](#) for tips and suggestions. There are 3 phases of Roundtable:

#### Staff Roundtable

As a staff, it is important to take time each night while students are showering or talking in small groups to debrief on the day. This helps bring your staff together before the team roundtable (where their voices should be heard sparingly), and allows them to move forward with shared focus and confidence. Keep an eye on time (it will be late) and facilitate accordingly.

- **Successes & Challenges**  
Each member of the staff discusses one success and one challenge from the day.
- **Lessons Learned**  
Each member of the staff discusses one lesson they learned during the day, and how it will impact them moving forward.
- **Red Flags**  
The facilitator asks for Red Flags – concerns or potential difficulties staff should discuss or be aware of going forward.
- **Logistics for Tomorrow**  
The facilitator reviews the agenda/logistics for the next day, including the script and any staff assignments. This portion can also be covered during the bus ride to your lodging to save time.
- **Shout-Outs**  
Brief shout-outs to other members of the staff.

#### Team Roundtable Prep

Following the Staff Roundtable, Team Captains should join the staff members that will facilitate the team roundtable to discuss and review the roundtable prompts and questions.

#### Team Roundtable

The Team Roundtable is the final activity of the day, and should be held in a circle with all members of the team participating.

- **Logistics**  
Review logistics and announcements prior to starting your roundtable. This preserves the atmosphere once roundtable concludes.
- **Whips**  
Short (sometimes 1-5 words) responses from each member of the team to a question or prompt. See suggestions for roundtable whips in Appendix D – Roundtable Guide.
- **Day/Theme-Focused Questions**  
Questions focused on themes from the day, answered by a smaller portion of the team (usually 5-6 people per question)
- **Challenge/Call to Action**  
The staff facilitators and team captains issue a challenge or call to action, asking team members to silently reflect on what it means to them and how they will respond.
- **Shout-Outs & Snaps**  
Brief shout-outs to other team members, with the team responding by softly snapping their fingers to preserve the atmosphere.

### SCRIPT CHECKLIST

- 1 printed copy of script per Staff Member
- Staff Member assignments for all script segments (Morning Meditation/Madness, Destinations, Journaling, Roundtable)
- Introduction & Debrief for all Destinations (Direct Service, Cultural Service, Lodging)
- 1 Journaling Session per day
- Roundtable Preparation for each evening



# DAILY ITINERARY DIRECT SERVICE

The foundation of your Y-Corps experience is Direct Service to individuals, organizations, and communities you visit on your trip. Direct Service projects provide an immediate or ongoing benefit to those you serve, and provide a sense of accomplishment and valuable lessons for your team.

## WHERE TO START

The best place to start planning Direct Service projects is with the “P” in TRIP – your partners and organizational relationships in the areas you’ll be visiting. When the service you perform benefits an individual or group with a direct connection to your own organization, it makes the impact that much more meaningful to your team.

For more direct service ideas and inspiration, search our archive of Direct Service projects from past trips – available online at our Y-Corps Resource page: [www.kyymca.org/y-corps/resources](http://www.kyymca.org/y-corps/resources)

## DIRECT SERVICE PROJECT FACTORS

There are numerous ways to provide direct service. In order to ensure a variety of service experiences on your trip, consider the following factors when evaluating potential projects. These factors are not meant to limit creativity, only to balance your itinerary. Use the [Direct Service Trip Planner \(Appendix B\)](#) to compare factors across your projects.

### LABOR INTENSITY

How physically demanding is the service?

#### Low

Ex: Mentoring, Teaching, Organizing/Cleaning

#### Moderate

Ex: Painting, Gardening, Stacking/Moving

#### High

Ex: Construction, Demolition, Clearing Brush

### IMPACT TIMEFRAME

How quickly will the impact of the service be observable?

#### Immediate

Full impact tangible upon completion of project

#### Ongoing

Completion of a phase, step, or segment of a project

### SCOPE OF IMPACT

How far does the impact of the project extend?

#### Individual

Ex: Cleaning an elderly person’s home

#### Group

Ex: Painting a Youth Center or YMCA facility

#### Community

Ex: Local, National, or Global Focus and Impact

### INTERACTIVITY

Will your team interact with other organizations in the community?

#### Team Only

Ex: Clean-up after an event, Stocking a food pantry

#### Interactive

Ex: Community Outreach, Mentoring

### MESSINESS

How dirty will team members get while completing the project?

#### Clean

No Change or Shower Necessary

#### Messy

Clothes/Hands may get dirty, Change of clothes

#### Very Messy

Clothes need to be washed and showers are needed

### LOCATION

What type of community will you be serving in?

#### Urban

City-Based Projects and Volunteering

#### Suburban

Suburb-Based Projects and Volunteering

#### Rural

Farms, Forests, Rural State and National Parks

### DURATION

How long will the project take to complete?

#### Half-Day

1-3 Hours  
(Balanced with Cultural)

#### Full Day

4-6 Hours  
(1-2 per trip)

### ORIGINALITY

How unique is the project to your team and trip?

#### Common

Weeding, Food Bank Stocking, Clean-ups

#### Unique

Storm Recovery, Seasonal Events, Concerts, Landmarks



# CHECKLIST DIRECT SERVICE

## TRIP PLANNER CHECKLIST

Use this checklist as a guide when completing the [Direct Service Trip Planner \(Appendix B\)](#)

- Labor Intensity**                      Majority of Projects Moderate or High Intensity  
Not all service projects works up a sweat, but many do! While most projects should involve moderate or high intensity labor, include low-intensity projects for balance.
- Impact Timeframe**                      At least 2 Immediate Impact Projects  
Projects are better received when there is an immediate observable impact. While it is extremely gratifying to experience, it is important your team understands that instant gratification is rare - most direct service is an ongoing process.
- Scope of Impact**                      At least 1 Project with each Scope  
All projects should have as much impact as possible, but there should be diversity in the scope of each project. Allow your team to feel the joy of making a massive impact in one life one day, then a real difference for an entire community the next.
- Interactivity**                              1-2 Projects with Community Interaction  
Your team will complete most projects without outside help, but be sure to arrange projects where the community joins in. This facilitates networking and cultural immersion for your team as well as partnership opportunities for groups you serve.
- Messiness**                                  1-2 Very Messy Projects  
Teens enjoy getting covered in paint, mud, dirt, etc., and it is important to include projects that give your students the chance. When arranging lodging, prioritize accessibility of shower facilities and a laundry machine or Laundromat.
- Location**                                      At least 1 Project at each Location, At Least 2 Projects Indoors  
Your service locations should provide a variety of settings, both indoor and outdoor, to help your team understand that service can be done anywhere.
- Duration**                                      1-2 Full-Day Projects  
Including travel and prep time, most projects take half a day to complete. Projects that require a full day of service are both more gratifying and exhausting, so make sure to take this into account when planning your travel and lodging.
- Originality**                                  At least 2 Unique Projects  
Common projects (litter removal, gardening) help show how working with a team makes service more rewarding, but unique projects (storm recovery, cleaning at a concert, serving in a national park) provide opportunities that can define your trip.
- First Destination of trip should be Direct Service
- Daily Balance with Cultural Service – Maximum of 3 days with only Direct Service
- Alternate Focus - No back-to-back days with only Direct Service

## DIRECT SERVICE SITE CHECKLIST

Record answers on the Direct Service tab of the [Y-Corps Admin Spreadsheet – www.kyymca.org/y-corps/resources](http://www.kyymca.org/y-corps/resources)

- Name, Email, and Phone Number for Contact & Organization, Address for Project Site
- 2 Pre-trip Check-in Calls – 3 weeks prior to trip and 1 week prior to trip
- Expected Duration of Service – Start & End Time, Outdoor/Indoor Breakdown
- Tools and Equipment required for Service – Provided or Brought?
- Safety Equipment Needed – Provided or Brought?
- Availability of Drinking Water – Provided or Brought?
- Proximity to Bathrooms
- Parking for Bus and Chase Van and Walking Distance from Drop-off location to Work Site
- Rain Contingency Plan (if outdoors)



# DAILY ITINERARY

# CULTURAL SERVICE

While Direct Service is about making an impact on those you are serving, Cultural Service is about providing your team with context and a deeper understanding of the people and communities they visit.

## CULTURAL SERVICE SITES

When choosing your cultural service sites, variety is very important. When seeking to give students the opportunity to tour a state or region, the key is finding experiences that will interest them, and you have the chance to handpick the best in the state.

Use the [Cultural Service Trip Planner \(Appendix C\)](#) to ensure a variety of cultural service sites on your trip.

### Museums & Galleries

Museums and galleries can seem intimidating, but provide terrific settings to build your arc and offer inspiration for daily themes. Major museums provide access to iconic pieces of history, culture, and science – each with potential relevance to your arc and theme. Regional and local museums can offer more eclectic collections to show that museums aren't just for old artifacts. Each area also has its own artistic subcultures showcased in galleries that can be local, national or global in scope. Local artisans (glassblowers, photographers, sculptors, painters, etc.) are often willing to share their creative process with your team if approached correctly.

### Local Landmarks

There are hundreds of guides to “off the beaten path” attractions available online, and most states and communities have something that would qualify. Stopping at these local landmarks can be a fun way to break up a bus ride or provide a cultural setting for a quick Bin Meal. Even a simple stop for a team photo can become a highlight of the trip when it comes with by a silly story. It is easy to overlook these spots in favor of better-known sites, but these local secrets provide a far more intimate perspective on community culture.

### Concerts & Festivals

A concert or music festival is always a fun cultural experience and a chance for your team to let loose. Public Concerts, Community Festivals, and Barn Dances are all great examples, and many are listed on tourism websites for towns, cities, and regions.

### Parks & Recreation

National Parks, State Parks, beaches, and other recreational areas are great places to reflect, journal, relax and even perform direct service. Every area has natural wonders unique to the region that are excellent sources of inspiration.

### Government Offices

Bringing your team to visit a public official or government office makes local leaders aware of your impact, and gives your team a moment in the spotlight. When possible, invite a public official to a direct service site to join in!

### Business & Industry

We often take for granted how much work goes into what we consume. Power plants, mines, farms, refineries, stockyards, and other facilities will all provoke great discussion and provide inspiration for your theme and arc.

### Historical Sites

It is important for your team to learn the legacy of the areas you visit. Battlefields, forts, and historic homes and buildings can be found in most areas you will visit – many as state or national parks and monuments that are free to the public. Be careful not to hide historical events or locations that are difficult to discuss. In many cases, these types of locations will provide an ideal backdrop for discussing your daily theme or illustrating a key point in your arc. Take time to research the story of each site you plan on visiting so your script can effectively connect the history to your team experience.

### Restaurants

Many restaurants and diners are more than just places to eat – they are cultural landmarks that define their communities. Most cities and towns have a few eateries that will be as culturally enlightening as they are delicious, and your team should take the opportunity to have a community meal at a few along the way. Be aware of pricing when planning these stops – your team may have to pay out of pocket unless you can get the meal sponsored. It never hurts to ask for a sponsorship!

## JOURNALING AT CULTURAL SERVICE SITES

Cultural Service sites offer the best opportunity to schedule your journaling sessions each day. Most of these sites will have tables, benches, picnic areas, amphitheaters, grassy knolls, or simply a quiet corner of the location for your team to sit down and reflect.

Journaling prompts can refer to the site itself, or simply use the site as an inspirational setting for reflection. Many sites will lend themselves to providing the weight of history or legacy – journaling about sacrifice at a battlefield or reflecting on social justice at a Civil Rights museum. Use these sacred spaces (with permission, if needed) to create a truly unique environment for the reflection portion of the service-learning cycle.

## FINAL NIGHT EVENT

The ending of your trip should be as intentional as the beginning.

Your final day should end with an event that offers both Direct and Cultural Service if possible, and bonds the team through both work and fun (concert, festival, community event).

This way, you end strong by bringing together both styles of service.



# CHECKLIST

# CULTURAL SERVICE

## TRIP PLANNER CHECKLIST

Use this checklist as a guide when completing the [Cultural Service Trip Planner \(Appendix C\)](#)

- Time and Fee Required**

Does the site fit easily into your travel plans, or does it require a significant detour? How much time is needed to fully appreciate the location, and do you have enough time to spend there?

Additionally, how much have you budgeted to spend per student per day? Keep discretionary spending in mind when considering the fee for a potential site.
- Trip Arc**

Does the site fit into your overall trip arc? Make sure the choice is as intentional as possible.
- Daily Theme**

Does the site fit into an existing daily theme, or serve as the source of inspiration for a theme?
- Journaling Time & Space**

Is there enough time at the site for journaling? If so, what kinds of spaces do they have to hold the session?
- At least 1 visit to each type of Cultural Service Site (If Possible)**

While time restraints might limit your ability to visit each type of Cultural Service Site, remember that varying the types of sites will give your team a far more unique cultural experience.
- At least 1 Business Casual / Normal Attire Activity**

For most of the trip, your students will be wearing Y-Corps t-shirts at all times. However, make sure to schedule at least one activity – usually at a Cultural Service Site – where students can wear nicer attire (ex: YMCA polo shirts and khaki shorts, business casual attire).
- Final Night Event / Activity**

End your trip on a strong note that provides your team with an evening of celebration and fellowship.

## CULTURAL SERVICE SITE CHECKLIST

Record answers on the Cultural Service tab of the [Y-Corps Admin Spreadsheet](#) – [www.kyymca.org/y-corps/resources](http://www.kyymca.org/y-corps/resources)

- Name, Phone Number, and Email Address for Contact & Organization
- Expected Duration of Visit
- Is there a fee for Entry/Admission?
- Are group tickets or reservations required?
- Parking for Bus and/or Van
- Journaling Space
- Daily Theme Tie-in
- Trip Arc Tie-in
- Rain Contingency Plan (if outdoors)





# DAILY ITINERARY LODGING

To make sure the majority of funds raised for your trip go towards sustaining the program rather than paying for hotel-style lodging, the team will often sleep in sleeping bags on floors made available for free.

## LODGING AT YMCAs

The best partners for this type of lodging are the local YMCA branches, which will generally allow your group to sleep in a gym, gymnastics room, multi-purpose room, or other suitable space in their facility.

All YMCAs will need advanced notice, and your team will likely have to wake up early to cleanup and move out of the space before open gym or an aerobics class begins.

## CONNECTING WITH YMCAs

If you don't already have a connection with a YMCA where you are traveling, use the Find Your YMCA tool available at:

[www.ymca.net/find-your-y](http://www.ymca.net/find-your-y)

Facility and staff size vary greatly between Y's, but it always best to start with a Program Director for Teens, School-Age Programs, or the Director of Facility Operations when requesting lodging space. These staff members can get your request processed through the appropriate channels at their facility if you don't have a pre-existing connection at the Y.

Make sure that your initial contact includes a letter explaining your trip, the size of your group, and the hours you anticipate you'll need to stay at the Y. Let staff know that if there is any kind of service your team can perform at their facility, your team would be happy to help out.

## ALTERNATE LODGING

If there are no YMCA's in the area, then schools, churches, community centers, or any other community building with a secure, enclosed space can be an acceptable substitute. If you are able to get a local partner involved in helping plan your projects, there will be a good chance they can also help you find a place to stay.

Two other options you can consider are residences and camping.

### Residences

In some cases, your team will have family or colleagues who live where you are traveling. If they offer to house the team, make sure there is sufficient sleeping bag space for each gender, and that you get approval from your supervisor.

### Camping

If your trip is staying local or in state and can accommodate packing tents and other camping gear, planning a night at a campground (along with a service project on site if possible)

## BUS DRIVER LODGING

Finally, plan to reserve a hotel room for your bus driver near your lodging location. In some situations the driver may be comfortable staying at your lodging site (bring an extra air mattress), but in most cases he/she will stay at a hotel.

## SHOWER POWER

When planning where to stay, be aware of how often showers are available to your team.

This doesn't need to be every day. Consider the type of work they are doing and whether they will be sweaty and dirty – plan accordingly.

Also consider the number of showers available. On a trip with 30 people, if your facility only has one shower per gender, it might be more efficient to deny the use of it.

Always be aware that the things that have to be done individually are most likely to drag the team off schedule (or delay sleep!)



# CHECKLIST LODGING

## LODGING SITE CHECKLIST

Record answers on the Lodging tab of the [Y-Corps Admin Spreadsheet](http://www.kyymca.org/y-corps/resources) – [www.kyymca.org/y-corps/resources](http://www.kyymca.org/y-corps/resources)

- Check YMCA Branches in close proximity to Service Locations
- Name and Phone Number for Contact & Facility/Organization
- 2 Pre-trip Check-in Calls – 3 weeks prior to trip and 1 week prior to trip
- Ask lodging contact if there is direct service your team can perform at their facility
- Available Sleeping Spaces – Gym Floor, Gymnastics Room, Teen Center
- Bathroom & Shower Availability
- Hours of Operation – Will facility opening impact departure time?
- Deadline for Arrival at Facility
- Will Chase Van need to arrive early to get into facility before closing?
- Expected Departure Time
- Hotel Reservation for Bus Driver
- Parking for Bus/Van (if needed)
- Learn Neighborhood/Community Surroundings
- Does facility need paperwork from students/adults for liability?
- Certificate of Appreciation for Facility
- T-Shirts/Giveaways for Staff Contacts
- Laundry Facilities to wash clothing and Y-Corps t-shirts (mid-trip or after messy service project)



# DAILY ITINERARY TRAVEL

The method of transportation is a major decision, and one that should be made early in the planning stage. If you have access to a minivan, minibus, or school bus, use it to your advantage. However, few teams will have that luxury.

## MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

In most cases, the major factor in determining the mode of transportation is how many students are going on the trip:

Team Size (w/staff)	Minivan	Minibus	School Bus	Chase Vehicle
< 7	✓			
7-15		✓		
16 +			✓	✓

### Minivan

For smaller teams of up to 7, an 8-passenger minivan (stowaway seats and storage preferable) will be all you'll need to travel.

### Minibus or Passenger Van

Minibuses or 15-passenger vans are an option for teams of 7-15, and more desirable for their cost efficiency. However, they will likely require staff or volunteer drivers who would be better off using travel time to rest or interact with students.

### School Bus

A standard school bus holds up to 44 people (which means luggage space for teams of 16-30) and is an ideal mode of transportation for most areas. The price is generally reasonable, with buses available for rent from bus companies that come with a qualified driver. There are local and national services that rent a bus with driver and/or large vans. Make sure that you understand the insurance policy your YMCA carries and how/if that covers the vehicles on the trip.

### Chase Vehicle

If you choose to use a school bus, then your team will need a Chase Vehicle. This is generally a minivan or truck that can carry supplies, luggage, tools, and other necessities so that the bus is not overly cramped. This vehicle allows staff and volunteers to shop for supplies or travel ahead to a lodging site without disturbing the trip. It also provides an efficient mode of transportation in the event of an emergency.

## TIMING YOUR TRAVEL

While Google Maps will be your best guide to determining your travel route between destinations, take the following recommendations into consideration:

- Add 15-20 min. to Google Map Estimates (Bus will likely drive slower than posted speed limits)
- Add 30-45 min. if traveling through urban/metro areas (Especially during morning and evening rush hours)
- Avoid drives of 3+ hours. Total daily travel time should not exceed 5 hours.
- Longer rides should occur in evening and/or later in trip to prevent early travel fatigue.

## BUS DYNAMICS

Travel is the most time-consuming part your Y-Corps itinerary, but also your best opportunity to develop a strong team dynamic.

Bus Dynamics – mixers, games, songs, cheers, and other activities keep your team engaged between destinations. See the Bus Dynamics Guide (Appendix D) for ideas!

Dynamics define Y-Corps culture and help create a team identity that carries over into their service work.

As part of your travel planning, make sure to build dynamics into your travel schedule, along with periods of quiet time when your team can sleep or relax – just as important to keeping your team healthy and ready to serve.

Staff members should either participate and help lead dynamics, or move to the front rows of the bus where they can work or rest without seeming unengaged.



# CHECKLIST TRAVEL

## TRAVEL ROUTE CHECKLIST

- Add 15–20 min to mapping estimates if traveling by bus
- Add 30–45 min if traveling through metro area or during rush hour
- Keep drives below 3 hours between destinations, with longer drives in evening
- Daily travel time should not exceed 5 hours (until later in trip when needed)
- Check for tolls and add up total amount
- Check for roads that will slow pace (Mountains, Narrow Roads, Dirt Roads)
- Identify Parking for Bus/Van at all Destinations where you disembark (especially urban areas)
- Allot necessary time for driver rest (check with company) between evening drop-off and morning pick-up

## BUS CHECKLIST

- Choose a Bus Service & Driver**  
Shop around with different companies and find a driver ready for the type of trip you are taking. Understanding and experienced drivers can be incredibly helpful in stressful travel situations!
- 3 copies of printed directions of full route with maps**  
1 copy for Bus Driver, 1 copy for staff on bus, 1 copy in BOGI (Box of Great Importance)
- Hotel Reservations for Bus Driver**  
Ensure driver has a room for each night unless plans are made to stay with team.
- Cash on Hand for Bus Parking & Tolls**  
\$100 + Total \$ needed for Tolls (In Rolls of Quarters) on Route
- Copy of Bus Contract & Insurance Information
- Plan for Bus Dynamics while traveling (Include 2 copies of [Bus Dynamics Guide – Appendix D](#))
- See the Packing List on the Admin Spreadsheet for additional items that should be packed on bus!

## CHASE VEHICLE CHECKLIST

- 2 copies of printed directions of full route with maps**  
1 copy in center console, 1 copy in glove box (you'll lose one – this is a back-up)
- Cash on Hand for Parking & Tolls**  
\$50 + Total \$ needed for Tolls (In Rolls of Quarters) on Route
- Credit Card in Glove Box for Grocery Store Runs**  
Use a Corporate Card or a set aside one card to make reimbursements easier upon return
- Copy of Rental Contract & Insurance Information
- 2 Universal Car Charging Ports & Cords
- See the Packing List on the Admin Spreadsheet for additional items that should be packed in Chase Vehicle!



# DAILY ITINERARY MEALS

The keys to a successful Y-Corps trip itinerary are efficiency and flexibility, especially when it comes to meals. This is why most meals on your trip will be served from Meal Bins packed with simple foods for breakfast and lunch.

## BIN MEALS

Bin Meals are designed around meal plans created for camping and backpacking, with the goal of storing a simple selection of low-cost items that are non-perishable, portable, and provide the nutrients and energy needed to function during busy and often strenuous days of service

As part of your trip preparation, make sure team members know that these meals are not meant to be small, cheap and unhealthy. Bin Meals are an important part of Y-Corps culture and provide an efficient way to consume the same nutrients you would for lunch at school or home.

Most breakfasts and lunches should be Bin Meals, allowing the team to eat quickly before leaving your lodging site or efficiently on the go while traveling between or at service sites.

Possible exceptions to this recommendation include offers from lodging sites to provide a hot or continental breakfast and offers from partners to host lunch at a service site.

## COMMUNITY MEALS

Community Meals are meant to be the one meal each day that allows your team to sit down, reflect, and have a hot meal – preferably cuisine that will offer them a taste of local culture and flavor.

Dinners offer the best opportunity for Community Meals, spending time reflecting in small groups and relaxing without rushing to the next destination, but breakfasts and lunches are also an option.

## Food Culture

Community Meals should be an event that the team looks forward to each day. They should be substantial both in the quality and quantity of food served, as well as in the intentionality behind where they are served. Strive to connect each Community Meal to local culture by serving local cuisine. One limitation on this goal is price, as good food can come with a significant price tag. To help lower cost, always seek out hosts and sponsorships.

## Hosts & Sponsors

One of the best ways to lower meal costs is to arrange for Community Meals to be hosted or partially sponsored. Nothing beats a hosted meal at a local eatery or a home-cooked meal prepared by friends or family.

Additionally, if a YMCA, partner organization, or family is willing to cover the cost of a meal, but can only afford cost-effective items such as pizza, hotdogs, subs, etc., work with the host to make the meal as substantial and meaningful as possible by splitting costs with the host to increase the quality and quantity of food.

## Paying Out-of-Pocket

Your team should expect to pay for a limited number of meal items while traveling (mainly snacks at gas stations/rest stops), but they should only be paying for Community Meals where they can experience local cuisine and culture. This should always be a final option if hosts or sponsors are not possible.

## PEANUT BUTTERITOS

The most common Bin Meal entrée is the Peanut Butterito, a whole-wheat tortilla or flatbread covered in peanut butter (or almond butter for peanut allergies) and rolled into a burrito. While simple, these Y-Corps delicacies pack a one-two punch:

### Peanut & Almond Butters

- Contain protein that keeps muscles functioning – critical while working on multiple service projects each day with limited sleep.
- Contain unsaturated fats that are slow digesting, keeping you full and stifling hunger while at a project.

### Whole-Wheat Tortillas & Flatbreads

- Contain complex carbohydrates that provide the energy you need to make it through a long day
- Like unsaturated fats, complex carbs are slow digesting.

Add an additional layer of jelly or Nutella, and you're ready to serve!



# CHECKLIST MEALS

## MEAL PLAN CHECKLIST

- At least 1 Community Meal per day (Dinner Recommended)
- Pursue all possible hosts and sponsorships before asking students to pay for Community Meals
- Students take shifts serving food and eating last at all meals – putting others first
- Assign Bin Captains to check Meal Bin supply levels after each meal and make shopping lists

## MEAL BIN CHECKLIST

Y-Corps meal supplies are meant to be affordable, simple, and portable on your bus and chase van. It is best to pack 3 Rubbermaid bins – 1 for Breakfast, 1 for Lunch, and 1 for Snack Items, and 1 cooler for fruit. Most, if not all, of your Y-Corps meal supplies for breakfast and lunch should be non-perishable (see lists below). If you choose to serve perishable foods other than whole fruit, you will need to bring an additional cooler and refresh ice daily.

### Breakfast Bin

- Peanut Butter (Crunchy & Creamy)
- Alternative for Peanut Allergies
- Grape & Strawberry Jelly
- Honey
- Nutella
- Bags of Mini Bagels (Varieties)
- Toaster Pastries (Pop Tarts)
- Fruit & Granola Bars (NutriGrain)

### Perishable Options (Additional Cooler)

- Milk (for Cereal – put in Breakfast Bin)
- Yogurt Cups
- Orange Juice
- Bananas/Clementine/Apples

### Lunch Bin

- Peanut Butter (Crunchy & Creamy)
- Almond Butter for Peanut Allergies
- Grape & Strawberry Jelly
- Honey
- Nutella
- Tortillas – “Peanutbutteritos”
- Flatbread Sandwich Halves

### Perishable Options (Additional Cooler)

- Cold Cuts (Turkey and Ham)
- Mayo & Mustard
- Cheese Slices

### Small Fruit Cooler

- Bananas
- Oranges/Clementine
- Apples

### Snack Bin

- Goldfish Cartons
- Pringles
- Lunch Size Chip Bags
- Cheese Crackers
- Granola Bars
- Beef Jerky
- Trail Mix
- Peanuts/Almonds



