



# Las Palmas Guidebook





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The Global Mercy will be at Astican Shipyard in Las Palmas, Spain from June through August 2026, for the Annual Maintenance Period (AMP). The focus of AMP is to make necessary repairs and modifications to the vessel. This time is also used to complete required audits and maritime surveys.

During this time, the vessel is turned into a construction zone, operating only with minimal crew who are essential to the work being done.

The hospital will not be in service during AMP. The Academy will also be closed, and our long-term crew typically take extended leave before the next field service.

# Country Information



## Las Palmas, Spain

Las Palmas is the capital and largest city of the autonomous community of the Canary Islands in Spain. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria was founded in 1478 and has a rich colonial history. The city served as a crucial supply port for ships traveling to the Americas and was the headquarters for the Spanish conquest of the Canary Islands. The historic district of Vegueta is a UNESCO World Heritage site, featuring cobbled streets and colonial architecture. Las Palmas is known for beautiful beaches, vibrant culture and diverse attractions.

Las Palmas has a population of 2.2 million, with 1.5 million visitors per week who are counted as part of the population by the Canary Islands authorities!

## Key Details:

**Region:** Southern Europe / Atlantic

**Climate:** Sub-tropical

**Time zone:** Western European Time (WET)

**Currency:** Euro

**Population:** 2.2 million

**Primary languages:** Spanish / Castilian (used most widely, especially in local markets/smaller towns.)  
English, German (used mainly in predominately tourist areas)

**Religion:** Catholic (84.9%), Atheist or Agnostic (12.3%), other religion (1.7%)

Month:	June	July	August
High Temp	26 °C	28 °C	29 °C
Low Temp	19 °C	21 °C	22 °C
High Temp	78 °F	83 °F	83 °F
Low Temp	66 °F	69 °F	70 °F

# What to Expect in Las Palmas

## Life On Board

During AMP, the ship will become a construction zone. It will be noisy and potentially hazardous in work areas. Appropriate footwear is required at all times. The essential ship systems will be available throughout the AMP with limited interruptions.

- There will be no children on board.
- All meals will be served from the Galley onboard. \*Meal times may change to an earlier breakfast and later dinner according to work schedules.
- The Internet may be offline at various times, relying mostly on satellite.
- There will be limited Crew Clinic services.
- We will use our regular gangways to access the vessel.

During AMP flexibility is key – you may be asked to assist in other departments.

## Housing and Logistics

- The number of people living on board is reduced to 200 essential positions only (including crew, contractors and staff) due to limited operational capacity, safety and compliance restrictions.
- Families of essential crew will be housed ashore in an Airbnb.
- All other essential crew will be housed on board.
- Some contractors and staff may be housed in a local hotel.

- Some crew might be asked to move cabins in the midst of AMP due to work being done.
- Non-essential crew are encouraged to take PTO, transfer to another location, or take approved training.

## Fun, Games, and Time Off

While some enjoy playing board games or visiting with other crew on board, crew also spend time exploring the country we are docked in. Mercy Ships does not specially organize off-ship tours or activities. However, there are always crew who actively organize trips, excursions, and visits to local churches which you can join.

Mercy Ships uses the Microsoft Teams program to communicate news and information on board. We recommend you have a device where you can download 'Teams' to use. There is a specific 'Community' channel where information about crew organized activities and shore excursions will be shared. At times, you may also find sign-up sheets in the Deck 8 Cafe "Activities Binders".

Code of Conduct: All Mercy Ships standards remain in effect during AMP, whether on board or in ashore accommodations. Crew remain subject to the Global Mercy Captain's authority and must adhere to the Mercy Ships Code of Conduct.

## Exploring Las Palmas/ Public Transportation

There are several options for getting about the island to explore:

- City buses run from stops near the shipyard and are the most practical option for reaching downtown and local neighborhoods.
- Intercity Global buses are best for traveling outside the city and can be accessed by taking a city bus to the nearest station.
- Taxis are readily available and convenient for direct trips, especially early morning, late night, or if carrying luggage.
- Contactless payment and reloadable transit cards are available and make bus travel inexpensive and straightforward.
- Walking is limited around the industrial port area, but once in central Las Palmas, the city is very walkable and bike-friendly.

\* Please abide by to your individual immigration restrictions prior to exploring Las Palmas

*Mercy Ships vehicles will not be available during AMP in Las Palmas.*

If you choose to hire a rental car while on the island, you must bring your original passport and your local country driving permit when you go to rent the car. It is recommended to carry an International Driving Permit, which can be obtained online in each country. For access to the

port with a rental car, you must provide the ship's Reception team with the license plate number prior to pulling into the port so that the guards will allow you access to the shipyard's parking area. No rental vehicles will be allowed to access the berth for security reasons. All vehicles will be parked outside the shipyard, and access to the ship will be on foot.

## Identification Needs:

Travelers must always carry identification. The Purser on board the ship can provide all crew with a "Ship Stamped" color copy of your passport to use when going off ship. Also, depending on your Visa status, you may be provided with your Seaman's book to carry.

## Security

The shipyard is guarded by its own private security, and we also have a security team on board. While we don't stipulate that you must travel in groups in Las Palmas as we do in Africa, we encourage you to be safe and to travel with others when headed off ship. We recommend that crew download the Everywhere app to use while serving.

# ¿Hablas español?

Spanish is the official language of Las Palmas, with most speaking a dialect known as “Canarian Spanish.” While English or German may be understood better in some of the more touristy areas, it’s certainly helpful to know the basics of the language before you arrive, and for interacting with the general population.

For pure translation purposes we recommend using DeepL (a language translator) as it will provide translation closer to what the locals may use. Please speak slowly for the best opportunity to be understood by someone local to the island. We hope a few of these words will help you get started. (There will also be a small language guide provided on the ship for use.)

<b>Hello</b>	Hola
<b>“Good Day” Good Morning</b>	Buenos días
<b>Good Morning or Good Afternoon (more informal)</b>	Buenas
<b>Good afternoon and Good evening</b>	Buenas tardes
<b>Goodnight</b>	Buenas noches
<b>Thank you</b>	Gracias
<b>How much does this cost?</b>	¿Cuánto cuesta/cuánto vale?
<b>Where is the bathroom?</b>	¿Dónde está el baño?
<b>What is your name?</b>	Como te llamas?
<b>My name is</b>	Me llamo ____
<b>Can you speak slowly?</b>	Puedes hablar más despacio?

# Dress Code

	Appropriate to Wear	Inappropriate to Wear	More Information
<b>On Ship Business/office wear (for non-uniform, internal-facing roles)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smart-casual trousers, skirts, and dresses</li> <li>• Smart-casual blouses and shirts, including polo shirts</li> <li>• Suit jackets</li> <li>• Smart-casual shoes. Smart sandals are appropriate for women. Trainers/sneakers can be worn during normal office work.</li> <li>• Jeans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shorts</li> <li>• Casual T-shirts</li> <li>• Flip flops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knees should be covered when standing and sitting for both men and women. Skirts that fall between mid-thigh and knee should be worn with leggings or opaque tights/hose underneath.</li> <li>• Sleeveless tops with wide straps are fine.</li> <li>• Men are not required to wear business suits and/or neckties but they can be worn if preferred.</li> </ul>
<b>Official meetings and functions, church attendance (both on &amp; off ship)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smart trousers, skirts, and dresses</li> <li>• Smart blouses and shirts</li> <li>• Suit jackets</li> <li>• Smart-casual shoes. Smart sandals are appropriate for women.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shorts</li> <li>• Jeans</li> <li>• Casual T-shirts</li> <li>• Trainers/sneakers</li> <li>• Flip flops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Men should wear a shirt and necktie if the meeting is formal.</li> </ul>
<b>Casual wear (both on and off ship)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jeans</li> <li>• T-shirts</li> <li>• Trainers/sneakers</li> <li>• Loose-fitting shorts that are mid-thigh or longer</li> <li>• Leggings where worn with a tunic-style top to mid-thigh or lower</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very tight or high-cut shorts ('running' shorts)</li> <li>• Flip flops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NOTE: Flip flops or sandals without a back-strap are NOT allowed onboard at any point during AMP. They can still be worn off ship, but not onboard.</li> <li>• If worn off-ship, they must be replaced with appropriate footwear for climbing up or down the gangway.</li> </ul>
<b>Exercising (both on and off ship)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lycra/Spandex leggings and tops</li> <li>• Basketball jersey-style tops</li> <li>• Short 'running' shorts</li> <li>• Exercise shirts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compression wear worn without any covering</li> <li>• Sports bras worn without any covering</li> <li>• Flip flops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On Board: Tight-fitting exercise gear should be covered up when walking through the ship.</li> </ul>

# Vaccinations, Medications, & Health

The Crew Clinic will be staffed by a Crew Nurse, whose primary role will be triaging and referring. There will be no pharmacy onboard, nor dispensing over the counter medications. Access to the local healthcare system will be navigated via the port agent.

## **Mandatory immunizations for adult crew:**

There are no vaccine requirements for crew serving on board a Mercy Ships vessel in a European Union country.

## **Important note on immunizations**

The Global Mercy is scheduled to be in Ghana in August 2026, so if your commitment spans this time, or if you hope to extend your commitment, be aware there are additional vaccination requirements. These may not be available or may be very expensive locally,

therefore we recommend getting all the required immunizations for sailing in international waters and service in Africa before you join Mercy Ships.

The agents can arrange vaccinations on a case-by-case basis. This should always be requested by the Crew Clinic, providing the crew member's full name, the vaccine to be administered, and any other relevant information.

## **Important note on health reviews**

Like the note above, crew wishing to extend past the maintenance period may need more health screening to be approved to join for sails or service in Africa.

## **Prescription medications**

*During maintenance, the pharmacy on board will not be active/open and cannot provide any medications.*

There are local pharmacies, but you will need a

prescription from a local Spanish doctor to get anything filled.

As such, we advise bringing a supply of your prescription medications from home to last your entire stay. When preparing your hand luggage pre-departure, we also highly recommend keeping at least a two-week supply in your carryon luggage when travelling, in case your checked baggage is lost or delayed.

For additional details regarding these requirements, please refer to the immunization checklist you will be sent after you receive your official offer letter or contact our Medical Review Facilitator at [medical.review.facil@mercyships.org](mailto:medical.review.facil@mercyships.org).

# Travel to Las Palmas

## Arranging your travel

Once your Onboarding Specialist has given you clearance to do so, use the service dates in your offer letter as your date of arrival and departure for your transport.

- Arrivals for new crew:
  - Friday, Saturday, or Sunday (Sunday Preferred)
  - After 0900
  - You will attend the All Hands meeting Monday morning and New Crew Orientation Monday afternoon
- Returning crew/guests/visiting staff can arrive any day.
- Departure can be scheduled at any time, but must match your offer letter service end date.

If the dates on your offer letter do not match the preferences listed above, please contact your Staffing Coordinator.

## Ticket refund policy

Flexibility is key! Because the ships' schedules can change, we strongly recommend that all crew purchase changeable and/or refundable tickets. Mercy Ships cannot offer refunds or financial assistance with extra costs incurred for changing or cancelling airline tickets when caused by a change in the ships' schedules or from unexpected travel restrictions.

## Travel agents

Mercy Ships recommends Gordian Travel International as our travel management company. They can help secure humanitarian fares

with increased flexibility and benefits -- as well as offer robust risk management in the event of emergencies.

Gordian Travel International (GTI)

[mercysipstravel@gordiantvl.com](mailto:mercysipstravel@gordiantvl.com) | +1 903 405 1311

## Arrival by plane

Flights should be booked in/out Gran Canaria Airport / Gando Airport (LPA)



## Immigration and visas

It is 35 kilometers from the airport to the Las Palmas Port. Agents will arrange collecting the crew, based on the control enforcer, established by the immigration office as per new regulations effective October 12, 2025.

All crew members embarking and disembarking are required to pass through the Border Police Office without exception, regardless of nationality, and will be accompanied by authorized personnel from the agency and ship agent.

Because Las Palmas is part of Spain, an EU nation, a visa may be required. To confirm if you need a visa, visit [www.passportindex.org](http://www.passportindex.org). If a visa is required, Mercy Ships can help with your visa application.

For EU citizens, you can typically enter and exit Las Palmas by using your passport or your national ID card; however, immigration currently requires passports for all crew.

## Immigration Restrictions

- Crew who are citizens of the European Union/Schengen area will have no restrictions on movement within the EU.
- Crew from Visa Waiver countries who are sailing in will have shore leave but are restricted to 10km from the vessel. Most shops and restaurants are within this 10km area.
- Crew members from Visa Waiver countries who are flying in will be given a Schengen entry stamp in their passport at the first Schengen airport and will not be stamped out again until the ship leaves Las Palmas. Following an entry stamp, one is free to travel throughout the EU.
- Crew members from Visa Required countries with a valid Seaman's Book and sailing in will have shore leave restricted to 10km from the vessel.
- Crew members from Visa Required countries without a Seaman's Book must have a Schengen Visa to sail or fly into Spain.
- Please refer to the Las Palmas/Gran Canaria Immigration Compliance Compass page for more detailed guidance.

## Required Documentation for Travel

*Mercy Ships staff do not require any documents for travel.*

*Crew must travel with the following documentation:*

- New Crew Letter (sent to you by your Onboarding Specialist prior to travel)
- Printed offer letter/acceptance letter from Mercy Ships (recommended.)

# Travel Resources

## Registering with Foreign Affairs

Many countries allow travelers to register with the foreign affairs office (or national equivalent) and include the following types of benefits:

- Receive the latest safety and security information for your destination country, helping you make informed decisions regarding your travel plans.
- Allows your nation's embassy to contact you in an emergency situation - be it natural disaster, civil unrest, pandemic, or family emergency.
- We encourage all volunteers to take this step for additional protection and peace of mind while away. [Click here](#) to see documented programs available.

## Emergency Contacts

Save this phone number in case you need to contact the ship while you are traveling:

Ship Reception: +1 954 932 9800 (satellite, answered 24/7)

## Questions?

We know arranging travel can be stressful, but it doesn't have to be! Our travel team is here to help. Reach out at anytime to our team at [travel@mercyships.org](mailto:travel@mercyships.org).

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and Tirsá



# Local Attractions and Resources

## Pharmacies near the shipyard:

### Pharmacy: Monica Megias Marinez

Calle Tenerife nº 14, Las Palmas

Phone: + 34 928 469 355

Time Table:

Monday/Friday: 0830/2100

Saturday: 0930/2100

Sunday: 0930/1600

### Pharmacy: Lopez Placencia Alvaro Javier

Calle Juan Rejon nº 9, Las Palmas

Phone: + 34 928 470 317

Time table:

Monday/Friday: 0830/2030

Saturday: 0930/1400

Sunday: Closed

### Pharmacy: De la Coba Rose, Francisco

Calle Juan Rejon 48, 35008 Las Palmas

Phone: + 34 928 469 414

Time table:

Monday/Friday: 0900/1315-1600/2000

Saturday: 0930/1315

Sunday: Closed

### Pharmacy: Gonzalez Azpeitia, Josefa Maria

Calle Juan Rejon nº 113, 3500 Las Palmas

Phone: + 34 928 460 003

Time Table:

Monday/Friday: 0800/2100

Saturday: 0900/1315

Sunday: Closed

### Pharmacy: Gonzalez Perez, Maria Esperanza

Calle Sagasta nº 46, 35008 – Las Palmas

Phone: + 34 928 260 165

Time Table:

Monday/Friday: 0900/1300 – 1600/2000

Saturday: 0930/1330

Sunday: Closed

## Local Churches near the shipyard:

### Parroquia Nuestra Señora de la Luz

Phone: + 34 928 482 128

Address: Calle Perez Muñoz 4, 35008 - Las Palmas

Time Table: 1000-2100 Monday to Friday

### Parroquia Nuestra Señora del Carmen de la Isleta

Phone: + 34 928 463 895

Address: Calle Benartemi nº 48, 35009, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

Time Table: Monday Friday – 24 hours open

## Evangelical English speaking churches:

Below information from evangelical English speaking churches in Las Palmas, so you can add them to the Guidebook.

### Christian Life International Church

\* Av. Alcalde José Ramirez Bethencourt, 8, 35003 Las Palmas de GC

Tf. 690 30 11 12

Services: Sundays, 11 am

### Anglican Church Holy Trinity

\* C. Rafael Ramírez, 13, 35005 Las Palmas de GC

+48 880 580 628

Services: Sunday, 11 am

### Korean Church of Altavista

\* Plaza de Agustín Castillo, 3, 35011 Las Palmas de GC

Tf. 928 20 74 10

Services: Sunday, 12 pm

## Top Attractions to Explore:

**Vegueta:** The historic heart of Las Palmas, Vegueta is known for its cobblestone streets and colonial architecture. Key sites include the Santa Ana Cathedral, Casa de Colón (Columbus House), and the charming Holy Spirit Square. This area is perfect for leisurely strolls and immersing yourself in the city's history.

**Playa de Las Canteras:** This urban beach is famous for golden sands and clear waters, making it ideal for sunbathing and water sports. The beach is lined with restaurants, offering delicious local cuisine and a vibrant atmosphere, especially at sunset.

**Poema del Mar Aquarium:** A stunning aquarium that showcases marine life from around the world. It's not only educational but also visually captivating, making it a great spot for families and marine enthusiasts.

**Museo Canario:** Learn about the history and culture of the Canary Islands at this museum, which houses a vast collection of artifacts and exhibits related to the indigenous Guanche people.

**Castillo de la Luz:** A historic fortress that offers insights into the island's maritime history. The castle is set against a beautiful backdrop and is a great spot for photography.

**Mercado del Puerto:** A lively market where you can sample local delicacies and enjoy fresh seafood. It's a great place to experience the culinary culture of Las Palmas.

**Jardín Botánico Viera y Clavijo:** This botanical garden showcases the unique flora of the Canary Islands and is a peaceful retreat for nature lovers.

# General Volunteer Guidebook

This Guidebook is a supplement to our General Volunteer Guidebook and contains information specific to our maintenance period. We ask that you please take time to read the General Guidebook as well to fully prepare for your travel and time on board.

Click the button below to view the General Volunteer guidebook and the topics listed here:

- Code of Conduct
- Community Life and Expectations
- Staying in Touch
- Uniform Guidelines
- Dress Code (African Countries)
- Crew Bank
- Packing List (ex, electrical adapters)



[CLICK HERE](#)



*Thank you!*



*Houleye*