

PART E

Local Travel

- **Air Travel to Haiti:** According to: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1134.html: International travelers arrive in Haiti by way of Port-au-Prince (PAP) at the Aéroport Toussaint L'Ouverture Airport or Aéroport International Cap-Haïtien in the North. Plane tickets can be purchased via many on-line ticketing sites and agencies. There are intra-Haiti flights available as well. Prices on these flights can fluctuate from time to time due to inflation but, depending on the airline, are usually between US \$125-132. In addition to avoiding rather dangerous and inadequate public transportation systems, flights offer a safe passage into and out of Port-au-Prince from other parts of Haiti.

Airlines such as American Airlines, Delta and Spirit serve Port-au-Prince from the US. Air Canada, Air France and Caribair, among others, also offer international flights to and from Port-au-Prince. Lynx Air flies from Fort Lauderdale and Miami to Cap-Haïtien. MFI (Missionary Flights International) fly to Cap also from Florida, but only registered non-Catholic Christian missionaries are welcome aboard. Other international airlines serving Cap-Haïtien include Sky King, Turks and Caicos Air and Pine-apple Air.

- **Traveling from Port-au-Prince to St. Marc:**

The only route from Port-au-Prince to St. Marc is route 1. The road starts in PAP and connects St. Marc and Gonaïves as well as many smaller townships along the way. Although previously very difficult to navigate due to frequent potholes and points of inundation, the road is currently being completely repaved by the government who employed a Dominican Republic agency to do construction. Currently the road does not quite reach all the way to St. Marc, although rapid progress is being made. The entire roadway is replete with pedestrians and small road-side stands with vendors that provide assistance at car windows. All types of vehicles inhabit the road: trucks, vans, tap-taps, buses, cars, motocyclettes, bikes, etc. No lanes have been established. The road is wide enough for two cars and a mobbylette to drive side-by-side.



Route 1: *before construction - note potholes



Route 1: after construction

- **Local Accommodations:**

There are multiple hotels scattered throughout St. Marc but the most luxurious hotel in the city is known as La Gout-T. It is the only hotel with a swimming pool and it also has a bar and outdoor seating area. There are in addition many guest houses throughout Haiti. However, these are quite hard to find while overseas. Many of these guest houses run about 25 to 35 dollars a night and include 2 to 3 meals during the day. Sometimes these houses are associated with orphanages (e.g., Saint Joseph's Home for Boys). Camping is a high-risk activity in certain parts of Haiti and is not recommended.

Travel Routes:

The international highway, Route 1, is the only road that connects Port-au-Prince, St. Marc, and Gonaïves. It is the only paved road in St. Marc, though it is very difficult to navigate due to frequent potholes and points of inundation, especially during the rainy season. Pivert is another main road currently under construction. It is beginning to be paved and a drainage system is also being incorporated at the sides of the road. Roads in St. Marc are rarely labeled, making navigation throughout the city extremely difficult.

GENERAL ST. MARC RESEARCH | LOCAL TRAVEL

- **Means of Transport:**

The typical means of transport are motocyclettes, or vespas, which are meant for two people maximum but are often fitted with four people. Cars are considered a luxury. However pick-ups or SVU's are needed to navigate the poorer roads. Public transportation, as it is sometimes defined, does not really exist in Haiti. While Haitians use buses, "tap-taps" (or taxis which may observe regular routes), none of these options should be considered reliable. The US Embassy strongly discourages their use. Many PLWHA make their way around town via foot or taxi, which can be hired for a cheap cost. Tap-taps, are widely available at a cheap price, although are often considered unreliable.



- **Road Descriptions:**

Cars are driven on the right side of the road in Haiti, but few roads have lane indicators. Drivers often use whatever part of the road is open to them. Traffic is congested in urban areas and hours-long traffic jams develop throughout the country. Driving in Haiti should be undertaken with extreme caution. Roads are generally unmarked. Detailed and accurate maps are not widely available. Lanes are not marked and signs indicating the direction of traffic flow seldom exist. This lack of organization, along with huge potholes that appear without warning, may cause drivers to execute unpredictable and dangerous maneuvers in heavy traffic. The Haitian government lacks adequate resources to assist drivers in distress or to clear the road of accidents or broken-down vehicles blocking the flow of traffic. In addition, while drinking and driving is illegal in Haiti, people frequently drive after drinking, especially at night.

Although Haitian law requires that applicants pass both a written and a driving test to qualify for a drivers license, many Haitian drivers appear unaware of traffic laws. Signaling imminent actions is not widely practiced and not all drivers use turn indicators or international hand signals properly. For instance, many drivers use their left blinker for all actions, including turning right and stopping in the road, and others flap their left arm out the window to indicate that they will be taking an unspecified action. Drivers do not always verify that the road is clear before switching lanes, turning, or merging. Motorists in Haiti are slightly haphazard, right of way is not established, so drivers make use of their horns to let other vehicles and pedestrians on the road know they are approaching.

Speed limits are seldom posted and are generally ignored. Speeding is the cause of many fatal traffic accidents in Haiti, as are overloaded vehicles on winding, mountainous roads and vehicles without brakes. Poor maintenance and mechanical failures often cause accidents as well. Drivers should be particularly cautious at night, as unlit vehicles can appear without warning.

Right of way is not widely observed in Haiti, and there are few operational traffic lights or traffic signs. It is advisable at most intersections to stop and verify that there is no oncoming traffic even if it appears that you have the right of way. Drivers can be quite aggressive and will seldom yield. Walls built to the edge of roads frequently make it impossible to see around corners, forcing drivers to edge their cars into the road at intersections to check for oncoming traffic.

GENERAL ST. MARC RESEARCH | LOCAL TRAVEL

In addition to vehicles, a variety of other objects may appear on the road in Haiti, such as wooden carts dragged by people or animals, small ice cream carts, animals, mechanics working on vehicles parked on the street, and vendors with their wares. Vehicles are often abandoned in the road or by the side of the road. There are few marked crosswalks and sidewalks and pedestrians often wend their way through traffic in urban areas.

- **Prices:**

Gasoline usually runs between \$30-35 HT per gallon. Taxis (tap-taps) are usually \$5-10 HT (\$1-2 US) in St. Marc, depending on the distance of a ride.

- **Access to FEBS Office:**

The FEBS office is located at 7G Rue Berlin, St. Marc, which is just off Pivert, one of the bigger roads in the city. FEBS office is accessible via car, but many of their clients arrive via taxi or on foot.



Road to FEBS office, typical road in St. Marc

- **Access to Bois L'Etat:**

Bois L'Etat is a 30 minute car ride from the center of town. The site is located in the mountain in a rural setting amongst small farmers in a region known as Haute de St Marc. Due to the altitude of the site and the lack of development of the road, the trek to Bois L'Etat a difficult journey. FEBS is hoping to hire a local organization to help grade the road for construction and easy transport of inhabitants. They hope to implement a bus system that will transport clients to and from the site. The road needs to be accessible by bus in the future for the community.



The road to Bois l'Etat at a point of inundation