

ALL ABOUT MONEY



GOURDES, DOLLARS, & SENSE
FOR WORK AND LIFE IN HAITI



*A HaitiHub Info Packet for everyone
committed to a more effective and
respectful way of working in Haiti*



Money Matters

(A HaitiHub Info Packet – See www.haitihub.com for more)

There are 3 currencies that you will encounter in Haiti:

1) U.S. Dollars, 2) Haitian Gourdes and 3) Haitian Dollars.

U.S. Dollars

- ~ The vast majority of businesses and individuals selling something in Haiti will accept U.S. Dollars.
- ~ Gourdes may be preferred in places like outdoor markets but U.S. Dollars will most likely not be turned down.
- ~ Creole speakers will call U.S. Dollars, “Dola Ameriken” or “Dola US” (pronounced “oos”).

Haitian Gourdes

- ~ The Haitian Gourde (HTG) is the official currency of Haiti.
- ~ Every single coin and paper bill in the country is denominated in Haitian Gourdes.
- ~ Creole speakers call Gourdes, “Goud” (rhymes fairly closely with the English “mood”).
- ~ The exchange rate of U.S. Dollars to Gourdes fluctuates with currency markets, but for many years it has been somewhere around: 1 USD = 40 HTG (+/- 5 HTG)

Haitian Dollars

- ~ The Haitian Dollar is a concept ONLY. It doesn't exist as paper or coin.
- ~ It is confusing, however, because Haitians will very often talk of prices in Haitian Dollars.
- ~ 5 Gourdes = 1 Haitian Dollar. This exchange rate is fixed forever.
- ~ If you exit a tap-tap, for example, and the driver demands “2 Dole,” he means 2 Haitian Dollars, which is 10 Gourdes.
- ~ Creole speakers will say simply “Dola” when they mean Haitian Dollars. They will specify “Ameriken” or “US” if they mean U.S. Dollars.



Big Bills

As mentioned, Gourdes are universal and U.S. Dollars are rarely turned down. What's difficult to spend in certain situations are big bills of either currency. If you're trying to buy an everyday item like a Coke or a small cell phone card, good luck getting rid of your \$20 bill or your 500 Gourde note. Change often seems to be in short supply and merchants are reluctant to give up the small bills that make up the bulk of daily transactions. Break up big bills before trying to spend them in the street. Money changing offices and any place that accepts credit cards will most likely be willing to break your big bill.

Credit Cards

Major Credit Cards (like Visa and Mastercard) are accepted in many places in Haiti. This includes all indoor supermarkets, many sit-down restaurants, cell phone stores and kiosks, hotels, and travel companies (bus and air). Just make sure to notify your credit card company before you arrive that you will be using your card from Haiti.

Accessing Cash in Haiti

ATM's in Haiti are hard to come by, unreliable, and can be dangerous as targets for crime.

If you are on a short-term trip (2-4 weeks), bring only \$50 in cash (or a higher amount if you know you will need it during your stay).

If you are living in Haiti for months or years, it is best to find out how much cash you will require out-of-pocket for at least 6 months and bring this amount with you in cash. You can exchange it for Gourdes as needed.

Exchanging Money

To find out the most current exchange rate of U.S. Dollars to Haitian Gourdes, see this website:

<http://www.xe.com/ucc/convert/?Amount=1&From=USD&To=HTG>

For changing your money, the easiest locations are indoor supermarkets like Omni Market, Eagle Supermarket, Lunivers Market, Giant Supermarket, etc. Better exchange rates are often available, however, at small money changing offices or depots. Ask a Haitian friend or colleague where to get the best rate nearby.

Haggling

When buying most anything from an outdoor vendor or merchant (with the exception of food), the first price you're given is often inflated significantly. When you feel your Creole is up to the task, haggling can bring a price way down. (Or ask a Haitian friend to buy the item for you.) Either way, just remember always to be respectful.



You're all set!

Thank you for your commitment to Haiti's better future. And thank you for pursuing a more effective and respectful way of working in the country. This movement starts with us.

If you have any feedback or suggestions about this HaitiHub Info Packet, please be in touch. We love hearing from you! Email:

haitihub@gmail.com

Feel free to stay connected with HaitiHub through Facebook and Twitter as well.

www.facebook.com/haitihub

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And check us out at www.haitihub.com for the highest quality Creole-learning resources available anywhere. Speaking Creole is THE BEST investment you can make in your relationships, work, and safety in Haiti.

Speak Creole. Connect. Do more.

We're here for you!

HaitiHub: Kote n'ap mete tèt ansanm!

Sincerely,

~ The Team at HaitiHub