



Guatemala Mission Trip

Information Packet

About Guatemala

Guatemala is a country of volcanoes, mountains, and beaches on the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. From the Cuchumatán Mountains in the western highlands, to the coastlines on the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean, this small country is marked by contrasts.



Three of Guatemala's 30 volcanoes are still active. Only slightly larger than the U.S. state of Tennessee, Guatemala is a mountainous country with one-third of the population living in cool highland villages. The coastal lowlands are warm and humid. The country is bordered by Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, and Belize.

The Maya civilization was very advanced in math and astronomy.

The Maya probably developed the concept of zero and left written records using hieroglyphics and whole words. While historians are not sure why the Maya Empire collapsed, the Maya society began to shrink in the 10th century and split into separate groups. They may have suffered from overpopulation and the effects of drought.

Maya women continue to weave brightly colored cloth and fashion the same traje, or suit, that their ancestors wore. More than half of the population is indigenous.

Guatemala was conquered by Spanish conquistador Pedro de Alvarado in 1524 and became a republic in 1839 after the United Provinces of Central America collapsed. They were overpowered and forced to work on vast estates in the newly established colony of New Spain. In 1821, Guatemala claimed independence from Spain.

A new constitution in 1986 established three branches of government. The president serves for only one term and is assisted by a vice president and the Council of

Ministers. New laws are passed by Congress. President Jimmy Morales was sworn in January 2015.

Antigua Guatemala

Antigua, the capital of the Captaincy-General of Guatemala, was founded in the early 16th century. Built 1,500 m above sea-level, in an earthquake-prone region, it was largely destroyed by an earthquake in 1773 but its principal monuments are still preserved as ruins. In the space of under three centuries the city, which was built on a grid pattern inspired by the Italian Renaissance, acquired a number of superb monuments

Brief Synthesis:

Built 1,530.17 m above sea level in an earthquake-prone region, Antigua Guatemala, the capital of the Captaincy-General of Guatemala, was founded in 1524 as Santiago de Guatemala. It was subsequently destroyed by fire caused by an uprising of the indigenous population, re-established in 1527 and entirely buried as a result of earthquakes and an avalanche in 1541. The third location, in the Valley of Panchoy or Pacán, was inaugurated in March 1543 and served for 230 years. It survived natural disasters of floods, volcanic eruptions and other serious tremors until 1773 when the [Santa Marta earthquakes](#) destroyed much of the town. At this point, authorities ordered the relocation of the capital to a safer location region, which became [Guatemala City](#), the county's modern capital. Some residents stayed behind in the original town, however, which became referred to as "La Antigua Guatemala



Official Language: Today there are 23 ethnic groups. While Spanish is the official language many different Mayan languages are spoken in Guatemala.

Population: 13,677,000



Monetary unit: Quetzal. Exchange rate to \$1= Q7.5
Guatemala is the most populous of the Central American countries with a GDP per capita roughly one-third that of Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. Coffee, sugar, bananas are the main products.

Ethnicity/race: Mestizo (Ladino)—mixed Amerindian-Spanish ancestry—and European 59.4%, K'iche 9.1%, Kaqchikel 8.4%, Mam 7.9%, Q'eqchi 6.3%, other Mayan 8.6%, indigenous non-Mayan 0.2%, other 0.1% (2001)

Religions: Roman Catholic, Protestant, indigenous Mayan beliefs

Weather

Guatemala weather varies between seasons and locations. Typically, the Guatemala rainy season (winter) occurs between May and October, extending a bit longer in certain locations. Though never freezing cold, rainy season can be a bit chilly in the Guatemala highlands. Showers are frequent, though it rarely rains all day, even in the middle of rainy season. Guatemala's summer dry season extends from November to April; rain is more rare, and temperatures run high. Both rainy and dry seasons can be very humid, especially in Guatemala's coastal regions.

The average year-round temperature in Guatemala City is very moderate, at around 70 degrees F. In the El Peten region, Flores's average temperatures hit a high of 82 F in May and 72 F in January. The highlands are generally cooler.

Clothing

Summer clothing is appropriate. Bring a hat to protect you from the sun. Please wear modest clothing. Bring shoes that are comfortable for walking or tennis shoes. DO NOT wear any jewelry that has sentimental value, include a church outfit for Sunday morning and maybe Wednesday night.

Immunizations

Immunizations are not required to be admitted into Guatemala. However we suggest you go to www.cdc.gov/travel to see the recommended immunizations, medical precautions, as well as handling the prescription medication you may be bringing with

you. These immunizations are typically available at your County Health Department at cost or at any Travel Clinic. We advise you to have a current Tetanus Shot as well.

Food

We will provide you with meals prepared carefully by our team of volunteers. Some meals will be eaten at restaurants to go and eat. But we also recommend that you bring light weight snacks such as energy bars, nuts or crackers. Drinking water will be provided throughout you stay.

Luggage

You are limited to One checked bag that will be paid for and a carry on Please consider carrying another checked bag with ministry supplies. Checking this bag will be included in your trip fee.

For spending money bring NEW bills in 50's. ATM's are available (fees may be higher).

Passport

It is required to have a passport valid for at least 6 months (June 7, 2018) after your departure date to travel to and from Guatemala. Forms are available online as well as finding the location nearest you accepting applications. To find the information needed you can go to travel.state.gov/passport on the web.

Customs

You will be required to fill out a customs form on the plane before you arrive in Guatemala The address you should put on this form will be provided.

Airport

When traveling to other countries you will find the airports are not the same as in the States. Upon arrival, there will be lots of people waiting outside to "help you" with your bags. Do not accept their help.

We also recommend that at all times you stay in groups of 3 or more. Whether if this is going shopping or just want to wander around.

Items to pack

*We suggest that you bring
the following items with you:*

Comfortable shoes

Comfortable clothing

Sunscreen

Hat

Sunglasses

Water bottle

Towel

Flash light

One large bag of candy (not chocolate)

LEAVE valuable like Expensive jewelry, rings watches etc. at home

Emergency contact information

Traveler Emergency Contact Information

Please provide us with the name and contact information of the person we should contact in case of an emergency.

NAME: _____

RELATIONSHIP: _____

DAYTIME PHONE: _____

EVENING PHONE: MOBILE _____

HOME ADDRESS: _____

E-MAIL: _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:



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Medical Information Form

Please provide us with the following medical information in case of an emergency.

NAME: _____

EXISTING MEDICAL CONDITIONS:

ALLERGIES: _____

LIST ANY MEDICATION YOU ARE CURRENTLY TAKING:

DOCTORS NAME: _____

PHONE NUMBER OF DOCTOR: INSURANCE INFORMATION:

ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY: _____



Acknowledgment

A mission trip can be a very rewarding experience. However, if a volunteer goes to a third world country unprepared it can make for an unpleasant experience. It is vital that all travelers read and acknowledge that they understand the risks, requirements and expectations of travel to Guatemala

After reading the mission packet please sign the following document and return to the Mission Director along with the release of liability, emergency contact information and medical information form. Please also send a color copy of your passport.

Thank you,

Pat & Mayra Couture

Missions Dept.

The undersigned hereby acknowledges, receiving this Mission packet, and acknowledges that they have read and understand all requirements and expectations listed herein.

NAME:

SIGNATURE:

DATE SIGNED:



OHG Mission Trip Application

Personal Information

Name: (Exactly how it appears on your passport)

Passport Number: _____ Expiration date _____

Birthdate: _____

Mailing address:

Cell phone: _____ Home phone _____

Email: _____

Marital Status: _____

Blood type: _____

Do you speak Spanish _____

What is your primary motivation for this trip?

What gifts and talents do you have that will complement this trip?

Any other helpful comments or suggestions?

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Please fill out the application and forms and send to
Open Heavens Guatemala
4252 Southtowne Dr. Suite D Eau Claire, WI 54701



Volunteer Release Form

We are delighted with your desire to travel with Open Heavens Guatemala and we are more than willing to help you with some of the arrangements.

Please sign and date this document and return it to OHG acknowledging this notification, releasing us from liability, and indemnifying us from claims against us arising from your activities. We must receive a signed copy of this letter before we can continue to plan your trip. Thank you.

The undersigned hereby acknowledges receiving this letter, and acknowledges the risks assumed by volunteers of OHG. it's officers, directors, members and all other persons and organizations working on its behalf from any and all loss, liability, actions, claims and demands of any nature, past, present or future, that may result from or be in any way related to the undersigned's activities conducted under the auspices of OHG.

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE SIGNED: _____

DESTINATION: _____



Ministry Reference

In order to be approved to travel on an OHG mission trip, you must provide a ministry reference for our review. Please have a pastor or mentor comment on the following:

- Your spiritual maturity
- Your social maturity
- Your emotional maturity
- Your leadership abilities
- How well he or she knows you

Please have your reference send the letter **directly** to us at:

Open Heavens Guatemala

4252 Southtowne Dr. Suite D

Eau Claire, WI 54701



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4252 Southtowne Dr. Suite D
Eau Claire, WI 54701
715 829 0109