



**HOPE FOR TOMORROW**

INTERNATIONAL

*Isaiah 6:8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!"*

# **Short Term Mission Guide**

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# Guatemala

**Population:** 14.7 million (2011 est.)

**Cultural History:** Guatemala won independence from Spain in 1821 after almost three centuries as a Spanish colony. Today there is still racial tension between those who are strictly of native descent and those who are a mix of native and Spanish. The indigenous Mayan population is frequently looked down upon and treated as outcasts.

**Climate:** Tropical. Hot and humid in the lowlands, cooler in the mountains.

**Religions:** Roman Catholic, Protestant, indigenous Mayan beliefs

**Language:** 60% of the population speaks Spanish. 40% speak one of many ancient native Mayan languages, twenty three of which are officially recognized.

**Literacy:** 80.5% (2009)

**Time Zone:** Central Standard Time. Time changes are not made for Daylight Savings Time as they are in parts of the US.

**Government:** Constitutional Democratic Republic

**Exports:** Coffee, bananas, sugar, crude oil, chemical products, clothing and textiles, vegetables, apparel, fruits, vegetables, cardamom.

**Location:** Guatemala is located in Central America, bordered by Mexico to the North, Belize to the East, Honduras to the Southeast, and El Salvador to the Southwest. The entire country covers an area just slightly smaller than the state of Tennessee.



**Flag:** Guatemala's flag has a white stripe in the middle with blue stripes on each side. In the center is a Quetzal bird, the national bird, and a scroll with the date of Guatemala's independence written on it.

## Money

The unit of currency in Guatemala is the quetzal. 100 centavos equal 1 quetzal.

Coins: 1, 5, 10, 25, and 50 centavos.

1 quetzal

Bills: 50 centavos

1, 5, 10, 20, 50, and 100 quetzals

The exchange rate varies daily but on average 1 US dollar equals approximately 7 quetzals.

## What You Will Need

### Passport

You will need a valid personal passport to enter and leave the country. Visit [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) to find a Passport Application Acceptance Facility near you, as well as detailed application instructions and all the necessary forms. Many post offices process passports; check at your local post office to see if they do or ask for the closest location that does. Fees range from \$105-\$135 for routine service. **The process may take up to six weeks so plan accordingly.** It is possible to expedite the process for an additional fee.

### How to get your passport:

1. Locate a Passport Application Acceptance Facility at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) or by calling your local post office.
2. Download or pick up all the necessary forms and fill them out.
3. You will need a passport photo to submit with your application. Passport photos have to meet very strict guidelines. Many pharmacies and photography services are set up to take an appropriate photo for a reasonable fee. More information on photos is available at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) .
4. Submit your completed forms with your picture and applicable fees to the Passport Application Acceptance Facility or post office. You will need to bring proof of U.S. citizenship (such as a birth certificate) and another form of identification (such as a driver's license). Refer to the application instructions for other acceptable forms of identification and complete directions on necessary photo copies of the documents.
5. Your passport will arrive in 4-6 weeks.

You can contact the National Passport Information Center at:

**1-877-487-2778 TDD/TTY: 1-888-874-7793**

Automated Passport Information is available **24 hours, 7 days a week.**

Speak with a representative **Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., EST**, excluding federal holidays.

The e-mail address is: **NPIC@state.gov** .

Most e-mail inquiries are answered within 24 hours.

## Packing

We ask that you keep your luggage to the carry-on specifications. You are allowed one carry-on bag that cannot exceed 45 linear inches (9" x 14" x 22") and one personal item, such as a purse, briefcase or camera bag. Check-in bags will be used to transport ministry supplies. Excess luggage makes travel cumbersome for the team and is more difficult to keep track of.

### Packing tips:

- Pack light. Bring only what you can fit in your carry-on luggage and carry comfortably yourself.
- As a general rule, if you don't use it every day at home, you won't use it away from home. If you have to think twice about it, you probably won't use it.
- All liquids (like shampoo, toothpaste, etc.) must be in containers of 3.4 ounces or less and kept in one 8" x 8" (quart size) Ziploc bag that can be easily removed at airport security checkpoints. Only one quart sized bag is allowed per passenger.
- Extra batteries must be in original packaging, or secured with tape at both ends and placed in a Ziploc bag.
- Avoid bringing or wearing new shoes; you don't want to have blisters during the trip.
- Avoid packing bulky electrical appliances like hair dryers, curling irons, and laptops. The electrical current in some locations may differ from the U.S.
- Even though the climate is tropical, shorts are not commonly worn by men or women in Guatemala and team members will not be wearing them outside of the team house.
- Additional information about airport security guidelines can be found at [www.safetravel.dot.gov](http://www.safetravel.dot.gov).
- If you have any questions about what you should or should not pack, check with your team leader.
- As you pack, keep in mind that we represent the community of Christ and clothing selection should be modest and appropriate.

## Packing List

### Men

- 1 or 2 pairs of khaki pants
- 2 pairs of jeans or work pants
- 4 or 5 t-shirts/work shirts (no inappropriate graphics, logos, or wording please)
- 3 or 4 collared shirts
- Tie for those who will share or preach in church

### Women

- 1 or 2 skirts to work in (knee length or longer)
- 1 or 2 skirts or dresses suitable for church (also knee length or longer)
- 1 or 2 pairs of jeans or work pants
- 1 or 2 pairs of khaki pants or capri pants that fall below the knee
- 6-8 loose fitting shirts, not sleeveless

### All

- 1 light sweater or jacket
- 10 day supply of underclothing and socks
- 1 or 2 sets of pajamas
- 1 pair of comfortable dress shoes
- 1 pair of sneakers or work shoes
- Hat
- 1 swimsuit (ladies, one piece only)
- Your Hope for Tomorrow t-shirt will be provided and should be worn as requested by your team leader.

### Toiletries

(liquids should be in containers of 3.4 ounces or less to meet airline carry-on guidelines)

- Soap
- Shampoo/conditioner
- Toothbrush & toothpaste
- Comb/brush
- Deodorant
- Sunscreen
- Personal medications (it is recommended that you pack any over the counter medications as well as prescriptions you might need as they may not be readily available)
- Razor & shaving cream
- Insect repellent
- Feminine hygiene items
- Antibacterial wipes/hand sanitizer

### Other Items

- Camera
- Spare batteries
- Flashlight
- Bible, journal, and pencil
- Water bottle
- Pocket Spanish Dictionary (optional but handy)

### Personal Spending Money

Very little personal spending money is necessary. Bring only enough cash to cover any souvenirs or gifts you wish to bring home, any additional snacks or beverages you wish to purchase at the airport, and something for the collection plate. There will be opportunities to exchange currency in Guatemala. **Please bring only crisp, new U.S. bills, the Guatemalan banks will not exchange any worn bills or bills with rips, marks, or creases.**

## **Team Activities**

### **Projects & Itineraries**

The specific projects scheduled for your mission team will be based on the skills and abilities of its members. Every team dynamic is different and there are always countless opportunities to serve. You may be asked to participate in one or more of the following tasks; food distribution, medical clinic, construction, evangelism, distributing water filters, preaching, farm work, and/or whatever The Lord may be calling us to do at the time. Approach each assignment with a servant's heart and the blessings will flow.

Daily itineraries will be established and communicated by the team leader. Each team member needs to remain conscious of arrival and departure times set by the leader. Being punctual shows respect for the locals we work with as well as the other team members. As a general rule, the team will work, travel, worship, and eat together as a group and adherence to the schedule will keep everything running smoothly. There will most likely be times when the team leader will need to make changes to the itinerary. Please defer to the judgment of your leader and remember, "Blessed are the flexible for they won't get bent out of shape."

### **Where We Stay**

Accommodations may vary depending on the size of the team and the amount of travel in the schedule. For the most part, teams will stay at the ministry's team house in the town of Teculutàn in the state of Zacapa. Some projects will take the team to other regions in which case the team may be housed in a hotel, with a local family, or in the team house of another missionary organization. Rooms are commonly dormitory style, with several people sharing the same space. Please be respectful of your teammates and hosts, by keeping your belongings neat and organized.

The Hope for Tomorrow team house is not luxurious by American standards but it has many more amenities than the average Guatemalan home. The water at the house is clean and drinkable, you can usually take a hot shower, there is a kitchen, and a refreshing swimming pool to cool off in after a hard day of doing The Lord's work. There are two dormitory style bunk rooms, a shared bathroom, one master bedroom, and a large open living area. It is everyone's responsibility to pitch in and keep the house neat and clean. If there are dishes in the sink, wash them; if the trash is full, empty it; if the bathroom is dirty, clean it. Remember your servant's heart.

### **What & Where We Will Eat**

Trying new foods and flavors in a foreign country can be a very exciting and enjoyable experience, however be mindful of the direction of your team leader as some foods may not be safe to eat and can make you quite sick. Many meals can be prepared at the team house in which case be ready to pitch in as needed during preparation and clean up. All fruits and vegetables must be sterilized during according to the instructions of your team leader.

Meals will also be eaten in local restaurants that your team leader has determined to be clean and safe. Even in these restaurants it is best not to consume any uncooked foods, salads, fruits, tap water, or ice. When in doubt, defer to the judgment of your team leader. Avoid buying any food or beverages from street vendors. Having a sick stomach during a mission trip is a very unpleasant experience.

The team may be invited to dine at someone's home. Meal times are extremely important in Guatemala and it is considered rude to be late. As in all group activities, you will be expected to participate with the team, even if you are not hungry. Female guests usually sit to the right of the host, and male guests to his left. When food or drink is offered it is polite to accept it, but avoid consuming anything that is not washed or sterilized. It is best, whenever possible, to follow the team leader's direction regarding what to eat and how to interact with the locals. It is polite to thank your host after every meal by saying "Muchas gracias".

### **Communications**

Technology and communications are not as readily available or as reliable in Guatemala as they are in the US. Although cell phones are common, your American cell phone will not work in Guatemala. Your team leader will have access to a cell phone and will provide you with a number your family can call in an emergency only. It is best to expect that you will not have contact with home for the duration of your trip.

On occasion, the team may be in a restaurant or hotel with free wireless internet service. Small electronic devices and phones with wifi are a great way to send news home via email and the internet. But chances are it won't be a regular occurrence and internet service can be unreliable.

## Safety & Health

A few simple rules should be followed to keep the team safe and healthy on the mission trip.

- We suggest contacting your physician to see if there are any shots or medications you might need. Make your leader aware of any medications you are taking and any health conditions you may have that would limit your participation.
- Make a copy of your passport and keep it with you at all times. While in the country, all passports will be locked away to prevent loss.
- The team should always stay together in a group unless otherwise directed by your leader. It is not advisable to go off on your own.
- Know where your belongings are at all times and be aware of pickpockets.
- Outside of the Hope for Tomorrow team house, drink only bottled water and avoid ice.
- Avoid uncooked vegetables, salads, and fruit that cannot be peeled. Only eat fruit which you peel yourself or have been properly sterilized.
- Bring a package of antibacterial wipes, washing facilities are not always available.
- It is very easy to become sunburned or dehydrated. Drink plenty of bottled water, use sunscreen, and wear a hat.
- Keep a water bottle with you at all times.
- Outside of the Hope for Tomorrow team house, use bottled water to brush your teeth and avoid getting water in your mouth while showering.
- You may want to bring some common medicines like aspirin, ibuprophen, Pepto Bismal, Immodium, and allergy medication.
- Wear insect repellent to guard against mosquitoes.
- Gauge hydration level by the color of your urine. The darker it is the more dehydrated you are.
- Please make your team leader aware immediately if you are having any unusual physical symptoms such as diarrhea, stomach pain, nausea, or any other concern.

# Cultural Sensitivity

## General

We are not there to change the culture, but to work within it. Our projects are more effective and our relationships with our Guatemalan brothers and sisters are stronger when we show respect and interest for their culture.

In The United States we are generally defined by, and focused on what we achieve and want as individuals. We tend to do 'what I want, when I want to'. In Central America people are defined by the groups they belong to and activities (church, meals, outings, projects) are done together. It is assumed and expected that you wish to participate. Be aware that an American attitude of 'doing things my way' will not be understood.

Dress is very important to Guatemalan people and the packing list reflects the conservative approach that should be taken when considering what to wear in the mission field. Every village has different feelings when it comes to clothing and jewelry, your team leader will advise you on appropriate dress each day depending on where you are going and what you are doing. In general, to avoid causing offense, dress conservatively, remove jewelry, cover tattoos, and avoid nail polish.

Furniture is typically not very strong and vehicles and equipment are usually old, so extreme caution should be used. When entering or exiting a vehicle, slamming the door shows disrespect.

Remember, time is short, take every opportunity to share the love of Christ with people.

## Greetings

Each morning, every individual should be greeted like a long lost friend. You will notice a sing song rhythm to the greetings.

The first time you see someone each morning, greet them enthusiastically with a warm handshake, hug, or kiss on the cheek as appropriate.

Eye contact is very important.

Expect a handshake when you are introduced to someone of either sex. If you are a woman being introduced to another woman, don't be surprised if she pats your right forearm or shoulder rather than shaking hands. Return the gesture by patting her shoulder with your left hand.

Don't expect, or give, a firm handshake. Such handshakes are common to those in urban areas or those who are Americanized. Both men and women usually offer a limp handshake.

Note that women are often greeted by close friends (both male and female) by a kiss on one cheek. Men who are good friends embrace and pat one another on the back.

In the highlands it is courteous to greet anyone you pass on the street. In the cities, don't say anything to passersby.

The best way to show respect when entering someone's home is to ask 'Con permiso', with permission.

## **Conversation**

Learning about Guatemala shows the people there that you have an interest in them, their history, and their culture.

If you are talking to a man and a woman together, generally expect the man to answer your questions.

It is always appropriate to talk about your family, job, and hobbies.

Speak softly or people will consider you very rude.

It is not necessary to be fluent in Spanish, but any Spanish you can learn is helpful and shows the Guatemalans we work with that you have a desire to communicate with them in their language. The following are some common phrases you will hear and find useful.

Buenos días – Good morning

¿Dormir bien? – Sleep well? Did you sleep well?

¿Cómo estás? – How are you?

Muy bien or Estoy muy bien – I am very well

Buenas tardes – Good afternoon

Buenas noches – Good evening (in greeting)

Mucho gusto! – Pleased to meet you!

¿Dónde está el baño? – Where is the bathroom?

Por favor – Please

Muchas gracias – Thank you

De nada – You're welcome

Le gusta? – Do you like it?

Sí, me gusta! – Yes, I like it!

Dios le bendiga! – God bless you!

Hermano – brother

Hermana - sister

Hasta mañana! – See you tomorrow!

Adios! – Goodbye!

Feliz noches – Good night (when you are parting company for the night)

### **In Public**

Humility and gentleness are highly valued in the Guatemala culture, as well as in the scriptures. If you are unsure how to act, conveying humility and gentleness in all circumstances is always best.

It is very rude to say ‘No’. The rudest you could ever be is to say ‘Brother, for me right now, it is difficult.’

To gesture ‘come here’, stretch your arm out, palm down, and wave your fingers.

Be considerate with your photography. Never photograph a family or a household without asking permission first, even if you see others doing so.

Expect to bargain in markets and other small shops. Ask the price and then offer half. Wait for a counter offer and continue going up a bit. If the vendor’s offer is too much, walk away. You may be called back with the vendor’s lowest price, or they may not call you back. If you really want the item, go back and agree to the lowest price the vendor offered.

The most popular items for tourists are the hand woven textiles by local artisans. When bargaining for them, remember the months of work that went into these pieces, and the economic status of the vendors.

**Please do not give Guatemalans money.** If you feel led to give money, discuss it with your team leader. They will leave it with the ministry to see that it is received. This is a very important point and greatly affects the ability of the ministry to reach the people. We want people to see us as a source of Christ’s light, not a source of money.

## Spiritual Preparation

### Prayer

“Prayer is only able to accomplish what God is able to do.” *Unknown Author*

We encourage you to find at least three intercessors to pray for you before, during, and after your mission trip. This is the most powerful tool we have.

Remember to pray for a servant’s heart. This can often be difficult to remember, especially when you are in unfamiliar circumstances. A servant’s attitude can break through any cultural barrier.

If you find yourself with some free time, pray.

### Bible Reading

Along with prayer, reading your Bible is extremely important to the outcome of your mission trip. Having a scriptural foundation to base your decisions and actions on will not only benefit the team, but it will also help you to remain focused. The last section of this book is for journaling your Bible study and reflecting on your experiences in the mission field. Each day’s entry starts off with a Bible verse. Try to find a quiet moment in each day of your trip to study these verses and journal how they might apply to your mission.

A spiritual journal can be a powerful tool. It can be a place to write your thoughts, prayers, spiritual experiences, as well as a wonderful place to document what you encounter in the mission field. Making an effort to reflect and write daily will bring you to a deeper understanding of the scriptures.

### Team Devotions

Every team is different, but your team may choose to make some time in the daily schedule to study and discuss the Bible together. Group devotions are an amazing way to help the team bond and get to know each other better. A mission trip can be an overwhelmingly powerful spiritual experience, and knowing your teammates are there for you with support and an encouraging word is comforting.

## Daily Journal

### Day 1

**John 13:12-15:** When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord’, and rightly so, for that is who I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.”

Jesus showed the heart of a servant and told us to do the same for each other. We need to love one another, and by this love people will know we are Christians.

**Day 2**

**Psalm 67:2** That Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations.

### **Day 3**

**Mark 8:35** For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.

#### **Day 4**

**Luke 10:19** Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.

#### **Day 4**

**John 14:6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

## **Day 5**

**2 Corinthians 12:9** And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

## **Day 7**

**Ephesians 6:18** With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

**Day 8**

**Philippians 4:13** I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

**Day 9**

**2 Timothy 1:7** For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

## **Day 10 – Conclusion**

**2 Thessalonians 2:16-17** Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.