

St. Michael's Guatemala Project

St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church
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INDIVIDUAL NEEDS LIST FOR TEAM MEMBERS

DOCUMENTS

Current passport, plus 2 or more copies. Leave one copy with your designate in the U.S. Keep the other(s) apart from the actual passport. When we travel, leave either a copy or the original in the secure location we designate in Guatemala City.

Consider bringing your driver's license.

Bring health insurance cards.

FUNDS

Carry not more than \$200 in cash. Banks in larger cities will cash traveler's checks with appropriate ID. Credit and debit cards can be helpful in the capital and with major banks if kept secure. Have contact numbers for lost or stolen cards with you, and leave info also with your designate in the U.S.

Generally allow about \$125 per week for expenses, for a "no-frills," low budget trip [you will probably spend less]. It's good to have another \$200 in "extra" funds for purchases and emergencies. The CPR-Sierra provide housing and food within their communities, at the level at which they live.

Cash to change must be in excellent condition. Banks will not accept torn, worn, creased, or stained dollars.

Most of us are now using money belts, which are still not a guarantee against robbery.

INSURANCE

Talk with your health insurance carrier about how to handle international claims. There is also special insurance for international travelers which can include emergency air evacuation and some theft insurance. Check the internet for specific companies.

HEALTH NEEDS

The minimum: Current tetanus shot.

Protection against hepatitis A (infectious hepatitis) – either immune globulin or the 2-step permanent vaccine (relatively costly).

Malaria regions: Important for **El Triunfo** of the CPR-Sierra "Sur." "Tesorito" Suchitepequez and "Tesoro" Uspantán have also reported cases. Other CPR-Sierra areas are malaria-free. Cloroquin-based preventive treatments work well. Aralén, a good one, can be purchased cheaply over the counter in Guatemala. Doctors recommend beginning once-weekly dosage a week or two before arriving in a malarial area.

Optional: Acidophilus capsules – some people like to take these before meals, so that the "good" bacteria counteract any others they encounter.

Cipro – Some will want to carry cipro just in case they suffer serious intestinal upset. It can be purchased without prescription in Guatemala City.

For additional optional protections, see the U.S. Centers for Communicable Disease web page for travelers' advisories, or talk to your doctor.

Recommended highly: Pepto-bismal tablets, for minor intestinal problems.

Multi-vitamin with minerals, to counter any nutritional deficits in daily diet.

Personal meds / first aid: Bring your own medicines / analgesics in their original containers. **If you experience motion sickness**, you will definitely need your preferred medications for giddy travel on serpentine mountain roads. **Also recommended** – antibiotic ointment, band-aids, tweezers, small scissors, moleskin, etc..

Insects: We don't encounter too many, but bring insect repellent and anti-itch cream. Small biting flies, "no-see-ems," and, in the past, fleas, have been the biggest problems.

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CLOTHING

windbreaker or light jacket
rain gear (lightweight poncho or rain jacket)
lightweight long-sleeved shirt
hat for sun protection
2 pairs long pants suitable for everyday and rough wear. Women, no shorts.
2 or more shirts or tee shirts (we suggest 3).
one set of presentable clothing for the city, international travel, etc.
women – skirt, knee length or longer (elastic waist will let you bathe semi-publicly).
tank top (for public bathing) can be useful
socks, underwear, etc, according to need. (3 pairs underpants seems the minimum. Some of us like to leave another clean set in the capital).
hiking boots or walking shoes.
rubber boots (to buy in Guatemala) for rainy season travel in back country.
tennis or lightweight shoes for everyday wear.
NO military-style clothing, camouflage or drab.
ziplock bags to keep everything dry.

PERSONAL ITEMS

simple personal toiletries / hygiene items – all the usual, small containers.
insect repellent and sun block.
roll of good U.S. toilet paper, small packs kleenex.
bar soap or “Camp Suds” or both.
moist “wipes” (travel size) or hand sanitizer.
wash cloth and small towel (kitchen towel or cloth diaper is less bulky than terry and dries faster).
your favorite portable comfort foods (trail mix, nuts, dried fruits, jolly ranchers, a few tea bags, Hershey’s nuggets with almonds, etc.)
spoon or utensils set you can carry in your pack.
small bowl for pack (plastic sandwich box or storage bowl with snap-on lid works well).
unbreakable cup (insulated plastic is best).
optional - ear plugs if night gets noisy (babies, etc.)
small sewing kit or needle and strong thread.
Your choice: camera, portable video player, small tape recorder, etc. Nothing fragile.

Personal items, continued.

Notebook(s), small “recuerdos” like photos or post cards for folks you meet. Pencils, colored pens, and small notebooks are nice for kids.
NOTE: We do NOT give money or gifts to individuals that would lead to envy or jealousy.
Your favorite reading material.

GEAR (critical items in boldface)

day pack

backpack; or, for some resettlement locations, short visit only, a soft duffel to hold all your “stuff.” Whatever you take, it will be battered – atop busses, on mules, in pickups, etc.
lightweight **sleeping bag** and stuff sack
mat for sleeping bag (highly recommended)
two durable **quart water bottles**.
water purification tablets or other purification system, as backup for bottled water.
Lemonade or gatorade mix if you don’t like the taste of treated water.

flashlight with extra bulb and batteries.

lighter, matches (waterproof helps), optional candle
small knife.

cord, a few small clothes pins.

diaper pins can be really useful.

for work details – good work gloves.

for **malarial areas** only – **mosquito netting** (can be purchased in Guatemala). Lightweight backpackers’ mosquito netting can also be useful in the mountains, to protect against *chaquistas*, *gigenes*, and small biting flies.

If you don't own backpacking / camping gear, don't buy unless you will want to use the items again. Talk to friends and the coordinator about borrowing.

We will be able to leave a small amount of personal stuff in suitcases or other storage in Guatemala City.

Coordinator, for long stays, takes a carryon with city stuff and paperwork, large suitcase with her back-pack inside, other suitcase with meds, daypack, etc. Nests suitcases in the capital, takes backpack and daypack to the communities. BUT “less is more.”



After having said all this, we'll add, “Pack light.”

Maya of the CPR-Sierra, Guatemala / St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church, Tucson – since 1993, an informal partnership.