

Pre-departure Preparation

Guatemala

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Payments, Cancellation & Insurance

Payments: Your final payment is due six-eight weeks prior to departure. You may pay your balance by check or with a credit card (please note we only accept Visa or MasterCard). For some customized programs, you may be billed directly by the organization or group that is sponsoring the trip.

Cancellation: Cancellation notices must be received by the Center for Global Education in writing. A \$250 deposit is non-refundable. A cancellation notice received up to 75 days before departure will be assessed only the deposit plus any non-recoverable costs (i.e. flight deposits, visa fee, etc.). A cancellation notice received 61-74 days before departure will be assessed 25% of the total travel seminar cost; a cancellation notice received 31-60 days before departure will be assessed 50% of the total cost. A cancellation notice received within 30 days of departure will be assessed the full program cost.

In the event that a Travel Warning is issued by the U.S. State Department for a country that will be visited during a program and CGE agrees that it is unsafe to travel there (or the sponsor has an existing written policy against traveling to a country/location with a Travel Warning), then CGE will try to reroute that program to another country. If we need to cancel the program, the participants will be refunded any recoverable expenses.

If there is no Travel Warning, but a participant cancels due to fear of a worldwide crisis, then they may be able to transfer their deposit to another program within the same fiscal year (if CGE agrees); however, they would still be responsible for paying any unrecoverable expenses related to the original trip.

All participants are encouraged to purchase trip cancellation or interruption insurance in the event of a personal or family illness or other unforeseen events.

Cancellation Insurance: We recommend you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself against emergencies that might prevent you from traveling. Some examples of unforeseen disruptions that could require you to cancel your trip are: you or a family member becomes sick or dies; bad weather or natural disasters that results in closed airports, roads, or hotels; calls to serve on jury duty; terrorist attacks/civil unrest in-country or at home; health epidemics (such as Ebola or H1N1). Some companies may offer “Cancel for Any Reason” clauses at an additional cost that will allow you to cancel for any reason. When purchasing these products we recommend you call the company to discuss any exclusions.

NOTE: Often cancellation insurance must be purchased within 14 days of your first payment towards any trip related costs.

Travel Health/Accident Insurance: All participants are required to have health/accident insurance that covers medical expenses incurred during the travel seminar and includes emergency evacuation. Please check with your institution to see if they provide coverage for international travel and emergency evacuations. Otherwise, there are a number of reputable providers you may use.

CGE has an account with HTH Worldwide Insurance Services, which provides good medical coverage at our group rate for ages 0-74: \$11.75/weekly or \$40.75/monthly. For more information visit the HTH website at www.hthstudents.com using group access code **BIH-2227**. You do not need to be a student to apply for this coverage. If you need assistance with registering online, please contact Olee Amata in our office at tel. 612-330-1115.

Passport, Visa & Entry Requirements

Passport: The information below addresses passport requirements for U.S. and Canadian citizens. Citizens of other countries living in the U.S. and Canada should contact CGE for further information.

Guatemala requires you to have a passport that is valid for at least six months past the scheduled date of departure. While the average processing time for a standard passport application is six weeks, it can take much longer. If your trip is departing within six weeks, we recommend using Expedited Service. Consult the U.S. State Department Web page for fees and procedures: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html

Once you receive your new or renewed passport, you sign it on the designated page opposite your picture to validate it. Please send us a photocopy of this page after signing it. Make sure you also have a photocopy for yourself to keep with you during the trip separately from where you keep your passport. It is also a good idea to leave a photocopy with a family member or friend at home.

Keep any documents inserted into your passport or given to you by immigration officials upon arrival in Guatemala. You will need to present them upon departure.

Visa & Entry Requirements: The information below addresses entry requirements for U.S. and Canadian citizens residing in the United States. Others should check with a Guatemalan consulate for visa and entry requirements. CGE will assist you in reviewing information, but the responsibility for obtaining and paying for proper documentation is yours.

There is no special visa requirement for short-term stays in Guatemala. You will receive a tourist card/entry card en route or at the airport. On this form, you should state that your reason for visiting Guatemala is “tourism.” If you check that your purpose is to study, customs officials might mistakenly assume that you need a student visa. The tourist/entry card is to be presented along with your passport at Guatemalan immigration upon arrival. There is no fee for this tourist card. At the end of your trip, your exit fee will be covered by CGE.

For those who have an extended stay in Guatemala that requires a visa, be sure to check that your passport has at least two blank pages in the visa section. This is a security requirement for those who travel with a U.S. passport.

Air Travel Arrangements, Deviations & Time Zone

Air Travel Arrangements & Deviations: The group or organization sponsoring your travel seminar through CGE will advise you on arrangements for air travel. It is essential that the name on your travel documents be identical to your name as it appears on your passport. If there is a discrepancy, you could be delayed or required to purchase another ticket.

In the event that changes need to be made to your flight itinerary due to illness, strikes, terrorism, weather, or other causes, ensuring the well-being of all participants will be CGE’s priority. Additional expenses, if any, will be the responsibility of the sponsor or each individual participant, although the Center for Global Education will make every effort to minimize such expenses.

Time Zone: Most of the year the time is the same as U.S. Central Standard Time. However, Guatemala does not observe Daylight Savings Time. The time will be one hour behind Central Standard Time during Daylight Savings Time.

Packing List & Luggage

Packing Tips: Be sure to put essential items such as medications, toiletries and camera film (security equipment at U.S. airports will destroy film in checked luggage) in your carry-on bag in case of a delay or lost luggage.

Pack comfortable, modest clothing. Cotton slacks, neat blue jeans, t-shirts without logos and button-down shirts are appropriate. Shorts, sweat suits, athletic gear, and tank tops or any other revealing clothing are not.

Pack as lightly as you can. Consider wearing outfits at least twice during the trip. Remember, laundry facilities may be available as well.

Most days you will be meeting with speakers many days. For church, government, and professional sector visits, pack at least one more formal outfit. For men, consider a nice button-down shirt and slacks (ties are not required). For women, a dress, or skirt/slacks and blouse (not a t-shirt) are appropriate.

Plan to bring items that are lightweight and can be layered in case of temperature or weather changes or air-conditioned rooms.

Do not bring anything with a camouflage pattern or of a military style.

CGE strongly recommends leaving expensive jewelry/watches at home.

Essential items to include: Be sure to bring insect repellent, a flashlight and a rain jacket.

Suggested items to include:

- Comfortable walking shoes with a closed toe for rural areas and markets, where there may be mud or biting insects
- Lightweight robe, and sandals or flip-flops for shared bathrooms as well as for health and safety reasons (e.g. scorpions)
- Swimsuit (some trips may visit a lake)
- Heavy jacket or heavy sweater, as well as warm clothing for sleeping during the cool evenings or in air-conditioned rooms
- Rain jacket, poncho, or umbrella
- Dressier outfit for church or meetings (described above)
- Medications, toiletries – many common medications and toiletries are not readily available (e.g. tampons, mouthwash, disposable razors); the most common ailments are traveler's diarrhea and motion sickness
- Toilet/tissue paper (it is handy to have because it is not always available, even in public establishments)
- Sun & insect protection – hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, insect repellent
- Camera, extra batteries, film (film is expensive in Guatemala)
- Small flashlight & extra batteries (for dark streets, rural areas)
- Refillable water bottle
- Sleep sack or flat sheet (for homestays)
- Ear plugs (if you are a light sleeper)
- Power bars or high-protein snacks (especially if you are vegetarian or vegan)
- Small backpack or shoulder bag for daytime excursions
- Small bag or luggage that can be used for short in-country trips

- Notebook or journal
- Reading material, deck of cards, etc. for waiting times or delays
- Travel clock, watch or other timepiece
- Money belt or neck pouch to hold valuables
- ATM card, credit cards
- Moist towelettes or hand sanitizer
- Two-prong plug adapter (if you are bringing electrical appliances)
- Passport and photocopy of the photo page (pack separately)

Luggage: Due to luggage capacity restraints for most vehicles in Guatemala, pack one large, soft-covered bag and one carry-on, plus a purse, camera case or briefcase. Pack as lightly as you can. In general, if you cannot comfortably walk five city blocks with all of your gear, you have packed too much.

International travel baggage restrictions and fees for excess cargo may vary by airline and destination. In general, the maximum allowance per piece of checked luggage is 50 pounds and 62 linear inches (total length + width + height) for international flights.

Weather

The following are average temperatures, not the extremes. As in the United States, weather patterns can vary frequently. We recommend checking weather sites on the Internet for the region and time of year you will be traveling.

Guatemala City has the same rainy season pattern as Central America; however, the temperatures are somewhat cooler, with average highs in the mid to upper 70s. The dry season temperatures are cooler with highs in the upper 60s to low 70s and lows ranging from 50° to 55°F. In the Guatemalan highlands, daytime temperatures are warm (70s), but evenings during November through February can be very cold with temperatures dropping as low as the upper 30s. Keep in mind that there will not be central heating!

Money

Most participants find \$150-\$250 to be sufficient spending money for a two-week program in Guatemala. Of course, how much you bring should depend on your personal spending habits. Remember that all meals and programs expenses are covered in your seminar cost.

It is helpful to have some cash in small bills. Try to bring new bills, as some past participants have encountered difficulty in changing bills that are worn, written upon or torn. We strongly encourage you to bring a money belt.

Plan to bring mostly cash. ATMs can be found, but access to international networks is limited. If you bring an ATM card, make sure it has the PLUS and/or CIRRUS logos. A Visa or MasterCard may be used for cash advances in local currency at Credomatic offices as well as some banks.

Credit cards may also be accepted in many of the more elegant shops and restaurants. Important: It is a good idea to call your credit card company to let them know that you will be using your card outside of the country for a set time. Some people encounter trouble using a credit card abroad because the credit card company assumes the card is stolen.

For current information concerning exchange rates, visit <http://www.xe.com>

Accommodations & Electrical Current

Accommodations: In Guatemala groups stay in modest hotels or guesthouses. Accommodations in the countryside will be more basic than those in the major cities. Some customized programs may include a homestay. Under these circumstances, you may not always have access to hot water or standard mattresses. We are confident that this experience will enhance your understanding of the country in a challenging, experiential manner.

Electrical Current: The electrical current is the same as in the U.S. (110 volts, 60 cycles). However, most outlets cannot accommodate a grounding prong or wide flange. If you are bringing electrical appliances, you will need to bring a two-prong adapter to fit an outlet with two narrow slots.

Health & Safety Information

Health: Review your vaccinations. Check with your doctor or the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) regarding recommended vaccinations for travel to Guatemala. Currently, the CDC recommends that you be up-to-date on diphtheria-tetanus and measles, and that you consider an immune globulin vaccine for protection against Hepatitis A. You may call the CDC at 404/332-4559 or visit their website at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>

- Bring enough medical/health supplies. If you take a prescription or medication, make sure you bring enough to last your entire seminar, including a possible day or two of delay. Be prepared, and bring medical and health supplies for potential problems. Many medications, including common over-the-counter items, may not be readily available.
- Drink only purified water. It is best to drink bottled water or water from trusted sources. You will be provided with purified water during your seminar. Don't forget to use purified water when you brush your teeth. Avoid ice cubes.

- Drink enough water. Besides drinking contaminated water, the most common health problem when travelling is not drinking enough water and getting dehydrated and/or constipated.
- Wash your hands with soap whenever possible or use hand sanitizer when soap and water is not available. Clean food and water can be contaminated by dirty hands.
- Watch your food. Eat meat, fish and vegetables only if they are well cooked, and avoid salads unless the greens have been washed with purified water. Fruit that you peel is the safest. CGE staff will give you more information on safe eating and drinking habits.
- Pace yourself. While strenuous walking is not a regular part of most programs, there may be occasions when a long walk is necessary to reach a certain location. CGE staff will keep you informed whenever possible. If a particular health condition makes strenuous walking a concern, please be prepared to communicate your limitations with your group leader and CGE staff.
- Be aware of your environment. The high altitude in Guatemala City (4,900') may cause you to tire easily. In addition, the pollution in most large cities can be very bad. This tends to be especially true during the dry season (November to April). If you have a history of allergies, other respiratory illness or heart problems, you could experience complications during your stay. If you use any type of medication for these problems, be sure to bring an adequate amount after consulting your doctor.
- If you get sick, please let your trip leader or CGE staff know right away. This will help to pinpoint problems with food and water, and help you to get better and arrange a visit to a doctor or medical clinic if necessary.

Possible Ailments:

Traveler's Diarrhea: Just the change in food, water and climate can lead to an upset stomach. If you get diarrhea, treat it with Pepto-Bismol and drink lots of water. When you are ready to eat again, start with rice, bread, crackers, and broth (bring bouillon cubes or dry soup). Imodium (Loperamide is the generic equivalent) is a stronger medication to be used only when absolutely necessary. It does not cure the diarrhea but slows down the digestive system, which can lead to other problems. Some herbal teas are thought to aid in the prevention and treatment of diarrhea such as ginger root, raspberry, comfrey, and peppermint. Feel free to bring some tea bags with you.

Hepatitis A: Studies have shown that many cases of travel-related Hepatitis A happen to travelers in developing countries with "standard" itineraries, accommodations, and food consumption behavior.

Malaria: Malaria is a mosquito-borne illness that is present in Guatemala (primarily in rural areas), depending on the time of year and the area of the region. In the Guatemala City there is no risk of malaria.

Cholera: Cholera is active in Guatemala. There is no satisfactory vaccine against it. Avoiding contaminated food and water is the best way to prevent cholera. Boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it!

Dengue Fever: This disease is a viral infection transmitted by mosquitoes. It is prevalent throughout the region. Since there is no preventative medicine for dengue fever, take measures to avoid mosquito bites such as using DEET repellent and keeping your arms and legs covered. The mosquitoes that carry dengue are active during the day as well as at night, so be sure to protect yourself at all times.

Typhoid: Typhoid Fever is a bacterial infection transmitted through contaminated food and/or water, or directly between people. The CDC recommends a typhoid vaccination for those traveling to rural areas or staying in Guatemala more than six weeks.

Safety:

Your safety is our highest concern. Since 1982, more than 10,000 people have participated in short-term customized programs through CGE. CGE has thus gained a great deal of experience with group travel, and having in-country staff helps to ensure an understanding of the situation and realities of Guatemala. CGE will not hesitate to cancel a trip should something occur that would make it appear to be unsafe to travel to a specific country or area.

For up-to-date CGE Safety Notices and Information please visit:

<http://www.augsburg.edu/global/about/safety.html>

Out of our extensive experience we have developed the following guidelines for you to observe before and during your travel seminar. These guidelines come out of important safety, security and cultural concerns. At times, the reasons for these guidelines may not always seem obvious to you. Keep in mind that following these guidelines helps to ensure the safety of participants, staff and resource people. In addition, it enhances the group's educational experience and fosters long-term relationships of trust and mutual respect which CGE seeks to develop in the region.

If all participants follow these guidelines, it means less inconvenience for you and the group and less work for our staff. Thanks! Please read these guidelines carefully and be familiar with them before your departure.

As you prepare for your travel seminar to Guatemala, please keep the following in mind:

- Shorts, short skirts, tank tops or flip flops are often not appropriate for meetings with resource people. However, you may use this clothing during your free time.
- Military clothing and hats could be mistaken for military apparel and should not be taken on the trip. Apparel with U.S. patriotic messages or symbols (such as conspicuously displayed flags) could provoke aggressive responses and should be left at home.
- Bring a small lock for your bag. You should also bring a money belt that can be hidden under your clothes in which to keep your money and important documents.
- Please do not bring flashy jewelry. Any expensive jewelry or watches, or any that looks expensive, should be left at home.
- Bring a pair of closed-toed, flat, non-athletic shoes for factors and government visits.

If in doubt about the appropriateness of an item, it is best to err on the side of caution.

When you arrive at the airport in Guatemala:

You may be asked by the officials what your itinerary and schedule is. If so, simply respond truthfully: you don't know what your schedule is. (You will receive a tentative schedule of appointments from the Center staff upon arrival in Guatemala). Identify yourself as a tourist if asked; the official purpose of your trip is educational tourism. Watch your bags and documents at the airport, as bags have been stolen before and while loading luggage into the vans.

Do's and Don'ts

While on the travel seminar . . .

Do . . .

- Listen carefully to all safety information during your in-country orientation.
- Keep your passport with you at all times, inside your clothing if possible (unless our staff directs you otherwise).
- Stay close together as a group when you are out in public and always travel in groups of two or more.
- Always ask permission of a person before taping or photographing.
- Be cautious about what you say in public (including airplanes, airports, restaurants and hotel lobbies). There will most likely be people around you who will understand English. Also, North Americans tend to speak in louder voices, so keep your voice at a low level--even when in your hotel room.
- Be respectful of resource people, even those with whom your views differ. This doesn't mean that you have to avoid asking the "hard" questions, just ask them in a non-confrontational way.
- Be respectful of other group members. Before asking multiple questions of resource people, look around to see if other people have questions and remember that people have varied learning styles and may need more time before asking questions. Remember that you are part of a learning community and not simply an independent traveler.
- Drink a lot of water to maintain good health. When the weather is hot, you will dehydrate much more quickly! Our field staff will give you guidelines for finding sources of safe water.

Don't . . .

- Leave suitcases, bags, or purses unattended, even for a minute!
- Handle large amounts of money in public. Know how much you have and where it is.
- Give anybody any reason to rob you. That means don't wear flashy (or any) jewelry, watches, bulging pockets, or expensive-looking sunglasses.
- Disclose the tentative schedule or names of resource persons and groups of which you may be aware. This information should not be given either to "friendly strangers," to other resource persons on the program, or to anyone outside of your group. If you want

to ask someone about information provided by another resource person/organization, find a way to do this without mentioning the other person/organization (e.g. "I read before I came that. . .").

- Photograph military personnel or military installations. In many countries, airports and bridges are included in this prohibition. This is true for U.S. immigration and customs areas as well.
- Flush toilet paper down the toilet, it will stop up the septic system. Dispose in waste basket next to toilet.

Your group will have an orientation session upon arrival in Guatemala. You will receive additional information and have the opportunity to ask questions at that time. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the information above, call the Customized Programs staff at CGE.

NOTE: It's likely you will hear the above guidelines again at various points during your travel seminar. We ask for and appreciate your patience with this fact in advance of your trip.

Policy on Controlled Substances

Policy on Controlled Substances: Because of a past incident with one of our travel seminar groups, we would like to bring the following information to your attention:

The use, possession, transport, or purchase of “controlled substances” (i.e., illegal drugs) by a program participant carries significant risks and penalties for the participant, the entire group, and the reputation and legal status of the Center for Global Education in the countries in which we work.

A participant who uses illegal drugs while on a Center for Global Education program will be sent home at his or her own expense. If the participant is detained or arrested, legal officials in the site of the arrest (U.S. or foreign country) likely will not permit CGE staff to contact or assist the detained person in any way. CGE’s responsibility for the participant ends at the time of detention or arrest for drug violations.

United States law prohibits the transport of illegal drugs across its borders. Also, U.S. law does not protect U.S. citizens, U.S. residents, or others traveling abroad who violate foreign drug laws. The laws that prevail are those of the country in which the law was broken.

Please reference the U.S. State Department’s Travel Warning on Drugs Abroad for more information: http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/drugs/drugs_1237.html

And remember:

The police and customs officials have the right to search your luggage for drugs.

In many countries local laws make no distinction between hard and soft drugs.

United States laws DO NOT apply to Americans abroad who violate foreign laws. Once you are overseas, you are subject to the same penalties for drug violations as the nationals of the country you are visiting.

In some countries, anyone who is caught with even a very small quantity of drugs for personal use may be tried and receive the same sentence as a large-scale trafficker.

If you are arrested for drug possession abroad you may be subject to interrogation and/or solitary confinement for up to a year before trial and receive a mandatory prison sentence of seven years to life if you are convicted.

Suggested Publication Guidelines

Suggested Publication Guidelines: Some participants write an article for their community newspaper, organizational newsletter or other media outlet following their travel seminar. In order to minimize risks to the security of resource persons who will meet with your group, without obscuring the written information or losing the strength or credibility of the article, we suggest the following publication guidelines. You will learn more about security-related issues when you arrive in each country. We appreciate your consideration of these guidelines.

- Some people and organizations with which you meet may ask that you not identify them by name in anything published about your visit.
- In order to be more forthcoming in his/her presentation, a resource person may request no photographs, tape recordings or videotaping.
- Visits to U.S. Embassies are considered by the Embassies as background briefings only and are officially "off the record." Embassy personnel ask not to be quoted or identified by name.
- Cameras and tape recorders usually aren't allowed inside U.S. Embassies.
- Some government offices require that cameras and tape recorders be inspected prior to granting permission to take these items inside the building.
- We request respect for all speakers, whether you agree or disagree with their perspective. Ask the "hard questions," but be aware of the manner and tone in which they are stated.
- Discussing sensitive issues on the phone during your travel seminar is not advisable.

The following are some examples of journalism following the suggested guidelines:

"Some of the church people that had gathered after the trial was canceled were bitter. 'Here you don't see any justice,' said one woman, 'only injustice.'"

"American diplomats and Salvadoran political analysts argue that the gains in curbing gross human rights abuses, stabilizing the economy, training the army and supporting an elected civilian government are essential and hard-won first steps."

"It's going to take a long time,' says a knowledgeable military expert closely associated with the war effort."

"Local religious sources and foreign development workers in different parts of the country report that . . ."

"We often go hungry to feed our children,' says an agricultural laborer with three children."

Gift Giving

The Center for Global Education is committed to building long-lasting relationships with the communities in our host countries. As part of that commitment we have a policy of not giving gifts, no matter how small or inexpensive, to people on the streets, including not giving candy to children. Regardless of the intentions, the practice of gift-giving can lead to ill feelings among both givers and receivers. It also reinforces the stereotype of North Americans as patronizing, wealthy foreigners. If you wish to share something with the people you meet, we suggest you bring postcards, photos or mementoes from your home community and family.

Some groups may decide to make a monetary donation to one or more of the organizations with which they meet. This is always done in coordination with CGE staff, and the donation is given to a responsible individual within the organization to ensure that it goes for the intended purpose. This type of gift-giving is always voluntary.

Diversity

The Center for Global Education strives to create for its participants an intentionally diverse community of co-learners where a variety of cultures and backgrounds is represented. Students, faculty, and staff help each other respond to issues of oppression such as racism, sexism, homophobia, economic inequality, xenophobia, ableism, religious discrimination, and classism, in an environment where diversity expands participants' thinking and worldview.

Under 18 Years Old

CGE also coordinates a customized programs for high school youth. Young adults under the age of 18 are welcome to participate on a travel seminar provided they and their parents and/or legal guardians have completed a travel permission form and checked with CGE in advance. There are some travel seminars whose programming allows for the limited participation of children traveling with parents. Requests for children to accompany adult travel seminar participants are considered on a case-by-case basis. All travelers under 18 years of age are required to carry along two notarized letters or consent forms with their passport. For your convenience, we have

provided a certificate of consent form. These forms are located on the Short-Term Program Register Now page.

Contact Information

Friends and family may place a direct-dial call to you during your time in Guatemala. Before your departure, CGE will provide you with direct-dial emergency numbers for the places you will be staying. It is much less expensive to call from the United States to Central America than vice versa. Most of the accommodations CGE uses do not have phones in the rooms. We recommend that for international calls, participants use an AT&T, MCI or Sprint calling card.

After-hours emergency cell phone carried by a Minneapolis staff member whenever programs are in progress: 612-817-2830

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