

GUATEMALA



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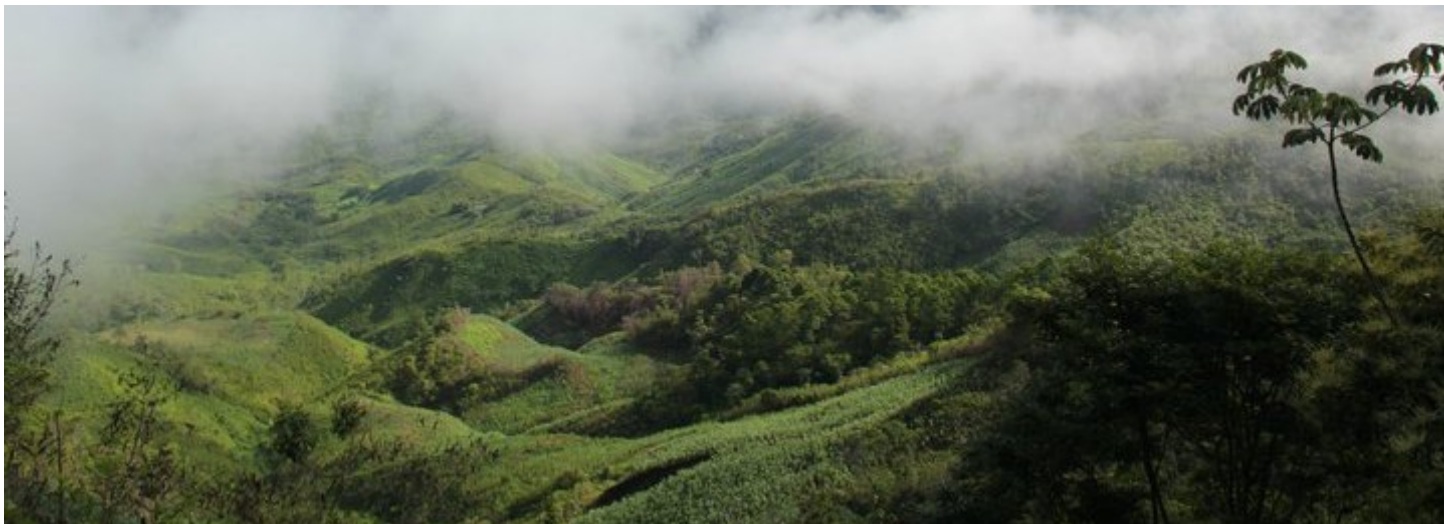
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COUNTRY INFORMATION



COUNTRY INFORMATION: GUATEMALA



Capital: Guatemala City

Population: 13+ million

Area: 42,043 sq. miles

Languages: Spanish & Q'eqchi

Government: Constitutional Democratic Republic

Neighboring Countries: Mexico, Belize, Honduras, El Salvador

Area to be visited: Polochic-Senahu Region (Chulac) of the state of Alta Verapaz.

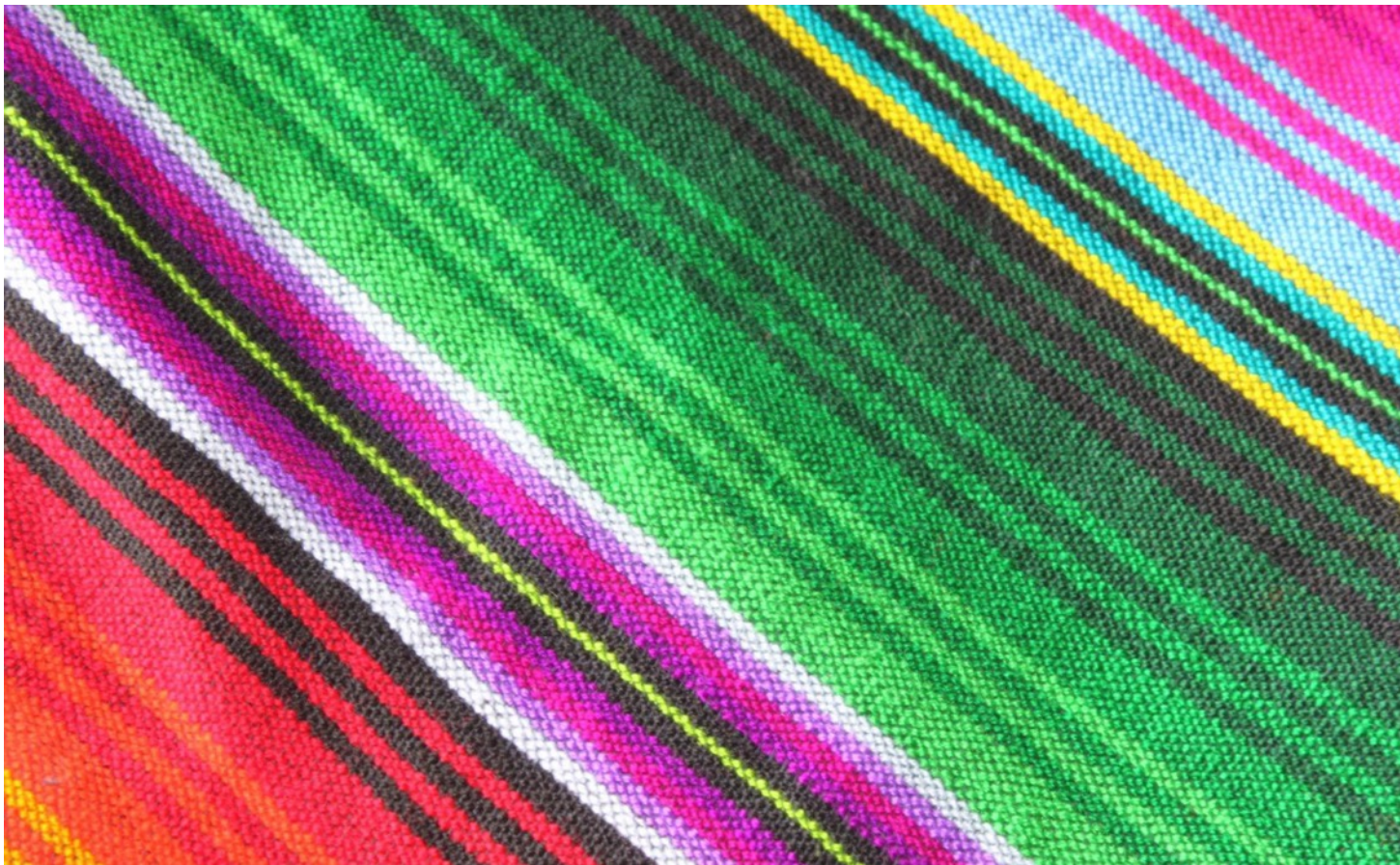
As with most countries, crime is generally present in the larger cities and is mostly non-violent towards tourists. The Polochic-Senahu Region has a very low crime rate.

POLOCHIC REGION

<http://issuu.com/familyhumanitarian/docs/polochicpassport?mode=window&viewMode=singlePage>

CURRENCY

The Guatemalan currency is the Quetzal (GTQ), which has been roughly \$1 USD = 8 Quetzals for some time. To verify current exchange rates, visit <https://fx-rate.net/GTQ/USD/>



ELECTRICITY

It is anticipated that electricity will be available where you will be sleeping, however, it never hurts to bring a power strip and/or power bank as outlets are limited. Extra batteries are helpful for cameras and other electronic equipment. Standard 2-prong plugs used in the U.S. work in Guatemala (110-120 volts/60 Hertz).

WEATHER

July and August are in the rainy season, which can bring with it thick, red mud. Days are generally hot and humid with cooler air in the evenings. Highs are generally 80-85° F and lows are 55-60° F, but with the high humidity, it feels much warmer. Other times of the year are milder, and the weather is generally beautiful but don't be surprised if you get rained on.

PRECAUTIONS

While theft is more of a problem in cities such as Guatemala City rather than in the Polochic Region, take appropriate precautions by ensuring that you keep your money and passport in a hidden place. Do not leave your belongings unattended in public. Keep cameras on a strap and don't go out alone or after dark. Leave expensive jewelry, watches, and valuables at home.

EXPEDITION LOGISTICS



Visit www.familyhumanitarian.org for in-depth details about all aspects of the expedition.

EXPEDITION FEES

A deposit of \$300 per person is due for registration and will be applied to the \$1275 per person expedition fee. This fee covers food, lodging, and transportation during the expedition and project materials.

Family Humanitarian is a 501c3 organization so expedition fees are tax-deductible as a charitable contribution. For more information, visit the link below:

<http://familyhumanitarian.org/expeditions/guatemala/>

Costs that are the responsibility of each expeditioner include airfare and associated taxes, any travel on your own, document costs (passport, visas, etc.), immunizations, and insurance. **Any meals eaten away from the group will be the responsibility of each participant.**

We recommend that you bring cash for souvenirs and for any additional personal expenses you might incur. A money pouch or belt is helpful to keep the money safely hidden. US dollars must be in perfect, crisp condition to be useful in Guatemala.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Visit <https://www.familyhumanitarian.org/registration/> step 4 for information on FH's cancellation policy.

TRAVEL DATES

Each participant is responsible for their own transportation to and from Guatemala. For travel dates, visit <http://familyhumanitarian.org/expeditions/guatemala/>

PRE & POST-TRAVEL

Expedition participants are free to organize their own travel before or after the expedition, but they must attend orientation on the first day of the expedition and depart from the village on the final day of the expedition.



TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

For detailed information, visit <https://www.familyhumanitarian.org/faqs/>

PASSPORT OR VISA (if applicable)

A current passport is needed to travel internationally. The expiration date should be no less than **6 months after** the end of the expedition.

CHILD AFFIDAVIT

A notarized Child Affidavit may be needed if a child is traveling with only one parent or a guardian and is under 18.

TRAVELER'S INSURANCE

Trip cancellation insurance is recommended to cover unforeseen circumstances that may arise and cause unexpected delays or flight cancellations. The required medical evacuation insurance is usually part of this recommended traveler's insurance. You can compare policies and options at <https://www.travelinsurance.com>.

MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE

Due to the lack of medical services in remote areas, FH **requires** all participants to purchase a minimum of \$25,000 in medical evacuation insurance and to send in proof of this insurance. **FH is not responsible for the cost of medical care, or any damage incurred during or because of a FH expedition.** You can compare policies and options at <https://www.travelinsurance.com>. Medical evacuation is not generally covered by health insurance.

TRANSPORTATION

Once in Guatemala, FH will arrange pickup of participants at the airport and arrange all other transportation needs during the expedition. Travel time to serve in the rural villages is extensive. As you travel remember that it is part of the work, the sacrifice of self, to bring love, hope, and joy to rural parts of the world where many humanitarians are not willing to travel.

If you travel within Guatemala on your own before or after the expedition, you are free to coordinate transportation (as well as to and from the airport) to meet your needs.

LODGING & SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

Rooms have been reserved at the Hotel Barcelo in Guatemala City for the first and last night of the expedition. While in the Polochic Valley, accommodations will be with the group in a common area, either a gym or a school on the concrete. If this poses a problem for health reasons, let us know so that we can discuss alternate arrangements with you.

If families or individuals desire to do so, a tent may be used for privacy while sleeping. Please ensure that you pack a compact sleeping pad or mat, a lightweight sleeping bag, a pillow, and any other items needed for your comfort, as the accommodations in Senahu will be rustic. You'll likely be sleeping on a cement floor and **men and women may be sleeping in the same room, with separate changing areas and restrooms**. Earplugs and a sleep aid are **very** helpful.

FOOD & WATER



Meals during the expedition will be provided for by FH and will be prepared locally. Precautions will be taken to ensure that US-standard sanitary practices are observed. **Fruits and vegetables will be washed in chlorinated water to ensure they are safe to eat.** Please ensure that you are not wasteful. It is perfectly appropriate to say "no thank you" if you are about to be served something you don't think you'll eat.

Always wash your hands before you eat or put your hands near your mouth.

If traveling on your own, ensure that the food in restaurants is well-cooked and served hot. Fruit and vegetables with a peel are safest.

Take precautions with the water in Guatemala by using bottled or filtered water only, even for brushing your teeth. FH will provide safe drinking water during the expedition. Most water FH provides will be in five-gallon containers. Please be mindful to not use drinking water to clean your body. If traveling on your own, also take precautions that the ice is made from purified water. Ensure that you drink throughout the day to avoid dehydration.

SHOWERS & RESTROOMS

Arrangements have been made for showers and toilet facilities. Please keep in mind, however, that the accommodations are rustic. Bring your toiletries and towel as well as toilet paper just in case. Bring a swimsuit and water shoes/flip flops for showers, as facilities are not always completely private. Be conscious of water usage.

WORKSHOPS & CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Visit <http://familyhumanitarian.org/programs/> for more information on the workshops and construction project.

Keep in mind that we are there to help; that sometimes requires patience with the villagers as well as other expeditioners. We're there to both work to help the villagers improve their circumstances as well as to take moments of downtime to connect with and learn from them, play games, etc. The labor we provide is secondary to the financing of important projects and especially the love, joy, and hope that we bring.

SUNDAY SERVICES

When possible, LDS Sunday worship services will be held for those who wish to attend but are strictly optional.

COMMUNICATION

Cell phone coverage will be spotty, in the event of an emergency, your family can contact you by calling Guillermo Lopez, the in-country coordinator, at +011+502+3355-9119. Due to the remoteness of the area, there may be delays in getting messages to you, although every attempt will be made. Each year internet and cell phone service improves. You may check with your cell phone provider to see if an international plan would serve you.

We anticipate full internet service at the Barcelo in Guatemala City.

MEDICATIONS



In addition to bringing any medications you take on a regular basis, recommended medications include the following medications listed below. Consult with your physician to ensure that none of them interfere with the medications you are currently taking. It is recommended that you bring enough medication for the length of the expedition as well as extra in case of emergencies. Due to the limited availability of medication in developing countries, don't plan to rely on purchasing them in-country. Also, ensure they are in their original containers to prevent problems with customs.

Prescription Medications:

- Azithromycin for traveler's diarrhea. (Highly Recommended: one full prescription for each member of the family.) While we make every effort to avoid illness occasionally a group or individual will have problems. If you will start your antibiotic the minute your tummy begins to rumble illness should be very short.
- Ambien (optional) or any sleep aid you are comfortable with. Sleeping conditions will not be quiet or ideal.
- Zofran (optional) or any preferred medication for motion sickness. Due to the road conditions, those prone to motion sickness may need extra support.
- Malaria prophylaxis (optional) Locally, it is reported that there is no malaria in the area to which we are traveling and most do not recommend preventative medication. However, consult with your physician/travel clinic for recommendations.

Non-prescription Medications:

- Imodium (highly recommended) for traveler's diarrhea symptoms. The azithromycin will stop the problem from persisting or growing, but the Imodium will help with the symptoms.
- Pepto Bismol tablets (optional) for diarrhea or upset stomach.
- Benadryl or Tylenol PM (optional) for a sleep aid if you don't have access to Ambien or don't want to use it.
- Ibuprofen (optional) for minor aches and pains.

ATTIRE

Guatemalans in general, especially in this area of the Polochic Region, are very modest. Expeditioners, particularly females, are urged to wear pants, skirts, or shorts that go to the knees. (Please avoid crop tops or short shorts.) We don't recommend bringing expensive clothing; the red mud may stain clothing.

CODE OF CONDUCT

FH's code of conduct during expeditions includes no use of alcohol, smoking, and drugs as well as the wearing of modest apparel. This code also includes non-married members of the opposite sex not sleeping in the same tent or bed.

ENGAGING WITH THE LOCALS

Consider bringing pictures of your family, nail polish to paint fingernails, bubbles to play with the children, equipment to play sports games (soccer, football, jump rope, etc.), or instruments to share music. Playing a simple game of tag or showing them a new dance or learning words from their language can be good ways to connect. Encourage locals to share something important to them – a dance, music, or making a local craft.

It's about the people, not the projects.



GIFTING POLICY

In order to ensure we don't create a handout mentality, we have a policy of no gifting (even small things like candies, balloons, or stickers). Our goal is to create relationships and friendships rather than being looked to for handouts. This also prevents the problem of some villagers receiving things that others do not, which can create bad feelings.

However, if you have items that you would like to donate to the community (such as sports equipment or school supplies) or have large quantities of items you'd like to donate, contact Michaela Shirley at michaela.s@familyhumanitarian.org to discuss.

Also, please do not make promises to the villagers for work opportunities, scholarships, etc. If you would like to help the villagers in any way, please work through FH Leadership.

WHAT TO EXPECT

What Youth Can Expect

Youth can expect to have an amazing cultural experience as they work and play alongside their parents and the local villagers. Activities for youth will include:

- Teaching opportunities
- Building/construction opportunities
- Group games with villagers such as soccer, basketball, frisbee, and kickball
- Talent Sharing (encouraged to bring harmonicas or balls for juggling or other talents to share)
- Hikes and other adventure
- Sharing sessions to help internalize the expedition experiences

JUST REMEMBER: Things in Guatemala move on Guatemala time!

Things tend to move slower and less efficiently than you may be accustomed. Unexpected delays and changes in plans are very common. Expect the unexpected! Try not to worry about locals waiting for you. They aren't worried. Flexibility will make your experience much more enjoyable.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)



For other questions, visit the FAQ section at <http://familyhumanitarian.org/about-us/faqs/> or contact Carrie Kirk at carrie.k@familyhumanitarian.org



TO DOS

FORMS & REQUIRED INFORMATION

Please make sure that flight itineraries and flight and passport information are uploaded to your registration forms as soon as possible. To make sure that you can access your registration account, please use the link provided on your registration confirmation email to set up an account.

If you are traveling with a minor who is not accompanied by both parents, you will want to carry an authorization for minor to travel form with you during your travels.

VACCINATIONS & IMMUNIZATIONS

While current guidelines from the U.S. Center for Disease Control don't require vaccinations for entering Guatemala, a Hepatitis A shot and/or Typhoid may be considered. Hepatitis A would be most often considered if you are working in a medical clinic. We have had great luck with our caterers taking every precaution and keeping us safe from typhoid, but typhoid is a bacteria that can spread if one person is infected from eating food prior to our expedition. Most expeditioners do not get these vaccinations, but we do want to point out that they should be considered as there is increased risk whenever traveling in the developing world.

Participants from countries other than the United States should check with their consulate to ensure there are no other restrictions that apply.

PACKING LIST

Be sure to check the weather forecast prior to departure to ensure appropriate packing. It is wise to think in **layers** when preparing for a service trip abroad. Highs most days about 80-85° F, but with the humidity, it often feels warmer. Low is generally 55-60° F and evenings are cool. Rain is very possible. Participants have found that packing everything in bags keeps clothes clean and smelling nice. Bringing a bag for dirty clothes throughout the expedition is also recommended. Leave behind a clean change of clothes at the hotel or keep a clean change of clothes in a plastic bag during the entire expedition so that there is a fresh outfit to wear upon your return to Guatemala City.

Quick-dry clothing is recommended. Any athletic, quick-dry, wicking type of clothing is very helpful, but the purchase of new clothing is not necessary. Consider packing clothing that could be donated upon departure.

You may want to gather items to engage local village children – they love nail polish, bubbles, balls, jump ropes, games, storybooks, etc. Remember we have a no gifting policy. We do not leave items with individuals, but the items you bring may be donated to village leaders or schools when we depart. **DO NOT BRING** candy for handing out. We have even found crayons and coloring books to be difficult. Avoid items that must be used by individuals, not groups.

The expedition packet that you will receive approximately 8 weeks before your expedition will include a packing list of specific recommended items for your trip. Please contact Carrie Kirk at carrie.k@familyhumanitarian.org for needs or concerns.

You will need to pack sleeping gear including a compact ground mat/air mattress, a small lightweight sleeping bag, and a pillow. A tent may also be brought for additional privacy.

PACKING TIPS

1. **Pack as lightly as possible.** You will be responsible for handling your entire luggage during any transfers or excursions. Suitcases or duffle bags with wheels are helpful.
2. **Don't bring large amounts of items in your personal medical pouch.** You will only need a small supply of each item.
3. **Make a copy of your passport picture page and put it in your suitcase and/or a picture on your phone.**
4. **When you check in for your domestic flight, check your baggage all the way through to the final destination.**
Be prepared to show your international e-ticket. You should not be charged the domestic baggage fee. We recommend that you keep your baggage claim tickets in an easily accessible place as it will be checked when leaving the Guatemala City Airport.
5. **Pack a carry-on bag** with a change of clothing for each family member as well as medications and other essentials just in case your luggage doesn't show up with you. It can take a while for it to catch up to the group.

DO NOT BRING

- Expensive jewelry or watches
- Expensive clothing
- Anything not replaceable

LANGUAGE PREPARATION



Both Spanish and Q'eqchi are spoken in the Polochic Region, however Q'eqchi is most common. Below are some common Q'eqchi words and phrases. For more detailed information, download the [Spanish](#) and [Q'eqchi](#) language cheat-sheets. Downloading Spanish Google Translate is also helpful.

(**X** = “sh” sound / **J** = “h” sound / **W** = “kw” or “qu” sound)

ENGLISH

Hello - How Are You? (*happy in your heart?*)

I am fine (*happy in my heart*)

What's up?

How is your family?

How are your children?

My name is Martha

What is your name?

Mother

Father

Brother

Sister

Children

Grandmother

Grandfather

Yes

No

Thank you

You're welcome

Pardon me (I'm sorry)

I don't understand

Good

Pretty

Water

Food

Good (delicious)

Goodbye

Good morning

Good evening

Q'EQCHI

Ma Sa Laa Ch'ool?

Laain Sa Lin Ch'ool

K'aru Ta K'ul

Chanru Wan Laa Jun Kab'al?

Chan Ru Wankeb' Laa Kok'al?

Ani Laa K'aba Martha

Chanru Laa K'aba?

Na'

Yuwa'

Asb'ej

Anab'ej

Kok'al

Na'chin

Wa'chin

Henh'

Ink'a

B'antiox

K'ulbilex

Chi Na Kuyaq'

In K'a Nan Taw Ru

Us

Ch'inaus

Ha'

Xtib'el Wa'

Saasa

In Wanb'i

Ch'owa (*man*) | Ch'ona (*woman*)

Ch'owa (*man*) | Ch'ona (*woman*)

(adapted from CHOICE Humanitarian)



We look forward to seeing you
on the expedition!

