

Guatemala 2016



Short-Term Mission Team Handbook

Trip Dates to be Announced

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The Mission Begins with God

In thinking about traveling to Guatemala, we start with God's Word. This helps us understand His will for us and for the trip.

Go make disciples – Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age. [Matthew 28:18-20]

Beautiful are the feet of messengers – Romans 10:14-15

But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the scriptures say, "How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!" [Romans 10:14-15]

Our Spiritual Gifts – Romans 12:6-8

In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. [Romans 12:6-8]

God has called us to go and spread the gospel. And he has given each of us unique gifts that we are told to use well.

The Guatemala mission trip is an opportunity to grow in our individual faith while using those unique gifts to spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

The Mission of our Mission

Trip Mission Statement

Partnering with local leaders in Guatemala to spread the Love of Christ.

The San Marcos province of Guatemala is a fertile mission field. Evidence of Christianity is everywhere, but there are many hardships in both spiritual and daily life.

Our ministry activities make a difference. The medical care that we take for granted in the US is difficult for many Guatemalans especially in poor rural areas. VBS activities, bible studies, and contact with local churches encourages local leaders and helps them reach out into the community. In just a week, we can affect lives in a lasting way. And our lives can be affected in a lasting way.

The Mission Team

The mission team consists not only of the group traveling from the US to Guatemala, but also our missionaries, guides, the staff that supports us, and our sponsors and supporters.

Missionaries

Ovidio Garcia- Ovidio is our host in Guatemala. He has been involved with Mission House for about 15 years. He was raised in Comitancillo where we will be staying, and speaks fluent Mam, Spanish, and English. He takes good care of our teams. If you want to know about local customs or attitudes, he'll help educate you. He recently graduated from Ophthalmology school and has an eye clinic in Comitancillo where he sees patients as both a business and a personal mission to the community.

Rolando Lorenzo – Rolando has been a part of our teams for the past 5 years. He grew up in a village named Taltimiche nearby to Comitancillo where his family grows trees and vegetables. Rolando attended the FTEI Bible Institute in Comi, and is considered a pastor within the community. When he is not hosting teams his main responsibility is providing on-going support to the local pastors and leaders whom our teams visit. He also helps Elder with administrative details of the student scholarship program.

Support Staff (Mission Housing Ministries)

The staff at Mission House (also affectionately known as “The Casa”) is caring and supportive. Juana and Esperanza cook and clean for us during our stay. They provide wonderful meals, including some local specialties all prepared so that they are safe for visitors to eat.

Elder, Hugo and several others act as a guides and translators for our team. Each has spent some time in the US and can help not only with translation, but also with questions about daily life in Guatemala or the local culture.

Sponsors and Supporters

Some very valuable members of our team remain stateside during the trip. It is truly a blessing to have them involved. In fact, this ministry would not be possible without them. Some support missionaries and missions trips as their own personal calling. They provide prayer, supplies and financial support for the trip, and we do our best to be good stewards of these resources and use them effectively as we spread God's Word in Guatemala.

Trip Dates

To be announced

Cost

There are three components of trip cost.

1. Airfare: Approximately \$700 per person. This is contracted directly with the airlines.
2. In-country expenses: \$850. This covers all ground transportation, food, and lodging while in Guatemala, but does not cover include personal expenses like snacks or souvenirs. Payment for in-country expenses will be provided to Mission Housing Ministries.

It is important to know that this amount helps provide support year-round for the operations of Mission House and the people that serve teams like ours. And the full amount is put to work in Guatemala.

Mission House is committed to putting 100% of your money to work in the mission field.

3. Ministry expenses: Generally estimated at \$100 per person, but may be greater depending on the ministry activities of the team. Medicine will need to be purchased for the clinics, and construction materials purchased in advance so that sites are prepared for the team's arrival in Comitancillo. Some of these purchases need to be made through Mission House while others may be handled directly by the team. We will work in partnership to make sure that details are properly planned and funding is appropriate.

Total cost per person is estimated at \$1,650.00.

Ministry Expectations and Details

We will have 4 days of ministry in rural Guatemala on this year's trip. We have found this is a great amount of time to build relationships and minister in the small communities surrounding the city of Comitancillo. Some likely components of our ministry are described below.



Figure 1: Children at VBS craft time

VBS-Style Children's ministry

We may develop a program of music, Bible stories, teaching, crafts, songs, or skits which we will use to minister to children and families during the medical clinics. We typically see anywhere from 40 to 200 children at a VBS event. It is amazing to see children and families walking to the church to join us, and these events help lift up the church leadership and encourage them in their ministry.

Light Construction

You may be asked to help dig post holes with a machete, set posts, hang corrugated steel sheets, pour a concrete floor, paint some walls, or help lay some concrete blocks. Prior construction experience is not needed. There are several on-going construction projects where we could join in, or we may choose to build a house for a needy family.

Medical/Health Mission

We will be traveling to small outlying churches each day to host medical clinics. These clinics will usually draw between 60 and 200 people with a variety of health needs, many of them basic. During the clinics we will also have crafts and activities for the family members who are not seeing our medical team. The goal is to minister to everyone spiritually while we help meet medical needs.

Music Ministry

Music is universal, and songs reach beyond the language barrier.

Men's Bible Study and Prayer Groups

We may host a Men's group to study the Word and share some time in prayer and fellowship.

Women's Tea and Prayer Groups

While tea may be a misnomer (other drinks are often served), this is a time for prayer and respect. It is a time to honor and serve the Mayan ladies who do not often receive this kind of treatment. Prayer time is powerful, and their prayer is usually a little different from what we are used to here in the US.

Shoe Ministry

People in rural Guatemala walk everywhere and are always in need of new shoes that will protect their feet. Consider asking for donations of new or lightly used shoes. While we may distribute a few pair during the trip, shoes or other supplies are usually distributed through local pastors and through the Mission House scholarship program to help encourage local ministry and to insure that they are going to truly needy families.

Evening Devotionals

There will be time each evening for the group to gather together for a devotional while we prepare for the next day. Since the team may not be together throughout the day, it is an amazing part of the trip to hear where God was present in the ministry.

Travel Expectations and Details

Passport

Please remember it takes about 6 weeks for passports to arrive, so check yours and apply or renew well in advance of the trip.

Flights

To be determined.

The long drive to Comitancillo

The drive from Guatemala City to Comitancillo takes 6-8 hours including 3-4 rest stops and a meal along the way. Because this trip is so long, we stay in Guatemala City the first and last nights.

The good news is that the roads are scenic, the company is good, and the conversation is enjoyable. Mission House provides well-maintained vehicles and drivers who make the trip many times each year, so our team can enjoy the journey.

Lodging

We stay at the Barceló Hotel in Guatemala City on the first and last nights of the trip. This is a 4-star hotel and we have had good experience with our teams here. They have all the amenities including a pool, fitness center (big one), restaurants, and several shops. Our teams generally begin their next day healthy and rested after a stay at the Barcelo.

The majority of the trip is spent at the Mission House in Comitancillo, lovingly referred to as “The Casa”. Rooms are basic but clean, safe, and comfortable. There are separate men’s and women’s bathrooms, each with 2 shower stalls, toilets, and sinks. There is also a large dining area and a living room where we hold devotionals and meetings. This is the perfect place to stay during while we are ministering in the area.

The staff takes excellent care of everyone during our stay at Mission House. They have learned how to prepare food and beverages that are safe for visitors to eat, and they maintain a clean and inviting “home away from home.”



Figure 2: Mission House and Team Vehicles

We have chosen to add a rest day to the trip so that our team can visit Lake Atitlan. This is a beautiful volcanic lake in central Guatemala, and a tourist location. We will be staying at a very nice hotel called the Posada de Don Rodrigo where we will be well cared for. While at the Lake there will be time for sightseeing and visiting an open air market for crafts and souvenirs.

Food

All of your meals while we are in Guatemala are provided as part of the trip. When in the town we will be eating at a variety of restaurants. Be prepared for some guidance regarding what is safe for us to eat and what is not. When we are at Mission House or out in the local communities, special food will be prepared for our team. Food and water are our biggest health risks, but with careful selection of restaurants and careful preparation of food items we have had good success in keeping our teams healthy, happy, and well-fed.

Meals while traveling to and from Guatemala are not included in the cost of the trip, so please bring a little spending money for snacks or meals in the airports.

Language

Learn and review as much Spanish as you can. We will have interpreters with us but you will find all the Spanish you know to be helpful. In Comitancillo, Mam is the native dialect of the local Mayan Indians and the main spoken language. Mam is difficult to learn and nothing like Spanish, so we rely on our guides to translate for us. However, most of the Mayans will know Spanish. Some of the young people will even know a few words of English. It's fun to try to learn how to communicate!

Personal Spending Money

A good estimate for personal spending money is somewhere between \$50 and \$150 per person. You may want this for the following:

- Snacks or meals during travel from/to the US.
- Souvenirs or snacks while in Guatemala City or Lake Atitlan
- Tips for porters to carry your personal bags at the hotels (We'll handle tips and fees for the duffel bags filled with ministry supplies)
- Leatherwork or woven goods from artisans that come to Mission House.

The local currency is the Quetzal. One dollar is worth approximately 7.5 Quetzales. Most vendors will also accept American dollars, but the exchange rate may not be very good. For this reason, you can exchange currency upon arrival at the Barcelo Hotel in Guatemala City and Ovidio will be able to exchange small amounts throughout the trip as necessary.

You might want to bring (1) VISA credit card to use in the tourist areas. VISA is the most widely accepted card, but others are beginning to gain acceptance. Be aware that most credit card companies charge a fee of 3-4% for non-US dollar transactions. Let your credit card company's security department know the dates that you will be in Guatemala so that they do not deactivate your card when the first Guatemalan transaction comes through!

Spread money between different pockets or handbags, and be careful what you allow others to see. We will be in good areas, but your money can be a great temptation to others so please manage it carefully.

Luggage

We have an allotment of 3 bags each for travel on the airlines. This includes one carry on, one free checked bag, and a personal item like a purse or laptop computer. The checked bag has a weight limit of 50lbs and a total maximum measurement (L + W + H) of 62 inches.

Please pack everything you will need on the first night in your carry-on. Be sure that your passport, an additional picture ID and any personal medications that you may need for the week are included there. Carry or pack a sweater or jacket where it can be easily reached. You might want to pack some snacks in your carry on and in your checked luggage as well. We secure as many bags as possible in the vehicles in Guatemala City, so items packed in large duffel bags may not be easy to access.

We try to use as much space as possible in our larger luggage for supplies to support our trip. If we pack well, the team will likely be able to avoid fees for extra baggage.

Clothing

Plan on 70-80 degree days and 40-50 degree nights. Plan for rain as there is usually at least a passing afternoon shower.

Clothes should be conservative. Jeans and T-shirts are fine for work days. Shorts are fine at the casa and for travel days. All shirts should have sleeves, no tank tops or short shirts that show your stomach.

For women on ministry days, we suggest ankle length skirts and a conservative top. Although this is not our American way, we dress this way out of respect for the culture of the people we visit. Almost all of the women and girls that you meet in rural areas will be dressed this way. For men, khakis and a polo shirt will be appropriate. Jeans are becoming more common especially in cities and towns, and are acceptable for either men or women, but not preferred.

Clothing, especially raingear is appreciated if you would like to leave it in Guatemala rather than bring it back home.

If you have piercings please remove them, and please be conscious of any tattoos, or tee-shirt graphics, that might be misunderstood.

Other Personal Effects

Some things to have on you at all times:

- A few sheets of toilet paper(most bathrooms have none)
- Small bottle of hand sanitizer.
- Sunscreen if you'll be out in the sun
- A picture ID. Passports may stay at Mission House or in a hotel safe, but it is good to have your secondary ID with you at all times.

Because of the altitude it is rare to see mosquitoes. Houseflies are common but most other insects are non-existent. We have rarely needed any form of insect repellent.

Don't bring or wear expensive jewelry, multiple credit cards, expensive electronics, or special pictures that you wouldn't want to lose.

Communicating with Home

Communication is becoming much easier, but can still be a difficulty while we are outside of the city. E-mail and social media are the best bet since there are wireless internet connections in the hotels and at Mission House. However, the connections are not as reliable as in the US, so it is quite possible that access may be limited.

For emergency situations or when it is necessary to speak with someone personally, we will use Ovidio's cell phone. His number is:

Ovidio's cell #011-502-3007-8617

Health Considerations

Immunizations

You may wish to visit the CDC travel website for their full set of recommendations. The link is:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/guatemala.htm>

To summarize, they recommend that your routine vaccinations (MMR, DPT, tetanus, etc) are up to date. In addition, they recommend immunizations for Hepatitis A, and Typhoid. A recent flu shot is also a good idea.

Malaria is not a significant risk in the areas that we will be visiting.

Good Practice


The largest risk to our health is bacteria in the water and food supply. There are also intestinal parasites and other organisms in the water supply, so it's important to be very careful not to drink this water or get it in your eyes, ears, nose, or mouth. This applies to bathing and brushing of teeth. We'll talk about how to do these things safely when we arrive at Mission House.

Other advice for a safe and healthy trip:

- Wash your hands with soap and water and then sanitize with an alcohol based gel. This is especially important before eating. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand gel (with at least 60% alcohol).
- Drink only bottled or boiled water, or carbonated drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and anything with ice cubes unless our hosts can confirm that the water has been purified.
- Do not eat food purchased from street vendors.
- Make sure food is fully cooked. Remember, lettuce and tomatoes on a hamburger have not been cooked.
- Avoid dairy products, unless you know that they have been pasteurized.

Diseases from food and water often cause vomiting and diarrhea. It is a good idea to bring anti-diarrheal medicine with you so that you can treat mild cases yourself. For more severe cases Mission House has a supply of antibiotics available on-site.

Taking a series of acidophilus has been found to reduce stomach complaints. Starting 2 weeks before the trip, take 2 acidophilus tablets daily. Continue this during the trip and for 2 weeks after returning. Some say that the live cultures are best. You can find these pills in the refrigerated sections of health food stores or you can eat yogurt with live cultures.



Sample Trip Schedule

This sample schedule will be updated as we confirm our church partners in Guatemala and discuss the ministry opportunities with them.

| | Morning Activity | Afternoon Activity | Lodging |
|--------|--|--|--------------------------|
| May 30 | Depart DFW Flight American 1013 Time 5:05pm | Arrive Guatemala, hotel check-in, dinner. | Barcelo |
| May 31 | Drive to Comi, Lunch in Xela, arrive 4PM | Craft Vendors at MH Unpack and Prepare | Mission House |
| Jun 1 | Morning Clinic, Construction, Women's Tea, Or Home Visits | Medical Clinic & VBS – Community TBD | Mission House |
| Jun 2 | Morning Clinic, Construction, Women's Tea, Or Home Visits | Medical Clinic & VBS – Community TBD | Mission House |
| Jun 3 | Comi Market Day, Visit Eye Clinic, FTEI Bible Institute | Medical Clinic & VBS – Community TBD | Mission House |
| Jun 4 | Morning Clinic, Construction, Women's Tea, Or Home Visits | Medical Clinic & VBS – Community TBD | Mission House |
| Jun 5 | Drive to Panajachel at Lake Atitlan | Arrive Lunchtime Afternoon Free Time Team Recap Meeting Dinner 6:00PM | Posada de Don Rodrigo |
| Jun 6 | Morning Free Time, Sightseeing, Market | Drive to Guatemala City, Hotel check-in, dinner, prep for departure. | Barcelo |
| Jun 7 | Depart GUA Flight American 1188 Time 6:30am | Arrive Dallas | |

Each day we will hope to have our morning and afternoon activities in the same village so that we can build deeper relationships.

Background Information

Where are we going?

The Highlands are a chain of mountains extending across Guatemala in an east-west direction. They are highest in the west. There, Vulkan Tajumulco-the highest mountain in Central America-rises 13,845 feet (4,220 meters) above sea level. The region has many volcanoes, some of which are active. Earthquakes sometimes occur in the Highlands. Guatemala's longest river, the 250-mile (402-kilometer) Motagua, rises in the Highlands and flows to the Caribbean Sea.

Comitancillo is in San Marcos in the Highlands region. It is the poorest province in Guatemala with multiple health problems and a scarcity of medical services and information. There are high rates of malnutrition, infant mortality, alcoholism, soaring unemployment... the list goes on.

We will be staying at Mission House in Comitancillo and driving a short distance each day to rural churches which are a few miles outside of Comitancillo.



The people we will visit

The families we will be serving are part of Guatemala's impoverished Mayan majority. The sixty percent of Guatemalans who are members of indigenous Mayan groups own only six percent of the land. Many survive on less than \$4 a day. Basic resources such as health care, electricity and potable water are scarce in the highlands, where the majority of the Maya

live. Yet these people endure, maintaining pride in their ancient languages and rich cultural traditions, while seeking ways to overcome the obstacles of poverty and discrimination by the larger Hispanic society.

The Mayans are friendly and welcoming, and generally a softer-spoken culture than we are in the US. During our visit, you'll have an opportunity to learn some Mam words and practice some basic Spanish. Our hosts will help you understand the local customs and they will provide translation and guidance for meetings, clinics, and ministry activities.



Figure 3: Irma, Lesbia, and Rolbin's House



Preparation Lists and Materials

Travel preparation checklist:

January-February

- Renew passport (Allow at least 4-6 weeks for processing)
- Get immunizations (see section above and/or CDC travel website) .
- Pay for Airfare
- Participate in early planning for ministry activities. Let us know of any particular preferences, skills, or thoughts that might help in the ministry.

March

- Attend first planning meeting for ministry activities.
- Begin working on planning for your particular areas of ministry (songs, crafts, stories, women's tea, etc.)

April

- Attend second planning meeting for ministry activities.
- Pay for In-country expenses and any construction project funding

May

- Attend third meeting to gather supplies and pack
- Start taking acidophilus (2 weeks before departure)
- Get last minute supplies
- Pack personal effects
- GO!

Packing Checklist

- Passport (Also pack a photocopy in one of your bags)
- Bible, notebook, and pen
- 2-5 Travel outfits for use on travel or sightseeing days. Jeans, shorts, tee-shirts are all acceptable.
- 2-4 Church outfits for use on ministry days in Chipel. Men polos or button-up shirts are preferred, women long dresses or skirts below the knee, please.
- Shoes or boots that can handle some abuse. We will be walking on dirt roads every day, and rain is common.
- Rain coat or poncho
- Jacket, sweat shirt, or sweater... nights can be chilly.
- Toiletries (shampoo, deodorant, etc.). Pack in "travel size" quantities. If you wear contact lenses, carry the necessary cleansing agents and pack an extra pair of eyeglasses.
- Small Flashlight
- Wet wipes for cleaning hands/face
- Hand sanitizer (a couple of travel-sized bottles should do).
- Anti-diarrheal medicine
- Roll of toilet tissue
- Travel sized sunscreen
- Camera, charger and extra memory card (bring a high-capacity storage device if you would like to trade photos & videos)
- Extra batteries for any electronic devices. These items can be hard to find and very costly in another country.
- Spending money (\$50-\$150)
- Alarm clock, watch, or phone that can wake you up
- Snacks for travel days
- Family picture to show others if your family is not traveling

Team Roster and Contact Information

| Name | E-mail | Phone |
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In Partnership With:



Mission
Housing
Ministries

Go - Serve - Grow
Comitancillo, Guatemala

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