



Volunteer/Visitor Preparation Pack - Guatemala

Thank you for considering coming to visit or serve in Guatemala with Street Kids Direct and its partner organisation SKD Guatemala. We are certain that you will thoroughly enjoy your time in Guatemala but we do need to point out a few things that you will need to take into consideration.

Serving in a cross-cultural context has its blessings and its difficulties. The purpose of this preparation pack is to get you ready for the times of growth and stretching that you will inevitably experience living and serving in a developing country such as Guatemala. To make the most of your experience, please come with a humble, learning attitude and ready for adventure!

Guatemalan Culture

After your first couple of weeks in Guatemala you will begin to notice the differences between Guatemala and the UK. Not only is the language, food, and driving different, but so is the way people interact with one another. The culture in Guatemala may be different than you expected, but it is not better or worse than any other culture.

There are a few things that we will explain to you when you arrive in Guatemala but be prepared and willing to make some cultural adjustments in order to politely conform to your host country.

It is expected that volunteers WILL NOT DRINK ALCOHOL while they are with us. Some Christians do drink alcohol here, but most don't. Almost all the children we work with have grown up with abusive parents who drink alcohol and so the smell of it on you can trigger unhelpful memories and experiences. For the short time you are with us it is worth considering the needs of the kids.

Volunteer Activities

As a volunteer your duties will be explained to you on arrival and dependent upon what type of activities you have asked to participate in.

You could be asked to work on the streets, in a Centre, teach children or young people, help with administration or a who variety of tasks that will help fulfill the mission of SKD Guatemala.

Housing

You can opt to stay in our Protection Home in zone 11 of Guatemala City for up to a week.

You will notice on arrival that the house is well protected and has security cameras throughout. It is a very comfortable home with TV, WIFI, hot water and laundry facilities. The bedrooms are dorm style and they have on-suite facilities.

The cost of staying at the house is \$15 a night for bed and breakfast. All other meals can be arranged on a day-to-day basis with your team leader. Volunteers can buy their own food for lunch and dinner and cook for themselves as required. **All payments will need to be made on arrival for the total number of nights you are expected to stay.**

We do recommend that volunteers find their own accommodation via AirB&B as some great places can be found not far from where we work. We can always advise on this if needed.

Safety

Although Guatemala is a beautiful country, it can also be a dangerous place if you make unwise decisions. Because of this, we ask volunteers to always keep their leaders or Dunc aware of their locations. You must ALWAYS carry your passport or a copy of it with you in Guatemala.

YOU MUST be aware that Guatemala is considered by many to be a violent country and violence is a fact of life that all Guatemalans live with every day. Most volunteers and visitors leave Guatemala with great memories and do not see any violence but the nature of our work does mean we work in some very “high risk” areas. For this reason, we will ask all visitors and volunteers to sign a waiver form before arriving in Guatemala.

This website <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/guatemala> will be good to be read before coming to Guatemala. This site is the official UK Government website and gives a lot of useful information/facts on Guatemala.

Health and Sanitation

Tap water is considered unsafe to drink. It is okay to bathe with, but we suggest brushing your teeth with purified water. In addition to the water provided in the home purified water is available in most stores and restaurants.

When using the bathroom in the home, and anywhere else in Guatemala, please put your **toilet paper in the paper bin next to the toilet** and not in the toilet itself. The pipes in Guatemala do not support toilet paper.

In the case of sickness, we will take you to a local clinic. The most common sickness here is a gastro-intestinal infection and resulting diarrhea, easily treated with an antibiotic. Please make

sure you have good international medical insurance and bring your own supply of basic medicines, etc.

Please ask your doctor about the most recent injections you will need in order to travel to Central America. Usually you will need the following:

Required: Tetanus, Typhoid, Hepatitis A

Optional (dependent upon individual surgeries advice): Hepatitis B (free jab if combined with Hep A), Diphtheria (usually comes with Tetanus), Rabies – this is expensive but most consider it worth having. Malaria is optional but advised for Guatemala but many visitors do not take it and suffer no ill effects as Guatemala City is not a malaria zone. If you do choose to take Malarial medicine you will find that it is an inexpensive course only needing to be taken once a week rather than daily.

Church Involvement

If you are staying in Guatemala over a Sunday you will be expected to attend a church with Dunc or one of the team. If this is not your usual Sunday activity then please be open minded and enjoy the new experience. Church services normally last about 1 ½ hours and are lively, engaging but of course are in Spanish.

Transportation

Most volunteers now take advantage of the cheap and secure form or taxi service UBER. There is also a very good (and safe) Trans-Metro system in Guatemala City and this is great for getting around the city. We do not advise you take other forms of transport, particularly the red buses and local taxis unless directed by Dunc and the team.

Phone and Internet Usage

You can bring your US/UK mobile phone with you and buy a local SIM in many places or, if you are here longer, we would suggest buying a very cheap pay-as-you-go phone and SIM.

Volunteers or Visitors from the UK or United States can email or Skype their family to let them know they have made it to Guatemala safely. There will also be a phone available to call your family and let them know you have arrived.

WIFI is available in the house and you will be given the access key when you arrive but you will need to be aware of the terms and conditions of use (made available when you arrive).

Flexible

If you come with the mindset to be flexible and serve, everything will come easily. Also know that there are many people in the team who understand English and many more who understand body language. Know that as a foreigner you are always being watched. Be careful not to offend someone in Guatemala with your words or body language. Be open to learn, be courteous, be willing to try new things and always be ready to help. Please strive to keep from complaining. Complaining will only cause grief to yourself, those you serve, and those you serve with. Please strive to serve joyfully in whatever you do.

Items to Bring

You will only be allowed to take ONE suitcase on most flights so please do not think you can pack every piece of clothing and every bit of technology! Think carefully about what you may or may not NEED to have with you as you might bring less of your own things and more items you can give away when you are here. Below is a suggested list (for those coming for about 10 days):

- Money belts – to be worn under clothing and contain passport and money at all times.
- Alcohol hand gel.
- Snack/breakfast bars, hot chocolate, sweets – other small foodstuffs you couldn't do without (Chocolate probably not a good idea in the climate!)
- Wash bag with the usual stuff in it (toothbrush, shower gel, etc.)
- Towel (usually not needed if staying in the Protection Home)
- Old t-shirts (4-5)
- Old shoes (probably 2 pairs)
- A nice pair of pants and a nice shirt for church
- A pair of shorts (girls, please make sure they are knee length)
- Pyjamas or nightwear (must be modest for girls)
- A sweatshirt (evening is cool but not cold)
- 2-3 sets of evening lounge or comfortable travel clothes (i.e. not old stuff to work in)
- Sun hat/cap
- Socks and underwear
- Bring pictures of your family and friends to show and talk about with the children
- Mosquito spray/roll on (DEET)
- Sunscreen high factor
- Sunglasses
- Torch
- Pens and notebooks/journals
- Cards/travel games

- Camera (see note below on expensive stuff)
- Pack of tissues may be handy
- Spanish/English Dictionary

MONEY. You can get out local currency from most places in Guatemala using your bank card, but it may be worth bringing some US Dollars with you as a back-up and exchanging some into local currency at the airport.

GIRLS! You will need to remember that the Guatemalan culture is different from the United States and so low-cut tops, sleeveless tops, short shirts, and short skirts are not permitted. Try and dress in a way your dad or grandfather would approve of!

Remember you'll be doing your own laundry and a washing machine is available for your use. Please also be aware of how many "designer" clothes you bring along - be aware of the children we will be working with and the backgrounds they have come from – you are not there to be showing off your latest outfits!

Address

When you arrive in the country, or even before on the plane, you will be asked to complete immigration and customs information and will be asked for the address of where you will be staying.

Please enter the following address: **5a AVENIDA "A" 2-54, ZONA 9, GUATEMALA CITY**, which is the address of our Mentoring Centre and offices.

The Protection Home address is: **15 AVENIDA 5-60, COLONIA CARABANCHEL, ZONA 11, GUATEMALA CITY.**

If you have any questions about this information pack or wish to discuss any other issue with us before you arrive then please contact Dunc Dyason below:

Phone: +502 5522 3333

Email: dunc@streetkidsdirect.org.uk

Skype: duncdyason

Helpful Spanish (Latin American) Phrases:

(italic words in brackets show how to pronounce more tricky words!)

Hello	Hola
Good day (more polite)	Buenos dias
Good evening	Buenas tardes
Good night	Buenas noches
My name is	Me llamo (<i>yamo</i>)
What's your name?	Como te llamas? (<i>yamas</i>)
Nice to meet you	Mucho gusto encantado
Thank you	Gracias (<i>grathias</i>)
You're welcome	De nada
Please	Por favor
How are you? (polite)	Como estas?
How's it going?	Que tal? (<i>ke tal</i>)
I'm fine thank you	Bien, gracias
And you?	Y tu? (<i>ee too</i>)
I'm English	Soy ingles
Sorry, I don't speak Spanish	Lo siento, no hablo espanol
I don't understand	No entiendo
I'm thirsty	Tengo sed
I'm hungry	Tengo hambre
Where is...?	Donde esta...?
Where is the toilet?	Donde esta el baño?
God bless you	Dios te bendiga

I have one brother
two brothers
one sister
two sisters

Tengo un hermano
Tengo dos hermanos
Tengo una hermana
Tengo dos hermanas

and

y (*ee*)

I like football

Me gusta el futbol

I enjoy music

Me encanta la musica

I love you

Te amo

Would you like...?

Te gustaria...?

Would you like to play football?

Te gustaria jugar el futbol? (*hoogar*)

Would you like some sweets?

Te gustaria unos dulces? (*dulthes*)

My hovercraft is full of eels

Mi aerodeslizador está lleno de anguilas

water

agua (*agwa*)

bread

pan

cup of tea

una taza de te

coffee

café

You are very beautiful

Eres muy hermosa