

CRIZMAC Travel Adventures

Trip Information Guatemalan Highlands: An Exploration of Art and Culture

Antigua, Panajachel, Guatemala City
February 20 - March 1, 2015



► Travel Arrangements

Travelers are responsible for making their own travel arrangements to/from Guatemala City. Please try to arrive in Guatemala by early afternoon on February 20th if possible. **Purchasing travel insurance is highly recommended.**

Transfers between Airport and Hotel: Airport transfers by bus or airport vans, from the Guatemala City airport to the hotel in Antigua, are provided for those arriving on February 20 and leaving on March 1, 2015 (regardless of whether participants come as a group or on individual flights).

Early Arrivals and Late Departures: If you choose to arrive early or stay after the tour concludes, and want to extend your stay in one of the tour hotels, please contact us at CRIZMAC and we will try and arrange the discounted hotel rate for your additional nights. The tour fee includes your hotel nights for the length of our travels only.

► Accommodations

We are staying in three different hotels during the course of our trip. Contact information for family and friends is listed following the name of the hotel.

February 20-22 Antigua:

Hotel Hermano Pedro, 502-7832-3926,
www.hotelposadahermanopedro.com

February 23-27 Panajachel:

Hotel Regis, 502-7762-1152, www.regisatitlan.com

February 28 Guatemala City:

Hotel Barcelo, 502-2320-4031, www.barcelo.com

► Tour Transportation

All tour transportation provided by motor coach, van and boat is included in your trip fee.

► What to Bring

Clothing

The altitudes are 5,000-6,000 ft., so the days will be sunny and warm with cooler mornings and evenings. Lightweight layers are great for the daytime with sweatshirts or sweaters for the cooler temperatures. Laundry service is available at the hotel in Panajachel for a reasonable price.

- Bring comfortable casual clothes, slacks/cropped pants are fine
- Two pairs of sturdy walking shoes (i.e., athletic type since you will encounter cobblestone areas and uneven ground in the rural villages)
- Travel lightly

Things You May Want to Pack for your Own Comfort

- Face cloth
- Prescription drugs: It is suggested that two sets be taken, one to carry on you and one in your luggage. Bring a LEGIBLE

copy of prescriptions from your doctor for emergency refills. It is possible to buy most drugs over the counter at a considerably reduced price.

- Writing and reading material
- First aid supplies and comfort medications (aspirin, Imodium A-D, Pepto Bismol, etc.)
- Alarm clock
- Hair dryer/curler, etc. The electrical current is the same as the U.S. but many outlets do not accept polarized plugs (one prong wider than the other). You can purchase an adapter inexpensively.
- Undergarment passport holder/currency wallet holder
- Package coffee/sweeteners/salt substitutes
- Small flash light and portable reading light (many light bulbs in hotels are 25/40 watts, so we suggest you bring a 100 watt bulb)
- Twice as much film or batteries for your digital camera as you think you can possibly use! This is one of the most photographic spots on earth!!

► Luggage

Travel lightly and consider the benefit of having an extra piece of luggage for purchases.

All luggage including carry-on bags and any that you purchase while traveling, must be carefully labeled and easy to read. Bring extra labels if you anticipate increasing your luggage during the trip.

► Currency

The monetary unit is the *quetzal*. The rate of exchange fluctuates on a daily basis. To check the rate, visit (<http://www.xe.com/ucc/convert/>). It is best to have US dollars to exchange while traveling or to use your ATM card to deduct money from your account. There are several places to change money at the Guatemala City airport (if they are open when you arrive). The exchange rate for *quetzales* is always better in Guatemala than the US. When you do change money or use your ATM, obtain enough to last for at least several days, so you do not have to exchange money on a daily basis. ATM machines are available every place we visit.

▶ Credit Cards

Visa, Mastercard and American Express are the most commonly accepted credit cards. Credit cards can also be used in ATMs to withdraw funds in the local currency at the current exchange rate (if you know your pin number), but this is a more expensive way to obtain funds. Credit cards can be used in many stores and restaurants, but it is not possible to use them in backyard “shops,” where you will find many of the best textiles and art.

Before you leave the US make copies of your credit cards, driver’s license and passport. Check the bank where you have your credit cards to get a regular telephone number should you lose your card...it is difficult to access 800 numbers from Guatemala. Call your credit card company and let them know you will be traveling in Guatemala and the dates of your travel.

Checkbooks can come in handy. Some people will accept checks, especially if the cost of the item is high. Having a few checks with you is a good idea.

▶ Proof of Citizenship

You will need your passport. As mentioned above, make a copy of it to keep in a separate place, along with your other important documents.

▶ Health and Safety

Much of the worry among travelers about Guatemalan food is unwarranted. Taking some care should allow you to travel throughout the country without experiencing “traveler’s revenge.” We will have many opportunities to sample some of the best local food. Raw vegetables and fruits should be peeled before eating. All of the restaurants we go to together (which is most of the meals) serve “safe” foods. Bottled water should always be used. It is available at the hotels as well as in many stores. Cleaning your hands frequently will also deter the spread of bacteria.

It is difficult to handle very specific dietary needs (e.g., low salt, low carb, low fat, etc.) when we are dining in a group. There can be some accommodation, but if you have specific health needs, please travel with or plan to purchase special foods.

Coffee and tea will be served at every meal. Any other drinks (water, soft drinks, alcoholic beverages, etc.) will incur an extra charge and can be paid for with cash or a check at the close of the trip.

▶ Time

Guatemala is on Central Standard Time and does not switch to Daylight Savings Time.

▶ Telephone Calls

Provided earlier under Accommodations are the telephone numbers for the hotels. Be advised that many hotels do not have an English speaker at the switchboard in the evening. Cell phone service is available in some locations. Check with your carrier about fees.

▶ Email Contact

If you do not travel with a computer or tablet, we are happy to accept emergency notes from family members via email, but access may not be available in all locations. If you are traveling with your own computer or tablet, it is helpful to have a SKYPE account.

▶ Tips

The trip fee includes tips for hotel bellboys and maids, tips for all group meals and for drivers and boat transportation. There are circumstances where a modest tip is appropriate for personal services rendered. Tips for baggage carriers in the airport are not included. For meals on your own or for drinks/cocktails, a 15% tip is appropriate.

▶ Taking Your Treasures Home

Americans are allowed to bring \$800 of purchased items into the US, not including items purchased for resale. Resale items are subject to a sizable customs fee. Shipping is available through many reliable companies in Panajachel. Shipping can be expensive but sometimes worth the convenience.

▶ Photography

The highlands of Guatemala and its people are some of the most scenic and fascinating subjects to photograph. When photographing the local people, it is appropriate to ask for their permission unless you are shooting from a considerable distance. Photography is not allowed in most churches.

▶ Free Time and Shopping

Our itinerary is very robust, but there are opportunities to shop in the markets and in the artists’ homes.

▶ Professional Development for Educators

Educators receive a certificate for 56 hours of professional development credit from CRIZMAC to verify their participation. It is the responsibility of each educator to verify that his or her district will accept this credit. Academic objectives of the trip for educators are available upon request.

▶ Need Other Information?

Contact Stevie Mack: 1-800-913-8555 or (520) 323-8555
steviemack@crizmac.com