

Curamericas Global Volunteer Program

Volunteer Expedition Proposal: Service-Learning & Cultural Exploration in Guatemala



Overview of Proposed Expedition

Travel Dates: March 9 -18, 2024
July 20 – 29, 2024

Team: 8-14 volunteers

Location: Curamericas Global's rural project communities in the Department of Huehuetenango in the mountains of Guatemala's northwest region. The team will stay in the community of Calhuitz, San Sebastian Coatán, Huehuetenango.



Goals: Through this trip, we will seek to:

- Participate in mutually-beneficial educational exchange with local health workers by visiting health facilities, training staff, providing medical and clerical support, accompanying workers on home visits, and learning about local health issues and initiatives;
- Improve and maintain local birthing centers by providing construction labor.
- Experience Guatemalan culture and learn about its history, health issues, socio-economic and political issues.

Curamericas Global, Inc.

Mission: Curamericas Global partners with underserved communities to make measurable and sustainable improvements in their health and well-being.

Service, Learning, & Cultural Exploration

Service: Volunteers will conduct community outreach with local health workers. Outreach may include visits to homes and schools as well as assisting during community events. Work can include distributing vitamins/medicine, weighing and measuring children, performing hand-washing demonstrations. Volunteers will also have the opportunity to support a local birthing center by providing labor to assist with the construction, maintenance and improvement of buildings as well as assist with the creation and upkeep of community gardens.

Learning: By interacting with local health workers, receiving informational presentations, touring health facilities, and participating in home visits, volunteers will have the opportunity to take part in a **real community-based, rural healthcare program in a developing country**. They will learn (from the workers themselves) about local health problems and initiatives, as well as the various cultural, religious, governmental, and socio-economic factors which affect health care in Guatemala's rural Mayan communities.

Culture: In the project area, students will have the unparalleled experience of being immersed in a unique mixture of ancient Mayan and rural Guatemalan cultures. We will be working in an isolated mountain settlement where the view is breathtaking. Many of the local women speak only Mayan dialects and still dress in traditional clothing. The trip will also include time for additional cultural activities, such as visiting the local weekly market in San José, exploring Lake



Atitlan, and shopping in Artisan markets.

The Curamericas Global Volunteer Experience in Guatemala

- Support:** All food, lodging, transportation, and activities will be coordinated in advance by Curamericas. A facilitator will travel with the team to interpret, coordinate logistics, and provide support as needed. Teams also receive extensive orientation materials such as travel guidelines, packing lists, cultural and safety orientation, and area information to help prepare for the trip.
- Safety:** Curamericas Global and all of our partners consistently make safety the highest priority for volunteers. The primary way Curamericas ensures safety is through partnership with local organizations. Through these established partnerships, our Guatemalan friends know where to go, when to go, and how to get there and keep us safe. In addition, group facilitators have extensive international travel experience along with a familiarity of Guatemala. Extensive risk management practices are in place in coordination with the local US Embassy, the Peace Corps in Guatemala, Emergency Evacuation companies in Guatemala, and Travel Insurance from the US.
- Lodging:** In the project area, volunteers will have simple, secure, dorm-style accommodations with modern toilets and showers. During travel and sight-seeing days, reservations will be made in clean, modest, reputable hotels.
- Food:** Local cooks will be hired to prepare three meals a day, ensuring that food will be safe and plentiful. Abundant purified water will be provided at all times. All efforts are made to accommodate food allergies and vegetarian preferences. While travelling through Guatemala, meals will be taken at reliable and safe restaurants.
- Schedule:** While onsite, volunteers generally work for 3-4 hours in the morning, take a leisurely lunch break for 1-2 hours, and work for 1-2 hours in the afternoon. Evenings offer time to relax, reflect, and interact with neighbors. We plan all of our expeditions with the goal of balancing service to the community with time for cultural exploration and exchange. Cultural nights occur each evening in the community as we explore various topics from the mouths of local community members, including the 36-year civil conflict, health care in rural Guatemala, the education system, and Guatemalan customs.

Tentative Itinerary

(10 days / 9 nights) Please note that this itinerary is subject to change.

- Day 1 Fly from U.S. to Guatemala City
Airport pick-up and travel to San Juan la Laguna; lunch en route
Stay overnight at Hotel Uxlabil in San Juan; dinner at hotel
- Day 2 Breakfast at hotel
Tour of San Juan, including visits to local co-ops
Dinner at hotel
- Day 3 Breakfast at hotel
Travel to project site (~10-12hr drive)
Stop in Huehuetenango for lunch
Dinner at project site
- Day 4-7 Work days in Calhuitz. Details to-be-determined upon arrival. General schedule is volunteer work in morning, cultural activities and language classes in afternoon.
Friday morning visit to market.
- Day 8 Breakfast at project site

Travel to Antigua (~12hr drive), with stops for lunch and visit to Zaculeu Mayan Ruins
Dinner in Antigua

Day 9 Tour of Antigua in morning + free time in afternoon

Day 10 Breakfast at hotel or airport
Flight home

Cost Estimates - \$3,300

Volunteers pay a flat-rate fee which covers all in-country travel costs including flights, meals, lodging, transportation, and activities, plus translations services and accompaniment by a Curamericas Facilitator, travel insurance, and support before and after the expedition. Below please find preliminary cost estimates for a **10-day expedition for a team of 8 volunteers, including visits to Lake Atitlan and Antigua.**

*****Please note that actual costs depend on flight prices at the time of purchase, team size, and tourist activities. *****

Per-Person Travel Costs, including the following...

- **Lodging for 9 nights**
- **Three meals per day, snacks, and water**
- **Private Transportation**
- **Cultural/Sightseeing Activities**
- **Accompaniment by Curamericas Global Trip Leader**
- **Miscellaneous Costs**
 - Tips for hotel staff, nightly phone calls home, international travel insurance
- **\$300.00 Per-Person Project Donation:** This donation goes directly to the project site to support the local health project and provides construction materials and supervision for the volunteers on site.
- **\$800.00-\$1,000.00 Round-Trip Airfare**

Additional Costs

~\$0.00 - \$150.00 Travel Vaccinations and medications (depending on medical history and medical insurance).

~\$200 Spending money

***Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Curamericas Global!
We look forward to working with you to plan this exciting and worthwhile adventure.***

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