

Casas por Cristo
short term missions

Guatemala Trip Guide

Greetings from San Raimundo, Guatemala,

We are excited that you have chosen to partner with us and the work God is doing in Guatemala through Casas Por Cristo. Many years ago I came on my first trip with my youth group, and I wasn't sure what to expect. On that trip, God changed my life and began leading me down a path to serve full time with Casas Por Cristo. In the same way, I believe this trip will have a lasting impact on your life.

We have prepared a Trip Guide containing the essential information (checklists, tips, and guidelines) that you will need to prepare for your mission trip. Please read it carefully. The information presented here is based on knowledge gained from over 4,000 mission trips to México and Guatemala. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the main office at (800) 819-8014 or e-mail me at bculp@casasporcristo.org. Our goal is to answer all of your questions quickly and efficiently so that you will be well-prepared for your trip.

We look forward to your arrival,

Brandon Culp
Field Director of Guatemala
bculp@casasporcristo.org

Quick Guide

3-6 Months Before Your Trip

- _ Apply for passports
- _ Read the Guatemala Trip Guide

30 Days Before You Arrive

- _ Begin praying for your family profile
- _ Disclosure of risk forms should be filled out and turned in to your team leader
- _ Fill out the medical release form and turn in to team leader
- _ Begin to prepare for the dedication

*For any questions call 800.819.8014 or
email questions@casaporcristo.org*

Packing List

- Passport
- Tool belt or nail apron
- Work gloves
- Protective eye wear
- Long work pants (no capri pants or shorts on work site)
- Work shirts (t-shirts)
- Sturdy closed-toed shoes or boots & flip flops
- Hat or bandana
- Insulated water container
- Sun block
- Chap stick
- Bible
- Soap, shampoo, & other toiletries
- Hammer (no smaller than 16 oz.)**
- Carpenter's Pencil**
- 25 ft. Tape Measure**
- Utility Knife**
- *Earplugs (for sleeping)
- *Flashlight
- *Knee pads

*These items aren't mandatory but can be helpful.

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Trip Preparations

Time Zones Guatemala is in the Central time zone, but does not observe daylight savings. When establishing meeting times, we will refer to the proper time zone for the location.

Emergency Contact Number 800.819.8014 This number should be used only for emergency situations. If the emergency is after business hours, you will reach one of our missionary's cell phones. Our staff will assist you in relaying your message to Guatemala and providing any necessary follow up.

Medical Treatment Your Casas missionary will have a first aid kit for minor injuries. Local missionary doctor, Dr. Cohon, will treat illnesses or injuries that require professional medical attention. Extraction or hospitalization for serious medical conditions or injuries will be determined by your travel insurance provider.

Cell Phones Talk with your carrier to see if you will have service in Guatemala and what charges you may incur through Guatemalan towers.

Money In Guatemala, the currency is called the Quetzal. The US dollar is **not** accepted in San Raimundo. Exchange your money either state side or in the Guatemala airport. You will need to have your passport and know where you are staying in San Raimundo in order to exchange money. The address you can give is **11 Calle 5-85 Zona 1, Colonial Huerta Penefort, San Raimundo, Guatemala 01060.**

Immunizations & First Aid We do not require any immunizations; however, we do recommend a current tetanus immunization. You may check the CDC website to see what they recommend for travel to Guatemala.

Transportation, Lodging, and Food We have arranged all ground transportation, lodging and meals, except for Friday lunch in Antigua. We have negotiated a price of \$125 per person (**15 person minimum**), including bedding and towels. You will pay this fee in US currency directly to the Morning Glory school in San Raimundo.

Passports Passports are **REQUIRED** for all team members!

Devotions Reflecting on each day is an important part of your experience. We have personal devotional guides available online to print for your trip.

Support Providing a mission trip of great value, both spiritually and economically, is always our goal. Our missionaries reach this goal by dedicating their week to your needs and by raising their salary to serve at the ministry. Each missionary depends on gifts from churches and dedicated individuals to cover their salaries. Changing a family's life this week could not happen without your effort and sacrifice. It also could not happen without your financial support of our missionaries. At the end of your trip, encourage your missionary by giving a donation and also consider joining their monthly support team.

Thirty Days Before You Arrive

Disclosure of Risk Every team member needs to have filled out a disclosure of risk form. These should be given to your team leader to be turned in before your trip.

Medical Release All team members need to fill out a medical release form. Your team leader will keep these with you throughout the trip in case of an incident needing medical attention.

Trip Insurance Each participant must have travel insurance before coming on a mission trip. Please provide your leader with the necessary information.

Attire Team members will be expected to wear long pants on the worksite for safety and protection. You may wear shorts whenever you are not on the worksite. Please bring clothing that is modest and appropriate. Closed-toed shoes are a must on the worksite (feet must be completely covered).

Weather The weather in Guatemala stays around 75 degrees year round. Rain is a common occurrence, and a light rain jacket is recommended.

Guatemala Guidelines

Rules for the compound and worksite:

1. Don't throw toilet paper into the toilets; it clogs them. (Use the provided wastebasket.)
2. The purchase or consumption of tobacco and/or alcohol is not allowed.
3. Both men and women must wear shirts at all times. Tank tops and cutoff shirts are NOT allowed.
4. Always ask the Casas missionary where you should throw out your trash.
5. Stay off the compound building roofs.
6. A curfew of no later than 10 p.m. is enforced.
7. It is important to stay out of off-limits buildings.
8. Do not drink unfiltered water.

Do NOT Pack

- Tank tops or sleeveless shirts
- Torn pants
- Short shorts (cheerleading/running)
- Tight fitting clothing (yoga/spandex pants)

Gifts for the Families

If you want to bring gifts for the family, we have several suggestions. While toys for children are very nice (crayons, bubbles, books, etc.), most families also have more pressing practical needs. We recommend if you desire to buy a gift for the family that you buy them food.

We also would like to note that we have been asked by our Pastors Committee in Guatemala to not give the families monetary donations. We ask that you please respect this.

If you have questions about other items that may be appropriate gifts, call us. We would be happy to advise you. We have found that the best time to give gifts to the family is during the dedication.

Note: Guatemalan customs agents look for illegal importation of goods. Please pack all of your gifts for the family with your personal belongings, in a suitcase or traveling bag, and not in trash bags or store bags.

Arrival

Arriving in Guatemala Due to the nature of our ministry, safety concerns, and the volume of teams with whom we work, **we require that all members of a team arrive and depart as a team.** All members must

be present and accounted for at the time the team is scheduled to meet its Casas missionary at the airport in Guatemala City. Additionally, no team member will be allowed to exit Guatemala before the rest of the team. We will make exceptions only for emergencies that may arise in Guatemala.

Typical Schedule

Sunday: Arrive at the airport and get on the bus to San Raimundo. On the bus you will be given a simple sack lunch/dinner in case you haven't eaten prior. Arrive at your accommodations in San Raimundo. A short orientation will be given.

Monday to Thursday:

- 6:00 a.m. — Breakfast
- 7:00 a.m. — Head to worksites
- 5:00 p.m. — Return from work
- 5:30 p.m. — Dinner
- 10:00 p.m. — Lights out

Friday: Fun day in Antigua. You are responsible for purchasing your lunch while in Antigua. Leave after breakfast and return late afternoon. Dinner Friday night is a Guatemalan fiesta.

Saturday: Early morning: head to the airport. Time will be determined by your flight back to the U.S.

Your Casas Missionary Our trained missionaries will lead and live with your group for the week. Each missionary is gifted with a different personality and style, which makes each mission trip unique. It is possible that your team will have people with more construction experience than our missionaries. We ask for patience and flexibility as our missionaries implement the best practices for team building, quality and maximizing materials.

As our missionaries live with you for the week they are given the responsibility to teach, supervise, and ensure safety and quality. We take care of the details so that you can focus on serving and building. Our missionaries are here for you and your group, and they will work to accommodate your requests.

All of our missionaries were once team members just like you. They have chosen to serve because of their love for Jesus and the people of Guatemala. Being in the mission field is their life, and to do this, they have made sacrifices, both financially and personally. It is appreciated and encouraged if your church, your team, or you give a love offering to your missionary at the end of the week.

Spanish The majority of our missionaries are not fluent in the Spanish language. We encourage you to learn some phrases beforehand to be able to speak with your family.

U.S. Border Customs Each person is allowed to bring \$400 worth of purchases through U.S. Customs.

Items Not Allowed

- Fruits, vegetables, and meats
- Fireworks
- Narcotics or illicit drugs
- Merchandise made from endangered species
- Cuban cigars
- Live birds
- Switchblade knives

Please do not buy anything that would tarnish the reputation of Casas por Cristo, your group, or Jesus Christ.

Guatemala Lodging

You will stay at one of our locations for the duration of your trip. Your Casas missionary will give you all of the specific information about the location once you arrive.

Showers All accommodations will have a shower. However, many of them do not have hot water. We ask you to take military showers: get wet, turn the water off, soap up, and then turn the water back on to rinse off your body.

Bathrooms All toilet paper should be thrown away in the trash can. Do not place it in the toilet.

Worksite

Attitude The most important thing to bring with you to the worksite is your positive attitude.

Preparedness Be sure to arrive at the worksite with all of the equipment that you will need. You will need to take toilet paper, trash bags, wet wipes, sunscreen, water, and snacks.

Worksite Bathroom There is a bathroom facility of some sort at each worksite. However, some may be more primitive than others.

Animals It is important that you do not feed or touch the animals. Many of them carry diseases and have the potential to bite or scratch.

Stay in a Group At all times, team members must stay in a group. Always let your Casas missionary and team leader know where you are.

Personal Belongings The first rule of thumb is to never bring anything to Guatemala that you would be heartbroken to leave without. We recommend keeping anything of value with you at all times (money, passports, jewelry, etc.).

Your Family Every family is different. We do not require that families participate in the building process beyond having the site prepared. However, many families are eager to help but are shy and feel like they would be in the way. Make every effort to include your family in the building process.

Some families will prepare meals for teams to show their gratitude. These families make extra efforts to ensure that the food is safely prepared.

Job Site Safety

The two most frequent job site injuries are debris in an eye and dehydration. Both of these are avoidable with proper planning and care.

- Always wear eye protection at the worksite.

- Remember to drink water regularly to prevent dehydration. Every team member should drink a minimum of one gallon of water at the worksite every day.
- Wear sunscreen or protective clothing everyday to prevent sunburn.

You know your body and physical limitations better than anyone else. If your Casas missionary asks you to do something that you are unable to perform, please tell him or her. Your missionary will be able to reassign you to another task.

Tools Casas por Cristo provides the majority of the tools you will need, **but you will need to bring the tools listed on the packing list.** You and your fellow team members are responsible for the tools we provide. If tools break due to normal wear and tear, we will replace them. However, if they are lost or neglected, your team will be responsible for the replacement costs.

The Casas toolkit is equipped with the following power tools: cement mixer, screw guns, drill, power saw, and generator, if necessary. You are welcome to bring any additional tools or nail guns. We have found that extra

battery-powered tools are more helpful than corded tools.

Tools are stored inside the compound. Your team may have to load and unload all of the tools multiple times every day.

Construction Process The house you will be building will have a cement foundation followed by 2"x4" framed walls. The outside of the house will be covered with wooden lap siding. The inside of the house will have electricity, and 1/4" plywood wall paneling. The roof is framed with 2"x6"s then covered with corrugated metal roofing.

Other

Casas por Cristo Merchandise You may purchase Casas souvenirs (t-shirts, hats, mugs, etc.) while in Guatemala. You can also order online at our website.

What Just Happened? Thousands of people have asked themselves the exact same question at the end of their mission trip. Truth is, we may ask the same question, but every family and every trip is a unique experience all with the same result – a free gift that models the free gift of God's grace.

Since we started in 1993, we have seen God's Kingdom expand from the city of Juárez to Acuña and then to Guatemala. Between the three locations, more than 4,000 families have received a free home because of you. When your family receives a home, they may not work beside you, and that is by design. Their gift is not earned. Their only requirement to receive a home is to apply through a local pastor and own the land where they live.

The local pastor is our link to the families we serve. A committee of pastors in each community solicit applications from both Christian and non-Christian families. Their discernment is the key to selecting those most in need. Our pastors collectively approve the applications, and our missionaries go to work pairing you with a family. The end result is a powerful voice from the local church to the community proclaiming Jesus Christ.

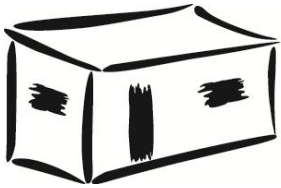
The example of Christ that you show during the week empowers the local pastor to challenge the faith of the families long after the trip is done. Casas por Cristo is simply one of many parts working within the body of Christ. Physically building the home is also only one part of many that make up the ministry of Casas por

Cristo. To keep making a difference and changing this world for Christ, your prayers and support are needed.

- 1993: 3 Homes
- 2001: 1,000th Home
- 2004: 2,000th Home
- 2007: 3,000th Home
- 2012: 4,000th Home

- 1993: Juárez, México
- 2009: Acuña, México
- 2011: San Raimundo, Guatemala
- 2015: Dominican Republic

Additional Ministry Opportunities Although our main goal is to serve God through building homes for families, we welcome and encourage teams to participate in additional evangelistic opportunities. See our **Spiritual Outreach Guide** or contact Brandon Culp, Director of Guatemala, for additional assistance or ideas at 800.819.8014 or bculp@casasporcristo.org.



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Revised 8.22.2014