

Traveler's Checklist for Mission Trips with HIM



Forms and Payment

All volunteers who are planning to travel on a mission trip with Hearts In Motion are REQUIRED to complete:

- **Trip Participant Sign Up Information Form**
- **Liability Release Form**
- **Health Care Provider Information**—Health Care Professions only

All medical personnel are required to upload, email or fax Medical License. If medical personnel are working with the surgical team, they must also upload, email or fax a copy of their college diploma. This information is necessary in order to receive permission from the Guatemalan government to work at the hospital.

A \$500 initial deposit is required.

What to Bring

Temperatures are around 85 to 95 degrees in Zacapa (hot, not usually quite as humid as Houston). Dress for comfort with maybe an outfit for a special night out. Evenings are pleasant with a breeze; sometimes rain, but never cold. In Antigua, on the other hand, it will be cooler in the evenings, days are pleasant. There is a laundry service at the hotel for a small fee so pack light. It is suggested you bring the following:

- Passport¹
- 1 or 2 pairs of long pants for cooler nights and if you are working at a construction site
- 2 pairs of comfortable shoes
- 1 or 2 nice outfits for evening activities and R&R days
- Anti-itch cream
- Alarm clock
- Clothes that can get dirty if you are planning on doing construction
- **Bug repellent** (DEET can melt items in luggage so pack carefully).
- Camera
- Diarrhea medicine (you might ask your personal physician for and bring Cipro or other antibiotic.)
- Fanny pack and/or money belt, and/or daypack (daypack is optional but may be useful in Antigua)
- Flip-flops or sandals for the pool or around your room
- Hand sanitizer or hand wipes
- Sunscreen
- Medications or specialty items you need (contact lenses, glasses, etc.)
- Pepto Bismol tablets or chewables
- Personal toiletries (ie. Washcloth, toothbrush, toothpaste, etc)
- Hat, bandanas
- Jacket or sweatshirt; rain poncho, umbrella (optional, but I've needed it in Antigua several times)
- Scrubs if planning on being in surgery
- Shorts and short sleeve, light-weight shirts
- Small Bible (or New Testament) if you are interested in participating in morning prayer time.
- Small flashlight or headlamp

¹ Make 2 copies – 1 for your luggage, 1 to leave at home. *If it will expire within 6 mos. of trip, get it renewed ASAP.* You might email a copy of your passport to yourself, should you need to retrieve it, or copy it onto a memory chip. A valid U.S. passport is required for all U.S. citizens, regardless of age, to enter Guatemala and to depart Guatemala for return to the U.S. A resident of the US who is a citizen of another country should bring their resident visa and paperwork. Also, please make sure to check with the appropriate Embassies on other requirements. While in Guatemala, U.S. citizens should carry their passports, or a photocopy of their passports, with them at all times. HIM staff will offer to collect original passports for safekeeping in a locked safe during the work week.

² Fill your water bottle at the departing airport for the 1st day's travel. You can refill it at the hotel each day. This small item will save a lot in \$ to HIM. They can buy 5 gallon jugs for the same cost as a 16 oz. bottle.

- Sports Water Bottle² with a carrier or carabineer
- Sunglasses
- Swimsuit, bath or beach towel
- Travel alarm clock (or cell phone and charger, although you may not have cell phone service in Guatemala³)
- If you are a medical provider, please bring a stethoscope and otoscope if possible

Extras/Optional

- Non-perishable snacks
- There are soft drinks available, but in Guatemala, there are less diet drinks. If you like sweetened, sugar-free beverages, bring individual-size Crystal Light packets to add to bottled water. If you like artificial sweeteners in your coffee, bring some.
- Plan on carrying your camera with you at all times in a fanny pack or pocket.
- Personal facial cleaning cloths or wipes
- Toilet paper or tissue packets (for travel and worksite use; hotel has TP)
- An adaptor for outlets. Most outlets are 2-prong.
- Locks for luggage (for storing your personal items in your suitcase while staying at the hotels)
- Small travel laundry bag with your name on it.
- Work gloves if you plan on working with the construction team.
- If you know services you will be providing, you may bring supplies or equipment needed (battery-operated hand drill for construction; stethoscope for medical personnel; scissors, needles, etc. for seamstresses).

Leave at Home:

Nice, valuable jewelry, wedding rings, watches, flashy cameras or computer equipment. Hotels are safe, but you are never to leave anything of value visible to cleaning staff or unattended at a work site.

Other:

Minors under 18 traveling with a valid U.S. passport do not need special permission from their parents to enter or leave Guatemala. If a minor should break any laws or become difficult and uncooperative, they may be sent home early at their parents' expense.

A passport is required to travel to Guatemala. **Passports MUST be valid for 6 months after departure date!!!** U.S. citizens do not need a **visa** for a stay of 90 days or less. That period can be extended for an additional 90 days upon application to Guatemalan immigration. (If the initial period of stay granted upon entry is less than 90 days, any extension would be granted only for the same number of days as the initial authorization.)

If you are not a U.S. citizen, please check with the Guatemalan consulate on the requirements to enter the country.

You do have the option to sign up for the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) (formerly known as "Travel Registration" or "Registration with Embassies") to receive the latest travel updates and information to the country you are traveling to. This is not mandatory; however, it would be a good resource. Please see the website for more information:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/step.html>

Cloztalk:

HIM is proud to announce the new clothing line by Cloztalk! Please check out our website or click on this link:

<https://cloztalk.com/collections/hearts-in-motion>

³ Cell phone service is unreliable. Bring your cell phone to use as your alarm clock. HIM staff can loan you their phones should you need to call home. (You will be expected to cover the cost of the call.) There will be internet access and staff can let you use their laptops, should you need to send emails home. Antigua has several internet cafes as well.

Trip Payments, Sponsorships, Cancellations and Reimbursements

The cost of the trip will depend on which mission trip you decide to volunteer on. A 10 day trip will cost \$1200 and a 7 day trip will cost \$1000. This trip fee covers room and board, in-country transportation, emergency medical insurance, and ongoing program expenses.

If you're planning on paying with your credit card, please make sure you go through the Hearts In Motion website to make the payment or call our office 219-924-2446. Click on Serve, Make Payment and follow the steps. Please note name and trip date in the memo. Please do not go to paypal directly!! You can also make a payment via Chase QuickPay if this is more convenient.

If you anticipate sending out letters to subsidize the cost of your trip, you will find a general HIM Sponsorship letter under FAQs which could be used along with a personalized cover letter. Please let us know as soon as possible and before you begin your fundraising activities.

Please remember that any checks submitted for tax-deductible donation **MUST** be made out to the order of Hearts In Motion. Checks made out to any other name cannot be tax deductible. In the event that your fundraiser generates more than the amount of the trip, it is the practice of Hearts In Motion to roll over the excess into the general fund as a tax-deductible donation; or if requested, return the excess to the donors. If you accumulate more than the amount needed to cover your trip fee, the overage will be kept in your account for one year. If you travel within a year of your last trip, then we can put the overage into your next trip. If you do not use the overage for a future trip within a year, it will be put into our general fund.

If you cancel your trip less than 30 days prior to the trip, **all but \$200.00 will be returned to you**. This \$200.00 is for administration fees. You also have the option of applying your payment towards a future trip.

Cash for the Trip

Dollar exchange is around 7.0 quetzals (Q's) to \$1 U.S. You are allowed to bring \$800⁴ worth of purchases into the U.S. without paying any duty. After that, they may impose a tax. Shopping is very reasonable in Antigua (R&R time). To make it easier to exchange U.S. money to Guatemalan Q's, please bring bills smaller than \$50s. Bills should be fairly new and in good shape (they may refuse to take well-used or ripped bills). Traveler's checks are not useful other than at the bank or Exchange at the airport. Credit cards can be used in ATMs, nice stores and restaurants in Antigua, but not in the inexpensive markets. Bank lines are long and inconvenient on Fridays, Saturdays and Mondays. Other expenditures will be entrance fees to museums (possible), laundry, and alcoholic beverages.

Vaccinations

No shots are required to travel with H.I.M. to Guatemala, but we recommend that you have an updated tetanus shot and Hep A vaccine. We also recommend checking with your family doctor regarding any additional vaccinations that he/she recommends or any other medical advice.

CDC does recommend malaria prophylaxis when traveling to Guatemala. This is at your own discretion but is not required.

Packing and Luggage

Pack your most important items (including medications) and a couple changes of clothing in your carry-on luggage. Most airlines now charge for the first and second checked suitcases. Usually the first checked luggage has a fee of \$25, and the second piece of checked luggage will cost \$40. If Hearts In Motion requires you to check a second piece of luggage of supplies for the trip, we will cover the cost. Please just provide the receipt.

United, American, Delta and other Airlines will permit 1 carry-on bag plus 1 personal item (briefcase, purse, day planner, small laptop computer, camera case, compact disk player or similar sized personal entertainment item) per passenger to be carried on the aircraft. The maximum combined linear measurement (L + W + H) of the carry-on bag is 51 inches (130 cm) and no more than 40 lb. Laptop computers must be removed from their cases and placed on the baggage belt at the security checkpoint.

*Airport security requires that **all liquid containers** (including lip gloss, Vaseline, nose spray, eye drops, lotions, etc.) in carry-on baggage be placed in a **quart size Ziploc bag**, and that none of the liquid containers be more than 3.4 oz. This*

⁴ We recommend not carrying more than \$300 in cash. ATMs are available in Antigua.

Ziploc bag of liquid containers will go through the x-ray outside of your carry-on so be ready to show it to security personnel. If you have liquid containers larger than 3.4 oz., or more bottles than can be placed in a quart size bag, put them in your checked luggage.

Note: No knives of any size or material are allowed past the security checkpoint (including, but not limited to, pocket knives, folding or retractable blades regardless of blade length or composition, box cutters, X-Acto knives, scissors with a pointed tip, straight razors, Leatherman or Swiss Army Knives). If you want to bring special tools or knives to use during the construction project, for example, pack them in your checked luggage.

What to expect when arriving into Guatemala City

When you arrive in Guatemala, there will be a HIM representative wearing a HIM t-shirt waiting by the baggage claim. The HIM representative will walk you through customs, and then you will then be escorted to the bus that will bring you to the hotel in Zacapa. Please watch and hold on to your personal belongings while you are at the Guatemalan airport, as stealing is very common. The bus ride to the hotel is between 4-5 hours. We will stop for a bathroom and snack break.

If for some reason that your flight is delayed or do not see the HIM representative, please call our office, Julie Stevens or Bert Echeverria ASAP so we can make all the necessary changes or notify the correct person. The phone numbers are listed below.

Hotel Information

You will be staying at 2 hotels during your stay. For the first part of the trip, the group will be staying at Hotel Atlantico located at Km 126 in Rio Hondo, Zacapa. For the last couple of days, the group will be staying at Hotel Casa de las Fuentes in Antigua, Guatemala (unless advised differently). Please check our website for pictures and more information about the hotels.

Hotel room arrangements will be made for each arriving group. As per HIM policy, unmarried couples will not be roomed together. People wanting or needing their own room may pay an additional fee to secure their own room.

Trip Rules/Notes for Group (Will be discussed during orientation on 1st day)

- Remember you are a representative of HIM: Local people are watching your behavior this week.
- Be respectful – we are guests in this country
- Be aware of what you say with Guatemalans around. They may understand more than you think.
- Be flexible: Things don't always go as expected
- Be mindful of noise. Guatemalans see Americans as being loud
- Hotel desk, dining room staff and cleaning staff only speak Spanish
- A/C switches (2) on wall between beds
- There is NO hot water
- The septic systems in all of Guatemala cannot handle toilet paper. It should be deposited in bathroom basket
- You change money at desk at the exchange rate of Q7.50 per dollar. Change will be in Q's
- Laundry can be taken to desk. Allow 2 days. Cost between Q25 – Q75 (\$3.50 -\$10.00)
- HIM will pay for all water, sodas, and coffee at hotel. Order at bar or take from cooler and tell/show to dining room staff and say "Karen"
- You are responsible for any alcoholic beverages. You can pay for them or charge them to your room and pay for at checkout day
- **We adhere strictly to NO drinking under the age of 21. We are following US standards and there will also be consequences to adults purchasing alcohol for minors. Likewise, parents are not allowed to purchase alcohol for their underage children.**
- Restaurant and desk open at 6am and closes at 10pm
- Outside lighting is turned off at 11pm
- Meal menus are pre-selected
- Breakfast each morning at ____ am in dining room. Dinner each evening at ____pm in cabana(will be advised of times during orientation)
- Please only use one plate at breakfast and dinner. Hearts In Motion does get charged by the plate.
- Please notify staff if you are a vegetarian or have a special diet.
- All food at hotel is safe to eat
- Cooked street food normally okay. Don't eat anything that was washed

- Do not use tap water for any internal use (drinking, brush teeth, etc)
- Use bottled water or pitcher of pure water in room for internal use. HIM will provide a Water Cooler outside of the staff room to refill your bottles.
- There are bugs at hotel especially in grass. Use plenty of bug spray. This also applies to Clinic and Construction teams
- Anyone who wants to run outside hotel ground should do it in groups of three or more with at least one man present.
- Expect at least one episode of diarrhea. If you don't have medication, please contact staff immediately. This also goes for any other sickness. Don't be ashamed and try to keep it a secret.
- Photograph protocol: Please ask before taking pictures. If you don't speak Spanish, just hold up your camera and they will know what you mean by it.
- Promises: Make no promises of help to the Guatemalan without first talking to HIM staff.
- Notification of personal medical needs
- Cell phones available to use from HIM staff. The cost is 1 Quetzal/minute.
- Curfew: Minors with group leaders need to discuss appropriate curfew before traveling.
- Adult responsibility: BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL
- Giving out personal information: It is unwise give out your personal contact information outside the trip participants.

Emergency Numbers (MAKE SURE TO CARRY A COPY WITH YOU)

Julie Stevens, IN Office	219-616-0061 (US cell) ⁵	Julie@heartsinmotion.org
Bert Echeverria, HIM Field Rep in Guatemala	011-502-4080-0080	Berthim78@gmail.com
Nancy Winiecki, HIM staff	011-502-5346-9287	Nwiniecki2002@yahoo.com
Monica Rosas, HIM Rep in Guatemala City (speaks English)	011-502-5339-3011 (cell) 011-502-2422-3520 (work) 011-502-2434-5601 (home)	<i>Call if there is an emergency in Guatemala City</i>
Hotel Atlántico, Rio Hondo, Zacapa, Guatemala	011-502-7934-7160	<i>Where we will stay for the work week(Friday to Friday)</i>
Casa de Las Fuentes Hotel, Antigua, Guatemala	011-502-7832-2312	<i>Where we stay during R&R at the end of the trip</i>
Luz Rosas, HIM Rep in Guatemala City (speaks English)	011-502-5901-0043	<i>Call if there is an emergency in Guatemala City</i>
Edgar, Firefighter in Guatemala City	011-502-5770-4902	<i>Call if there is an emergency in Guatemala City</i>
Jorge, Taxi driver (speaks English)	011-502-4521-9234	<i>Call if there is an emergency in Guatemala City</i>
Betio, taxi driver	011-502-5583-3941	<i>Call if there is an emergency in Guatemala City</i>
Hearts In Motion, Munster, Indiana	219-924-2446	Information@heartsinmotion.org

If there is an emergency while you are traveling or when you arrive into Guatemala, please give one of us a call (start at the top of the list)

R&R – Possible Side Trips

At the end of our stay in Rio Hondo on Friday morning, we will pack up and travel by bus to Antigua, the original capital city of Guatemala. We arrive sometime in the afternoon, depending on traffic and the size of our group. Saturday will be a day to explore – shopping, eating in nice restaurants, and site seeing. After several days of hard work, you may want to relax, so *keep this in mind*.

Please do not plan on going out on your own – there are safety issues to be considered. The HIM staff will make a list on the last Friday of the trip of who is interested in taking a volcano hiking tour or zipline tour. The volcano tour cost approximately \$20 and the zipline tour is \$60. Here are other travel agencies that our team members feel comfortable using. If you need any help, please contact our office.

- **AntiguaTours.net -- Antigua Tours** was founded by Elizabeth Bell in 1992 as a receptive travel agency and tour operator. She provides an excellent cultural walking tour within Antigua, among the ruins and including a lot of history. For a group of 10, she will give a group discount. The basic cost is \$20 per person for a 3-hour walk around the city, with one starting in the morning and another in the afternoon.
- **GuatemalaReservations.com** is a full service (internet/email based) Tour Operator located in Antigua, Guatemala. We have used this agency to arrange tours outside the city in a comfortable, air conditioned van (depending on the size of the group). Their tours include trips to a coffee plantation, Mayan music museum, weaving coop, etc. They can also arrange tours to the volcanoes and other popular Guatemalan destinations such as Lake Atitlan.
- **Frijolfeliz.com** – A cooking school in Antigua, Guatemala. This company offers a 2.5 hour cooking class, where you prepare a main dish, two sides, and a dessert. The price is \$49 and it does include wine, soda or bottled water during the class.
- **www.rudygiron.com/photowalks** - If you are interested in the art of taking photos, you may want to look into this tour while in Antigua. The guide will give you pointers on taking pictures as well as cultural and history lessons. The cost is approximately \$75.

Travel Insurance

Hearts In Motion requires that all volunteers have emergency medical travel insurance. For a “normal” mission trip (not including student rotations) the cost of emergency medical travel insurance is already included in the trip cost. We will be working with Outreach Group Travel for our team insurance.

Volunteers participating in the student rotations will be responsible for purchasing their own travel insurance and emergency medical insurance, and sending the trip coordinator a copy of the insurance card.

For those who need to purchase travel insurance. HIM has identified online organizations offering such coverage. Coverage ranges from ticket cancellation to full medical evacuation. Below are links to websites you might consider; there are certainly others:

- www.fullarmorinsurance.com
- www.specialtyrisk.com
- www.travelex.com
- www.travelguard.com