

have fun help people.

Giving Guatemala About your Program



“There comes a point in a person’s life when you start asking yourself: what difference am I making in this world? I decided to put my time into something worthwhile.”

- Gayle Harrod

Giving Guatemala

Introduction to Guatemala

Guatemala, officially the Republic of Guatemala, is the northernmost of the Central American nations. It has the grandeur of some of the most majestic ruins on the planet - Tikal - and the wonders of the most diverse flora and fauna of any rainforest. You will find tremendous pride in Mayan culture everywhere you go in Guatemala. Yet its high level of poverty and unstable political past has left a legacy of current challenges.

Guatemala's neighbors are Mexico on the north and west, Belize, Honduras and El Salvador on the east. The country consists of three main regions - the cool highlands with the heaviest population, the tropical area along the Pacific and Caribbean coasts, and the tropical jungle in the northern lowlands (known as the Petén). Guatemala has a rich and distinctive culture from the long mix of elements from Spain and the native Mayan people. This diverse history and the natural beauty of the land have created a destination rich in interesting and scenic sites.



Guatemala was once the site of the impressive ancient Mayan civilization. It was conquered by Spanish conquistador Pedro de Alvarado in 1524 and became a republic in 1839 after the United Provinces of Central America collapsed. From 1898 to 1920, dictator Manuel Estrada Cabrera ran the country, and from 1931 to 1944 dictator Jorge Ubico Castañeda served as the strongman. He was forced to resign in response to a wave of protests and a general strike, and from then until the end of a murderous civil war in 1996, Guatemala was subject to a series of coups with massive attendant civil rights abuses. State-sponsored murders of students, human rights activists and the ethnic Mayan people, gained Guatemala a terrible reputation around the world.

Since the peace accords in 1996, Guatemala has witnessed successive democratic elections, most recently in 2011.

Guatemala's abundance of biologically significant and unique ecosystems contributes to its position as a biodiversity hotspot.

Spanish is the official language of Guatemala, and the most commonly spoken. Over twenty indigenous languages are still spoken throughout, but many of the Maya people have at least a working knowledge of basic Spanish as well, except in the more remote areas.

Guatemala's abundance of biologically significant and unique ecosystems contributes to its position as a biodiversity hotspot.



Community

Flores is in close proximity to Tikal, the most famous Mayan ruins in Guatemala.

Flores is the airport that volunteers will fly in, located in Petén, Guatemala. The town proper is an island on Lago Petén Itzá, connected to land by causeway, on the other side of which lie the twin towns of Santa Elena and San Benito. All three are often referred to as Flores.



El Remate is the name of the smaller community in which the program is located. All the locals will enjoy telling you about their experience when the television program Survivor was filmed here a number of years ago!

Flores is in close proximity to Tikal, the most famous Mayan ruins in Guatemala. The city is dense with colonial, red-roofed buildings, narrow cobblestone streets, a historic church and Spanish plaza, and restaurants that are easy to stumble upon walking the city's charming streets.

Walking is the most common way locals get around El Remate. You can take a tuk-tuk style taxi almost anywhere for less than \$4.

Projects and Expectations



For this Globe Aware project, we will be working at a school in the El Remate community. This school is a work in progress. It is a technical school for 7th, 8th and 9th graders, which was originally founded by a French NGO and is supposed to be maintained by the Guatemalan Department of Education (which has no money). Its purpose is to prepare kids, who don't have much hope in affording any more schooling, to be able to go out into the modern world and survive. They teach basic Academic education - Language skills, Math, Social Studies, with courses in English (really important for tourism) and as many extra technical modules as possible.

They are restricted in their offerings to things they can find a teacher for. As an example, a former student who is an electrician comes in to teach a module on "Installing an electrical switch"; or a volunteer teaches a cooking class, or they find funding for a building and supply the labor, this learning about carpentry, cement work or plumbing. This makes the project very very special. Students, parents and teachers will be joining in to work alongside us as volunteers, using the building of their school as a learning opportunity for the children, so that in the future they can hopefully find a job in which to apply these skills.

Most Guatemalans in the area do not finish school beyond the sixth grade, so the educational level of the community has been greatly enhanced by the founding of this school. Before it was built, the average educational level of the community did not go beyond 6th grade because children couldn't even afford the bus to get to another community to go to school, and parents are uneasy about sending young daughters out of the village for the day, so often refused to allow them to go. Now there are 75 students each year who are receiving an education that is approved by the Guatemalan Department of Education. Several of these students have even found the way to be able to continue their education to high school after being inspired by being able to finish 9th grade.



The school is very important to the community. Parents, teachers, students and former students all work together and work very hard to improve their school every year, knowing their education is critical to future success.



This is the main school building. There are three classrooms and at the far end, a small office. To the right is the unfinished cafeteria/kitchen/assembly area. At the far end the students are building a foundation to build a Computer Workshop (which will be part of our project), as last year they received 5 desktop computers as donations.

The plan for continued improvement and development for the property includes (we will be tackling some -hopefully all- of these projects during your volunteer week):



1. Finish fencing and installing a main gate
2. Bathrooms require sinks and toilets
3. Kitchen where lunches will be cooked and served, and also cooking classes for Restaurant and Hotel Training needs windows, appliances, dishes, pots, pans and cooking utensils.
4. Teacher - the teacher for English and Math was laid off because of lack of funds for the government. Through your donations, her salary will now be covered for 3 years.

5. Computer room. There is a basic room form for computers. The school would like to put un a tile floor and false ceiling for insulation, and they ned extra computers, basic computer desks and an internet modem.
6. Poly Sports Field. Facilities for basketball, badminton and papi-futbol (Central American version of football).
7. Classrooms equipped for Technical Classes (none of which have false ceilings either)

Vivint Solar will also be installing and incorporating solar panels into the construction, which will of course help the school to be more self sustainable.

Expectations

You may well be the type of person who has achieved great success through your focus on productivity. We applaud you!

You will likely find that success in Guatemala is measured differently. Part of participating in a program like this is taking advantage of the opportunity to absorb life at a different pace. For Guatemalans, spending lots of time with friends and family is their highest priority. They usually spend several hours a day with them and in this way, feel they have achieved great success. Education is a privilege, not a right.

While you are working on projects, try not to look at your watch or focus on numbers, as the locals will not be. They will feel that learning about you is just as important, if not more so, than the work you are doing. Get ready to open your mind, relax, and prepare to experience an entirely different way of life! You will be totally immersed in a different culture. This total cultural immersion is one of the two key components (along with volunteer work) of Globe Aware's programs. In order to have the most enjoyable and meaningful trip possible, we ask that you carefully consider the following:

- Please do not expect to spend all day, every day, working on volunteer projects. It is equally important to Globe Aware that you have ample time to experience the culture through planned activities, excursions, and free time. We try to work for at least 6 hours on volunteer projects on weekdays, and less on weekends.
- Try to stay open minded about work projects. The communities with whom we work choose the projects they feel are most important to develop. The work is varied and can encompass a variety of activities throughout the week. All projects are requested by the community and implemented in a manner they propose. This means the people with whom we work may approach a problem differently than our volunteers would like to. At times, there may be a tendency to judge a culture negatively for not focusing on productivity. We ask our volunteers to keep in mind that our focus is two fold –we are there to help, but we are also there to learn.
- Scheduling, punctuality, and time are concepts that are not universal. Please do not be surprised if your volunteer week involves more waiting than you expected, or schedules are adjusted throughout the day. Remember that most people we are working with don't own a watch, so you may want to take a break from yours for the week! However, remember we will work and move around in a group, so it is important to be prompt when meeting other volunteers to avoid delays.
- Projects will change as the communities' needs change. Even though we will work on a set itinerary, it may be necessary to adjust schedules or projects. Factors affecting the week's plans include but are not limited to: the weather, which projects were or were not completed by the prior group, availability of supplies, number and physical capacity of the volunteer group, and the changing priorities of the community.
- Please communicate freely with your coordinator. If there is anything that can be done to make your stay more enjoyable, please don't hesitate to discuss it with your coordinator, whether you'd like an additional pillow or to visit a specific cultural site. Keep in mind that requests cannot always be accommodated due to limited resources at program sites, though we will make every effort to do so.

Leisure Activities



Volunteers will have the wonderful opportunity to visit the world-famous Tikal National Park and Temple. The Tikal excursion including transport, guide and entrance fees are \$50 per person. We have set aside a scheduled time in your program for you to be able to enjoy a visit to the archeological site.

Don't miss the opportunity to visit the world-famous Tikal ruins!



During your lunch and dinner time and free time, we will have tortilla making classes, as well as demonstrations of backstrap loom weaving, wood carving, stone carving, Mayan art and other local arts. Dinnertime entertainment will include marimbas, flute or guitar/violin (local ranchero music).



Optional excursions, independent of your Globe Aware program, but run by companies whose safety we have vetted, may include some of the following activities. Please let us know which ones you are interested in so that your coordinator may arrange for you, or you can sign up at Orientation on arrival.

Horseback Riding	\$20 per person
Canopy Tour Package (February 4) (Round Transportation to Canopy, Entry Fee)	\$30 per person
Horseback Riding	\$20 per person
Mayan Fire Ceremony	

Packing Information



You will not regret packing light. Keep in mind that it is OK to wear clothes more than once, and that a week is not a very long time. There is a good possibility that you will get very wet, muddy or dirty with many of our work projects. Good, durable, “non-fussy” clothing is best. Pack according to what you feel will make you most comfortable.

Our program location is very humid and often muddy. Pack light **very casual** and quick drying clothes. Your work clothes may be ruined with paint, cement, or mud. You may want hiking boots or comfortable and sturdy work shoes. Expect narrow, muddy and uneven trails and bring appropriate footwear. You might consider bringing rubber rain boots for the mud if you come in the rainy season. We recommend bringing work gloves that may get dirty, a few snacks and Ziploc bags. Strong insect repellent is essential. Make sure to pack enough clothes to be comfortable, considering sweat, mud, paint, etc. Many previous volunteers leave their clothing behind as donations to the locals as well.

Please remember:

Linens, pillows and mattresses may not be the quality you are used to at home. For those who are more particular about their bedding you may consider bringing a “sleep sack” or sleeping bag. It does get chilly at night (50s-60s) and there is no heat. A sleeping bag or blanket is a great donation to leave behind at the end of the program. All volunteers should bring their own towels (also a great donation) at the end of the program).

The packing list is meant as a guideline. There is no single item that you can’t live without for one week. Pack what you think you will need to be comfortable, but do not get preoccupied about items that you didn’t bring, weren’t on the list, etc. Everyone has different opinions about essential items!

- Sunscreen
- Sun hat
- Pants for working and relaxing
- Towel (BRING YOUR OWN)
- Toilet paper / tissues or wipes
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Flashlight
- Toiletries and any prescription medication needed
- T-shirts
- Umbrella or rain poncho / rain jacket
- Socks and plenty of underwear
- Day pack / Small backpack
- Strong money belt
- Camera / memory cards / chargers
- Money / credit cards for personal expenditures
- Lip balm
- Travel charger (see our Electricity section for more information)
- Work gloves
- Face masks for working
- Closed toe shoes for working
- Small first aid kit

You may enjoy bringing games or books for free time. Be sure you leave plenty of space in your bags for souvenirs!

Avoid bringing expensive jewelry or designer clothing. Make sure you check with your cell phone provider about foreign roaming or international data plans. There is no internet or Wi-Fi available in this location and international data plans can be **VERY** expensive.

Donations

Many volunteers ask about donations to bring on their program. These are suggested items that are particularly relevant and important to this program, but please do not feel obligated to bring any extra donations. You are already doing quite a bit by participating in this program!

- School supplies - we will be working at a school for 7th, 8th and 9th graders. Notebooks, pencils, pens, all school supplies are welcome.
- Games that do not require batteries (jump ropes, UNO, card games, Connect 4, travel games, etc)
- Gently used clothing for kids and adults
- Kitchen utensils for the new kitchen to be installed at the school
- Bring clothing, towels and blankets/sleeping bags to be used while on the program and then leave behind as donations.

We strongly discourage handing out monetary donations or candy in this program.

Accommodations

Lodging is provided in a small, rustic but very quaint hotel situated on the shores of the quiet lake (no motor boats allowed!), accommodating two to four guests per room. All beds are covered with mosquito netting, and include a private bath with a hot shower, flushing toilets, fans, and an outdoor patio area. Towels are not provided, please bring your own. There is also a small no frills lock box in each room for valuables. While mosquito nets are provided, many find they decide not to use them after the first day. The windy proximity to the lake tends to discourage most mosquitoes from staying nearby.



The hotel is located on Lake Petén Itzá within a biological rain forest reserve. Because of this, everything flourishes here, including bugs. Expect that at least on an occasional basis, you will see a daddy long-leg, or ants, etc. You will hear the miraculous howler monkeys at times from your rooms. There are quite a few pleasant communal relaxation areas, such as the dock - look out for the naturally glowing organisms in the lake at night! During the dry season, butterflies are literally everywhere. If you see something amiss (a door is jammed or a fan doesn't work, PLEASE notify the coordinator who will ensure it gets fixed.

Electricity

There is limited electricity: enough to recharge digital batteries, but not enough to do heavy-duty hair drying. Voltage is the same as in North America, 110V. Electrical outlets take the same plug as in North America, so a prong adaptor is not necessary.



Food

Breakfast and dinners will be served at the hotel.



Other meals may be taken at local restaurants and several special meals will be prepared by the families for whom volunteers will install floors. Sample meal items include chicken tamales with black bean salad, fresh local whitefish with chicken and vegetarian alternatives, rice, beans, and fresh fruit. All meals have the option of meat, vegetarian or vegan. Bottled water is provided.



Weather

Our program site is located in El Remate, which is normally tropical very warm weather, and humid year round. March to May is the hottest, driest season, and the wet season begins in late May or early June. October and November are cooler. The high seasons for Guatemala tourism are December to April and July and August. Daytime temperatures are often in the high 80s to low 90s year round, nighttime temperatures are usually in the 50s-70s. The rainy season does not mean rain all day long, usually there is clear sunshine in the morning with an afternoon rain shower of 1-2 hours.

Money



The local currency is the Quetzal (plural: quetzales), named after the national bird, which has ancient and mythic connotations. US dollars are widely accepted and can be exchanged in most small towns. ATMs can be found on most major towns but do not expect to find them in El Remate. Euros are also becoming increasingly common. If you are coming from the USA, there is little need to change currency as a huge percentage of people rely exclusively on US\$. In fact, almost all prices are quoted in US\$. If you want Quetzales, it's best to get them from an ATM as you arrive at the airport in Guatemala City.

Credit cards are accepted in some places, but be sure to notify your bank that you will be traveling, and make sure to ask them not to flag the cards. Sometimes even after you have notified the bank, they might stop payment on some transactions, which can be extremely frustrating.

Phone and Internet

Please do not plan to spend a lot of time on the phone or internet during your short volunteer week. You may make calls and check email during your free time, though you may find it is not all that convenient.

Many US phones will work in Guatemala, though roaming charges can be extremely expensive. Be sure to check with your cell phone provider before you leave so that you can arrange for data, cell and text while traveling and depending on your plan, you may need to pay for the entire billing cycle. The safest way to avoid a high cell phone bill when you return is to turn your cell phone off or use only on Wi-Fi where available.



There is a small internet cafe about 2 miles from the volunteer accommodations which can be reached by tuk-tuk, but it is not incredible convenient. It is more feasible to not count on regular internet access. In case of emergency, your friends and family should call our emergency phone number: (214) 824 4562 where our on-call attendant will be able to get in touch with your local coordinator.

Also, if you find yourself needing help in the middle of the night, the on-call manager at the hotel has a cell phone that can be used for emergencies as well.

Health

You should be up to date on routine vaccinations while traveling to any destination. No special vaccines are required to travel to Guatemala.

For additional information on travel health in Guatemala, please refer to the CDC's website at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/guatemala>

Please be aware that dengue fever, a mosquito-borne illness, is present throughout tropical Central America. It is essential to use mosquito repellent with at least 20% DEET at all times.

Your Local Host and Coordinator: Anne Lossing



Anne, her 10-year old son and the family dog set out from Calgary, Canada in 1994 seeking to fulfill a lifelong dream of a home with palm trees and thatched huts. Their journey eventually led to the Mayan jungles of Petén, Guatemala, where she began many humanitarian assistance projects and programs, including a free medical clinic, the coordination of visiting international medical and dental professionals, a computerized library and a Women's Center. Anne has spent years as a hotel manager in the heart of a Mayan wildlife preserve. Anne is also the lead organizer for the annual gathering known as Unificación Maya, and the author of numerous electronic publications describing life in the jungle. She is bilingual in English and Spanish.

Home Office Coordinator: Shanti Shahani de Venegas



Shanti is Director of Communications for Globe Aware. She is thrilled to join this group as she has worked closely with Vivint Gives Back and Vivint Solar in organizing this trip. Shanti has worked with Globe Aware since early 2012 and has a professional background in the fields of Marketing, Non Profit management and Communication. She was born in Monterrey, Mexico and she is fluent in Spanish and English. She has traveled widely and grew up surrounded by different cultures.

Assistant Coordinator: Sapphire Stockman



Sapphire is a recent graduate of the University of Kansas, where she received her Bachelor's Degree in Women's Studies with a co-major of International Studies in Latin America. She has worked with Globe Aware as a volunteer coordinator since 2012. She is from Kansas City, Kansas, and in addition to English she speaks Spanish and is fluent in ASL (American Sign Language) and she is currently studying Portuguese.

Arrival and Meet-Up

Mundo Maya International Airport is just outside Flores and is the only other international airport in the country aside from Guatemala City. There are two daily flights to and from Guatemala City, which is a huge, modern airport.

Volunteers will meet at the Flores Airport exit.

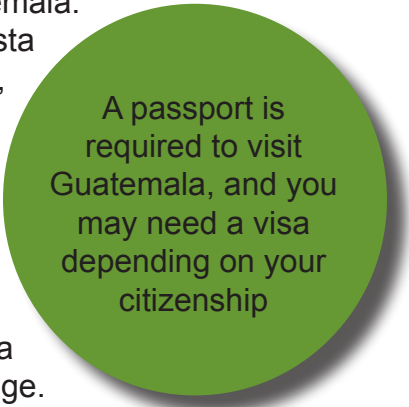
If you don't come in at the scheduled time, we can arrange for a taxi to pick you up. The cost for the taxi pick up is \$50 per person. If we do not see the volunteer at the meet up, we call our head offices, who in turn call your emergency contact to see if they have any updated information on any change in travel plans. If there are any changes in your travel plans please make sure you contact our home office at (214) 824 4562 and press zero to speak to an attendant, we are on call 24 hours a day.

Entering and Leaving Guatemala

A valid passport is required to visit Guatemala.

Citizens of the following countries do not need a visa to enter Guatemala:

Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Chile, Denmark, El Salvador, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Portugal, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, San Marino, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, United Kingdom, United States of America, Vatican City, Venezuela.



A passport is required to visit Guatemala, and you may need a visa depending on your citizenship

A valid U.S. passport is required for all U.S. citizens to enter Guatemala and to depart Guatemala for return to the United States, regardless of age.

Even if dual nationals are permitted to enter Guatemala on a second nationality passport, U.S. citizens returning to the United States from Guatemala are not allowed to board their flights without a valid U.S. passport. Certificates of Naturalization, birth certificates, driver's licenses, and photocopies are not accepted by Guatemalan authorities as alternative travel documents. While in Guatemala, U.S. citizens should carry a photocopy of their passports with them at all times due to the high rate of passport theft and leave the original passport in a safe place. Visit the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website (Spanish only) for the most current visa information.

An exit tax must be paid when departing Guatemala by air. The exit tax (currently \$30) is generally included in an airline ticket price, but may be charged separately. There is an additional airport security fee (currently 20 quetzals, or approximately \$2.60) that all travelers must pay at the airport.

Minors under 18 years old traveling with a valid U.S. passport do not need special permission from their parents to enter or leave Guatemala. 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.) There is a daily fine of 10 quetzals for each day that a traveler overstays his/her permission to be in Guatemala, which must be paid directly to the Guatemalan Immigration Agency. (U.S. citizens born in Guatemala are currently exempted from this fine.)

In June 2006, Guatemala entered a “Central America-4 (CA-4) Border Control Agreement” with El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Under the terms of the agreement, citizens of the four countries may travel freely across land borders from one of the countries to any of the others without completing entry and exit formalities at immigration checkpoints. U.S. citizens and other eligible foreign nationals who legally enter any of the four countries may similarly travel among the four without obtaining additional visas or tourist entry permits for the other three countries. Immigration officials at the first port of entry determine the length of stay, up to a maximum period of 90 days. Foreign tourists who wish to remain in the region beyond the period initially granted for their visit are required either to request a one-time extension of stay from local immigration authorities in the country where the traveler is physically present, or to travel outside the CA-4 countries and reapply for admission to the region. Foreigners “expelled” from any of the four countries are excluded from the entire CA-4 region. In isolated cases, the lack of clarity in the implementation of the CA-4 Border Control Agreement has caused temporary inconvenience to travelers. U.S. citizens who are also citizens of another country and who choose to travel within the CA-4 region using their non-U.S. passport should consult in advance with the appropriate regional authorities regarding visa requirements within the CA-4 zone.

A U.S. citizen whose passport is lost or stolen in Guatemala must obtain a new passport at the U.S. Embassy as soon as possible and present it, together with a police report on the loss or theft, to the Guatemalan Immigration Agency (Dirección de Migración), Sub-Director for Migratory Control (Sub-director de Control Migratorio) in order to obtain permission to depart Guatemala. The agency is located in Guatemala City at 6a Avenida 3-11, Zone 4. Office hours are weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; the telephone number is 2411-2411. No fee is charged by Guatemalan immigration for this service.

For further information regarding entry, exit and customs requirements, travelers should contact the Guatemalan Embassy at 2220 R Street NW, Washington, DC 20008; telephone (202) 745-4953, extension 102; fax (202) 745-1908; Visit their website ; or contact the nearest Guatemalan consulate (Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Providence, Phoenix or San Francisco).

Stay Involved

As you leave Guatemala, you may be asking yourself, “how can I continue to help?”.



Purchase this commemorative bracelet to memorialize your experience. Wear it, tell your friends about your trip, spread the word about Globe Aware! Proceeds will go toward the purchase of school supplies for the children of Guatemala. To purchase, please visit our online store here: <http://www.globeaware.org/store/commemorative-bracelets#.UtgxS02A2M8>

Other ideas to stay involved:

Start planning your next volunteer vacation

Are you ready for your next volunteer vacation? Many of our volunteers are forever changed by the experience and can't wait for the next one, or to visit a new, exciting place. Maybe you fell so in love with the community you visited that you would like to go back. Get a group together, explore our different destinations on our website www.globeaware.org, or return to Guatemala! All returning volunteers receive 10% off our program fees!



Join us on Facebook

Our Facebook page is www.facebook.com/globeaware . Don't forget to LIKE us! You can also FRIEND us at www.facebook.com/globeaware.org and see photos of your program, continue to follow the progress of projects through other volunteers and their images.

Fundraising

Start a fundraising campaign to support a program or project, fundraise towards your next volunteer trip, or even donate to other individuals fundraising so they can experience what you did!

Communicate with us

Please call us at 1 877 588 4562 or email us at office@globeaware.com to communicate any special needs you saw, project ideas, etc. to our office. We are always happy to hear from you!

Share your photos

Send in your photos so we can share with other people in the same program, or people interested in going to Guatemala.

Safety and Security

Flores is a quiet and peaceful place, and probably one of the safest places in the sometimes wild north. Santa Elena and San Benito require a little more caution, but offer a more authentic experience of a Guatemalan town, complete with traffic, litter and street food. Travelers should be vigilant when in major cities or tourist areas such as at Tikal and Guatemala City, due to occasional petty theft. However, incidences of violent crime in Flores are rare.

Never take photos of children without permission. Some Guatemalans are extremely wary of this and will assume you are a kidnapper (even if the children are someone else's). Guatemala has had many problems with children being sold or kidnapped and put up for adoption on the black market. Of course, this doesn't include a few children mixed in with many adults at a distance. This occurs mainly on the more remote Guatemalan villages. In the major cities people are somewhat more open towards picture-taking, but still avoid it.

Things happen. Please understand that Globe Aware cannot be responsible for acts by God or government. Weather, strikes and many other occurrences can effect which roads are open, and cause unscheduled delays. Working outside of North America and Europe is rarely as punctual for many reasons. Pack your patience and flexibility, you'll be rewarded.

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program is a free service provided by the U.S. government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency, keep you up to date with important safety and security announcements, and help your friends and family get in touch with you in case of an emergency. The link to STEP is <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>

Global Entry

Global Entry is a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) program that allows expedited clearance for pre-approved, low-risk travelers upon arrival in the United States. Due to sequestration, long lines have been reported at customs and immigration when coming back into the United States. Global Entry approved travelers are able to use the automated kiosks at immigration to reduce wait times considerably. For more information, visit <http://www.globalentry.gov/>

In Case of Emergency

Embassy of the United States in Guatemala

Avenida Reforma 7-01, Zona 10, Guatemala Ciudad, Guatemala

Telephone: (502)2326-4000 during embassy business hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Mo-Thu and 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Fridays).

Emergency after-hours telephone: (502)2331-2354

Facsimile: (502)2331-3804

Internet website: <http://guatemala.usembassy.gov>

Other emergency numbers:

- Police (911 equivalent): 110 or 120
- Tourist emergency assistance: 502 2421-2810
- Tourist Police (POLITUR): 1 500
- Fire Department: 122 or 123

Further Readings While no further reading is required, we think it is always nice to have a travel guide book with you to read about the area. Lonely Planet, Frommer's, Budget Travel, Rough Guides are some of the titles we have recommended in the past. Many people also enjoy reading about the Mayan Calendar and Astrological beliefs (one popular title is "The Book of Destiny" by Carlos Barrios).