



Guatemala Medical Trip

7 NIGHTS IN GUATEMALA

What to Expect From Your Medical Trip

You will be joining other like-minded volunteers in Antigua, Guatemala, which will be your base during your week-long stay. You will participate in 4 medical popup clinics in poor communities where many people cannot secure proper medical care and medications.

DAY 1: ARRIVAL

You'll be picked up at the airport and taken to your lodgings. There is a short orientation meeting on this day.

DAY 2: ORGANIZATION

We'll have the meds ready to go, but today is about separating them for each day. An optional cooking class is available.

DAY 3: FIRST POPUP CLINIC

We'll travel to a village to hold our first clinic. There will be a debriefing after each day, as it can be overwhelming to see so much need.

DAY 4: SECOND POPUP CLINIC

Our second popup clinic is today and again, we'll have a debriefing.

DAY 5: CHILL DAY

We'll tour either a coffee farm or a chocolate factory. You'll have free time to explore Antigua and do some shopping.

DAY 6: THIRD POPUP CLINIC

Back to helping people! We'll travel to a new area to hold a clinic and have a debriefing in the evening.

DAY 7: FOURTH POPUP CLINIC

Our final popup clinic will be held today and we'll have a final, celebratory dinner to thank you for your help in Guatemala.

DAY 8: FLY HOME

Thanks for visiting this beautiful country! We'll drop you off at the airport for your return flight.

Trip Costs: \$1,000 USD

The trip cost includes the following:

- Transport to and from the airport
- Daily transport to the clinic locations
- 7 nights lodging
- Food for the week
- Translators as needed
- A supply of medications to prescribe as needed
- A tour to either a coffee plantation or a chocolate factory
- An optional Guatemalan cooking class at your place of lodging
- A Healing Hearts t-shirt

NOT Included:

The following are not included in the trip cost:

- Souvenirs
- Travel insurance
- Eating out if you choose to skip a house meal
- Airfare to Guatemala
- Additional days in Guatemala

Healing Hearts Guatemala is not associated with a church or religious organization. We welcome people from all walks of life.

Guatemala Medical Trip

Common Illnesses and Medical Issues You'll Encounter

Every village we visit will have its own challenges, but many people will have the same issues that you'll see repeatedly. Remember, you may not be able to do a lot for them in some cases, but just offering Tylenol, vitamins, and showing that you care goes a long way.

**We will also offer medical followup on the most intense cases to ensure they get the necessary tests and medications where possible.*

COMMON COMPLAINTS

Allergies: People may say they have an allergy when referring to a rash. Seasonal allergies are also common.

Anxiety: We've seen an increase in anxiety, though they may not name it. They will describe the symptoms.

Arthritis: Aches and pains in joints are most of what you'll see in the older generation. Many have untreated arthritis.

Back pain: Back pain is especially common in farm workers and women with C-sections, since medical care is poor.

Colds: Runny noses and coughs are pretty common, particular in the cooler months of December-March.

Dengue: This mosquito-borne illness is common in most parts of Guatemala, especially in the rainy season, May-Nov.

Diabetes: Around 13% of Guatemalans are diabetic and most of those are unaware. Those that know may not have meds.

Diarrhea: Most often seen in kids, it may be an intestinal infection, food poisoning, or a parasite.

LIFESTYLE FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Life in Guatemala is very different from that in North America, which means there may be lifestyle factors you haven't considered. Here are some of the more common ones to look at.

Smoke: Most people don't smoke here, but they may cook over an open fire, which means they're inhaling a lot of smoke.

Pets: Pets in the home are rarely washed or given parasite meds. Fleas, worms, and other issues may arise from this.

Water: Many people do not have access to clean water and drink from the river or taps. You may suggest boiling water for safety.

Hypertension: Many older Guatemalans suffer from hypertension and most do not medicate.

Eye issues: Cataracts and pterygium are very common and we can refer them to a free hospital in Antigua.

Gastritis: Acid reflux and other symptoms come up a lot. Diet is often a big part of the problem, as well as acidic food.

Headaches: Everyone has a headache at the clinics! Often, they are dehydrated, but some may need glasses or have migraines.

Nerves: Nerve pain from an injury or something like carpal tunnel syndrome from tortilla making and washing clothes is seen often.

Parasites: Intestinal worms are a fact of life here and particularly common in children. Treat the whole family, if possible.

Rashes: Rashes are pretty common and are usually from eczema, scabies, Psoriasis, or lack of hygiene.

Wounds: We frequently see wounds in various stages of healing, particularly in diabetics and the elderly. They may not seek medical attention until we are around.

STIs: Unfortunately, it's common to have women come in with STI symptoms, usually due to a cheating spouse. Asking questions about this is acceptable, if uncomfortable.

Children: It's common for women to have back to back children and many of them. This can severely affect their health.

Hygiene: Not everyone has access to a shower or warm water. This may result in skin issues and UTIs.

Guatemala Medical Trip

Staying Safe and Healthy in Guatemala

Guatemala gets a bad rap for being dangerous, but in general, it's pretty safe. We will not take you to any known dangerous areas and will be working in small villages where we have a connection with a village leader or church leader.

Like many areas in the world, it's best to stay indoors after 10pm and to avoid walking alone at late hours. Most Guatemalans are quite friendly and helpful, but there are always some people who will take advantage.

If you feel threatened at any time, please notify a leader immediately and we will deal with the situation or ensure everyone is removed from the situation.

YOUR HEALTH

Food and water are the most common causes of health issues among travelers. To ensure you stay as healthy as possible, please do not:

- Brush your teeth with tap water
- Drink tap water
- Eat street food unless told it is safe by a guide
- Eat unwashed fruit and vegetables

We will provide you with pure water for drinking during your stay, as well as ensure that your food is cleaned correctly.

Despite the best precautions, you may still become ill. We recommend you have travel insurance, but can take you to get tests and to see a private doctor if needed, as well as assist with getting the necessary medications.

BEHAVIOR AND ACTIONS

We are not religion-based, but many of the Guatemalans we see are Catholic or Evangelical. We may also work with churches on occasion and it's quite common that they will want to pray with us before beginning the clinic. If you are uncomfortable with this, you are welcome to step outside or stay to the side. However, we do ask that you respect their religious beliefs.

When it comes to clothing, we ask that you refrain from wearing short skirts and shorts, as well as spaghetti straps. This is because it can be considered offensive in some areas. In Antigua, there's no problem with dressing how you like, but in the villages, we want to be respectful to their culture.

Please ask for permission before taking photos. Most people are fine with it, but some are not and parents may be protective of their children's privacy.

If you are going to give out a candy or toy, be aware that every child in the area will be coming to you for some. To avoid hurt feelings and other issues, please refrain from handing out items if you don't have enough to go around. That being said, we encourage you to bring a bag of treats if you like.

Do not offer money to your patients. If you feel they are in particular need and want to help them out, get their phone number and name and talk to one of us. We can help you arrange aid without making it obvious to everyone. Please be aware that some people are not honest and are simply trying to get money, so we prefer to help in a specific way, such as a food basket, paying the child's school fee, etc.

We also do not permit the use of drugs or alcohol while you are in the field.

Guatemala Medical Trip

Packing List

Wondering what to bring to Guatemala? It's the Land of Eternal Spring, which means it's usually fairly temperate, at least in the highlands where we are. Temperatures range from 20-36° C during the day and may drop more at night. There's no heat in the homes in Guatemala, so make sure you bring at least one sweater for the evenings.

THE BASICS

You'll want to bring the usual pants, shorts, shirts, underwear, etc. We have access to a washing machine, so you can wash your clothes if necessary. We also recommend the following:

- Comfortable walking shoes
- Sandals or flipflops
- Rain jacket or poncho
- Jacket or sweater
- Hat for sunny days

DON'T FORGET!

Some items that you'll also want to be sure to have include:

- Sunscreen!
- Shampoo and conditioner
- Any necessary medications
- Lotion or burn gel
- Nausea meds if you get carsick
- Ziplock bags for sundries
- Any specific food items you need
- Feminine hygiene products

We will have painkillers and such, but you may wish to bring your own painkillers, Immodium, etc.

FOR THE CLINICS

We provide the medications for the clinics as part of the package. However, if you want to bring something useful, we welcome the following:

- Vitamins, adult and children's
- Small toys to give away (bring at least 20-50, please, to ensure everyone gets one)
- Candy, again, bring lots!
- Small snacks, like jerky, chips, etc.
- Sunglasses (always asked for!)
- Reading glasses
- Compression socks (hard to find here)
- Hygiene items like deodorant, lip balm, etc.