LIFE GUATEMALA

MISSION TRIP HANDBOOK

2025/26 EDITION

Dear Future Team Member,

Thank you so much for considering visiting and blessing the people of Guatemala with our mission! You will never regret the decision and we are excited to have you with us soon.

This handbook is a compilation of information that we hope will be very useful for you. Thought not all-inclusive, we believe what you need to know to plan and execute your trip will be found here.

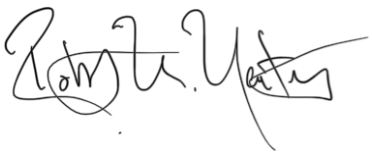
It is mandatory for the team leader to read this handbook and oversee that his/her group fully understand and agree to its contents.

Upon reading this manual, we assume by your signing and emailing to us your Verification of Reading and Understanding form that you have indeed read this document and understand its contents.

PLEASE be sure to sign the Verification form and email it to teams@lifeguatemala.com as soon as possible.

We look forward to seeing and ministering in Guatemala with you soon and are here to answer any other questions or doubts you may have.

God bless you in your journey!



Robert Yeater
Founder, Life Guatemala

LIFE GUATEMALA

STC/LG TEAM HANDBOOK

Verification of Reading and Understanding

Please complete and email to teams@lifeguatemala.com as soon as possible.

_____

I, _____ , by signing this document make it known to LG Guatemala that I have read, understand and will share this information to every member of our potential team.

Further, we agree with the financial terms of our visit and all of our responsibilities as it pertains to any home build, VBS or any other activity agreed upon with STC and will be subject to its adherence.

I understand that as a team, we alone are responsible to come prepared and well-versed in the LG TEAM HANDBOOK and its expectations.

Name: _____ Date:_____

Signature: _____

LIFE GUATEMALA

FINANCES

We try to make our visits and projects as affordable as possible.
As soon as you reserve a trip, LG begins to invest time and energy into your visit to make it as effective and profitable as possible.

There are 4 separate payments you will make:

1. **Downpayment.** ($500)

This payment you make is the only way to lock-in your dates and guarantee your visit.
Non-refundable payment due immediately.

2. **Project Payment.** (Varies)

This payment is non-refundable and fully committed to us/due within **90 days** of your visit. Once Life Guatemala commits to build a home for a family or complete any other project, this will be carried out regardless of a trip cancellation.

EX: Home Build 5000 + Stove 450 + Water Filter 100 + Rice/Beans 250 = **$5800 usd**

3a. **Team Fee** ($450)
3b. **Guatemala Fee** ($250)

Your team/mission home fee consists of **2** separate payments payable in the following manner:

3a. **$450**usd Team fee is due per individual **30** days prior to arrival.
*This amount is to be mailed to LG or paid electronically.

3b. **$250**usd Guatemala fee is due per individual **upon arrival** in Guatemala
**Good condition, US bills in 50/100 denomination only, per Guatemala bank request.*

NOTE: If you choose to not pay the Guatemala fee, your Team Fee due will be **$850**usd

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Upon arrival & request, you will be given a donation receipt for your records and bookkeeping upon receipt in Guatemala.

EXTRAS

It is wise to have extra funds built into your trip budget.

All of these funds are payable <u>IN COUNTRY</u> upon arrival.

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1. **<u>Tips</u>:** You will be working closely with 5-6 Guatemalans who work with all week long. A show of gratitude to them is a huge blessing.**($500 total recommended)**

2. **<u>Team Store</u>:** Life Guatemala maintains a team store that has everything from Coca-Cola and M&M's to t-shirts, coffee, leather goods and ceramic mugs. **($50-$1000)**

3. **<u>Shopping Day:</u>** Visa/Mastercard are generally accepted as is CLEAN U.S. dollars *20's and up/Mint condition as possible. **($100 recommended)**

4. **<u>Extra Days Stay</u>:** A standard visit with LG is 6 nights, 7 days.
   *Additional night is **$50p/p**(*breakfast included)* and is an **in country cost**.
   *All extra nights stays must be cleared by LG before you arrive!

5. **<u>Volcano Hike</u>:** Your pre-planned volcano hike is an **in-country cost** of **$100p/p**

6. **<u>Airport Transfers:</u>** Your transfer is included in your team fee. But if any members travel separate, there will be a **$75** fee payable in USD **in country cost**, *each way*.

<u>IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO NOTE</u>

LIFE GUATEMALA CAN ONLY ACCEPT U.S. CURRENCY FOR ANY EXTRAS SO PLEASE COME PREPARED FOR THESE EXPENSES.*

Because of banking policies in country, all bill must be of the **50/100 denomination** <u>without **any** rips, stains, tears of writing/ink of ANY kind</u>.

HOME BUILD

Building a home for a family in Guatemala is one of the most rewarding things a team does on mission trip with Life Guatemala.

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1. **Cost:** The cost to build a home is **$5000**. Stoves are an additional **$450**. *REMEMBER: This is due no later than **30 days** prior to your arrival in Guatemala.

2. **Commitment:** When a family is told they are receiving a home, it is quite emotional and life-changing. We follow-through on that promise every time. If for any reason you must cancel your trip within **90 days of arrival**, the home will still be built in your absence(complete with video of dedication). So whether you arrive in Guatemala or not, know that **you are committing to build this home**. NO EXCEPTIONS.

3. **Tools:** All tools will be provided in country. LG utilizes DeWalt 20v tools to build, so if you wish to bring in extra tools or even you own tool belt, feel free to do so. Everything will be provided to complete the build in the event you do not.

4. **Home Type:** All of LG's homes are cement floor, block base with a wood frame construction and board & batten siding. There will be someone from the LG construction staff on site to help guide you in the build process from start to finish. This is a great team building opportunity for your group!

5. **Dedication Day:** On the final day of the build we will have an official dedication of the home and a presenting of the keys to the family. Someone from your team will share a word/pray while that same person or someone else will hand them the keys. It is a very special time that will be filmed on Facebook Live for your church, friends or donors to see.

6. **Extras:** Each house has 2 twin-sized beds. If you would like to set up the home for the family, you can bring things such as bedding, plastic cups/plates/utensils, small cross, small wall clock, towels, extra blankets, wash cloth, soaps, school supplies, candy, toys…Whatever you bring will be greatly appreciated by the family.

NOTE: If you have **15 or more** in your group, **2 home builds** are advisable.

HOME VISITS

LG loves to meet the people *where they are*. Because of this, you will get the opportunity to visit real homes of real people. It is very impactful and life-changing.

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1. **Rice/Beans:** As we go into homes we like to try and meet not just spiritual but physical needs. We will deliver food to families as we visit.

2. **Prepare:** Coming on a missions trip stretches you. Be prepared to share some of your testimony with people. Be prepared to pray with a family. The Guatemalan people are open and love to hear your words of encouragement!

3. **Pictures:** During home visits, ONLY LG staff will be allowed to take photos. It can be very intimate and we must use discretion at all times.

4. **Stamina + Shoes:** Guatemala is very hilly! Please bring closed-toe shoes that are suitable for the rigors of mountainous terrain and drink plenty of water; you will be ministering at 7500' above see level!

5. **Translators:** Don't worry, you won't go alone; LG translators will be there to minister with you every step of the way!

VBS FOR KIDS

Each team will *normally* do **3 separate** children activity times.
This is generally done in VBS format with singing, story, games and an activity.

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1. **What to bring?:** Each team is required to bring **ALL** things needed each day(including give-aways, candy, games, coloring sheets etc).

2. **Will you help us?:** This is YOUR week to minister. LG will help with music, general order and possibly a clown for event opening. Translators will be provided for you, so you will not be left alone. Our staff doesn't work the VBS for you; we *help* you!

3. **How many children?** There will be between 50 and 150 children at each event, unless otherwise stated for special events. One event will have around 50 children and the other two events will have between 80-170 children. It is ok to bring extra 'just in case'; we can never have enough material in Guatemala.
   ***Attendance can be very volatile. Prepare for too many or too little!**

4. **How long do we have?** Please be prepared to minister for 45min to 1 hour in length(this includes activity/game time). Remember: you will be translated from English to Spanish so this will make things take slightly more time.

5. **Experience:** Although we encourage you to involve the entire team, we ask you to prepare and give **your absolute best** to these children. If someone has never shared a lesson before or spoke in front of a group, we ask you consider using those with experience for these important times.

'The key isn't perfection; it is in the preparing.'

SAFETY

You are traveling to a foreign country and things are different than in the United States. What are some ways to secure?

1. **Don't be flashy:** Have a super nice watch you like? To err on the side of caution, it is important to not do/wear things that draw attention to yourself. Be mindful of the jewelry you wear and electronics you carry.

2. **Stay with the group:** There is safety in numbers so whether you are at the airport or out in a village, always make sure you have at least 1-2 people with you, preferably more.

3. **Stay hydrated:** Guatemala is almost perfect in climate, but you will be between 5000' to 8000' elevation during your visit. Water consumption is paramount.

4. **Keep bus windows closed in towns and phones inside:** Never open the bus windows and put your phone outside to take a photo. Theft is common and we need not draw that type of attention to the group.

5. **If you cannot afford to lose it, leave it:** If you simply cannot afford to lose that phone, please leave it at the mission home. Passports should **NEVER** travel with you to a village, under any circumstance. Should you do so and lose it, **you will be responsible** for its replacement, housing if needed and any costs associated with its loss, incurred by Life Guatemala; *including staff labor.*

6. **Don't open the door:** LG staff will be responsible for letting people in and out of mission property. Please never answer the door and under no circumstances should you ever leave the premises unless with a staff member or with prior consent from the LG director.

7. **Water + Hygiene:** Easily our biggest safety culprits, clean water and hand sanitation are the biggest inhibitors to good health for the week. Do not drink any water from the faucets/shower and wash you hands incessantly. It will go a long way to a happy and healthy mission trip!

8. **Traveller's Insurance: IMG Global** and others similar are recommended.

MISSION HOUSE

Just outside of Antigua, Guatemala is a small village town called San Juan del Obispo. This will be your home for the week.

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1. **Sleeping Arrangements*:** The LG Mission Home is Jack & Jill style, comprised of 2 separate bunk rooms, each with its own private bathroom. One room can accommodate up to 10 people and the other can accommodate put to 12 total.

2. **Bedding:** All towels and bedding are provided by LG. Favorite pillow though? That is totally up to you! Towels will be changed out every other day.

3. **WiFi:** Wireless internet is available throughout the property.

4. **Dining:** 2 separate dining areas, along with some private tables, allow for up to 50 visitors to dine together at one time.

5. **Coffee:** Absolutely and every morning and evening!

6. **Washer + Dryer:** There is a washer and dryer on site for a fee of **$10** per load.

7. **Snacks:** The LG Tienda is available 24/7 and has a variety of merchandise, snacks, cold drinks and freshly roasted coffee to take home!

8. **Amenities:** Hammocks, rocking chairs, fire pit, fooseball, ping pong, corn hole and a plethora of table games are free to use for your enjoyment.

9. **502 Coffee:** Life Guatemala is also home to the official 502 Coffee Co roaster. During the week expect to smell a fresh roast and learn what makes the specialty coffee in the Be Braver Team Shop so insatiable! Cost is **$15** per bag medium roast, **$20** special blend.

NOTE: *Because of limited space, unless your team is very small we cannot accommodate for couples. In the future we hope to be able to offer this so please be sure to understand that **girls and guys will stay together, in separate rooms**.

TRAVEL DAY

First time travel or first time to Guatemala? It is quite simple upon arrival but here are a few easy hacks to help you through:

1. **Passport:** Be 100% sure your passport is valid for AT LEAST 6 months longer than your return date to the United States.

2. **Bag Stickers:** When you check in your bags from your departure city, the counter attendant will give you the stickers to your luggage.
   DO NOT LOSE THESE; you will need them in Guatemala.

3. **Customs Form:** 24 hours BEFORE flight, fill out and screen shot your customs QR code at https://farm2.sat.gob.gt/declaDelViajeroGt-web/pages/public/declaracionViajero.xhtml#no-back-button
   *NOTE: Estados Unidos = United States **and** Español = English

4. **Address:** You will see 'Foreseen Address' on your customs form. This is where you put the address you will be staying.
   Please put the following: 3A Calle San Juan Obispo, Antigua Guatemala

YOU HAVE LANDED IN GUATEMALA, NOW WHAT?

Step 1: Follow the crowd and make your way to the customs line. Here, they will take your form and stamp your passport. **NOTE:** You can fill electronic entry form here too.

Step 2: Go to the corresponding luggage belt and retrieve your luggage. If you have too much and need help, there are helpers there that require $2 for cart rental and we can tip them when you get outside.

Step 3: Remember those **bag stickers** from this morning? As you exit the luggage area an agent **will ask to see** your stickers and verify your bags. **Have them ready!**

Step 4: Go to agent with red/green light. **Have the digital QR code** you saved ready and show it to the agent should they ask.

Step 5: Once you pass through the scanners, **go through the door and to your RIGHT** hand side! **RIGHT** side! Wait for your team, stay behind the glass(don't go all the way outside yer and look for the LG staff and/or sign!

FOOD

There is nothing like fresh food in Latin America!
Here is the scoop on what your food situation will look like.

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1. **Mission House Meals:** All of your meals will be familiar, we might even have a taco night! Our meals are prepared in-house by our own cooks in sanitary conditions. From spaghetti and bacon to local Guatemalan favorites, you will not go hungry with LG while visiting Guatemala.

2. **Food Allergies:** Unfortunately, LG **cannot** accommodate for food allergies. There are normally a few things to choose from but if you have an allergy, please compensate by bringing what you need on your trip. We cannot shop upon arrival.

3. **Kitchen Use:** The kitchen is for LG Staff use ONLY. **You will not** be able to use the kitchen to prepare independent meals. There is a microwave in the dining area for your use and convenience.

4. **Refrigerator Use:** All refrigerators are for **LG use ONLY.** The only acceptable use by team members is for medicine that requires refrigeration.
   If you would like a drink or snack, the Be Braver Team Shop is available 24/7.

5. **Village Meals:** One cool part of LG Guatemala is we get to eat authentic meals at times prepared in the villages where we minister. These meals are safe to eat, as is any form of ice that we give you access too.
   *If there is a scheduled meal in a village you **will always have the option** to pack a PB&J before you leave each morning!

6. **Giving Away Food:** We know it is difficult, but at times you might have lunch around others. For lack of food and the fact they don't eat sandwiches, please refrain from giving away your food. If you prefer, simply do not eat.

HELPING HELPS...

...when done correctly. Sometimes it is difficult seeing so much need.
Here are some guidelines for you to consider prior to your visit:

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1. **Do not give away cash:** When we are in the villages, never give money directly to a person/family. Please contact LG staff and we can work together in helping if you feel led to do so.

2. **LG Staff help:** Many of you will grow to love our staff just as much as we do! But, please leave any monetary help to them by way of a tip at weeks end. Never promise finances and if you would like to help someone on staff in a deeper way, please contact the LG Director before you say or do anything.
3. **Social Media:** Social media is a great help and allows us to stay in contact between visits, especially those that make friendships while here. LG **DOES NOT ALLOW** our staff to contact social media friends for **money** or anything else. If this happens, please contact the LG Director for help and clarification.
   PLEASE DO NOT use Google translate and ask for wants/needs, please. This is truly detrimental to the LG team and staff as a whole.

4. **Helping a Family you meet:** Sometimes you will come across people in very dire straights. If you or your team feel led to help a specific family or person, please contact the LG Director and we will talk about what would be best for the family.

NOTE:

We understand that our rules and procedures may seem like too much. We also realize it can be very hard to follow them when you see such desperation.

Please realize we have been doing this for 15 years and each point we make; not just in this section but the entire handbook, is made for a reason. It's for the benefit of both you and the Guatemalan people. Each line item you see is something we have dealt with multiple times.

Thank you for your heart and trust in missions with Life Guatemala!

WHAT TO BRING

Here are some suggestions:

1. Linens and towels are provided by LG. But an extra towel never hurts!
2. Travel size shampoo, soap and toothpaste.
3. Comfortable shoes designed for activity. Closed toe are a must for villages.
4. Any VBS materials; including candy and give-aways.
5. Any extra supplies for furnishing a new home build.
6. Any personal tools(like tool bag) you would like to use during construction.
7. Money for mission home fee($250), volcano ($100) if added, spending money for shopping day, tips, team shop and some fresh 502 Coffee!
8. If you have food allergies, please bring any food to compensate for the week.
9. All medications/devices you need. ***YES, you can bring your C-PAP machine!**
10. Comfortable clothes, light sweatshirt/jacket and a poncho.
11. Flashlight, power strip, phone charger etc.
12. Sunscreen and/or a hat.
13. Any applicable items for village distribution(hats, gloves, shoes, glasses etc).

Village Dress Code:

Life Guatemala strives to maintain a great relationship in our villages and cultural norms here are very important. Because of this we ask the following from **both men & women:**

1. **No** tank tops or low-cut shirts showing your mid-section.
2. **No** exercise pants, tight LuLulemon-type shorts of any kind.
3. **ALL** shorts should be loose fitting and to the top of the knee.
4. On Sundays we ask you wear at minimum jeans and a nice shirt. NO SHORTS.

Tobacco and Drug/Alcohol Policy:

Life Guatemala is a **100% tobacco, drug and alcohol** free ministry.

Please respect this. Failure to do so can result in being asked to leave the mission property.

WHILE YOU WAIT

Prior to your trip there is plenty to do!

1. **Pray.** Pray for a heart of service and vision for what LG is trying to accomplish.
2. **Study.** If you will teach or sing; please invest much time in preparation.
3. **Help.** Fundraising for a home is a group effort. Be involved in the process!
4. **Prepare.** Make sure your passport is valid for at leas (6) months beyond your return date to the United States.
5. **Money.** Make sure all of your bills are in good condition without tear/markings.
6. **Connect.** If you have not already done so, please follow us on Facebook and Instagram @lifeguate.
7. **Learn.** At www.lifeguatemala.com you can learn about us, watch informative videos, meet the team and more! Be sure to check out our YouTube channel also!