CFCA AWARENESS TRIPS

trip information

*The following information is for **2013** trips. The dates and trips to specific countries change from year to year depending on interest, the political situation within the countries and the ability of CFCA projects to host an awareness trip. A detailed schedule and additional information will be sent one to two weeks prior to departure in the pre-departure packet.*

GUATEMALA

2013 Trip Dates:

Feb. 2-9	**June 15-22**	**Oct. 12-19**
March 16-23	**July 20-27**	**Dec. 26 – Jan. 2, 2014**
April 13-20	**Aug. 10-17**	

Trip Size: 12-35 participants

Please register by 60 days in advance to reserve your spot. If you still wish to register after this date, contact a CFCA trip coordinator regarding availability.

Trip Fee: $500

Includes food, lodging and in-country transportation. Airfare is **not** included.

On your trip to Guatemala you may do some or all of the following activities:

- Be welcomed by the local CFCA staff who will be your hosts for the week, ensuring that your visit is enjoyable
- Spend time with your sponsored friend
- Visit the homes and communities of CFCA sponsored friends and their families, where you will learn about their joys and challenges
- Observe the beauty of the people, volcanoes and lakes of Guatemala's highlands, including Lake Atitlan, one of the world's most beautiful lakes
- Visit Antigua, the colonial capital of Guatemala

Entry and Exit Requirements

A passport valid for at least six months beyond the end of your intended stay is required to enter Guatemala. U.S. citizens do not need a visa for a stay of 90 days or less. An **airport security fee of 20 quetzals (approximately $3**) will be charged to travelers departing at the airport and must be paid in cash, in either dollars or quetzals. There is also a **departure tax of $30**. This fee is often included in the airline ticket price. *All fees are subject to change.* While in Guatemala, travelers should carry their passport or a photocopy of it at all times. Participants who will be traveling with a minor should contact a CFCA trip coordinator for additional information.

Airport and Travel Arrangements

Make your airline arrangements only after your registration is confirmed and you receive the CFCA trip coordinator's written instructions for scheduling your flight. In the meantime, we strongly encourage you to research airfares with a travel agent, the airlines or via the Internet. Vista Travel may also be contacted regarding airfare at (800) 537-5066. This agency is familiar with our programs and schedules.

All trip participants should arrive on the first scheduled date of the trip and depart on the last scheduled day from **La Aurora Airport (GUA)** in Guatemala City**.** The first and last dates listed for each trip are the days that travelers will depart from and arrive back in the U.S. **The CFCA staff will meet all travelers at the airport who arrive on the scheduled arrival day. Do not accept offers of transportation from anyone other than the CFCA team.**

(over)

Accommodations and Food

Trip participants will stay in a hotel in Guatemala City on the first and last night of the trip. The group will spend the remainder of the week at the Hermano Pedro Regional Center in San Lucas Toliman, three and a half hours from Guatemala City. Married couples will stay in private rooms. Other participants will stay in dormitories. Internet access is available. Pillows, sheets, blankets and bath towels are provided. Travelers should bring their own toiletries and alarm clocks. Running water for showers is readily available, but it may not be heated. **Tap water is unsafe for drinking.** Instead, the project will provide bottled water. Alcoholic beverages are not included in the trip fee.

Participants will eat simple meals that reflect the local cuisine. All food is prepared with purified water. All meals will be eaten with the group. Do not purchase food from street vendors. Meals are often served at a later hour than most Americans are accustomed to eating. We recommend bringing snacks such as dried fruit and nut mixes, raisins, granola bars, etc., as you may want something to eat between scheduled meals.

The electrical current in Guatemala is 120V, the same as in the U.S. The outlets accept two-prong plugs. Bring an adapter if your personal electronic device is three-prong.

Climate

San Lucas Toliman, located in the highlands of Guatemala at an altitude of 5,064 feet, has an average high temperature of 77 degrees and a low of 55 degrees. The dry season lasts from December to May and the rainy season lasts from late May until the end of November. During the rainy season, it usually rains late in the afternoon for an hour or two and sometimes late at night. The rainiest month is September. Temperatures vary little during the year. The warmest months are March and April. Participants may visit the warmer, coastal lowlands in the department of Suchitepequez where the elevation drops to around 1,000 feet above sea level. Participants should be aware that minor tremors may occur. The group also travels along winding, mountainous roads, which can cause motion sickness.

Health/Medical Preparations

Contact your medical doctor or local health department for immunization recommendations based on your health history. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/travel has country specific recommendations regarding immunizations. You may also contact them by phone at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). CFCA staff members are not qualified to offer advice on immunizations.

You should consult with your medical insurance company prior to traveling to confirm whether your policy applies in a foreign country. **If your policy does not cover emergency expenses such as medical evacuation, we urge you to consider the purchase of temporary travel insurance.** Many insurance plans, including Medicare, do not cover treatment outside of the U.S. You may obtain further information on travel insurance from a travel agent or through research on the Internet.

Currency Exchange and Handling

The local currency is the Guatemalan **quetzal** (GTQ). Your lodging, food and in-country transportation are included in the trip fee. You should bring additional money for the purchase of snacks and souvenirs, and to cover entry/exit fees. You should not carry bills in denominations greater than $20 because they may be difficult for local banks or vendors to exchange. Do not bring torn or severely worn currency. Bring U.S. dollars into the country and exchange them for quetzals at the Guatemala City airport. Traveler's checks are not recommended, and ATMs are not readily available.