

TEAM CASAS TRIP GUIDE

CASAS

P O R C R I S T O

Guatemala

*For questions and to submit documents, please contact our team coordinators at questions@casasporcristo.org or 915.778.0046.
Fax: 915.778.0086.*

QUICK GUIDE

3-6 Months Prior

- _ Register and pay the \$100 deposit.
- _ Apply for your passport.
- _ Read this Guatemala Team Casas Trip Guide.
- _ **Do NOT purchase plane tickets until the trip is scheduled.**

30 Days Prior

- _ **If the trip has reached the minimum number of participants and is scheduled...**
 - o Submit your final trip payment.
 - o Secure your flight to and from La Aurora International Airport in Guatemala City, Guatemala.
 - o Submit your flight itinerary, food allergies, disclosure of risk form, and medical release form to our team coordinators.
 - o Check your email to find out your missionary, lodging, and family information.
 - o Pray for the recipient family.
 - o Casas por Cristo will purchase travel insurance on your behalf.

**At least 14 individuals need to register 60 days prior to the trip start date for a trip to be confirmed. Registrations will be accepted until the trip takes place.*

PACKING LIST

- Travel documents (passports, etc.)
 - Tool belt or nail apron
 - Work gloves
 - Protective eye wear
 - Long work pants (no capri pants or shorts on work site)
 - Work shirts (t-shirts)
 - Sturdy closed-toed shoes or boots & flip flops
 - Hat or bandana
 - Insulated water container
 - Sun block
 - Chap stick
 - Bible
 - Soap, shampoo, & other toiletries
 - Emergency cash for medical treatment
 - Feminine hygiene products (tampons are difficult to find)
- | | |
|--|----------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Hammer (no smaller than 16 oz.)<input type="checkbox"/> Carpenter's pencil<input type="checkbox"/> 25 ft. tape measure<input type="checkbox"/> Utility knife | REQUIRED TOOLS |
|--|----------------|
- *Earplugs (for sleeping)
 - *Flashlight
 - *Wet wipes
 - *Knee pads
- *These items
aren't mandatory
but can be helpful.*

DO NOT PACK

- Tank tops or sleeveless shirts
- Torn pants
- Hair dryers, curling irons, and hair straighteners
- Shorts shorter than knee length (no cheerleading/running shorts)
- Tight fitting clothing (yoga/spandex pants)

30 DAYS PRIOR

Disclosure of Risk & Medical Release Form

You must fill out a Disclosure of Risk & Medical Release Form before you enter into Guatemala. We now collect this form digitally. You will receive an email with instructions on how to fill out this form. Your form is due 30 days prior to your trip.

Final Payment

Make your final payment online or send a check to Casas por Cristo, PO Box 971070, El Paso, TX 79997.

Flights

Purchase your airfare to and from La Aurora International Airport in Guatemala City, Guatemala. Book flights to arrive anytime on the first date of the trip and depart anytime on the last date of the trip. Due to the unique situation of this trip, we will not allow any exceptions to the arrival and departure days. Forward your flight itinerary to our team coordinators.

Food Allergies

Email your food allergies to our team coordinators.

Missionary, Lodging, & Family Information

Check your email for a trip profile page link containing information about your assigned missionary, Guatemala lodging, and family. We will send it to you no later than 30 days prior to your trip.

Travel Insurance

Casas por Cristo will purchase travel insurance on your behalf (see EMERGENCIES section for details). Your Casas missionary will keep a printed copy of your group's travel insurance ID cards throughout the trip.

TRIP DETAILS

Arrival & Departure

Your Casas missionary and one of our team coordinators will set up a video call with you and the other team members sometime before your trip to introduce ourselves, go over expectations for the week, and talk about your airport pickup.

Once we have received everyone's flight itineraries, we will email you some scheduled pick-up times from the airport. Once you exit customs, you can wait in the café area to the left of the exit until the designated pick-up time. Then exit the airport to meet your Casas representative out front and board the bus.

Animals

It is important that you do not feed or touch the animals in Guatemala. Many of them carry diseases and have the potential to bite or scratch.

Attire

Please bring clothing that is modest and appropriate. The following clothing items are prohibited: tank tops, cutoff shirts, torn pants, shorts shorter than knee-length (no cheerleading/running shorts), tight-fitting clothing (no leggings or yoga/spandex pants). On the work site, everyone must wear long pants and closed-toed shoes for protection. You may wear modest, knee-length shorts whenever you are not on the work site.

Cell Phones

Talk with your carrier to see if you will have service in Guatemala and what charges you may incur. Your Casas missionary will have a cell phone with service in Guatemala in case of emergencies.

Cost

The cost can be found on your invoice and on our website. The cost includes all materials, meals, transportation, lodging, and insurance in country. The cost does not include airfare to and from Guatemala City. The \$100 deposit is non-refundable and non-transferable. However, if we do not reach the minimum number of participants, the trip will be canceled and your deposit will be refunded.

Cultural Sensitivity

Casas por Cristo exists to open the door for local pastors and churches to share the love of Jesus Christ by serving. The Guatemalan church culture is generally more conservative than yours. Please be sensitive to the desires of the pastors you are here to serve. Our pastors have asked that our teams refrain from purchasing or consuming alcohol and tobacco, dress modestly, and respect the facilities. Ask your Casas missionary for more specific information about your assigned pastor/church.

Dedication

Start thinking about how you would like to dedicate this home. We will provide a Spanish Bible, keys, and a plaque. This will be a great time for the group and family to speak with one another and pray together. Check out our [dedication sample outline](#) for more details.

Devotions

Reflecting on each day is an important part of your experience. We will plan a time each day for a group devotional and reflection. We may ask some you to lead a devotion throughout the week. We will email you details if you are selected.

Documentation

Passports are REQUIRED for all team members! If you plan to travel with minors without parents, please see the US Customs & Border Protection's [recommended documentation](#).

Excursion

We have arranged for your team to visit the ancient city of Antigua and shop around the local market the day prior to your departure. The cost of transportation to Antigua is included with your trip, but you will need to pay for your own lunch ~\$15. Please note that in the event your home takes longer to complete than anticipated, you will give up your excursion day to stay and finish the house.

Gifts for the Recipient Family

In an effort to create uniformity and adhere to the desires of our pastors, we ask that you limit your gifts to one of each of the following per family.

- One bed and/or one Eco Filter which can be purchased for in our [online store](#).

Immunizations

We do not require any immunizations; however, we do recommend current Tetanus and Hepatitis A & B immunizations. You may check the CDC website to see what they recommend for travel to Guatemala.

Internet

Most accommodations offer basic internet for \$10/week that will allow you to text and call (video streaming unavailable). Cash and credit cards accepted at the Casas store.

Lost Baggage

If your baggage does not arrive, please see the airline and give them the following information.

- Address: 7 Calle 3-34, Zona 1, San Raymundo, Guatemala.
- Guatemala staff phones: 4488-4606 (Pete Dockery), 3166-6771 (Kyle St. Amand), and 4561-8486 (Luke Stavely). Dial 011-502 first if calling from a US phone number.

Meals, Transportation, & Lodging

Casas por Cristo will arrange your [meals](#), transportation, and lodging in Guatemala. The only meal not included is lunch while sightseeing in Antigua. The fees for this are included in your final payment. There is an additional fee if you are staying longer than the typical 6-day trip.

Merchandise

You may purchase Casas souvenirs (t-shirts, hats, mugs, etc.) from the Casas store located at our office in San Raymundo. You can also shop online on our [website](#). US dollars, Guatemalan quetzales, and credit cards are accepted.

Money

In Guatemala, the currency is called the Quetzal. The US dollar is **not** accepted in San Raymundo. Exchange your money state side for the best exchange rate or in the Guatemala City airport. You will need to have your passport and know where you are staying in San Raymundo in order to exchange money. The address you can give is **7 Calle 3-34, Zona 1, San Raymundo, Guatemala**. You can also withdraw money from the local ATM's in San Raymundo using your personal debit card. Please check with your bank to see what fees may apply. No banks will exchange \$20 bills in San Raymundo, so if you need to exchange money there, you will have to bring crisp \$50 or \$100 bills.

Personal Belongings

Don't bring anything to Guatemala that you would be heartbroken to leave

without. We recommend keeping anything of value with you at all times (money, passports, jewelry, etc.), locked in the safe in our office, or secured in the room at your lodging facility.

Recipient Family

We do not require that the recipient families participate in the building process beyond having the site prepared. However, many families are eager to help but are shy and feel like they would be in the way. Make every effort to include your family in the building process. Some families will prepare meals for teams to show their gratitude. These families make extra efforts to ensure that the food is safely prepared.

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program

We will enroll your group in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program at [STEP.state.gov](https://step.state.gov). This will help the US government reach you in an emergency.

Spanish

The primary language spoken in Guatemala is Spanish. However, some families speak a Mayan dialect called Kaqchikel. We encourage you to learn some Spanish phrases beforehand to be able to speak with your family.

Support Your Missionary

In order to keep the cost of our mission trips low, our missionaries raise their own salaries to serve at the ministry. Each missionary depends on gifts from churches and dedicated individuals to cover their salaries. Changing a family's life this week could not happen without your effort and sacrifice. It also could not happen without your financial support of our missionaries. At the end of your trip, encourage your missionary by giving a donation and consider joining their monthly support team.

Team Captain

Each Team Casas will have a Team Captain. Team Captains are volunteers who work as liaisons between Casas and the team to help recruit, prepare for, and carry out the mission trip. They are not staff missionaries, but are helpers, especially behind the scenes and in the planning of the trip. They are there to help team members. If you've been on a group trip with Casas, they are similar to the group's team leader. They will not be leading the construction of the home.

Team Members

The ideal group size is 15 to 25 people per house. We will send you a roster of your team prior to your trip. The work will include pouring concrete, building walls, and installing metal roofing, electrical, siding, windows, and a door. Each of these tasks has at least one element that everyone can perform. Skilled laborers aren't needed.

Time Zone

Guatemala is in the Central time zone but does not observe daylight savings. When establishing meeting times, we will refer to this time zone.

Water

Tap water in Guatemala is not purified to American standards. To avoid getting sick, please drink only the purified water that Casas will provide for you at your work site and lodging.

Weather

The temperatures in San Raymundo range from 55 to 80 degrees year-round. Rain is a common occurrence, and a light rain jacket is recommended.

Your Casas Missionary

One of our trained missionaries will be with you 100% of the time you are in Guatemala to lead and live with your team for the week. He or she will teach, supervise, and ensure safety and quality. We take care of the details so that you can focus on building and serving. Most of our missionaries have a basic understanding but are not fluent in Spanish. Our missionaries are here for you and your group and will work to accommodate your requests. Read a brief bio about your missionary on the [missionaries page](#) of our website.

EMERGENCIES

Casas por Cristo Office Number: 915.778.0046

Please leave our office number 915.778.0046 with your families and friends at home in case of an emergency where they would need to contact you while you're out of the country. Even if it is after business hours, they will reach one of our missionaries who will assist in relaying their message and provide any necessary follow-up.

Emergency Numbers in Guatemala

If an ambulance is needed, the Guatemala emergency numbers are 6630-8755 and 4548-8786.

First Aid Kit

Your Casas missionary will have a basic first aid kit. We recommend that you also bring a first aid kit to treat minor medical incidents.

Medical Treatment

In case of a medical emergency your Casas missionary will evaluate the severity of the injury. For minor medical issues (dehydration, minor scrapes and cuts, food-related sickness, etc.), you will see the local doctor in San Raymundo, Dr. Ramiro Cojon (GPS: 14.766925, -90.593245). For more serious injuries, the Casas missionary will call the international insurance we purchased for you and take you

to Guatemala City to receive treatment at a larger medical facility, Centro Medico (Zona 10, GPS: 14.610198, -90.509935). You will be accompanied by a Guatemala field missionary while another Casas missionary attends to the needs of the rest of the team. You will be sent back to the US as early as possible.

Travel Insurance

Casas por Cristo will purchase the [International Assurance Travel Medical Plan](#) through Insurance Services of America and Azimuth Risk Solutions on your behalf. We offer an [Explanation of Travel Insurance Coverage](#). We will purchase a maximum benefit of \$600,000 for individuals under age 70 (\$50,000 for individuals age 70-79 and \$12,000 for individuals 80+) and a deductible of \$250. We will also add the sports rider. No later than a week prior to your trip, we will email you a copy of the policy. Your missionary will keep a copy of your ID cards during the trip, but feel free to print a copy for yourself, as well. We recommend bringing at least \$250 in emergency cash to pay up front for medical treatment in country. If you need assistance from the insurance company, please contact Adam Bates, Vice President, at 800.647.4589 or adam@missionaryhealth.net.

Safety

Your team's safety is of the utmost importance to us. We have been working diligently since our inception in 1993 to ensure that we have a number of fail-safes in place regarding personal safety and emergency situations. Read our Risk Plan for more details.

US Embassy Guatemala City

Sometimes, in spite of careful planning, things still go wrong during a trip abroad. Contact the US Embassy for help with emergencies.

US Embassy Guatemala City

Avenida Reforma 7-10, Zona 10

Guatemala City, Guatemala

Email: AmCitsGuatemala@state.gov

Phone: (502) 2326-4000 (If calling from the US, dial 011 first.)

GUATEMALA LODGING

You will stay at one of our facilities for the duration of your trip. We will email you the link to your trip profile page containing details about your lodging no later than 30 days prior to your arrival.

Bathrooms

All toilet paper should be thrown away in the trash can. Do not place it in the toilet.

Cleaning

Our Guatemala cleaning team will service your accommodations daily to remove trash in the restrooms and common areas. They will not enter the dorm rooms where your team will stay. However, we recommend not leaving any valuables in the rooms. If your restroom trash should fill up before the next day's cleaning, please dispose of the trash into the larger trash containers.

Showers

All of our accommodations have a shower. However, many of them do not have hot water. We ask you to take military showers: get wet, turn the water off, soap up, and then turn the water back on to rinse off.

Sleeping

Sleeping arrangements vary by facility. A bed, pillow, sheets, blanket, and towels will be provided.

SCHEDULE

Day 1

Arrive at the airport, exit customs, and walk outside to meet your Casas representative and get on the bus. Arrive at your accommodations in San Raymundo and enjoy a simple sack lunch/dinner in case you haven't eaten prior. A short orientation will be given.

Days 2 - 4

- 6:30 a.m. — Breakfast
- 7:30 a.m. — Head to work sites
- 3:00-5:00 p.m. — Return
- 6:00 p.m. — Dinner
- 10:00 p.m. — Lights out

Day 5

Visit the ancient city of Antigua and shop around the local market. You will be responsible for purchasing your lunch. Leave after breakfast, return late afternoon, and have dinner at your accommodations.

Day 6

Morning: go to the airport. Time to be determined by your return flight.

WORK SITE

Construction Process

The house you will be building will have a concrete foundation followed by 2"x4" framed walls. The outside of the house will be covered with wooden lap siding. The inside of the house will have electricity, and 1/4" plywood wall paneling. The roof is framed with 2"x6"s then covered with corrugated metal roofing.

Preparedness

Be sure to arrive at the work site with all of the equipment that you will need. You will need to take a positive attitude, sunscreen, water bottle, and tools.

Stay in a Group

Your Casas missionary should know where you are at all times. Your team should stay together as a group at all times.

Tools

Casas por Cristo provides the majority of the tools you will need, **but you do need to bring the required tools on the packing list.** You and your team are responsible for the tools we provide. If tools break due to normal wear and tear, we will replace them. However, if they are lost or neglected, your team will be responsible for the replacement costs. The Casas toolkit is equipped with the following power tools: cement mixer, drill, power saw, and generator, if necessary. You are welcome to bring any additional tools or nail guns. We have found that extra battery-powered tools are more helpful than corded tools. Your team may have to load and unload all of the tools multiple times every day.

Work Site Bathroom

There is a bathroom facility of some sort at each work site. However, some may be more primitive than others.

Work Site Safety

The two most frequent work site injuries are debris in an eye and dehydration. If your Casas missionary asks you to do something that you are unable to perform, please ask him or her to reassign you to another task. Please take the following precautions.

- Wear eye protection at the work site.
- Drink one gallon of water per day.
- Wear sunscreen or protective clothing to prevent sunburn.

C A S A S *Por* C R I S T O

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Casas por Cristo
PO Box 971070
El Paso, TX 79997

915.778.0046
casasporcristo.org
questions@casasporcristo.org

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