



Information Document for Teams

Welcome

On behalf of Love Made Real (LMR) we would like to thank you for your interest in joining us in Guatemala. We can guarantee that your experience will be a rewarding one as you give of yourselves to the wonderful people of this country.

In this document we will attempt to provide you with as much information as we can to help you better prepare for your upcoming trip and hopefully answer most of your questions.

MONEY MATTERS – HOW MUCH WILL MY TRIP COST?

- The average cost of a mission trip with LMR is between \$2500 and \$3000 CDN, or between \$1700 and \$2100 USD, depending on the current price of airfare and the length of your trip. As well, you will need to pay to get a passport, for vaccinations, baggage fees, airport meals, and any spending money you wish to bring. These costs can seem high and somewhat overwhelming. For Canadians, the value of the Canadian dollar has a lot to do with that.
- We have hosted 70 teams of volunteers from Canada and the United States in the past 18 years, and it has been our experience that family members, friends, co-workers, and your church family are often willing to support you in your humanitarian/spiritual endeavour.

Approximate Payment Schedule

- A Deposit (non-refundable) of \$400 CDN or \$275 USD is due 30 days after your Application has been processed. LMR uses an application process both to gather information about you and to advise you of the expectations we have for all team members.
- Cost of Airfare is due 4 months before your trip, so that LMR can book flights for you. It is our experience that booking flights this far in advance gives us both a better selection of flights and a lower price.
- Final payment (Room & Board, Transportation, Project, and Administrative costs) is due 2 months before your trip (less Deposit amount)

Tax Receipts for Canadians

- According to Canada Revenue Agency, charities can issue tax receipts for travel expenses if the travel is for humanitarian purposes. The cost of your airfare (only if booked by LMR); in-country transportation; room & board; and project costs can be receipted for tax purposes.
- Donations to LMR for the purchase, in Guatemala, of shoes or education supplies can be receipted.
- Also, all donations from others towards your specific trip or for the projects you will be working on can be receipted. This only applies if the money is sent to LMR. Individuals can donate directly to LMR, either online at [LMR Donate](https://www.lovemadereal.com/donate) or by sending an e-transfer to donate@lovemadereal.com
- You may also accept donations on behalf of LMR, but only if you use a donation tracking form that we will provide for you.
- **It is important that these donations include the donor's full name, address, email address, and phone number, as well as the name of the individual for whom the donation is intended.**
- Tax receipts cannot be issued for other costs, such as vaccinations or baggage fees.
- Receipts will be issued in January every year for the previous year's contributions towards your trip.

Other Costs – CDN Dollars (Not Receipted)

(Prices are approximate)

- Canadian Passport (\$120 for 5 years) or (\$160 for 10 years)
- Hepatitis A&B inoculations are **required by LMR** (3 doses at approximately \$80 each)
- Personal medical out-of-country insurance is **required by LMR** (\$50-\$100)
- Baggage Costs: Baggage handling policies differ from one airline to another, so check with your airline for accurate information.
- Travel meals in airports (approx. \$40 – USD if travelling through an American airport).
- Optional: Contributions towards a craft for one of the days at the Feeding Centre
- Spending money in Guatemala – this includes meals out at restaurants and the purchase of souvenirs and will vary by person.

The following first aid supplies are **recommended**, as the health care system in Guatemala is not ideal and can be expensive and very time-consuming:

- DUKORAL for traveller's diarrhea (\$145 for 2 doses or \$85 for the booster)
This is available over the counter, but if you have a drug plan that covers it you will need a doctor's prescription to avoid paying out of pocket.
- Antidiarrheal medication, such as Imodium or a generic version
- Antibiotic cream, such as Polysporin or a generic version

Currency in Guatemala

- **You cannot exchange Canadian currency in Guatemala.**
- The local currency is the Guatemalan Quetzal. **We prefer that you obtain Quetzales in your home country before you leave**, as trips to the bank can eat into our already busy schedule.
- We recommend that you order Quetzales from your financial institution two or three weeks in advance of your trip for all your in-country purchases. One Canadian dollar is worth approximately 5 Quetzales; one US dollar is worth approximately 7 Quetzales.
- Note that US dollars are not accepted by all merchants in the communities where we work.

Other Donations

- If you would like to donate shoes, educational supplies, etc., we prefer that these be purchased in Guatemala rather than in your home country. This supports the Guatemalan economy and saves the trouble and cost of extra baggage.
- If you wish a tax receipt for this kind of gift, send your donation to LMR and designate it accordingly. We can shop for the items together during your trip.

Fundraising for Projects

- Part of the cost of your trip includes a contribution towards the projects your team will be completing. However, this contribution does not usually cover the full project expenses, especially as, like everywhere in recent years, the cost of building supplies and labour has risen in Guatemala.
- For this reason, LMR encourages teams to raise additional funds to meet this shortfall.
- To aid your fundraising, LMR can provide you with an official letter that outlines the details of the projects and activities you will be completing.
- As well, Guy will keep each team apprised of the status of their project funds.
- Note that LMR also solicits funds for these project costs.

Purpose for Giving

- Our ministry is aimed at giving a hand up rather than a handout. It is our goal to empower the people of Guatemala. To that end we advise that you be sensitive to our goal by not giving out cash to those to whom we are ministering to. We have learned that we can easily create a dependence on our ministry and our volunteers which is unhealthy to the nurturing of our Guatemalan friends.
- If you do wish to help an individual, please check with Guy first.

VACCINATIONS

- We **require** that you obtain at least the first 2 doses of Hepatitis A & B before departure, and that your Tetanus shot is up to date.
 - Visit Twinrix.ca for more information about this Hepatitis A & B vaccine.
- If you choose **not** to obtain the necessary vaccinations, you will have to sign a waiver which we will provide to you.
- The altitude where we will be staying and working is 6000 feet above sea level. As a result of this, the cases of Dengue Fever and Malaria are very low. We do not require you to be vaccinated for these illnesses, but if you feel safer in getting them, then go ahead.
- Further information about recommended vaccines when travelling to Guatemala can be found here: [Travel Vaccines and Advice for Guatemala](#)

Traveler's Diarrhea

- The water in Guatemala is not treated to the same standard as in North America and may contain parasites, bacteria, or viruses that could make you sick.
- For this reason, the following guidelines are important!
 - Do not drink water that is not bottled or filtered.
Filtered water in the Mission house or Feeding Centre is safe.
 - Do not purchase food from street vendors.
 - Wash your hands before eating anything.
 - Peel or wash fruits and vegetables with filtered water.
 - Avoid getting water in your mouth while showering or swimming.
- LMR will only take you to restaurants that use bottled or filtered water in their food preparations.
- We recommend taking DUKORAL as a preventative before your trip, and bringing an antidiarrheal medication such as Imodium.
 - See [Dukoral Information Brochure](#) for more information.

WEATHER IN GUATEMALA

- There are two main seasons in Guatemala – dry or rainy – or summer and winter. The dry/summer season is from November to the end of April, and the rainy/winter season is from May to October.
- It is neither terribly hot nor cold in Guatemala, but due to the altitude we are working in, 5,000 to 6,000 feet above sea level, it can be quite chilly in the morning and evenings. Note that the mission house is unheated.

TRANSPORTATION IN GUATEMALA

- LMR and Casa Esperanza have recently purchased a 15-passenger 2025 minivan for our transportation needs in Guatemala.

ACCOMMODATION IN GUATEMALA

- We have rented several 3-bedroom townhouses for our stay in the city of San Lucas. The houses are beside each other in a compound behind a locked gate, and each is roomy enough for the full team to meet and eat dinner together each night.
- San Lucas is located approximately 1 hour from the airport in Guatemala City, and 10 minutes from Santiago, where we will be working.
- No one has to share a bed. You do not need to bring any bedding or towels but note that face cloths are often not provided.
- The house is not a hotel or a restaurant; you are expected to keep all areas of the home clean and to pick up after yourselves. We will be doing our own grocery shopping and cooking. It is also the responsibility of team members to do dishes, clean the dining room and kitchen, fill the water filtration jugs, and make lunches for the next day. A schedule is normally prepared to ensure that all team members participate in the household chores.
- Lunches consist of a sandwich (usually peanut butter and jam), juice box, and a snack such as a small bag of chips or cookies. We try to keep the lunch modest as you will be eating amid those you are serving who may or may not have access to food.
- There is a washing machine and dryer in each house; however, efforts should be made to pool your clothes to help reduce the cost of electricity.
- The sewage infrastructure in Guatemala is old and damaged from many earthquakes over the years; therefore, **under no circumstances can you flush bathroom tissue or sanitary products in the toilet.** There will be small garbage containers and a supply of plastic bags in each bathroom for this purpose.
- Electricity in Guatemala is expensive. Please be conscientious about turning lights off.
- We do not allow alcohol or drug consumption.
- Please refrain from bringing perfume or perfumed products to Guatemala, as it causes allergic reactions for some individuals.
- Anyone who smokes or vapes is asked to do so outside the house and is expected to pick-up after themselves. Note that cannabis use is illegal in Guatemala.
- The houses are equipped with high-speed Wi-Fi. If you wish to bring your own laptop or other devices, you'll be able to connect with the Wi-Fi system without problem.
- In Guatemala the electrical outlets are the same as in North America, 110V. However, not all the outlets are grounded. Therefore, if you have a device (i.e., CPAP machine) you will need an adapter that goes from the wall (2 prongs) to your device (3 prongs). LMR has a supply of these for you to borrow, as they cannot be purchased in Canada.

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT TRAVEL ADVISORY FOR GUATEMALA

- We suggest that you read the travel advisory that the government of Canada has for Guatemala. It can seem very dangerous when reading this, but most of the problems are in Guatemala City and in the northern part of the country bordering Mexico.
- We will land at the Guatemala City Airport but will immediately drive to San Lucas (about 1 hr away) where it is much safer. We also work in rural communities where it is relatively safe.
- The web site link to the travel advisory is as follows: [Canadian Government Guatemala Travel Advice](#)

Safety

- Avoid walking alone; groups are best.
- Do not go out after dark; always return to the Mission House before dark (6 pm)
- Never show large amounts of money
- Dress **not** to be noticed and don't bring attention to yourself.
- Leave original passport in community house and carry a photocopy on you **all** the time.
- Avoid bringing expensive jewellery, including expensive watches.

TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS OF MAYANS OR INDIVIDUALS IN GENERAL

- We ask that you exercise caution when photographing children and Mayans in their traditional clothing. It's always best to ask permission before taking a picture.

BEING FLEXIBLE IS VERY IMPORTANT

- In order to manage your expectations for the trip, it is very important to be flexible, adaptable, teachable, and patient. Even though your daily schedule will have been pre-planned, changes and delays will occur regularly.
- As well, building practices and standards are very different in Guatemala than they are in North America. When on the job site, it is important to accept without criticism how things are done by the local masons we work with.
- There is a meeting every night at the house, usually during dinner, to debrief from the day and go over the schedule for the following day.

For more information about the activities of Love Made Real in Guatemala, see our webpage: <https://lovemadereal.org> or visit us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/lovemadereal/

Information current as of June 2026