

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How will the weather be? What should I wear?**

We will be at several different altitudes on our trip, and the temperature varies quite a bit, so layers will be the way to go. Definitely bring rain gear, and sturdy shoes. Many streets in Guatemala are cobblestone, so if you have hiking boots with some ankle support, they may serve you well.

### **Can I bring kids? Is there a children's rate?**

We like kids, and see the value in international experience for them. Sarah will be traveling with her infant son, Walker, and we are open to having other children along, too. You know your child best, and whether your child can adjust agreeably to irregular schedules, travel, and food. If you think your child/ren will be easy with all of this, we are delighted to have them along. Sadly, because a child takes up a seat at a table or on a bus (some of the bus rides are long enough to wear out a lap pretty quickly), we can't offer a children's rate.

### **Is it safe?**

This is, of course, a nuanced question. We don't want to downplay the fact that Guatemala has a very high violent crime rate. That crime is largely concentrated in Guatemala City. We will only spend about 24 hours there, but we will travel to a part of town that is considered quite dangerous. We will do that at appropriate hours, though, and under the guidance of folks who live there, and know how best to navigate.

So yes, there is a real risk, but after twenty-two trips to Guatemala, I've never had an issue. My wife has traveled there with me, and our son Mason, when he was seven, as well as my parents, when they were in their late seventies. We won't take you anywhere that I wasn't comfortable taking them.

For outside sources on this question, I'll refer you to this USA Today article (<http://traveltips.usatoday.com/safe-travel-guatemala-11224.html>), this Lonely Planet page (<https://>

[www.lonelyplanet.com/guatemala/safety](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/guatemala/safety)) and to the U.S. State Department (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Guatemala.html>)

To be clear, we will do everything we can to keep you safe, but cannot assume any responsibility. If you decide to come with us, and we hope you will, you will be responsible for your own welfare, and the welfare of any children who come with you.

### **Will we be doing a project/mission work?**

We may have an opportunity to help out a bit at one of our partners' sites, but this is not the primary purpose of the trip. Trip participants may get to meet with English students at UPAVIM to help them practice their English. For the most part, though, we are seeking to learn, to understand, to make new friends. If further relationship grows from this trip, we can figure out together how best to be friends to each other in ways that foster dignity, respect, and affection, rather than categorizing people as 'helper' or 'helped,' which can sometimes dehumanize everyone involved, in spite of good intentions.

### **Can I arrive late? ...depart early? ...stay longer?**

Building group cohesion and processing our experience together will be an important part of our experience, and we strongly encourage participants to be a part of the group for the whole trip. That said, we recognize this may be a challenge for church professionals, in particular, since the trip starts and ends on Sundays. The first two nights of the trip are in Guatemala City, and if you can travel Sunday afternoon or early Monday morning, that can work. We will end the trip in Santiago, Atitlán, and our last complete day there (Saturday) will be a relaxation day, so it would be possible for someone to travel to Guatemala City on Saturday morning, and still join us for the trip.

If you would like to come to Guatemala before the trip, or stay longer, we are happy to offer tips on things to do or places to visit, or to connect you with a good language school and lodging. Just let us know.

If you have other questions, don't hesitate to drop a note to Sarah at [peg@pegpartners.org](mailto:peg@pegpartners.org).