

When you are packing for GUATEMALA you should think about the following:

Luggage: You should bring a backpack as your hand luggage. It is a good way to carry your belongings when you are on field trips. As your main luggage, you should only bring one piece (recommended is a backpack, but if you do not have one, something that can be carried on your shoulders or have sturdy wheels would be advisable). *You will be responsible for carrying your luggage around by yourself*, so make sure you can handle it! Maximum weight for 1 piece of luggage checked-in at the airport is 50 pounds for overseas flights. You are allowed 2 pieces of checked-in luggage. On the airplane you can take 1 carry-on piece (must fit into overhead bins) plus 1 personal item (handbag/ purse or camera or a coat). Do not lock your luggage as it needs to pass the security check at the airport. No liquids or gels over 3oz. are allowed before you pass the security at the airport (no water bottles, hand lotions, hand sanitizers, etc.) For additional information, please visit the American Airlines website (www.AA.com).

Clothing: Think about what you are going to do during your program abroad. Guatemala has a tropical climate and in January temperatures vary from 50-75°F depending on the specific location. Find out about the weather in your host country at: www.worldweather.org

Laundry: Laundry services in Antigua will be approximately \$5.00 for wash/dry/fold. Same day and overnight service is available. Laundry facilities will be limited in the countryside so pack more change of clothes which cannot be washed or that would not dry quick if it rains, etc.

Electricity: The (voltage) power and plugs in Guatemala is the same as in the US and can accept Type A, B, G & I plugs. In the U.S., two-blade plugs are often polarized, with one blade larger than the other. Most outlets are designed to handle these. The larger blade is the neutral side of the current. This is a safety feature to reduce the chance of accidental shock. If you try to plug a modern plug into an old-style receptacle for equal size blades, it won't go in unless you file down the larger blade to the older plug size. Many countries with Type A use the old style plug, and a newer US plug with unequal pins might pose a problem. This can be bypassed using an adaptor (found in many travel kits). Be aware, though, that you might also be bypassing the protection that polarization provides.

Calling: If you want to call home from abroad, it's a good idea to buy a pre-paid calling card before you leave (try Nobelcom.com) or share it with your fellow student. There are many publically available phones to use should that be necessary. The hotel staff will be able to direct you to the nearest phone you can use for the purpose of calling home or in emergency. Email is so broadly used today that it may be easier and more cost effective means of keeping in touch with your family. Cyber Cafes are very common in Antigua, widely used and safe. Rates are 60 cents to a dollar per hour. Bringing personal computers IS NOT recommended due to safety issues.

Cell phones: Cell phone use may be helpful for the portion of your travel in the US. If you wish to use the cell phone in Guatemala, check with your service provider to see if it works in Guatemala. In general, it can be expensive to use a cell phone abroad, plus recharging it may be a hassle too.

Currency exchange: Follow the advice from your professors about the best and least expensive way to obtain the Guatemalan Quetzal (GTQ). At the beginning of your trip, you should have at least \$100 of local currency in cash (and exchange more during the trip if necessary). Guatemalan banks can exchange cash, some can do traveler's cheques and some allow cash advances on VISA and MASTERCARD. Taking your ATM card, which is also a credit card, may be your best bet for getting the local currency from ATM machines abroad. If you plan using ATMs, take 2 credit cards with you in case one gets "eaten" by the ATM machine (which happened). Ask your credit card company to give you a PIN number for your "true" credit card so you can get cash with it – it takes a few weeks to take effect. Call your credit card company and tell them about your travel and charges in foreign currency. Visa and MasterCard is widely accepted for purchases.

Also, you must have at least \$50 on hand in case you need medical treatment (your insurance policy has a \$50 deductible to be paid by the patient). In addition, you must have \$3 in cash (or more based on current exchange rate) to pay exit and airport security fees when departing Guatemala for US.

Papers: Take the CCID travel document holder (which you will receive from your faculty prior to your trip, or at the airport) with you to keep all of your original personal papers at one place: passport, tickets, contact list, and insurance ID cards. Don't forget to *take copies of all of these documents (and put them in various places in your luggage)* and leave them also with your emergency contacts in the US. This way it will be easier to replace any of them if they get lost or stolen.