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EMERGENCY SERVICES

Emergency Services Volunteer Excursion

Information Packet

OPERATION
GUATEMALA



RESCUE



EMERGENCY SERVICES

EXCURSION

BELIZE

Belize

With a long Caribbean coast, Belize is culturally similar to many of Britain's former West Indian island colonies, with a majority creole/(Afro-European mixture) or Afro-Caribbean population. Inland are the native Maya people, and especially in the north and northwest of the country Spanish is often spoken. In the south east along the Caribbean coast live the Garifuna (Black Caribs) an Afro-Amerindian culture. German speaking Mennonites also call Belize home. World class attractions include exploring the lush jungles with exotic plants and animals, deep sea fishing, swimming, snorkeling and diving in the Caribbean sea with its attractive reefs, and visiting the Mayan ruins. Income levels are still very low and the infrastructure is very basic. The Belizeans are very proud and friendly to visitors and the tourist industry grew greatly in the last decade.

History

Like the neighboring parts of Guatemala and Mexico, this area was settled for thousands of years by the Maya people. They are still here, an important part of Belize's people and culture. While the Spanish Empire claimed the area in the 16th century, the Spanish made little progress in settling here. The British settled first on the coast and offshore islands for logging. In 1798 British Belizean forces defeated a Spanish attempt to drive them out in "the Battle of St. George's Caye", whose anniversary is still celebrated as a holiday each 10 September.

The colony of "British Honduras" grew in the 19th century. At first Africans were brought in as slaves, but slavery was abolished here in 1838. Many refugees from the 19th century Caste War of Yucatan escaped the conflict to settle in Belize, especially the northern section.

The government of Guatemala long claimed to have inherited the Spanish claim to Belize; the territorial dispute delayed the independence of Belize until 1981. Guatemala refused to recognize the new nation until 1991.

Belize escaped the bloody civil conflicts of the 1980s that engulfed much of Central America, and refugees from the conflict in Guatemala arrived, mostly settling in the west. While Belize has not been immune to the rampant drug crime and grinding poverty of its neighbors it is a comparatively safe destination in a conflict prone part of the world.

Tourism has become the mainstay of the economy as the old agricultural products -- sugar, banana, and oranges -- have lost ground. The country remains plagued by high unemployment, growing involvement in the South American drug trade, and increased urban crime. In 2006 commercial quantity oil was discovered in the Spanish Lookout area.

Language

As a former British colony the official language of Belize is English, which makes it stand out from its Spanish speaking neighbors. Spanish, Maya, Garifuna (Carib), and Belizean Creole are widely spoken in various parts of the country. Many Belizeans speak a mix of Creole and English among friends, and full English to foreigners. The strong Caribbean accent may take some getting used to.



People

Belizeans are some of the most socially relaxed people in the world, especially if you venture inland away from the tourist islands of Ambergris Caye and Caye Caulker. The pace of life is generally slower in Belize, so it's good practice to begin any social interaction, even to ask a quick question, with eye contact and a genuinely pleasant greeting. Most rural Belizeans enjoy casual conversation and you could easily find yourself chatting it up for a few hours. Hey, it's part of the charm!

The Maya communities can be a little more reserved at times. As always, a little respect and politeness will carry you through.

Stay Healthy

Belize is a relatively healthy country. Bottled water is a must in most areas. And, unless you eat only at tourist restaurants, dysentery may strike at some point; be prepared with over-the-counter medication and prescription antibiotics.

The CDC lists all of Belize except Belize City as a malaria risk area, and recommends the antimalarial drug chloroquine. Other drugs may also be recommended in certain circumstances - consult a qualified professional specialist.

Insect/mosquito bites should be prevented with appropriate clothing, repellents and insecticides, and bed nets if sleeping in non-air-con/unscreened rooms.

The sun, as anywhere else in the tropics, is very intense. A hat, high-SPF sunscreen, and sunglasses should do you fine.

Many places in Belize are very hot and humid, and dehydration is a risk. An expat suggests to drink as much water as you want, and then drink that much again.

The adult HIV/AIDS prevalence rate is currently at 2.5% or 1 per 40 adults.

Climate

Tropical; very hot and humid; rainy season (May to November); dry season (February to May). Hurricanes season (June to November) brings coastal flooding (especially in south).

Terrain

Flat, swampy coastal plain; low mountains in south. Highest point: Victoria Peak 1,160 m.

Lowest Point: Caribbean Sea, at 0 m.

By plane

The Philip S. W. Goldson International Airport (IATA: BZE) (ICAO: MZBZ) is in Ladyville, to the northwest of Belize City where it receives international direct flights from Atlanta, Charlotte, Newark, Miami, Dallas, Houston, Flores, San Salvador, Roatan and San Pedro Sula.



Travel Information

Weather

The climate in Belize is hot and humid with an average temperature of 85 degrees. For a current forecast go to www.weather.com and type Belize in the “Local Weather” box.

Clothing

Summer clothing is appropriate with the high temperatures and humidity. Please wear modest clothing. Please bring shoes that are comfortable for walking long distances as we may be required to do some hiking .

Showering

You will want to use unscented items if at all possible to help cut down on bug attractions.

Passport

It is required to have a passport valid for at least 6 months after your departure date to travel to and from Belize . Forms are available online as well as finding the location nearest you accepting applications. To find the information needed you can go to travel.state.gov/passport on the web.

Money

It is best to bring cash. Traveler’s checks are also accepted in some places and credit cards are only accepted in some places. I.E. some in your wallet, some in your suitcase, etc.

Customs

You will be required to fill out a customs form on the plane before you arrive in Belize. The address you should put on this form will be provided to you by your team leader in Miami the night before departure.

Luggage

We ask that your checked luggage be donated items for the current project underway. You should be able to fit your clothing and personal items in a rolling carryon. However, due to the tightened restrictions, please check with the airline on toiletries allowed in carry-on. It might be necessary for you to pack some things in your checked luggage. If you do not have enough supplies to donate, our donations coordinator can ship additional items to the team leader.

Immunizations

Immunizations are not required to be admitted into Belize. However we suggest you go to www.cdc.gov/travel to see the recommended immunizations, medical precautions, as well as handling the prescription medication you may be bringing with you. These immunizations are typically available at your County Health Department at cost or at any Travel Clinic. We advise you to have a current Tetanus Shot as well.

Food

We will provide you with meals . We will supply you with clean drinking water during your stay.

GUATEMALA

About Guatemala

Guatemala is a traveler's delight for history lovers and nature buffs. Guatemala is one of the most bio-diverse and historically significant countries in Central America. Guatemala is bordered by Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, and Belize. Guatemala has a predominantly mountainous landscape, with narrow coastal plains and limestone plateaus. The unique blend of the country's ancient Mayan ruins and its colonial ancestry combine with expansive landscapes decorated with colorful plants and diverse wildlife present the traveler with breathtaking beauty and gorgeous landscapes.

History

The Mayan civilization was centered in Guatemala, proven from the many artifacts and sites excavated and dated as early as 3rd – 10th century A.D. or the Maya period. The most famous, of these is found in the northern part of the lowlands, in Tikal. In this location, temple pyramids, plazas, monuments, and more that make up a total of about 3,000 structures were discovered.

Between the years 1523 and 1524, the Spanish forces led by Pedro de Alvarado subjugated Guatemala. Three centuries later, Guatemala was released from Spanish domination and declared its independence on September 15, 1821. About that same time, seeing this to his advantage, then Mexican ruler Agustin de Iturbide integrated Guatemala into his empire. Guatemala was free again by 1823, when a revolution crashed Iturbide's reign and the Mexican republic was born. That same year, Guatemala, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, and Costa Rica formed the United Provinces of Central America. Unfortunately, not long after, the association was formally disbanded in 1838. Several dictators took over after that period.

The election of Juan José Arévalo as president of the republic was the turning point for Guatemala. During his term, the border disputes between Guatemala and the British Honduras (or was it now known as Belize) was settled. After his presidency, Guatemala made a shift to the Communist side, perpetuated by Jacobo Arbenz Guzman. Decades after this radical change, the republic constantly struggled with unjust declarations and anti-Communist demonstrations. There was a lot of chaos and turnovers of power for a good many years.

Spanish language in Guatemala

Spanish is Guatemala's official language and is used by close to 93% of the country's population. Spanish is also used to teach in most schools. Despite Spanish being the formal language, not all locals are eloquent in it. Some of the locals use it as a second language. Due to the diverse ethnic groups, quite a number of languages are spoken all over the country. 21 Mayan languages are used, specifically in the rural areas. Two other non-Mayan languages are also spoken in the country. These two are Xinca and Garifuna, but they are not recognized as National Languages. Other languages that can be heard in Guatemala are English, French, Chinese, and German. Despite all these languages, Spanish is the country's official language. Some of these languages will be discussed in brief below.



Culture

The national culture of Guatemala reflects strong Mayan and Spanish influences. During the late 19th century, it was influenced by the arrival of other Europeans, especially Germans, and recently by recent movements of thousands of Guatemalans to and from the United States. The Mayan culture has remained as one of the largest cultures because of the people's knowledge on sciences and astrology. Though the pattern of its culture is characterized by sharp contrasts in the spoken language, households, cuisine, attire and family affairs, the country still has its culture felt through the many aspects of the life of its people.

Cooking, for instance, reflects multi-cultural nature of Guatemala, as its food differs in taste in each region even as the traditional food is still based on Mayan cuisine that features corn, chilies and beans as key ingredients

Guatemala has a predominant Roman Catholic religion combined with indigenous Maya religious rites to form a unique syncretic religion prevailing throughout the country. The Protestant Pentecostalism is predominant only in Guatemala City and other urban centers. Other religious denominations are also found in many parts of the country.

Mayan people are known for their brightly colored yarn-based textiles woven to capes, shirts, blouses and dresses, with women's clothing consisting of a shirt and a long skirt under a village own distinctive pattern. The traditional clothing of the population is handmade with the garment displaying certain details and designs that identify the wearer's group or village and that have religious meanings to most of them.

Guatemala Poverty

Rural Guatemala exhibits one of the most extreme combinations of poverty and illiteracy in the hemisphere. The indigenous people that inhabit these regions suffer from malnutrition (rates among the worst in the world), poor health outcomes, extreme racism, illiteracy, and low levels of educational accomplishment. Together, these conditions virtually guarantee that future generations will not improve.

Petén Region

4 the World operates its HQ from San Andres and does the majority of its work in Petén which is a department of the nation of Guatemala. Petén is geographically the northernmost department of Guatemala and is also the largest department in size in Guatemala. In 2013, 4 the World received an honor never before bestowed upon any non-profit. By official government decree, the organization 4 the World and its Founder Robert Keith Froom were named "[International Ambassador](#)" to San Andres Petén Guatemala, the largest municipality in all of Central America.



Weather

The climate in Guatemala is hot and humid with an average temperature of 80-90 degrees. It is not uncommon for an afternoon rain storm if you are staying on the lake in Petén where many of 4 the World's projects are located. The rainy season can produce heavy rains at times and the months of Nov – Jan can be a bit cooler. Check with your team leader for expected weather conditions near your project area.

Clothing

Summer clothing is appropriate with the high temperatures and humidity. Please wear modest clothing. Please bring shoes that are comfortable for walking long distances as we may be required to do some hiking or walking around town and there are a lot of dirt roads so good shoes are recommended.

Showering

There is a chance that the shower water will be room temperature or slightly warm. You will want to use unscented items if at all possible to help cut down on attracting bugs. Be sure to use bottled water to brush your teeth.

Passport

It is required to have a passport valid for at least 6 months after your departure date to travel to and from Guatemala. Forms are available online as well as finding the location nearest you accepting applications. To find the information needed you can go to travel.state.gov/passport on the web.

Money

It is best to bring cash. Traveler's checks are not accepted in most places where we will be in Guatemala. There are however banks and Atm's in some of the larger communities where we will be staying in Guatemala. You can also exchange US or Belizean money at the border.

Customs

The border crossing into Guatemala from Belize is usually easy to cross and the Customs agents do not usually check baggage or suit cases like they do in Belize. You can expect to have your bags search when returning to Belize from Guatemala.

Luggage

We ask that your checked luggage be donated items for the current project underway. You should be able to fit your clothing and personal items in a rolling carryon or backpack. However, due to the tightened restrictions, please check with the airline on toiletries allowed in carry-on. It might be necessary for you to pack some things in your checked luggage. If you do not have enough supplies to donate, our donations coordinator can ship additional items to the team leader.

Immunizations

Immunizations are not required to be admitted into Guatemala. However we suggest you go to www.cdc.gov/travel to see the recommended immunizations, medical precautions, as well as handling the prescription medication you may be bringing with you. These immunizations are typically available at your County Health Department at cost or at any Travel Clinic. We advise you to have a current Tetanus Shot as well.

Food

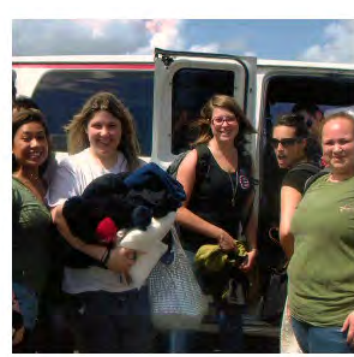
We will provide you with meals and restaurants with delicious safe food. We will supply you with clean drinking water during your stay. If you have allergies or special requirements for your meals please let us know in advance so we may make arrangements a head of your arrival. There are plenty of places to buy snacks and soft drinks etc.



Approximate Trip Costs

Based on a 7 day/6 night stay or a 14 day/13 night stay.

- Airfare Varies Volunteers are responsible for making their own flight arrangements but are asked to book on a predetermined flight into and out of Belize Airport (BZE).
- Non-Refundable \$25 Application fee to reserve your spot on the trip. Due at time of application.
- Mission Trip Fee- \$750 - \$1200 to be sent with your application, this covers the cost of Rooms & Board, drivers, tipping, escort fee, etc.
- Supplies Varies 4 The World asks that all volunteers use 2 pieces of “checked luggage” for supplies. If the team does not have enough supplies to fill the bags, items can be shipped to the team leader from our donations coordinator. Volunteers are responsible for any extra expenses incurred during their stay.



What to Bring

We suggest that you bring the following items with you...

- Cash in twenties, tens and fives
- Unscented Soap, Shampoo & Lotion
- 100% Deet Bug Spray (Available at Target or other camping supply stores)
- Flashlight
- Walking Shoes
- Modest summer clothes, i.e. tee shirts, shorts, jeans or capris.
- Wet Wipes
- Antibacterial Hand Gel
- Wide Mouth Water Bottle with Lid
- Color Copy of Passport

Items to return to 4 The World prior to departure

- \$25 Application Fee
- Mission Trip Application
- \$750-\$1200 Mission Trip Fee
- Volunteer Release Form
- Emergency Contact Information Form
- Medical Information Form
- Acknowledgement Page
- Color Copy of Passport
- Copy of Medical Insurance card



Volunteer Release Form

We are delighted with your decision to travel with 4 The World, and we are more than willing to help you with some of the arrangements. However, any travel is accompanied by certain risks. As our organization is comprised entirely of volunteers like you, it has limited funding and has no insurance to cover these risks. Each volunteer is expected to assume any and all risks that may result from his or her activities and to procure insurance coverage as he or she deems appropriate.

Please sign and date this document and return it to 4 The World, acknowledging this notification, releasing us from liability, and indemnifying us from claims against us arising from your activities. We must receive a signed copy of this letter before we can continue to plan your trip. Thank you.

The undersigned hereby acknowledges receiving this letter, and acknowledges the risks assumed by volunteers of 4 The World, its officers, directors, members and all other persons and organizations working on its behalf from any and all loss, liability, actions, claims and demands of any nature, past, present or future, that may result from or be in any way related to the undersigned's activities conducted under the auspices of 4 The World.

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE SIGNED: _____

DESTINATION: _____

DATE OF DEPARTURE: _____

DATE OF RETURN HOME: _____

Please return release prior to Volunteer Trip.

4 The World
404 Butler Dr.
Garner, North Carolina
Attn: Mission Trips
admin@4theworld.org



Emergency Contact Information Form

Volunteer Emergency Contact Information

Please provide us with the name and contact information of the person we should contact in case of an emergency.

NAME: _____

RELATIONSHIP: _____

DAYTIME PHONE: _____

EVENING PHONE: _____

MOBILE/PAGER NUMBER: _____

HOME ADDRESS: _____

E-MAIL: _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: _____

Please return release prior to Volunteer Trip.

4 The World

404 Butler Dr.

Garner, North Carolina

Attn: Mission Trips

admin@4theworld.org



Medical Information Form

Please provide us with the following medical information in case of an emergency.

NAME: _____

EXISTING MEDICAL CONDITONS: _____

ALLERGIES: _____

LIST ANY MEDICATION YOU ARE CURRENTLY TAKING: _____

DOCTORS NAME: _____

PHONE NUMBER OF DOCTOR: _____

INSURANCE INFORMATION: _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY: _____

Please return release prior to Volunteer Trip.

4 The World
404 Butler Dr.
Garner, North Carolina
Attn: Mission Trips
admin@4theworld.org

Acknowledgment Page

A mission trip can be a very rewarding experience. However, if a volunteer goes to a third world country unprepared it can make for an unpleasant experience. It is vital that all volunteers read and acknowledge that they understand the risks, requirements and expectations of travel to Belize

After reading the mission packet please sign the following document and return to the Mission Director along with the release of liability, emergency contact information and medical information form. Please also send a color copy of your passport and a copy of your medical insurance card.

Thank you.

4 The World, Board of Directors

The undersigned hereby acknowledges, receiving this Mission packet, and acknowledges that they have read and understand all requirements and expectations listed herein.

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE SIGNED: _____

Mission Trip Application

Personal Information

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____
Marital Status: _____
Date of birth: _____

Health Information

Describe your general health condition: _____
Are you taking any medication? If so, what? _____
Allergies: _____
Blood type: _____
Family Physician: _____
Family Physician Phone #: _____
Medical Insurance Company for trip: _____
Medical Insurance Contact #: _____
Emergency Contact Person: _____
Emergency Contact Phone #: _____
Relationship: _____

Travel Information

Have you ever been to Belize before? _____
Passport Number: _____
How will you be arriving to Belize? Airline: _____
Flight number: _____ Arrival Time: _____
Do you want to book your own ticket from Miami to BZE? _____

Other Important Questions

Have your fees been forwarded to the appropriate address? _____
What method were they sent? (regular mail, courier etc.) _____

Additional information or comments:

What is your primary motivation for this trip? _____
Any other helpful comments or suggestions? _____



PLEASE BE AWARE THAT MEDICAL INSURANCE IS NOT ONLY RECOMMENDED BUT ALSO REQUIRED FOR YOUR JOURNEY TO BELIZE BY OUR ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM.

IN SIGNING BELOW, I ACKNOWLEDGE THE FOLLOWING:

- The above information is true to the best of my knowledge.

4 THE WORLD AND / OR IT'S VOLUNTEER STAFF CANNOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ACCIDENT OR INJURY THAT COULD OCCUR WHILE IN BELIZE.

NAME:

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

Any questions should be directed to:

4 The World

ATTN: Volunteer Mission Trips

404 Butler Dr.

Garner, NC 27529

Phone: (919) 278-7584

Email – admin@4theworld.org

Your place will be reserved once we receive the following:

1. Completed application
2. Appropriate fees (payable in US funds to 4 The World in the form of cashier check, money order , paid via PayPal or on our website)
3. Volunteer Release Form
4. Emergency Contact Information Form
5. Medical Information Form
6. Acknowledgment Page
7. Color Copy of passport
8. Copy of Medical Insurance Card