



Its **Your** Mission

Guatemala Travel Guide

Buckner International seeks to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ by ministering to orphan children throughout the world.

**“Come, you who are blessed by my Father;
Take your inheritance,
The kingdom prepared for you since
the creation of the world.**

**For I was hungry
and you gave Me something to eat,
I was thirsty
and you gave Me something to drink,
I was a stranger and you invited Me in,
I needed clothes and you clothed me,
I was sick and you looked after Me,
I was in prison and you came to visit Me...**

**I tell you the truth,
Whatever you did for one of
the least of these brothers of mine,
you did for Me.”**

Matthew 25:34-36, 40



MissionsFAQ

Who is Buckner?

Buckner International is a Christian social service agency with more than 130 years of experience in dealing with children and youth in crisis. Buckner Children and Family Services (BCFS) is one division of Buckner International.

Buckner Missions seeks to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ by ministering to orphan children throughout the world. Buckner ministers to orphan children by giving humanitarian aid, including shoes from our national "Shoes for Orphan Souls" shoe drive, helping make orphanage improvements, developing programs, ministering through construction projects, and taking people on short-term mission trips.



with the children for only a short amount of time, bonds will form quickly. They are so open to Christ's love in you! Please take this opportunity to pray for each child (this may be the only time in their lives they are prayed for). We will guide you to the openness of each orphanage director to evangelism. Do not miss an opportunity to share the love of Christ.

Do I need to get shots for this trip?

Consult your personal doctor and the Center for Disease Control website (www.cdc.gov).

All countries require you to have an updated tetanus shot, and most countries require additional shots.

What if I get sick on this trip?

Most of the minor discomforts and illnesses that occur during international travel can be taken care of with over-the-counter medicines. Consult your doctor or pharmacist for over-the-counter and prescription

medicines to help you adjust to jet-lag and other potential health issues. Pack prescription medication that you might need along with diarrhea and upset stomach medication, cough and cold medicine, cough drops, aspirin and pain reliever.

WE RECOMMEND YOU CARRY THESE ITEMS IN YOUR CARRY-ON. If there were a serious illness or accident, staff would be available to immediately transport you to a safe hospital for quality health care.

Who will be in charge of the team?

From the time you enter the country to the time you depart, you will be under the supervision of employees of Buckner International.



Will I be safe?

Some amount of risk always exists when you choose to travel overseas. We take every precaution to ensure the safest trip possible. We consult state travel advisories and in-country ground staff, train the trip participants to be cautious, and pray for God's wisdom and guidance.

What will I do?

Relationship building is one of the most important opportunities we have with these children who, for the most part, are very limited in the number of relationships they have outside the orphanage walls. Though we are



MissionsFAQ

Please refer to the travel insurance description located in this manual for more information.

How much money should I take?

Your trip cost is all-inclusive. You should bring money for souvenirs and occasional snacks along the way. Bills need to be new (large-face bills) with no marks or tears. Small bills (1s, 5s, 10s, 20s) are recommended for shopping at markets. Credit cards are accepted in some major stores, but traveler checks are not. The amount of money you bring depends on what type of shopper you are.



Will my money and other valuables be safe?

We make every effort to have very secure hotels, but you should never leave money, plane tickets or passports in your rooms. If you have other valuables, lock them in your suitcases before you leave the room each day. Split up your money between you and your spouse/friend and try to leave small amounts in your wallet so that you do not have to get into your money belts in a public place. Please leave jewelry at home and do not take any valuables that might attract attention. Remember not to pack cash or valuables in checked luggage as well.

Can I drink the water?

No. You may not drink the water. Bottled water for drinking and brushing your teeth will be provided. If you need additional water (or soft drinks), it is usually available for purchase at kiosks outside the hotel or in shops surrounding the hotel lobby. Remember to have a few bottles with you for our plane ride overseas.



How will I be prepared for the trip?

We will have an orientation meeting (manual included) that will prepare you for your mission trip. A video of the orientation will be mailed to out-of-state participants and those unable to attend.

What will we eat?

All of your meals will be in the hotel, orphanage or restaurant. You should pack a few snack foods to eat between meals: peanut butter crackers, granola bars, nuts, raisins, crackers, etc. Most of the trip participants will tell you they get plenty of food at the meals! There are small stores where you may buy bottled water, soft drinks, juice, or small snacks. Bottled water is included in each meal; soft drinks are available in most restaurants for an additional charge.

MissionsFAQ

What do I pack?

Refer to baggage allowance guidelines for your airline. Each person will be allowed two checked bags weighing approximately 50 pounds each (one bag for personal belongings and one for supplies and donations). Refer to the packing list in the manual as a guide.

Where will I stay?

While in the city, you will be staying at a hotel. Rooms are based on double-occupancy unless you have requested and are paying extra for a single room. Some mission teams may stay at the orphanage campsite while leading ministry camps.

What will the weather be like?

Consult weather websites (www.wunderground.com) for weather forecasts and histories. Dressing in layers is recommended.



How will I be able to communicate when I do not speak the language?

It is amazing what can be communicated without language. Smiles and hugs go a long way! We have an incredible team of interpreters available to you during the trip.

What is the time difference (based on CST)?

Consult the following website for exact time difference based on the time of year you are traveling: www.worldtimezone.com. Keep the time difference in mind when making calls to your loved ones at home, or when they are making calls to you.

Will I be able to communicate via phone or internet?

The hotels we stay in should have a business center where e-mail can be accessed. Our busy time schedule may not allow daily access (as business centers close at different hours and sometimes are closed by the time we return to the hotel for the day). Phone cards can also usually be used, though some hotels require a \$50 deposit or do not allow outgoing international phone calls. Be prepared to communicate minimally with loved ones back home. Some trip participants have begun renting T-Mobile World Cellular Phones.

Will a Laundry Service be available?

Most hotels are able to do laundry. Cost is per item; one item costs approximately \$1.

Do other countries operate on different electric voltage?

Yes. Bring adapters and converters for any electrical devices; they are located in most general stores (Target, Wal-Mart, etc.) and are country-specific.



Rules Reminder

As a representative of Christ and Buckner International while overseas, we ask that you refrain from the following:

1. Possession or use of any drugs
2. Possession or use of any firearms
3. Possession or use of alcohol of any kind

In order to be an effective witness through your actions, we ask that you:

1. Refrain from romantic involvement of any kind with any person (including interpreters) other than your spouse.

2. Stay with the group and do not leave the lodging complex or group at any time (alone or with your

interpreter) without special approval from the Buckner staff.



Orphan Types

Social Orphans:

Many of the children have families. Some grew up in a family for several years, but their families could not take care of them for various reasons. Sometimes it is because the parents could not afford to raise them, other times it is because the parents divorced, were widowed, hospitalized or imprisoned and could not care for them. Some parents have had their rights revoked by the courts.

Some children see their parents several times a year. They can go on vacation with their families and can go home periodically.

Others have extended family members who care for them. They come and visit from time to time.

Some have siblings scattered among other orphanages. Others have siblings with them in the same orphanage.

There are some who have a sibling or two that have been adopted and therefore are struggling with the reality that they will most likely not be adopted.

Some children have parents in the same town as the orphanage and yet never get visited by a family member.

Some have lived on the streets.

True Orphans:

Abandoned. Have no parents or no knowledge of a family because they have been in an orphanage setting for their entire life.

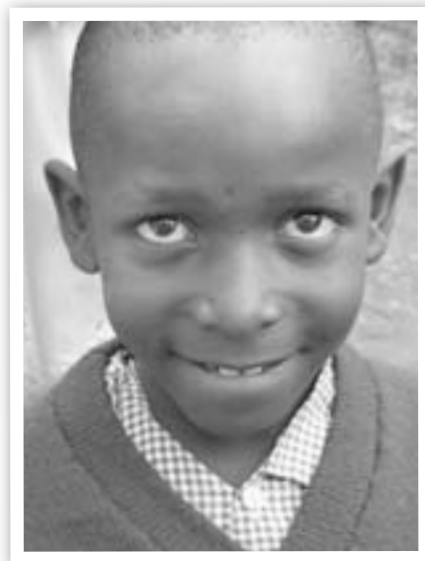
Parents are deceased.



Adoptable Orphans:

State laws require parents to visit their child at least once every six months. If a child is a "true orphan" or if the parents of a "social orphan" choose not to visit them in the first

six months, and never again after that time, they can terminate their rights as parents to make that child available for adoption.



Visitation Guidelines

Please do not make promises you cannot keep!

You will make a connection with certain kids and want to help them and bring them home. The best thing to do is simply love on the children and teenagers in Jesus' name for the time God has brought you to their country.

If you would like to write the children, please get their full name, orphanage #, and birth date or age. Then you can e-mail your letters to our follow-up team and they will translate the letters and e-mail you back the children's letters.

Be aware of the impact your questions may have on the child.

Questions that may not be appropriate involve the following subjects:

School performance – such questions may cause anxiety for the child since oftentimes these children struggle with school for a variety of emotional and situational reasons.

Biological parents and past family life – these subjects should be avoided unless the child initiates the discussion.

Relationship with foster parents or caretakers – the child is likely to feel pressured to respond in the affirmative when in the presence of his or her foster parents or caretakers.



Questions that are more appropriate to ask involve the following subjects:

- Favorite toys and belongings
- Camps and friends
- Holiday activities
- Hobbies and free-time activities
- New skills and talents

These guidelines were developed by psychologists working with children from foster care and transitional living programs in the Vladimir region of Russia



Orphan Children

Important Notes

All orphans want a home and a family.

Most children do not have visitors.

They don't own the clothes on their back; even that is a property of the state.

They are adolescents who reach out for love. They are growing, changing, trying to figure things out, and they truly realize their plight.

Most of these orphans are the poorest of the poor. Many populations are generally poor and these kids are poorer than the average individual.

Some of the children you will meet have been through a Buckner VBS or summer camp program. Some have accepted Christ into their hearts.

In one way, orphans are just like us... each of them has a story to share.

Orphans bond quicker to you than normal children. Embracing you comes easy for them. Hug them back... they get very little affection on a regular basis. A little hug goes a long way!

For some children, because they have been raised in an institutional-like setting, not in a family, their brains



have formed differently. They may ask you a question, and two minutes later ask you the same question. They do not remember or realize that they just asked you the question. This is called Sensory Motor Integration Disorder.

Some of these sweet children rock back and forth ... especially when they are singing or listening to music. It is a comfort disorder they have and one way to help them is to simply touch them on the back or shoulders... and the rocking will stop.

They listen to all sorts of music and often watch a ton of TV. There is not much monitoring of activities on the caregivers part to actually screen what they listen to or what programs they watch.

They will look at you like a movie star all the way from America! Expect bombardment when you enter these orphanages. They love you already!

In general, orphans are smaller than other children their age. If you see a child that looks about 10 or 11

Orphan Children

years old, chances are they are about 13 or 14 years old. Physically, they are skinny and some are malnourished.

Some have health issues because of lack of nutrition through the years.

Orphanages are divided into two systems: one for normal kids and one system for special needs kids. Each child takes a psychological test at the age of 3 and that determines the system in which they will grow up.

Some children have been abused sexually, physically and emotionally. Some by parents, older kids in the orphanage, and possibly even from a caregiver.

All of the younger children infected with HIV are in a special hospital. Some of the older teenagers that are HIV positive are in regular orphanages. There are only a handful of these children and youth in the general orphanage population.

They do not receive enough money from the state to run the orphanage properly. Meals are not very nutritious.

In general, they get bathed two times a week and are given a stack of clothes to last the next several days. This all happens, including group showers, in an assembly line manner in most cases.

Most do not have life skills and social skills. They have not learned how to cook, sew, save money, spend money, shop at a market, fix a car... etc.

Issues they face are smoking, gang mentality, homosexuality, promiscuity, being considered social outcasts, and abuse in all ways.

Medical care is minimal.

You will see some physical scars on some and numerous emotional scars on so many others.



Travel Checklist

- Bible and devotional reading
- Trip Manual and Journal
- Passport (visa inside) with Xerox copy
- Ticket (will be given to you at the airport)
- Money for souvenirs (please take clean, new large-faced bills)
- Money belt (money, passport/visa, and ticket will be kept on you at all times)
- Phone numbers, addresses, email addresses of family and friends
- Camera, film, batteries -Put film in carry-on; x-rays on checked luggage will ruin film
- Toilet paper or small packets of tissue
- Antibacterial hand cleanser and wipes
- Travel alarm clock
- Prescription drugs for entire length of trip (place in carry-on luggage)
- Over the counter medicine (cold & cough, upset stomach, pain relief, Tylenol PM)
- Toiletries (shampoo, soap, toothbrush & paste, personal hygiene items)
- One nice set of clothing; can be slacks or skirt for women and nice shirt, khakis for men
- Everyday clothing (khakis, jeans, t-shirts and sweatshirts are fine for the orphanages.)
**** Buckner International asks all trip participants and workers to dress respectfully and appropriately according to the country culture, and the type of orphanage ministry work being performed, to the Glory of God ****
- Pack one change of clothing in carry-on luggage
- Comfortable pair of indoor shoes
- Washcloths
- Instant tea or coffee with heating element (if desired)
- Eyeglasses/Contact Lenses (with extras for emergency)
- Adapter and converter for electrical items (these are country specific)
- Snacks that withstand travel and heat
- Small flashlight with batteries
- Small Calculator (for converting money)



Travel Checklist

FALL TRIPS:

- Warm comfortable walking boots (waterproof if possible), long underwear or warm outer clothing (layering is best, rain coat with lining, gloves, hat)

SUMMER TRIPS:

- Bathing suit, Sunscreen, Bug Spray, Hat to block sun

OPTIONAL:

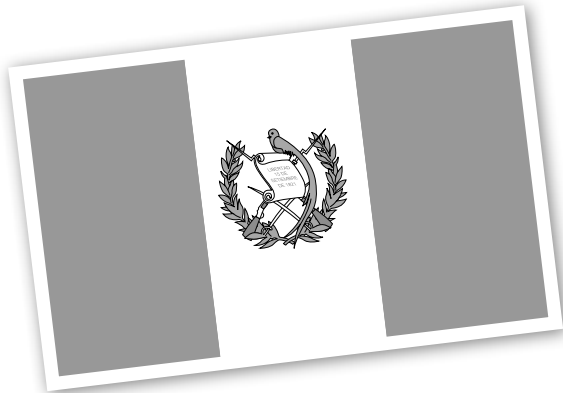
- Umbrella
- Ziploc bags
- Artificial sweeteners, packaged salad dressings
- Safety pens/travel sewing kit for emergencies
- Labels with email address/ mailing address for kids (buy stamps there)
- Fun things for kids
- Book/magazines for airplane
- Gifts for interpreters (hand lotions, jewelry, devotionals, praise CDs)

REMEMBER:

- Give emergency numbers to family and friends
- Airline allows 1 carry-on bag within their standard size and weight limitations
- Each person is allowed 2 checked bags (not exceeding 70 lbs).

**** Please keep in mind that one of the checked bags will be provided, packed and filled with humanitarian aid from Buckner. ****

About Guatemala



and bordering the Gulf of Honduras (Caribbean Sea) between Honduras and Belize

Size: slightly smaller than Tennessee

Population: 12,728,111 (July 2007 est.)
Most populous country in central America

Country Facts

History: The most populous nation in Central America, Guatemala is a representative democracy with its capital at Guatemala City. Although the nation has been relatively stable since 1996, Guatemala's recent history has been plagued by civil war and military coups, which have slowed the nation's development. Large portions of Guatemala's interior remain wholly undeveloped, including the nation's many rainforests and wetlands. Guatemala's abundance of biologically significant and unique ecosystems contribute to Mesoamerica's designation as an important biodiversity hotspot.

Location: Central America, bordering the North Pacific Ocean, between El Salvador and Mexico,



Climate: tropical; hot, humid in lowlands; cooler in highlands; has seven different climates

Ethnic Group: Mestizo (mixed Amerindian-Spanish) and European 59.4%, K'iche 9.1%, Kaqchikel 8.4%, Mam 7.9%, Q'eqchi 6.3%, other Mayan 8.6%, indigenous non-Mayan 0.2%, other 0.1%

Language: Spanish 60%, Amerindian languages 40%

Religions: Roman Catholic, Protestant, indigenous Mayan beliefs

Literacy: total population: 69.1%
male: 75.4% female: 63.3%
More than two million children do not attend school, most of them indigenous girls in rural areas. Only three of ten children graduate from sixth grade and only one of 20 enter high school.

Unemployment rate: 3.2%

Population below poverty line: 56.2%

Government: constitutional democratic republic



Economy (Agriculture & Industry)

Economy: sugarcane, corn, bananas, coffee, beans, cardamom; cattle, sheep, pigs, chickens, sugar, textiles and clothing, furniture, chemicals, petroleum, metals, rubber, tourism

Industry: sugar, textiles and clothing, furniture, chemicals, petroleum, metals, rubber, tourism

Currency: Quetzal (7.5Q=1 USD)

Culture

Family life:

- Family is very important aspect of the culture. Family members are dependent on one another, which is why being orphaned is looked at as such a sad and hard life.
- Guatemalan society can be characterized as a patriarchal society. Relations between men and women are unequal, even if, in the city, the journey toward equality is progressing little by little.

About Guatemala



- Children remain in the home usually until they are married. They usually commute to the university from home.

Food:

- Chicken, turkey, and beef (roasted, grilled, or fried) are the country's most popular meats and are normally accompanied by beans and rice
- Corn is a staple food. It is most often eaten in the form of a tortilla.
- Black beans are eaten at almost every meal.

(charcoal-grilled steak), and chiles rellenos (chiles stuffed with meat and vegetables).

- Guatemalan coffee, which is most often exported, is considered some of the best in the world.

Sports: "Futbol" (soccer) is the main sport in Guatemala.

Arts: Guatemala has a large variety of handicrafts. Weaving is the most common, other include wood-carving, ceramics, and painting.

Holidays

- September 15—Independence Day
- November 1—All Saints Day

Customs/Courtesies

- Guatemalans refer to themselves as "chapin"
- They refer to a younger kid as "patoja" or "patojo"
- Pollo Campero (Country Chicken) is the local chicken chain
- Guatemalans generally touch when speaking with one another; women even more so.
- Upon meeting someone, greet the person by shaking hands (man or woman). Those who have attained a good level of trust may occasionally kiss each other on the cheek, which is more common between women and somewhat less between men and women. Between men, trust is displayed by a hug.

- Guatemalans at times use their lips to point somewhere
- Guatemala has a public bus system with buses called chicken bus, instead of numbers the routes and buses are named after women.

Orphans and at-risk children

More than 370,000 children are orphans in Guatemala with countless more at-risk.

- 5,000 street children between the ages of 5-14 are in Guatemala City alone.
- There are only 4 government-run orphanages in the country.
- Violence, corruption, abuse, malnutrition are leading problems affecting children.



- Other popular dishes are bistec (grilled or fried beef), guacamole, mosh (porridge), churrasco

Buckner in Guatemala

In 2001, Buckner was given the opportunity to partner with the Guatemalan government to meet the need of foster care program development. Buckner was able to introduce successful models of care from the United States to Guatemalan culture to assist orphaned children within the country.

About Guatemala

Buckner services and country support include:

- Training numerous Guatemalan-nationals that work in the government orphanages in the areas of foster care, preventive health care, childcare, residential care and social services.
- Supporting the Orphan Graduate Sponsorship Program which provides girls and boys who have aged out of the orphanages the opportunity to continue their education.
- Operating four Buckner-owned facilities: a Girl's Transitional Home, a Baby and a Single-Parent Home in Guatemala City and a Baby Home in Xela.
- Sponsoring mission trips throughout the year to minister to the children in government and privately-owned orphanages.
- Providing on-going humanitarian aid such as shoes, socks, medicine, diapers and toiletries.

Typical mission trips include

- Church Trips—VBS Ministry, Sports Camps, Life Skills Training
- Medical Mission Trips
- Dental Mission Trips
- Construction Ministry
- School Group Trips

