

Voluntourism Informational Package



Get ready for a thrilling adventure,
because you're about to take off to
Guatemala!



WORTHY VILLAGE INC.

Worthy Village is a 501c3 non-profit organization with a mission to build pathways out of poverty for women and children in Guatemala by providing economic opportunity, healthcare, and education.

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Contents

Who We Are!	4
Worthy Village Volunteer Work	5
Worthy Village On-Site Staff!	6
Everything You Need To Know	6
Passport & Visa Requirements:.....	7
Health Awareness:	7
Medicines you may need:	7
Be cautious about food and water.	7
Upon returning home:	8
Climate:	8
Electrical Appliances:	8
Suggested Packing List:	9
Supplies and Donations:	10
Contact Information:.....	10
About Panajachel:	11
Language:	11
Getting Around Guatemala:	12
Shuttles-	12
Walking-	12
Tuk Tuks	12
Pickup Trucks	12
Boats	12
Being Safe in Guatemala:	12
Our Apartment Accommodations:.....	13
Apartment location:	13
Currency and Money Matters:	13
Terms and Conditions	15
Participant Stipulation:	15

Confidentiality:	15
Included in the trip cost:	15
Not included in the trip cost:	15
Deposit and Cancellation:	15
Fundraising for trip:	16
No Drug Policy:	16
Apartment Damage:.....	16
Terms and Conditions Agreement	17
Medical and Evacuation Insurance Contract	18
Liability Release Forms	19
Form A	19
Form B	20

Empowering Women and Children in Guatemala: The Impact of Worthy Village

Worthy Village is a non-profit organization that works towards enhancing the quality of life for women and children in Guatemala by offering them access to economic opportunities, healthcare, and education. The organization partners with over 50 highly skilled women artisans to sell their products to tourists. However, the profits generated by the sales do not cover their basic needs. Women in Guatemala are among the most vulnerable and marginalized in their society, but Worthy Village is committed to empowering them economically and ensuring their needs are met. The organization's highest priorities include fair wages, access to basic healthcare, and income to support their children's education.

To support Worthy Village's mission, we purchase products from their artisan partners and pay them a fair wage for their work. These products are available for sale on our online marketplace and are also sold wholesale to stores and boutiques across the United States. The profits generated from these sales enable us to continue purchasing products, thereby providing a stable source of income for our artisan partners. Any additional profits are directed towards supporting Worthy Village's two key initiatives: healthcare and education. By purchasing products from Worthy Village, you can contribute to supporting their cause and help empower these communities.



Photo: Worthy Village Artisan women

Worthy Village Volunteer Work

Worthy Village extends an invitation to join us in Guatemala and make a difference in the lives of those in impoverished villages. Our base of operations is Panajachel, located on Lake Atitlan, where you'll have the opportunity to experience the community and culture. Your time in Guatemala will be characterized by meaningful work, interaction with the locals, and education on Mayan traditions.

Our approach is focused on voluntourism, whereby travelers take part in charitable activities. We believe that both the recipients and volunteers must derive value from the experience. Our past participants have described the trip as "life-changing."

Our primary goal is to teach the Worthy Village Healthcare Book and provide training on the use of Sawyer Water Filtration Systems. The Healthcare Book acts as a curriculum, covering important topics such as oral hygiene, daily hygiene, hand washing, healthy living, disease prevention, and other life-saving subjects. We conduct seminars in schools, orphanages, and local community centers and ensure that each participant receives hygiene products and a Healthcare Book.

You will receive comprehensive training on the Sawyer Water Filtration Systems, including proper usage and cleaning. You'll then assist in delivering these systems to families and schools in need, where you'll have the opportunity to teach them how to use them. We spend a considerable amount of time in the homes of these families, understanding their lives, needs, passions, and struggles.

Our workdays end in the mid-afternoon, affording you the chance to explore and experience the beauty of Lake Atitlan and its culture. Additionally, you'll have one to two free days to enjoy activities such as horseback riding, attending a Mayan ceremony, zip-lining, hiking volcanoes, artisan shopping/workshops, and in-home visits.

Join us on this meaningful journey to make a positive impact in the lives of those in need.

**The cost of extra activities is not included in the trip price.*



Worthy Village On-Site Staff!

Mayra Perez- Dankievitch, CEO, President, Co-Founder

Mayra the co-founder of Worthy Village, spent her formative years in Santo Domingo, Jalapa, Guatemala before moving to the United States at the age of nine. She holds a degree in Human Resource Management and International Business Management from UMass Dartmouth. In 2013, Mayra led a group of UMass Dartmouth students to Jalapa, Guatemala, to instigate positive change in the village. The journey had a profound impact on all travelers, including Julia Rayberg. Upon returning to the US, Mayra and Julia embarked on a mission to transform the Spring Break trip into an international non-profit organization, which resulted in the creation of Worthy Village.



Victoria Joj, Director of Social Work

Victoria, grew up and currently resides in Panajachel, Guatemala. She is currently in the final year of her Social Work degree program at the University Mariano Galvez of Solola. With fluency in English, Spanish, and Kaqchiquel, Victoria plays a vital role in the organization's activities, including translation services, project coordination around the lake, and overseeing the Volunteer Day Program on Lake Atitlan. Her passion has always been to assist her community in overcoming poverty and implementing developmental strategies to achieve that goal. Victoria has been teaching Spanish since 2008 and intends to continue utilizing her knowledge and unwavering dedication to fulfill the mission of Worthy Village.



Sylvia Mateo, Program Manager of Social Work

Sylvia was born and raised in Panajachel, Guatemala. She has a Masters degree in Social Work from the Universidad de Mariano Galvez Solola. She had been in social work since 2013 working in orphanages and safe homes of Guatemala. She has a very strong passion for her work and consistently demonstrates her compassion and love for this work.

Sylvia works both in the office and in the field, assisting the Director of Social Work and expanding on our programs. She is eager to bring her experience and ideas into Worthy Village to make positive, sustainable impact in the communities on Lake Atitlan.



Everything You Need to Know

Passport & Visa Requirements:

Before traveling, please be sure that your passport is up-to-date, for air travel, and valid up through your length of stay. There is no visa necessary for stays of 90 days or less in Guatemala.

Health Awareness:

While no mandatory vaccinations are required to enter Guatemala, the CDC recommends Hepatitis A and Tetanus vaccines. Other vaccines to consider include Diphtheria, Rabies, and Typhoid. Hepatitis B is recommended only for those at highest risk. Travelers should consult with their doctor or local health department before deciding on optional inoculations. More information can be found on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention website.

Medicines you may need:

When traveling, bring enough prescription medications for the duration of the stay in their original bottles and in carry-on luggage. Over-the-counter medicine for traveler's diarrhea, such as Imodium, is recommended, although a prescription may be necessary for more severe cases. Follow liquid medication security guidelines.

Be cautious about food and water.

Travelers are at risk of getting sick from food and water. To avoid illness, it's advised to:

- Wash hands frequently and carry alcohol-based hand gel
- Drink only bottled water and avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes
- Avoid street food
- Ensure food is fully cooked
- Avoid dairy products if unsure about pasteurization.

Worthy Village staff members can make suggestions on where to eat; most meals will be eaten as a group.

Upon returning home:

If you are not feeling well, you should see a doctor immediately and inform them that you had recently been in Central America.

Climate:

The temperature in Panajachel typically ranges from 70 to 90F during the days and will drop down to 60 to 70F in the evening. The rainy season begins in May and goes through November.

Electrical Appliances:

Outlets in Guatemala handle the same voltage as the U.S. Feel free to bring any chargers and electrical utilities that you think may seem appropriate.



The quetzal bird is the national bird of Guatemala.

Suggested Packing List:

Random:

- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Deet Bug Spray
- ☐ Passport, credit cards and plane tickets and Photocopies of each (please leave a copy of these at home with family member as well).
- ☐ Day pack to carry daily belongings
- ☐ Pocketknife
- ☐ Money belt
- ☐ ATM/Credit card
- ☐ License or other picture ID
- ☐ Your prescription medicine and Ibuprofen
- ☐ Germ-X or something similar, antibacterial wipes
- ☐ Your regular hygiene items (e.g., soap, shampoo, deodorant, feminine products, shaving cream, lotion etc.)
- ☐ Extra pair of prescription glasses and/or contacts
- ☐ Extra hair elastics
- ☐ Band-Aids
- ☐ Phone charger, laptop or tablet, camera
- ☐ Notebook and pen
- ☐ Extra bag for carrying donations

Clothing:

- ☐ Two pairs of comfy pants
- ☐ One pair jeans
- ☐ Six T-shirts or short sleeve shirts
- ☐ Two to three blouses or dress shirts
- ☐ One to two pairs of shorts (not short-shorts)
- ☐ Two week supply of underwear and socks
- ☐ One sports bra and two regular
- ☐ Two medium-weight sweater/sweatshirt
- ☐ One medium-weight jacket or fleece
- ☐ One poncho or rain coat
- ☐ A few casual dresses/outfits
- ☐ A few "going-out" outfits for our nightly events
- ☐ Bathing suit!
- ☐ Light pajamas
- ☐ Towels
- ☐ Shoes:
- ☐ Two pairs of sandals/flip-flops
- ☐ One pair of sneakers

Assistance and Supplies for Your Trip

Your U.S. cell phone carrier may have a global program. If you would like to use your cellphone while in Guatemala, call your provider and ask to enable international roaming. This will allow you to make phone calls and check email while in Guatemala. Be sure to ask about cost and details, because they do vary.

Mayra's cell: 1-774-219-1674 U.S. mperez@worthyvillage.org

Victoria's cell: 011-502-4138-2030 (Guatemala) vjoj@worthyvillage.org

About Panajachel:

Discovering Panajachel's Serene Spirit and Cultural Diversity

Panajachel, also known as "Pana," sits on the largest lake in Guatemala, Lake Atitlan, which is often referred to as "The Most Beautiful Lake in the World." This remote region in the Guatemala highlands is renowned for its breathtaking views and tranquil atmosphere. The indigenous population, which keeps the Mayan traditions alive through language, food, and customs, resides in different villages around the lake. There are 23 indigenous languages spoken in Guatemala, and Kaqchikel and Tz'utujil are the two main languages spoken on the lake. Although Spanish is the second language for most of the communities, some do not speak it at all.

Despite being home to the indigenous population, Lake Atitlan has become a popular destination for travelers and backpackers worldwide. Pana boasts a perfect balance between local traditions and international visitors, bustling with a variety of cultures.

Language:

Discovering the Rich Indigenous Culture and Languages of Guatemala

Guatemala boasts of a diverse indigenous culture and is home to over 23 different languages. Although Spanish is the official language, most locals speak their native language or dialect. During the workdays, Worthy Village groups will be partnered with translators, so volunteers should not hesitate to request translation when necessary. The translators are there to help! When teaching the Worthy Village Healthcare Book, volunteers will work with a designated translator assigned to translate the information and presentation.



The glorious view of Lake Atitlan, get used to this!

Getting Around Guatemala:

Transportation Options in Panajachel

When travelling to Panajachel, a private shuttle service will be waiting for you at the Guatemala City airport. The shuttle service that we use is reliable and trustworthy, and will take you directly to your destination. The ride is approximately three to four hours long and may vary depending on traffic.

Panajachel is a town that is easily accessible by walking, and is generally very safe. Walking is the main form of transportation within the town. However, after 10 pm there are fewer people on the streets, and it is advisable to be more careful. It is not recommended to walk alone at night.

Tuk Tuks are the other major form of transportation in Panajachel. The cost of a typical Tuk Tuk ride is 5Q to anywhere in Pana, except to and from our apartment, which is then 10Q. Worthy Village will cover the expenses of Tuk Tuks to and from work-related activities. However, Tuk Tuks taken during your free time or activity will be at your own expense. They are relatively inexpensive.

Pickup trucks are also a popular and safe form of transportation in Panajachel. We will ride a pickup truck to the village next-door to Pana, which offers breathtaking views.

Boats are the preferred mode of transportation to some of the villages around the lake, as they do not have road access. Boats will pick us up and drop us off at the front boat dock of our apartment. The boat rides offer a stunning 360-degree view of the lake, making for perfect photo opportunities.

Being Safe in Guatemala:

Travelers visiting Panajachel should be mindful of their safety and take appropriate precautions to avoid being targeted. It's advisable to refrain from openly displaying cash and instead keep it concealed. Limit cash carrying to what is required for the day, and store the excess in a secure place like an apartment. An apartment can serve as a secure location for storing money and valuables.

Our Apartment Accommodations:

Worthy Village volunteers will have the opportunity to reside in a fully-equipped 14th-floor apartment featuring a remarkable glass wall that offers an unparalleled view of the lake. The apartment comprises a cozy living room, a spacious common area, and a fully-functional kitchen, supplied with clean water by Worthy Village. The apartment is situated within a hotel that provides various amenities, including access to a pool, hot tubs, gym, sauna, and dock entry. With round-the-clock security measures in place, volunteers can rest assured that their personal safety and possessions are well-protected.

Apartment location:

*Tower #1, Apartment
#1404 & #1405
Riviera de Atitlan
Panajachel, Solola,
Guatemala*



View from Worthy Village apartment.

Currency and Money Matters:

When traveling to Guatemala, it's advisable to exchange currency before departing. One can visit a local bank or AAA to exchange money for Guatemalan currency. The country's official currency is the Quetzal, with a conversion rate of approximately 1.00 USD to 7.50 GTQ. ATMs in Panajachel accept Visa and Mastercard for cash withdrawals. Travelers are advised to exchange a minimum of \$250 or an amount depending on their expenses. In case of low Quetzales, a staff member can facilitate a visit to a bank for exchanging dollars, but this will require a passport and dollars without any stains or wrinkles. It's vital to carry cash, as most transactions require cash payments rather than credit or debit cards.



These are Guatemalan Quetzales!

Terms and Conditions

Participant Stipulation:

To qualify for participation in our volunteer trips, applicants must meet specific criteria, including age, qualifications, skills, and other designated conditions established for the trip's particular goals.

In situations where a participant is under 18 years old, it is mandatory to be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Worthy Village staff maintains the right to ask any volunteer to leave the trip immediately if any behavioral issues arise. In such instances, the volunteer is responsible for all expenses incurred outside of the group, and there will be no reimbursement provided.

Confidentiality:

All medical information of individuals must remain confidential. Artisan & sponsor family's personal information may not be disseminated or shared.

Included in the trip cost:

- Traveler's insurance
- Breakfast and lunch food
- Apartment accommodations
- Private shuttle transportation to/from airport
- Translators
- All transportation to/from work related events
- T-shirts

Not included in the trip cost:

- Airfare
- Alcohol, Dinners
- Laundry, telephone, other personal expenses
- Travel unrelated to volunteer work (tuk tuk, boat, pickup). Shopping/artisan purchases
- Excess luggage
- Medical expenses for injuries or illness

Deposit and Cancellation:

- Payment dates will be announced by trip leader and must be made on time.
 - Trip must be paid in full 30 days prior to departure.
- If a volunteer cancels their trip after beginning payments, payments will not be reimbursed.



Fundraising for trip:

Worthy Village suggests volunteers fundraise for their trip to help impoverished communities in Guatemala, recommending the use of crowdfunding sites like gofundme.com. If a fundraiser is unable to attend the trip after fundraising under the name "Worthy Village," it is their responsibility to donate the funds to the organization promptly.

No Drug Policy:

On Worthy Village trips, participants must not be involved with non-prescription drugs at any time, including during travel or free days. This policy is for safety, and non-compliance will result in immediate dismissal without reimbursement. Drinking alcohol is allowed during non-volunteer-work time for those over 21 years old, but caution is advised. It is unacceptable for those under 21 years old.

Apartment Damage:

Guidelines for the Use of Worthy Village Apartments:

It's essential to recognize that Worthy Village does not own the apartments used for lodging. Therefore, specific rules are in place for the welfare of all occupants. All units come fully furnished and equipped with appliances that must be handled with care and respect. In case of any damage occurring during the stay, and no particular individual is found to be at fault, a professional estimate will be conducted to assess the cost of repair. This cost will then be shared equally among all occupants, including staff, who resided in the apartment. However, if a specific individual is found to be responsible for the damage, they will be required to bear the entire cost.

Terms and Conditions Agreement

I, _____, have read and fully understood the terms and conditions stipulated in the Worthy Village Volunteer Package. I hereby acknowledge my agreement to all the terms and conditions by signing this document.

Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian (if under 18)

Date

Medical and Evacuation Insurance Contract

Worthy Village cannot guarantee the safety of those involved as volunteers or staff on our trips. We endeavor to provide a safe, enjoyable and even positively life changing experience. With that said, travel to another country, any country, involves risk. These risks increase in under developed countries such as Guatemala. Should a medical or other emergency arise, local facilities and services will most likely not be up to standards we are used to in the United States, Europe or Canada.

Worthy Village requires that everyone has Medical Evacuation Insurance. We work with trusted carriers who can arrange medical evacuation and even evacuation/extraction for natural disasters and other events; in the unlikely event you might require it.

A medical flight to the United States can cost tens of thousands of dollars that may not be covered by your current medical insurance provider.

Please fill out the information below so that the Worthy Village Team can purchase your medical and evacuation insurance.

Name _____

Country of Citizenship _____

Home Country _____

Date of Birth _____

Passport Number _____

Dates of travel _____

I, _____, understand that I need this insurance, and I agree and give permission to Worthy Village to purchase my medical and evacuation insurance for me.

Signature of Worthy Village Participant Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian (if under 18) Date

Liability Release Forms

Form A

In consideration of my desire to serve as a volunteer in relief efforts to be conducted by WORTHY VILLAGE, I hereby assume all responsibility for any and all risk of property damage or bodily injury that I may sustain while participating in any voluntary relief effort, disaster exercise or other activity of any nature, including the use of equipment and facilities of WORTHY VILLAGE.

Further, I, for myself and my heir, executors, administrators and assigns, hereby release, waive and discharge WORTHY VILLAGE and its officers, directors, employees, agents and volunteers of and from any and all claims which I or my heirs, administrators and assigns ever may have against any of the above for, on account of, by reason of or arising in connection with such volunteer relief efforts or my participation therein, and hereby waive all such claims, demands and causes of action.

Further, I expressly agree that this release, waiver and indemnity agreement is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by the State of Massachusetts and that if any portion thereof is held invalid, it is agreed that the balance shall, notwithstanding, continue in full legal force and effect.

I currently have no known mental or physical condition that would impair my capability for full participation as intended or expected of me while involvement with and traveling to and in Guatemala with WORTHY VILLAGE.

Further, I have carefully read the foregoing release and indemnification and understand the contents thereof and sign this release as my own, free act.

Date: _____ Signature: _____ Print Name: _____

Guardian Signature (under 18): _____ Print Name: _____

Form B

Authorization and Release for Participation in Worthy Village Guatemala Volunteer Trip.
By agreeing to participate in Worthy Village Guatemala Volunteer Trip and sharing any copyrighted materials including video, audio, photographic and others ("My Participation"), I hereby release Worthy Village, the State of Massachusetts, the Board of Directors, and their officers, employees and agents from any claims, damages, or actions that may arise due to My Participation in the Program.

Furthermore, I agree to indemnify and hold Worthy Village, the Board of Directors, and their officers, employees and agents harmless in case of any legal action or claim that may arise due to My Participation, including actions in violation of the rights of third parties. I also grant Worthy Village, the Board of Directors, and their officers, employees and agents authorization to use my name, voice, photograph, likeness, performance and/or biography in connection with any product arising out of My Participation in the Program.

I understand that Worthy Village, is not obligated to air the Program and I will not receive any monetary compensation for the rights granted herein. I hereby consent to the use of My Participation by Worthy Village under the provisions of Massachusetts Statutes.

I am at least 18 years old, or I am the parent or guardian of a participant under 18 years old. I have read and understood this Performance Authorization, Release, and Waiver of Liability and agree to all its terms. I sign this document voluntarily and with full understanding of its significance.

Date: _____ Signature: _____ Print Name: _____

Guardian Signature (under 18): _____ Print Name: _____

Emergency Contact Information

Full name of contact #1: _____

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Full name of contact #2: _____

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____