

World Accord

World Accord brings people together. Affirming the sacred worth and dignity of each person, we respond as partners to opportunities that nurture the basic well-being of all.



Central America Construction Expedition

Team Member's Handbook

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>4</u>
Team Environment	4
Local Leadership and Traditions	4
Sensitivities	5
Dogs	6
Participating Organizations	6
Sharing Your Talents and Yourself	7
Documenting Your Trip	8
Emergency Contacts	9
Safety	9
Security	10
Orientation Sessions	10
<u>ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND DRUGS</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>PREPARATIONS IN CANADA</u>	<u>12</u>
Medical	12
Travel	14
Fund Raising	14
<u>TRAVELLING TO CENTRAL AMERICA</u>	<u>16</u>
Departure times	16
Meeting at the Airport	16
Security Considerations	16
Connecting in the U.S.	16
Arriving in Central America	17
<u>TRAVELING FROM CENTRAL AMERICA TO CANADA</u>	<u>18</u>
Leaving Central America	18
Connecting in the US	18
Arrival Times in Canada	18
<u>WHILE IN CENTRAL AMERICA</u>	<u>19</u>
Well Being	19
Accommodations	20
Food/Meals	20

Medical Help	20
On the Job	21
Off the Job	21
Shopping	21
Gifts	21
Phoning Home	22
<i>WHAT TO BRING</i>	<i>23</i>
Special Items	23
Luggage	23
What to leave at home	24
Clothes	24
Sundries	25
Recreational Equipment - Optional	25
Treats	26
Sleeping	26
Miscellaneous	26
What World Accord will bring	27
<i>DONATIONS OF SUPPLIES</i>	<i>28</i>
Construction Tools.	28
School/Office Supplies	28
Sports Equipment	28
<i>APPENDICES</i>	<i>29</i>
Making Travel Arrangements	29
Cost of Travel	30
Charitable Tax Receipts	30
Spanish Vocabulary	31
<i>DAPHNE'S USEFUL SPANISH FOR BUILDERS</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>WORKSITE</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>MEALTIME</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>STATEMENTS OF BELIEF</i>	<i>34</i>
World Accord	34
Community of Christ	34
First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto	34

Introduction

You have embarked on a rewarding journey: an exciting opportunity for personal and spiritual growth. To make the most of it, please take advantage of the many opportunities, both expected and unexpected, that will come your way, now, while in Central America, and when you return. Please share your adventure freely with family and friends. You will make a difference to yourself and the world.

This handbook has been prepared to give the novice developing world traveller as much information as possible about our trips. The more experienced traveller may find it a useful review, or may want to focus on the trip specific information.

Flexibility will be the key to survival! What ever we say now may change. Patience and humour help too.

If you have any questions or concerns about your trip, or anything in this manual, please call Richard Kirsh, our Construction Volunteer Coordinator, at (416) 767-5837, or e-mail him at richardkirsh@sympatico.ca.

Team Environment

World Accord construction teams are small by design, usually about 12 people. This enables us to travel to more remote locations, serving communities with the greatest need and fewest facilities. It eases the logistics of travel, accommodation and food.

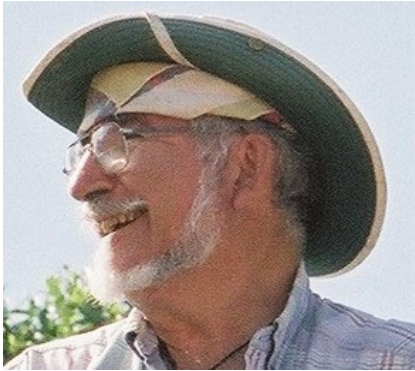
This relatively small size will put a premium on working together to achieve our goals and maintain group harmony. Because we will see and work with each other every day for two weeks, we will get to know each other quite well.

Local Leadership and Traditions

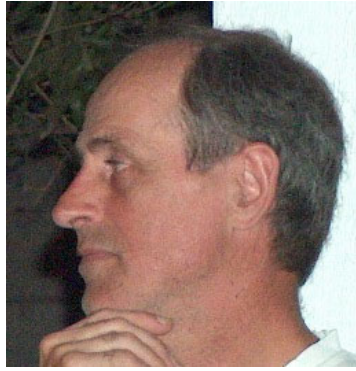
While we are in Central America, we are the guests of our partner organizations. They will provide direction both on and off the job. Al Wigood and Jens Schoenrank, World Accord Construction Coordinators, will be our Construction Expedition leaders and will provide the liaison with our hosts.

These trips are unique learning opportunities for us. The more we are open to new experiences, the more insight we will gain into the local culture and ways. Wherever possible we will do things the local way, rather than bring North American thinking into the communities. We ask/suggest you do the same in your personal encounters.

The pace of life is slower and the activity less frenetic in Central America than it is in Canada. Slow down and enjoy it.



Al



Jens



Richard

Sensitivities

There are a few things that we need to be especially sensitive to while we are in Central America. These will help ensure the success of our trips and the ongoing relationship between World Accord and its partners and their constituents.

Politics – Because of the recent history of political instability and violence, many people still fear possible retribution for holding or expressing political views. We therefore ask you not to initiate political discussions with our hosts or have open discussions about Central American politics with each other.

The cultures we are going into are conservative by most Canadian standards. We ask that you govern your actions accordingly. Two examples are:

- Meeting new people: go slowly and be a little more formal than you might be in Canada.
- Dressing (this effects women more than men) – don't wear tank or sleeveless tops, or short shorts.

Because people might react quite differently in Central America we ask that you:

- Avoid loud conversations and arguments. If you have any concerns, bring them to Al or Jens who will try to resolve them.
- Don't laugh at the traditions or ways of the indigenous people. Laughing does not always translate the way you mean it to. Be careful not to do anything to make people believe you are making fun of them.

Because of our relative material wealth there will be a natural tendency for the local people to look up to us or even put us on a pedestal. This makes everything we do or say that much more important. In the long run, the trip will have more positive results for all, if we try to level the playing field by remembering that we are there to serve them and that we have as much to learn from them, as do they from us. Respect the inherent worth and dignity every person.

Dogs

Most dogs in Central America are not pets. They are either working dogs or wild. In most cases they are neither petted nor fed, but left to scavenge for themselves. This leaves them wary and good watch dogs. Many are infested with fleas and some may be rabid: please do not pet them.

We ask that you do not feed them with your leftovers as this reduces their value to their owners. Where we eat lunch at the work site, it can also make them thieves and pests to other team members who may not share your passion or compassion. In many cases, people do not have enough food for themselves and their families. Any left over food, can be accumulated and given to a hungry child.

Participating Organizations

Canadian Organizations

World Accord is a human resource and community development charitable organization, based in Waterloo, Ontario. Since 1980 World Accord has provided programs that allow the poor in the developing world to break the cycle of poverty through their own efforts. World Accord works at the grass roots level through partnerships with, and under the direction of, indigenous NGO's, facilitating local solutions to local problems in Southeast Asia and Central America. Major funding partners include CIDA, the World Hunger Fund and the Wild Rose Foundation of Alberta.

The construction trips are a small but important part of World Accord's programs. In addition to helping achieve World Accord's overall goals, the trips help put Canadians directly in touch with the work so they gain a personal understanding and appreciation of its importance.

Community of Christ (formerly the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Later Day Saints - RLDS) started World Accord as an independent charity and continues to provide many of its constituents and much of its non-governmental financial support. The Community of Christ is a non-creedal Christian denomination.

The First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto (Toronto First) has been involved in development work in Central America since 1997 through its Central America Community Development project with the goal of building understanding between people and improving the social, economic and living conditions in the poorest areas. Members of

Toronto First and other Unitarian congregations have been participating in the World Accord Construction Expeditions since 1999. Unitarian Universalism is a liberal religious faith and is also non-creedal.

Since we have joined our efforts we have begun to discover how much we have in common (see the appendix for statements of beliefs) and how much more we can accomplish together. We welcome participation by all interested Canadians and their friends, regardless of their religious beliefs. We hope the trips will be enriching and enlightening for everyone.

Indigenous Organizations

World Accord works with one NGO in each country where it promotes development.

El Programa de Reconstrucción Rural (PRR) was founded in 1983, as an affiliate of the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction to work with selected communities in the municipality of Zacapa, Santa Barbara, Honduras. At the core of the organization's programming is an integrated and holistic approach to socio-economic development that focuses on four core areas: health, economic improvement, education, and social organization. Since its inception, PRR has developed strong programming in each core area, including the creation and operation of a medical and dental clinic at La Buena Fe, supported by mobile health care teams that provide community health care in the field. PRR is active in 30 communities in the Departments (provinces) of Santa Barbara and Comayagua, working directly with approximately 1,500 rural families.

Mujeres en Acción (MeA) operates programs that empower previously disenfranchised women in the Guatemalan countryside. For years, these women had no political voice, little economic opportunity, and a low position within society. MeA is helping to change these things, enabling the women to gain political experience and confidence, opening new doors of economic opportunity, and teaching them that they no longer have to be second class citizens in their own country.

El Programa de Esperanza Recuperación Comunitario (PERC) works with a very poor marginalized community located on the outskirts of San Salvador, El Salvador. The program focuses on community development and capacity building, and on micro-enterprise and micro-credit.

Sharing Your Talents and Yourself

There will be a lot of time to get to know one another, especially after dinner. Most of this time will be unstructured. While most activities will happen by themselves without any forethought, some advanced preparation could help you make the most of your free time. Think about what you can share with the team. What talents help define who you are? It could be anything: arts, music, poetry, humour, or mime. The only limit is your imagination. If possible bring along those supports that would enhance a group or one-on-

one activity, such as, musical instruments, written and recorded music, books, magic props, sketchpads and pencils, etc. Anything that you might find yourself saying, “I wish somebody told me to bring my ...” Travellers are invited to organize an evening’s activity. (see also “Off the Job”) Some of the places we stay will be very remote, much like being in a northern overnight camp.

Also think about what you can share with the local people. Often something as simple as origami paper, a game that doesn’t need a lot of verbal instruction (e.g. jacks, or hacky-sack), or magic tricks can be a wonderful icebreaker, especially with children. If you bring extras, you can give them (discreetly) to the local friends you make. Children in Central America have few toys. And don’t forget pictures of your family and neighbourhood. (Pictures of your house may seem like bragging, given the modest circumstance of most Central Americans.)

If you have a Polaroid camera, please bring it and some film so you can take pictures to leave with the local people. They will see us taking lots of pictures but will never see the end product or their own image.

For many travellers, these construction trips to out of the way places are opportunities for personal and spiritual growth. Living and working with people is far more intimate and rewarding than travelling as an isolated tourist. You cannot come away without being moved by what you see and who you meet: Central American and Canadian. This is one of the most important aspects of the trips.

You may find this an ideal opportunity to explore or express your beliefs. We ask that you do this in a way that respects the sensibility of other team members who may have beliefs, religious and otherwise, that differ from yours. We ask that listeners extend a similar courtesy and listen with an open mind. In this way all team members will have the freedom to grow and we will develop better understanding of each other.

Documenting Your Trip

While you are in Central America you will see many people, places and things that you will want to remember for a long time. The best way to do this and be able to share your experience with friends and family back home is to take lots of pictures. This can be either stills or video. Since film is very expensive in Central America, if available at all, it is best to bring more than you think you’ll need. You can always use up leftovers at home. We recommend using good quality, compact cameras that are easy to carry securely with you at all times.

Each year we update our web site and put together a slide show of previous trips that we use for promotional purposes. We will ask you to share some of your best shots with us once you get home.

Emergency Contacts

Should your family need to reach you while you are away, the best way is to call our partner organizations directly. Remember that telephone service in Central America is not as reliable as in Canada and often requires some persistence. Central America is on Central Standard Time, 1 hour behind Eastern Standard Time.

Honduras – Call the home of Enrique Castio, the Director of PRR, both he and his wife Patty speak English and will relay messages to us (011-504-773-4676). Another option is to send a fax to Enrique at the same number.

Guatemala - Send an e-mail to the MeA office (meai@itelgua.com.gt) or call during office hours (011-502-839-3262), but note the staff speak Spanish not English.

El Salvador – Phone the office at 001-503-228-7241 but note the staff speak Spanish not English.

Since we may be staying some distance away, there could be a day or two delay before you can respond. Also calling out can be difficult and may add additional delay.

If your family is experiencing difficulty reaching you, they can call World Accord in Waterloo for assistance: (519) 747-2215 or 1-800-525-3545 during office hours. On weekends and evenings call Terry Fielder at home: (519) 746-4430. World Accord will use the same procedure as your family so it won't necessarily be any faster or more direct.

Safety

Much is made of safety when travelling in Central America. Our trips are planned carefully to avoid such difficulties and we have had no incidents in the past. If you remember that we are travelling in relatively poor countries and take a few precautions, everything should be all right. It is not that much different than travelling in an unfamiliar, major North American city.

The key to personal safety is to use common sense, don't take risks and listen to our Construction Expedition leaders, Al and Jens

- Travel in small groups: never alone at night
- Be cautious when walking at night in unfamiliar areas
- Leave anything that suggests you are especially rich at home: Rolexes, gold chains, wedding and engagement rings, etc.
- Don't "flash" large amounts of money
- Put a thick rubber band around your wallet and carry it in your front pants pocket

- Carry most of your money in a undergarment carrier
- If you carry a waist pack or backpack, use a diaper pin (double catch) or two to pin the zipper pulls together (pack pins in checked luggage until arrival)
- Carry a copy of your passport information pages and out of country emergency medical card with you at all times. Leave the originals in safe keeping with our host organization, along with other important documents, such as airline tickets.

Security

Although the areas we travel in are relatively safe and secure, petty theft is always a concern. Bring as few valuables as possible (e.g. bring a Timex watch not a Rolex). Give valuables that you don't need daily, such as large amounts of cash, passports and tickets, to Al for safekeeping. Keep the doors to the dorm areas locked when no one is there. When on the work site, keep your camera on your belt or out of sight in a bag you can see from where you're working.

Orientation Sessions

Each team will have an orientation session when it arrives at its final destination. It will cover such items as: meals, sleeping arrangements, construction schedules and duties, team meetings, daily routine, special arrangements, introduction of local hosts, and local orientation. If at anytime you have questions, please speak to Al or Jens.

Before you leave, please call our Volunteer Coordinator, Richard Kirsh, at (416) 767-5837 or e-mail him at richardkirsh@sympatico.ca. All questions are welcome.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs

On the application form we have asked each participant to abstain from consuming alcohol, tobacco products and drugs during this trip. The primary reasons for this are:

- Our hosts have asked us to honour the values their programs promote: strengthening the family and generating economic renewal and independence: and
- Drinking and/or smoking: the local people look up to us. They may emulate us, and use our behaviour as justification for consumption of alcohol or tobacco, which robs families of valuable resources.
- Please talk to Al or Jens about allowable places to smoke or drink while in Central America.

Drugs can compromise the entire team, especially during international travel, and jeopardize the ongoing programs of World Accord and its partner organizations. You are not allowed to take pills with codeine (e.g. 222's) into the U.S., even with a prescription.

Preparations in Canada

Medical

Take this section with you when you visit your clinic or doctor.

It is your responsibility to make sure you have the appropriate medications and vaccinations for your trip. For liability reasons World Accord cannot make specific recommendations. The best source for information is a clinic that specializes in travel or tropical medicine, found in some large hospitals. Another good source is your local health unit or you can talk to your family doctor.

If you are travelling on your own, before or after the trip, take that into consideration

General medical information and immunization recommendations are also available on the Internet. Reputable sources are:

- Center for Disease Control (US): www.cdc.gov/travel
- Health Protection Branch (Can): www.hc-sc.gc.ca
- Canadian Society for International Health: www.csih.org
- Travel Medicine Centre: www.travelclin.com (700 Bay St., Toronto (416) 340-8222)
- International Society of Travel Medicine: www.istm.org

The conditions you will encounter while on the Construction Expedition

Honduras

- Altitude: 2,300 to 5,000 feet depending which communities we visit
- Temp: Days 75-85⁰F: Nights 50-55⁰F
- Humidity: moderate
- Dry season
- Some mosquitoes, but not a lot.
- Off the normal tourist track
- N.B. the airport we are arriving at and departing from in Honduras is located at sea level in San Pedro Sula, a city on the Caribbean coastal plane
- You will be doing construction work
- Local women trained in safe food handling for Canadians will prepare your food.
- All water will be bottled.

Guatemala

- Altitude: at or above 5,000 feet
- Temp: Days 75-80⁰ F: Nights 45-50⁰F
- Humidity: low
- Dry season
- There should be few mosquitoes
- Outside normal tourist areas
- You will be doing construction work
- Local women trained in safe food handling for Canadians will prepare your food.
- All water will be bottled.

El Salvador

- Altitude: below 1,000 feet
- Temp: Days 80⁰ +F: Nights 50⁰+F
- Humidity: moderate
- Dry season
- Some mosquitoes, occasionally a problem
- Outside normal tourist areas
- You will be doing construction work
- Local women trained in safe food handling for Canadians will prepare your food.
- All water will be bottled.

Some of the potential vaccinations require treatment to begin well in advance of your actual departure date. Make your enquiries as early as possible.

Some of the more common issues to discuss with your medical professional are: Hepatitis-A, tetanus (DPT), typhoid, malaria, travelers' diarrhoea, regular diarrhoea, stomach upset, and pre-existing conditions.

For tetanus, if your immunization will be more than five years old when you travel, ask your travel professional about getting a booster here, now, rather than in Guatemala or Honduras, should you have an inevitable construction related wound (e.g. wire scratch, cut, nick, etc.).

All team members must have out-of-country medical insurance. Remember to bring your card: carry a copy with you at all times and give a copy to Al Wigood when you arrive. If you don't have insurance already it can be arranged through our travel agent in Toronto

and combined with trip cancellation insurance. World Accord does not cover this cost. Remember, since you are not paying for your tickets your a credit card, “gold/platinum card” policies may not provide coverage. Check your policy.

We have run into little biting insects called chiggers. They do no real harm but burrow under your skin and itch like crazy. The treatment is to cover their air hole with nail polish. Most people bring clear, but there’s nothing stopping you from making a fashion statement with fuchsia or?

Travel

You will need a valid passport with an expiry date at least 6 months after the trip ends. This can take up to several weeks to arrange depending where you live. (The Canadian Passport Office web site is www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/passport/menu.asp)

All tourist cards and visa’s can be handled while on route to Central America. We will let you know if this changes.

Where possible, airline tickets and related documentation will be mailed or couriered directly to you a few weeks ahead of the trip. Last minute items will be distributed at the Toronto airport prior to departure.

The most direct flights from Canada to Central America originate from Montreal, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver, connecting through Miami, Houston or Dallas. If you are departing directly from one of these cities, World Accord will make the travel arrangements for you.

If you are making air connections in Canada or thinking of arranging side trips on the way to or from Central America, please discuss your plans with Richard Kirsh as soon as possible.

Bring every thing you need. There is little available in most of the locations where we’re staying. Double-check the list of things to bring, especially personal items such as medication and documents.

Fund Raising

Each construction trip is entirely self-funded including the money we’ll need to buy construction materials in Central America. This is why we asked each participant to raise charitable donations in addition to the cost of travel, food and accommodations. The more we can raise, the more we can do while we’re in Central America. Tax receipts will be issued for donations in accordance with Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) requirements. Previous travellers have found that writing a one-page letter to family and friends, telling about what they are doing and why, has been an effective method.

All donations should be made payable to World Accord –and designated to “Construction Expeditions”. Each traveller should send them to the Waterloo office in batches with an itemized summary, as early as possible. Please ensure that names, addresses and amounts are clearly set out and that the participant on whose behalf the donation was made is specified.

Please keep a personal record of all the donations you raise so we can confirm their receipt and trace any amounts that inadvertently may get recorded in other accounts. Donations that arrive at World Accord without specific designation for use generally end up in our “General Fund” so make sure your contributions are designated.

Travelling to Central America

Departure times

Flight times are subject to change. Exact times will be indicated on your tickets when issued. Please reconfirm the details with the airline a day or two prior to departure.

Food

At the current time, American Airlines, and maybe Continental, doesn't serve meals on its flights to the US and Central America. Check with them before leaving. Bring something for breakfast and lunch to eat on the plane. Airport food options may be limited.

Meeting at the Airport

Get to the airport at least 2 hours early so team members using the same gateway can be seated and travel together. Richard Kirsh will meet travellers leaving from Toronto to distribute any last minute travel documents, answer final questions, and give you any new information. In Toronto, bring a loonie to rent a baggage cart. Elsewhere bring...

We will give you coloured tape to clearly identify all items belonging to team members, both checked and carry-on. This will facilitate getting luggage off the carousel and keeping track of items during waiting periods. If we have additional supplies to bring down, they will be in hockey bags, clearly labelled as to contents and weight. We will give you a copy of the contents list.

Travellers leaving from Toronto will go through US Customs and Immigration in Toronto.

Security Considerations

All sharp items (e.g. Nail file, pocket knives) and other objects that could be used as weapons (e.g. hammer, trowel and duct tape) must be packed in checked luggage. All electrical items (e.g. radios, shavers) should be operable and easily accessible in carry-on luggage to facilitate visual inspection.

Connecting in the U.S.

The connections may be within the same wing, in adjoining wings or separate terminals. Some of the walks are substantial. If you have gone through US Customs and Immigration in Canada you won't have to go through customs and immigration again but may have to go through security if you change wings or terminals. If your flight is on Continental from Toronto, your connection in Houston is very tight, less than an hour – be purposeful.

Arriving in Central America

To enter Central America you will have to fill out a tourist card. Airline staff may hand them out at the departure gate or on the plane. There is no cost. The reason for your travel is a personal, pleasure or tourist visit (i.e. not business).

The local addresses for the entry documents are:

Honduras – **La Buena Fe**. (at the south end of Lago de Yojoa, about 1½ hours south of the airport.)

Guatemala – **Chimaltenango** (about 1 hour west of Guatemala City)

El Salvador - **Valle Dorado** (just northwest of San Salvador)

Stick together exiting the plane and walking through the airport. There are separate Customs and Immigration lines for residents and visitors. Most of the officers have enough English to process you efficiently. You will get a copy of your tourist form back. Keep it safe. You will need it to leave. Keep it with your passport.

Work as a team to get our bags: a few people pick all of our distinctively marked bags from the carousel, a few carry them to a safe central location and a few watch the pile. Each team member should confirm that all the bags they are responsible for are accounted for before any bags are moved. Then all team members carry the bags out to the bus. If local people offer to help, politely but firmly say no thank you (No, gracias!). They would at least expect a tip and, at worst, disappear with your bag.

Al and Jens will meet each team in the arrivals area. They will help us collect our bags and get to our bus.

The best place to convert your money from American dollars to local currency is at the airport bank. It is more convenient and easier than any place else locally, and a much better exchange rate than in Canada or at the US airports. Once our bags are loaded on the bus/truck, Al and Jens will take us to the bank.

Traveling from Central America to Canada

Leaving Central America

The airports in Central America can be a bit chaotic with long lines. We will be there early to ensure we're through on time. Again work as a team to move and watch bags carefully, get ticketed and clear immigration and security.

If you are planning on bring some field ripened pineapples home, pack them carefully in a strong box in your checked baggage. That way they technically don't enter the US where they're banned. When you fill in the Canada Customs form, it's OK to indicate that you have pineapples where it asks about fruit. Since we don't have a domestic industry to protect from disease we have been allowed to bring them in.

In Guatemala and El Salvador, the good news is that shoppers have a reasonable selection of goods to choose from at not too bad prices. You will be able to pick up some last minute things and spend the last of your local currency. There is a more limited selection of tourist goods available at the San Pedro Sula airport, other than coffee.

To leave Central America you'll need your passport, tourist card copy and pay an exit tax, which Al or Jens will give you.

Connecting in the US

You'll have to leave the plane with all your carry-ons and go through US Customs and Immigration and security. Then you board your plane to Canada. Although the connection is almost 2 hours, it is extremely tight, as Miami is the major entry point to the US from the Caribbean and all of Latin America – be purposeful getting through it all and getting to the departure gate, before you pick up food.

Your checked luggage may go straight through. OR you may have to claim it in one room and drop it off in the next. Please check carefully before you leave the baggage area.

Arrival Times in Canada

Flight times are subject to change. Exact times will be indicated on your tickets when issued. Anyone meeting you at the airport should reconfirm the arrival time and status with the airline.

While in Central America

Well Being

By following these few suggestions you can help ensure that your trip is happy, healthy and productive.

Always wash your hands with antibacterial soap before eating and always carry antiseptic towel-lets, or antibacterial waterless soap for those occasions when soap and water isn't available.

Don't go barefoot at any time.

Vigorously shake out your shoes in the morning before putting them on!

Protect yourself from the sun with a hat, bandana, and sunscreen. Even when it isn't hot, the sun burns quickly because of our location close to the equator and the altitude.

If there are mosquitoes, wear insect repellent. Don't completely rely on your immunizations.

Avoid dehydration, which happens more quickly at high altitudes. Drink lots of water or other low sugar beverages. Buy a litre bottle of spring water at one of airport shops or local stores (tiendas), label it with your name or some other unique identification and refill it with the bottled water we provide. You may want to bring some Gatorade crystals to flavour your water.

Brush your teeth with bottled water only.

Consume only the food and beverages that our hosts prepare for us. If you buy anything from a street vendor or local store make sure it's in a sealed package or you can peel it your self (e.g. banana).

If you don't feel well for any reason tell Al or Jens. Don't be afraid to take a rest when you are tired.

If you get invited into people's homes, you will be offered something to eat and/or drink. It's an insult not to take it. Fresh baked goods, or coffee or tea that's been boiled are the best alternatives. While it's not guaranteed you'd get sick, it's not a bad bet and better not to take chances.

Be very wary of "ice" in your drinks as it is generally made from tap water.

Accommodations

Our living quarters will be basic and cosy. In general you will not need a sleeping bag, blankets, sheets, pillow or mat.

Organize your belongings so you can live out of your bag.

We usually have showers. They may be warm. Since there may not be much privacy, bring a bathing suit and shower shoes to wear to and in the shower. In Honduras we may also have a chance to swim.

The toilets in Central America are constructed in a way that traps toilet paper, causing them to overflow. As a result, it is necessary to place all used toilet paper in a container next to the toilet. Do not flush it down! Of course when you are using an outhouse that isn't a problem.

Most toilets in Central America don't have toilet paper in them. So always carry some with you in a day bag (small knapsack or gym bag) - especially when we are travelling or at the construction sites. At home, save the last ¼ from 2 rolls of toilet paper and put them in zip lock bags. You can replenish your supply in Guatemala from the toilet paper we bring.

The electricity supply in most places is similar to Canada: 110/120 volts and two pronged plugs.

Food/Meals

Local women will prepare all of our food for us. It will be similar to what they eat. Simple but good and filling: not spicy, lots of rice, beans and tortillas, plus vegetables, fruit and meat. The women have been trained in the safe preparation of our food, using bottled water. If you are a picky eater, consider bringing some extras like peanut butter for an occasional treat. If you have dietary restrictions or preferences (e.g. vegetarian), please let Richard Kirsh know well before departure.

Our meals are usually served buffet style. Travellers are invited to give thanks.

Always eat all that you take. Food is not thrown out! What else are friends for?

Medical Help

A nurse is usually available for immediate local medical aid. Any condition requiring more serious assistance will be referred to medical facilities in a near by city.

On the Job

The workday will be about eight hours long with a good break for lunch. If you are feeling tired, take a break. Drink plenty of water.

We will have local people working with us. Remember these are their projects and that they have all the skills necessary to complete the job. We are there to assist them.

Always wear work gloves; no open toed shoes on the work site – wear your work boots.

Off the Job

After work and dinner, there will be plenty of time to get to know each other better. We will have to organize our own activities. In addition to reading, writing journals and talking, team members may want to organize some voluntary evening activities, such as cards, scrabble, checkers and song fests (a CD/tape player is available). Bring the required gear. If you play a portable musical instrument (e.g. guitar), please consider bringing it. When we are in larger towns you can explore in small groups.

On the weekend in the middle of each trip we will arrange an outing so you can see other parts of the country. In Honduras this might be a visit to Copan, a Mayan archaeological site. In Guatemala, it might be a trip to Lake Atitlan, Antigua or Chichicastenango.

Daylight is from 6am to 6pm. Darkness comes quickly with little twilight.

Shopping

In Guatemala and El Salvador there are lots of crafts to buy and lots of bargaining to be done. There is much less in Honduras.

Gifts

If you want to give something to a special friend you make in Central America, keep it very modest. While you may not consider something worth \$10 to be excessive, there it represents a day's wages for a skilled labourer or a week's wages for the unskilled. There is also a risk of creating an obligation for that person to return the gesture by giving you a gift. Ask Al or Jens when in doubt.

You may want to bring a few trinkets to give away to the children. Items such as Canadian flag pins, chicklets, matchbox trucks are popular and appropriate. Only bring individual candies wrapped in paper, not plastic. When you are giving, do it discreetly, without other people around, to avoid creating a mob scene and begging.

If you have a lot of toys, want to leave any of your clothes or make any other substantial gift, give them to our hosts. They will make sure it gets distributed fairly and goes to the most needy.

Phoning Home

Calling from Honduras to Canada is difficult at best. Guatemala and El Salvador are somewhat better. No one should be expecting a call from you.

What to Bring

Plan to buy nothing other than souvenirs.

Special Items

- ✓ (Give to Al Wigood when you arrive, keep copies for yourself)
 - ✓ Passport and photocopies of pages 2 & 3 (to be kept separately)
 - ✓ Airline tickets
 - ✓ Outside Canada health insurance card & copies
 - Alternate photo ID & copy (driver's license, student card, citizenship certificate)
 - Prescription medicines (bring prescription printout from Pharmacy)
 - Carry your passport and tickets on your person in a safe place while you travel
 - Pack several days' clothes, medicines, photocopies of ID's, "valuables" and toiletries in carry-on bags – all sharp items should be packed in checked luggage.

Luggage

Label all bags in side and out with your name, address and phone number, in case your bag goes astray on the way down.

Honduras: Programa de Reconstrucción Rural, La Buena Fe - (504-773-4676)

Guatemala: Mujeres en Acción, Chimaltenango - (502-839-3262)

El Salvador: Marina Ramos de Merino, Sta. Tecla - (503-228-7241)

Permissible carry-on size is approximately 9x16x20 inches: limit 1 bag/person (40lbs max); usually you can also carry a purse or camera bag.

Permissible checked size is approximately 62" overall dimensions (length + width + height), with a weight limit of 50lbs each bag (limit 2 bags) to carry donated supplies and additional personal items. Check the American or Continental Airlines web site for the latest details. Secure zippers with reusable twist ties. Overweight bags up to 70lbs will be surcharged \$25 each.

What to leave at home

- Jewellery (including wedding and diamond engagement rings)
- Credit cards (you may want one for extra souvenir shopping or emergencies)
- Alcoholic beverages, tobacco & illegal drugs
- Expensive watches
- Military like clothing

Clothes

The general rule is be modest. We are visiting a conservative culture. For example, women should not wear tank or sleeveless tops or short shorts. Comfort rather than style should be your major consideration: 100% cotton is best. Wear what you might wear on a camping trip. Slacks/jeans and tee shirts will be appropriate everywhere, including travel to and from Canada and in tourist centres, such as Copan or Antigua.

In Guatemala and Honduras, the weather will be spring like: days 75-85⁰F, nights 40-50⁰F. In El Salvador it will be warmer. It will be the dry season. There should not be much rain.

Bring enough clothes for 2 weeks. Or, you can have local women do laundry using traditional methods for the equivalent of about \$1. Bring a laundry bag and mark your name on your clothes. Or you may want to do your own laundry a couple of times.

- Work boots or sturdy shoes (2 pair) - Green tag safety boots are optional. Make sure all shoes are well broken in.
- Socks (cotton)
- Orthotics
- Pants (2 or 3) & belt
- Long dress (denim is best)
- Shorts (1)
- Underwear
- Short sleeve shirts
- Lightweight cotton long sleeve shirt (to cover arms from sun)
- Sweatshirt/sweater (2) or lined jacket for cooler evenings
- Polar fleece, if you are on the January trip
- PJ's
- Thongs & swim suit for showering or swimming
- Handkerchiefs/Kleenex
- Hat(s) for sun protection – Tilley style preferred
- Bandannas (to cover neck)
- Rain jacket/poncho, lightweight

Any unwanted clothes, shoes, etc. can be left at the end of the trip. Our hosts will distribute them to the most needy families.

Sundries

- Tooth brush, tooth paste & cup
- Dental floss
- Brush & comb
- Shaving gear
- Antibacterial soap (Dial-bar or Purex-liquid)
- Antiseptic hand wipes/small waterless antibacterial liquid soap (for times when soap and water not available before eating)
- Shampoo
- Deodorant
- Toilet paper - last 1/4 roll (2) for bus rides or on the job
- Washcloth & bath towels (2): Large (20x38 inch) fast dry towels are available at Mountain Coop for about \$10 each. They dry and smell better longer.
- Kotex or Tampons
- Eye glasses/contacts
- Extra glasses, lenses & holder
- Contact lens cleaners
- Earplugs, if you are sensitive to night time noises (e.g. roosters, dogs and snorers)
- Sewing kit
- Nail clippers
- Sun block (SPF 15 or more)
- Chapstick
- Bug repellent
- Prescription medicine (regular and travelers)
- Imodium (regular diarrhoea)
- Pepto-Bismol tablets
- Complex DIA & Echinacea (homeopathic remedies to prevent traveller's diarrhoea)

Recreational Equipment - Optional

- Camera, Film (lots) & Extra Batteries
- Lead film bag
- Video camera
- Polaroid camera and film
- Light reading/books (1 or 2)
- Walkman & extra batteries
- Bird book for Central America & binoculars

Treats

- Gatorade crystals for your drinking water on the work site, if you wish
- Hot chocolate
- Granola/ fruit bars
- Trail mix
- Peanut butter

Sleeping

- Sleeping bag and liner
- Mat
- Pillow and slip
- Most trips to Honduras do not require these items. Ask if these are required on your trip

Miscellaneous

- Laundry bag
- Cold water laundry soap
- Cheap watch
- Unique labels to differentiate your water bottle
- Leather palmed work gloves (2-3 pairs)
- Sunglasses
- Flashlight with extra batteries & bulb
- Money belt (under garment)
- Fanny pack
- Day bag to carry water and sundries
- Pocket size note pad
- Pen & pencil
- \$1-300 US cash to convert to local currencies for souvenirs and side trip expenses (don't bring Travelers' cheques or Canadian money except for use to and from Canadian airports)
- Credit card (1) useful only at airports (for emergency ticket replacement and cash advances)
- Pictures of family, neighbourhood, etc.
- Musical instrument
- "Props" for "sharing your talents"
- Songs & readings to share
- Maps & travel guides
- Spanish-English phrase/translation books
- School, office or recreational donations (pack in hockey bags)
- Construction tools to use and leave behind (see below)

What World Accord will bring

World Accord will supply all food, lodging, transportation, tools and construction supplies, unless specified elsewhere. In addition we will bring the following miscellaneous items:

- CD/Tape player
- Clotheslines and pins
- Sink Plugs
- First Aid Kit
- Back-up water filters
- Team banner for pictures
- Funnels to decant water from large bottles to small

Donations of Supplies

Travellers are asked to collect supplies that can be used in the programs of our NGO partners in Central America.

Construction Tools.

- Cement/brick trowels - #8 (blade about the size of a man's hand)
- Long handles shovels (spades)
- Pails to carry water and mortar (donut and bulk food shops may be willing to donate plastic pails)
- Linesmen's pliers
- Tin snips (spring loaded – straight)
- 3 foot levels

School/Office Supplies

- Notebooks (8 ½ x 11 lined),
- Scribblers
- Pens, pencils, erasers, pencil sharpeners,
- Markers,
- Chalk, erasers,
- Crayons,
- Fluorescent paper
- Thumbtacks, staplers, masking tape, Scotch tape, glue,
- Paint brushes, water colour paints,
- Scissors,
- Calculators, math sets
- Equipment: computers (pentium or better), school and office software (in Spanish), sewing machines.

Sports Equipment

- Soccer balls (deflated), soccer uniforms (team quantity)
- Skipping ropes
- Extra large hockey bags (to carry supplies)

Appendices

Making Travel Arrangements

1. World Accord will make the travel arrangements for most travellers.
2. The most affordable airfares:
 - Are limited in number
 - Must be booked early
 - Must be paid for and issued within days of booking
 - Are non-refundable
 - Have significant penalties for changes made after issuing
3. Travellers must make World Accord aware of any special travel arrangements they would like to make or are considering (e.g. staying longer, going earlier, returning via a different route) either on the application or immediately thereafter.
4. In some circumstances, World Accord will ask travellers to make their own reservations with our travel agent.
 - Travellers making their own arrangements must ensure that they arrive at the airport in the Central American destination city either before the “team flight” or within one hour in order to facilitate transfer to our billet.
5. The tickets will be issued to World Accord regardless of whether the traveller or World Accord made the arrangements with the travel agent in order to maintain eligibility for tax receipts and facilitate team coordination.
6. Where a tax receipt is not required, tickets may be issued directly to the traveller.

Our travel agent is: Cristina Valencia
Manager, Andes Travel
616-A Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario
M6G 1K8

(416) 537-3447 Phone
1-800-866-4076

(416) 531-6876 Fax

andes@andes.ca

Cost of Travel

1. The posted cost of the Construction Expeditions includes an “allowance” for airfares that is enough to cover the most economical airfare classes offered for the return trip from Toronto to Central America. Montreal fares have been similar. Western fares slightly higher.
2. Travellers are responsible for all costs above the allowance. Any potential additional costs will be reviewed with the traveller prior to being incurred.
3. Possible extra costs include:
 - Western departures
 - Connecting flights in Canada
 - Unavailability of the most economical fares at the time the traveller applies to join the Construction Expeditions.
 - Hotels required by overnight connections
 - Airline charges for changes made to tickets after issuing.
 - Travel insurance in addition to cancellation

Travellers are responsible for all costs related to personal travel (i.e. when not travelling with the team).

Charitable Tax Receipts

1. Donations for Construction Expeditions are generally eligible for tax receipts in accordance with CCRA requirements.
2. All donations toward the cost of the Construction Expeditions not related to international travel (e.g. room and board, construction materials and transfers) are eligible for tax receipts.
3. Donations toward the cost of international travel are eligible for tax receipts in accordance with CCRA standards, which require World Accord to reduce the amount of the receipt where an individual “receives a personal benefit” from the travel rather than doing charitable work.
 - Eligibility for tax receipts includes the extra costs noted in Cost of Travel #3 on previous page.
 - Even where there is personal travel, a tax receipt will be issued for the full amount if an unrelated party makes the donation (e.g. not the traveller, the traveller’s spouse or supporting parent), because the donor received no personal benefit.

- Reductions are proportional to the time the person is travelling on his/her own vs. with the Construction Expedition. Examples:
 - A person travelling only with the Construction Expedition will get a tax receipt for all of the travel costs.
 - A person travelling on their own for one week and with the Tour for two, will get a receipt for 2/3 the travel costs – a reduction of 1/3.

4. All extra costs related to personal travel are not eligible for tax receipts.

Spanish Vocabulary

Learning some Spanish will improve your ability to connect, at least a little, with our hosts. The following page was developed by Daphne McCree after her second Construction Expedition.

Daphne's Useful Spanish for Builders

Social/Manners

please = por favor
thank you = gracias
you're welcome = de nada
sorry = perdón

yes = si
no = no
okay/good = bueno

good morning = buenos días
good afternoon = buenas tardes
good evening = buenas noches
hello = hola
good bye = adiós
see you later = hasta luego

pleased to meet you = mucho gusto
how are you? = cómo esta usted?
very well, and you? = muy bien y usted?
I like = me gusta
I want = quiero
there is, there are = hay

I Feel Sick!

I'm sick = estoy enfermo
my stomach hurts = me duele el estomago
what kind of pain is it? = qué clase de dolor es?
dull = apagado
sharp = agudo
constant = constante
on and off = intermitente
throbbing = palpitante
medicine = medicina

Worksite

board = tabla, tablero
bending tool = grife
brick = ladrillo
bucket, pail = cubo
ceiling = techo, cielo
cement = cemento
concrete = concreto
door = puerta
floor = piso
gravel = cascajo
hammer = martillo
ladder = escalera
level = nivel
lime = cemento
mortar = mortero, argamasa
nail = clavo
pliers = alicates, pinzas
room = cuarto
sand = arena
saw = sierra
sawhorse = caballete
scaffold = andamio
screen, sifter = cedazo
screw = tornillo
screwdriver = destornillador
shovel = pala
shutter = postigo
tape-measure = cinta para medir
trowel = trulla
wall = pared, muro
window = ventana
wire = alambre

dry = seco
dull = apagado
sharp = agudo
wet, soaked = mojado

Mealtime

breakfast = desayuno
lunch = almuerzo
dinner = comida
dessert = postre
knife = cuchillo
fork = tenedor
spoon = cuchara, cucharita
bowl = escudilla
cup = taza
saucer = platillo
glass = vaso (glass of wine =
copa de vino)
plate = plato
apple = manzana
banana = banana
bread = pan
butter = mantequilla
beans = frijoles

cereal = cereales
chicken = pollo
coffee = café
egg = huevo
juice = jugo
lemon = limón
lime = lima
meat = carne
without meat = sin carne
milk = leche
orange = naranja
papaya = papaya
pineapple = piña
salad = ensalada
soft drink = refresco
sugar = azúcar
tea = té
vegetarian = vegetariano
water = agua
watermelon = sandia

Statements of Belief

World Accord

World Accord brings people together. Affirming the sacred worth and dignity of each person, we respond as partners to opportunities that nurture the basic well-being of all.

Community of Christ

Transformation 2000 Goal: “We will become a world-wide church dedicated to the pursuit of peace, reconciliation and healing of the spirit.”

First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto

As a member congregation of the Canadian Unitarian Council, we affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.