

The Boletín

2020 Departure Issue



Established 2001

Medicos-en-Accion (Guatemala)

Winter 2020

Happy New Year everyone! We hope you had great Christmas and New Year celebrations and are ready to travel to Guatemala. On behalf of the MeA Board, thank you for volunteering your time and expertise.

Antigua is a very special place and the following information will help you with travel planning. Any question or concerns? Please contact us at medicoscanada@gmail.com

Food & Travel



When completing your immigration and customs paperwork when arriving into Guatemala, please indicate that the purpose of your visit is **pleasure not work**. And as you are travelling to the country for pleasure, there is no need to report that you have a personal supply of gowns, gloves or masks.

Please remember to have a meal during your layover in the US or Mexico before flying to Guatemala. Food is not available in the Arrivals area nor are any restaurants open near the hotel in Antigua when we arrive in the late evening.

Suppers, weekend meals and any travel or other activities are at your expense. Antigua offers a wonderful variety of very good restaurants and dinners can run from \$25-\$35 (USD).

Airport Transfers: Airport shuttles will be provided for team members unless you are arriving before Friday, January 24 or departing after Saturday, February 8.

Supplies

Please ask your hospital (or suppliers) if they can donate a box of sterile gloves and masks for your use in Guatemala. If you are carrying nonpersonal surgical supplies, you must provide a list to Dr. Norm Weir, c/o medicoscanada@gmail.com by January 8. Please keep a copy of the list with you when you travel.

Your Health

You cannot drink the tapwater in Guatemala. Our hotel supplies one bottle per person per day in your room. Use this water to brush your teeth. Buy extra water as needed. The hotel will supply larger bottles but they are at your expense.

For work, daily walking etc., the hospital does have large containers of water from which you can fill a personal water bottle. You may also want to bring small bottles of hand sanitizer that can be carried with you when travelling. Be aware that public washrooms have only cold running water (if any). Few have paper towels and some may only offer a communal hand towel for hand drying.

Bring CASH



Very Important!

Everything runs on cash in Guatemala - including Medicos. For 2019, your total donation to cover hospital and patient costs, shuttles and accommodation in Antigua is:

One week volunteer: \$500 USD

Two week volunteer: \$900 USD

Your \$300 (CDN) application deposit was exchanged at \$220 USD. You will need to bring the balance of your donation with you in US dollars.

Please bring:

One week volunteer: \$280 USD

Two week volunteer: \$680 USD

VERY IMPORTANT: Only crisp new bills are accepted. No tears, folds, any marks or wear! Bills damaged in any manner are not accepted anywhere. Avoid accepting them in Guatemala, too!

Depending on where you live, your bank may need to order in this quantity/quality of US currency. Please order early to ensure it arrives before your departure!



Single Supplement and Extra Nights

Our home away from home in Antigua:

<http://quintadelasflores.com/index2.php>

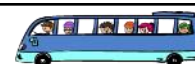
Single supplement hotel room: \$450 (2 weeks)

Extra Nights - if you are completing a one week mission and staying beyond Saturday, February 1, there will be additional room charges.

Casita: \$30/USD per night

Single Room: \$62/USD per night

Airport Shuttles



If you have not already done so, please send Cindy Reimer your flight information **TODAY!**

medicostravel@gmail.com



Photos and Social Media

Please remember patients, hospital staff and colleagues are entitled to their privacy. Please ask for permission before taking or posting any photos.

Surgical/Audiology Team Members Antigua 2020

Surgery

Herb Wong, Norm Weir, Amelie Foucault, Sari Kives, John Cleland, Donald Lovely, Elyse Lackie, Daniel Ovakim, Alysha Nensi, Jennifer Soucie, Albert Rosengarten

Anaesthesia

Murray Reimer, Gordon Wood, Grant Stefanysen, Harold Booy.

Nurses PAR

Libby McMullen, Joanne Marceau, Catherine MacKenzie, Madeleine Szostakiwskyj, Shaelynn Johnston, Anika Dierckx, Kelly Phillips.

Nurses OR

Joanne Richard, Tammy de Rocquigny, Elna Bourgenesset, Gina Hawryschuk, Robin Edwards, Laurie Beauchamp, Mina McCrea, Nancy Doherty, Jonathan Hsuing, Janet Hardie, Karen Hill,

Audiology

Jean-Gregoire Roveda

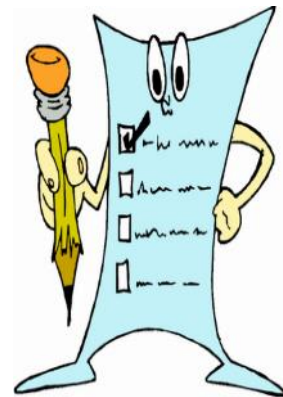
Translators

Murray McCallum, Florrie McCallum, Julian Szostakiwskyj

Support

Cindy Reimer, Brenda Uhryuk, Laurel Cleland, Jocelyn Faire, Ian Doherty,

Mission Schedule 2020



Friday, January 24

Travel day

Saturday, January 25

Free Day. Orientation to Antigua.
Welcome party (at hotel)

Sunday, January 26

7 AM Orientation for new volunteers at hospital
7:30 Breakfast at Hermano Pedro
8:00 Setup begins; Patient interviews & scheduling

January 27 - January 31

7:30 Breakfast at Hermano Pedro
8:00 - 17:00 Surgery and Hearing Clinic

Weekend: February 1 & 2

Free Days.

Monday, February 3- Friday, Feb. 7

Surgery days

Friday, February 7

Half-day minor surgeries only; pack up supplies
Evening: Farewell party.

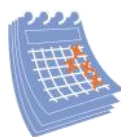
Saturday, February 8

Shuttles to airport

Friday, March 13

Deadline: Submission of all receipts for travel and related expenses for a 2020 tax receipt. Please remember to keep receipts related to your travel.

Please check the whiteboard in the hotel reception area daily for updates and messages.



Antigua 2021 Mission

**To be confirmed:
January 22 - February 6**

Travel day: Friday, Jan. 22
Setup: Sunday, Jan. 24
Travel home: Saturday, Feb. 6

Applications available:
Monday, March 23, 2020

Please note that we have not yet received confirmation for our 2021 dates. These are anticipated dates based on previous missions.

Tourism links

To learn more about current event and restaurant listings in Antigua and area:

Revue: revuemag.com
Que Pasa: quepasaenantigua.com

Antigua, Guatemala is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Information can be found at:

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/65>
lonelyplanet.com/guatemala/antigua

Travelling to Tikal ?
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/64>
tikalnationalpark.org

For Panajachel and Lake Atitlan:
panajachel.com

Activities

As a UNESCO World Heritage Site, there are many things to experience in Antigua with your free time including:

- ◆ Salsa lessons
- ◆ Cooking classes
- ◆ Chocolate making
- ◆ Yoga
- ◆ Shopping
- ◆ Walking tours
- ◆ Spanish lessons
- ◆ Museums
- ◆ Galleries
- ◆ Photography

San Benito Report

Thanks to the **November 2019 San Benito Team**

Surgery (ENT only): Norm Weir, Richard Abriss

Anaesthesia: Murray Reimer,

OR Nurses: Joanne Richard, Lottie Froese, Odra Flores, Elna Borgenesset,

PAR Nurses: Christa Maguire

Pre-op Coordinator: Sasha Russell

Hearing Clinic: Cindy Reimer, John Froese, Oscar Rene Cano Arden



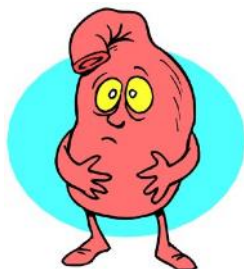
Day one at Hospital Shalom!

Photo: Hospital Shalom

More Travel Tips

A potentially distressing and uncomfortable condition for team members relates to a GI issue. Last year, several team members reported this was an issue after we returned. As a best practices refresher, please have a look at his recent CDC article:

<https://www.cdc.gov/features/managing-travelers-diarrhea/index.html>



If you should experience diarrhea or diarrhea with a fever, please inform your team leader.

Bringing your phone? Add the hotel address and contact info to your contacts. Whether you have a phone or not, it is a good idea to pick up a business card from the registration desk and carry it with you in case you need help with directions. **Our hotel address: Calle del Hermano Pedro No. 6, La Antigua Guatemala. Tel: (502) 7793-7900.**

While Antigua is relatively safe, it makes good sense to travel with others, especially when walking after dark. Tuk-tuks are also a great way to get around (cost is about 15 Q (2 US \$) between the central park area and the hotel. Remember, as people clear out of the city in the evenings, the tuk-tuk drivers do as well.

Money Exchange

Guatemala's official currency is the Quetzal. US dollars can be exchanged at most banks. Bring your passport for identification.

Many team members prefer using ATM machines. They are widely available and generally secure. There are currency exchange counters and ATMs at the airport before arriving at immigration. US dollars are **not** available from local ATMs.

About Medicos-en-Accion Canada

Formed in 2001, Medicos-en-Accion's volunteers provide surgical services, hearing clinics, community health and education support in Guatemala and The Gambia.

Medicos-en-Accion

450 Greenstone Drive
Kamloops, British Columbia
V2C 1N9

Medicos-en-Accion/Guatemala

1431 Frontier Place
Nanaimo, BC V9X 1P5

Medicos-en-Accion Board

President: Koos Meijerhof

Vice President/Team Leader The Gambia: Gareth Eeson

Vice President Surgery Guatemala: Brenda Uhrynuk

Vice President /Team Leader Medicine Guatemala: Brian Poelzer

Treasurer: Dennis Wallis

Secretary: Bill Beaton

Website: Blake Farren

Medicos-en-Accion/Guatemala Surgical Teams

Vice President: Brenda Uhrynuk

Team Leader Surgery Guatemala: Norm Weir

Secretary: Cindy Reimer

Communications: David Hill-Turner

Volunteer orientation: Joanne Marceau

Email: medicoscanada@gmail.com

FB: Medicos-en-Accion Guatemala Surgical Team

URL: www.medicos-en-accion.com

Medicos-en-Accion is a registered charity in Canada.

San Benito-November 2020: Dates TBA

The San Benito mission is based in Flores, a one hour flight north of Guatemala City. It is a picturesque town located on the shores of Lake Peten. It is best known as the jumping off point for the World Heritage Site at Tikal, about a 90 minute drive away.

The team volunteers at Hospital Shalom, a hospital that was completed in 2017 and is operated by an American not for profit. The team carries out ENT surgeries and also operates a hearing clinic. It is located in San Benito, a 15 minute drive from Flores. Application form available: March 23, 2020.

Mailing List

Please contact medicoscanada@gmail.com to be added or removed from our mailing list.

To avoid ATM fraud, many travel veterans now use a Debit card dedicated to travel that is linked to only one account holding limited funds and with no links to other accounts. In case the card is compromised, thieves are thwarted by the daily withdrawal limit and the limited amount of cash in the account.