

Personal Equipment List

MIRADOR BASIN PROJECT

Peten, Guatemala

Personal Equipment List

We welcome you on this expedition. You will be exploring some of the last great unknown regions of the world, and you will be among the first explorers to discover and observe the magnificent remains of the earliest Maya. The knowledge and experiences that you gain here will last forever, and we are delighted that you could share and contribute to this expedition in such an important and timely manner.

Mandatory equipment:

1. **Passport.** We will need a scan of your passport pages with your data and photo on them. We also need two photographs of you (your passport photo will work if clear enough) for registration with the Guatemalan government. We will also need a complete cv.

2. **Medical notice.** You are required to notify Idaho State University and the project director of any medical conditions, including HIV, diabetes, seizures, or any other medical ailments that could impact you on this expedition. You will be required to sign a disclaimer that you are free from disease and sickness.

3. **Adequate clothing.** You will be needing cool, comfortable clothing, preferably cotton. Be sure that you have some long sleeve shirts, and light cotton pants (levi's are heavy, hard to wash, hot, and never seem to dry). Most cotton clothing can be found at a fairly reasonable price in most sporting apparel stores. We do not suggest any particular brand or store, but a wide variety of expedition and tropical weather clothing can be found in second-hand stores, or in specialty stores such as REI, Banana Republic, etc. **Do not bring** anything of a military appearance such as army surplus clothing or camouflage.

Boots, Shoes

Boots should be high top, lace boots, especially if you are hiking in. If leather, they should be waterproofed. We suggest that you try to locate a good boot for a modest price. Please be sure they are worn prior to making the trip. This is one item you don't want to skimp on, although that doesn't mean you will need expensive boots. Just find some that you can hike comfortably in over rough terrain. It will be useful if you can tuck your pants into your boots (keeps ticks and chiggers out of your crotch). You will be needing another pair of cheap shoes as an emergency backup and rest pair. These can be inexpensive jogging shoes. A pair of rubber thongs would also come in handy for bathing.

Socks. High top cotton socks may provide additional protection against insect bites on the lower leg. Please wear at least two pair of socks on the trip in, and

make sure that you have moleskin and tape. Feet problems are the greatest single affliction that we face due to the fact that feet turn soft and mushy due to the high heat and humidity. Moleskin or medical tape applied in Carmelita or whenever the blister first start will save you sore feet farther along the trail.

Hat

A hat is a necessity, primarily for insect control, and to discourage penetration of the bot-fly worms into the scalp where they are considerably more difficult to detect and eliminate. Common caps and wide brim hats are sometimes preferred since the mosquitoes tend to hover around the edge of the brim rather than on your head. Also, the wider brim hat tends to shelter the head and upper body from pollens and organic debris that fall from the trees and they protect from the torrential rainfalls that are common even during the dry season. The disadvantage is that they are bulky, and somewhat awkward in the dense vegetation.

Light Jacket- needed for some evenings and early mornings.

Rain gear- we will be involved in rainstorms of tropical proportions. Important items should be placed in ziplock bags. Often, a small umbrella is useful where vegetation is not as dense. Plastic rainjackets are sometimes a double edge sword: they protect you from rain but you get wet from sweating underneath them.

Clothes soap- please be frugal with the amount of clothing you bring along. The powder concentrate, environmentally benign clothes soaps are recommended, and in most cases, can now be purchased in Guatemala. Powdered soap can also be purchased in Flores or Carmelita. We will have buckets for washing clothes, and the project will have a laundry person with whom you can have laundry done for a fee.

3. Camp gear. The basic camp gear is required. This includes:

Day pack/fanny pack. Useful for hiking in, and carrying water and supplies.

Sleeping bag/sheet. Preferably a cheap cloth bag (ie. \$15), and even better are the small fleece bags (\$9 at Walmart). They absorb perspiration better, dry out well, provide adequate warmth, and can be left behind if necessary.

Foam Pad or Air pad (or both). A cot of some sort is also recommended, but not required. The project is providing cots for staff and students.

Duffle Bags. Duffle bags have proven to be easier to handle on mules and on helicopters. Get the ones that zipper along the entire length of the duffle bag. Pack frames tend to get bent and caught in vegetation, and receive more abuse.

Flashlights with batteries. The small AA cell batteries are adequate if they provide a bright light, but try to find a light with good illumination. You will need

adequate illumination for walking trails and observing the night animals active in the trees. Remember that fer-de-lance are also nocturnal hunters.

Clothes line. Always handy

Tents. The project will provide tents for all personnel at the site, but you can bring your own if you desire and you think you have space. Project Tents are large and spacious, and individually assigned, meaning that you will have your own tents.

Plastic ground cloth and/or tarp that will also provide an additional rain fly .

Canteen.

The 2 quarts or larger sizes are beneficial since you will be consuming large quantities of water on the trail. However, large plastic bottles for soft drinks (2 liters) are also a cheap, efficient way to transport water. Bottled water can be purchased in Flores, and rain water and bottled water can be obtained in Carmelita. However, if you have a canteen, make sure that the strap is nylon and not cotton in order to withstand the abuse and the heat and humidity. More numerous smaller bottles on a belt, especially those found in Army surplus or Boy Scout supply stores, are also fine and in many ways superior

to the larger canteens because they free the hands and can be carried personally on belts, fanny packs, or day packs (whereas the others most often end up on the mules, and most likely not with us. Gatorade is a great electrolyte replacement as a powder, which can be added to your drink. May make a difference on the way in.

Small Plastic Wash tub- optional, and can be procured in Flores, Guatemala. A small toilet plunger is marvelous for washing clothes and can also be obtained in Flores.

Machete- purchased in Flores, Guatemala. When properly used, is a very useful and essential tool.

A small water filter may be useful on the trail.

Personal First Aid Kit, and snake bite kit. The project maintains a doctor in all project camps, but personal kits are always handy.

Compass

Personal Toilet Kit

Soap, Shampoo

Shaving equipment

A couple rolls of toilet paper

Towel

Dental needs. Toothpaste can be purchased in Carmelita if needed.

Feminine supplies

Caladryl lotion-Antihistimine cream. You will especially grow to love this stuff.

Anti-fungal cream, such as athletes' foot cream and vaginal yeast infection cream such as Vagisil do wonders for crotch rot. Crotch rot is a severe rash that can totally incapacitate you on the trail or in the site because of extreme heat and moisture. Pay attention to this one...

Mosquito Repellent. After much experimentation, I have determined that the voracious insects of the Peten have little regard for most all popular brands of repellents, with the exception of Deep Woods Off and a brand found in Guatemala made by Bayer. Other repellents, especially those of a liquid nature and heavy Deet content are not recommended because of damage to equipment and materials.

The aerosol sprays are preferred because they are less messy and can be applied abundantly to clothing. They also tend to do less damage to equipment, as Deet has proven to be extremely damaging. Most repellents are quickly washed off by perspiration and will need to be applied frequently to exposed skin.

Archaeologists should try to procure a **Munsell Color Chart**, although charts will be available on site.

Personal Photographic equipment. Make sure everything is insured. All photographs are considered property of the project, but you will be allowed to keep the photos that you shoot. Publications of any sort in any venue must have project authorization before publication (Government requirement)

Lap top computer. We have generators and internet at El Mirador; generators at other sites. Please bring your own surge protector.

Chloroquin/Anti-malaria. Because of the remote nature of the sites (malaria mosquitoes require human vectors), many of the staff do not take anti-malaria medicines because of health hazards. However, we suggest that each person consider anti-malaria control. Discuss this with your M.D.

Suggested equipment:

Small camp cot. Totally optional, since the project provides cots and/or wooden beds, but the issue is to keep you off the ground.

Folding lawn or directors chair

Hammock- can be purchased in Flores. We recommend the hammocks that are solid cloth or canvas, not mesh, for insect relief.

Tape Recorder. Especially great for recording those unbelievable jungle sounds. Nobody at home will believe what a Howler monkey sounds like, and the exotic calls of

birds like the *Chachalaca* and the *Oropendula* will bring back memories for a lifetime.

Candles- can be purchased in Carmelita or Flores.

Lanterns. A florescent lamp with batteries will also be useful.

Munchies, candy (that will not melt), jerky (especially nice). But be conservative, please.

Vitamins.

Journal.

NOTE THAT THE PROJECT HAS A STAFF PHYSICIAN AT ALL TIMES AT THE SITE. WE HAVE ALWAYS HAD AN MD ON HAND DURING THE FIELD SEASONS, SO BE ASSURED THAT WE CAN DEAL WITH MANY MEDICAL SCENARIOS IN SPITE OF OUR EXTREMELY REMOTE SITUATION

DO NOT BRING:

Handguns of any type.

Military clothing

Absolutely no drugs, of any type, unless specifically prescribed by your physician. Guatemalan prisons are much more unpleasant than those in the U.S. We will actively prosecute any violation of this.

.Absolutely no alcoholic beverages. We need you to have your wits about you at all times.

Anything that would draw unnecessary attention to yourself. **For men, we have found that short haircuts (mid-ear or higher) tend to avoid police and military scrutiny, unnecessary inspections, and generally lend to a better relationship with authorities.** Jungles are not conducive to maintenance, cleanliness, and safety of long hair.

Notes on Conduct and Behavior:

Remember that we will be guests in a country that is not particularly pro-U.S. People are very polite, considerate, and tolerant for the most part, and you will make friendships there that may last for a lifetime. Please extend to them every consideration possible while visiting their land, and you will enjoy the pleasant associations and relationships that you will develop. We will be subject to their laws and legal

responsibilities and we will cooperate with all government and law enforcement agencies. You will have personnel with you who have lived for years in Guatemala and other areas of Latin America, who understand and speak the language with native fluency, and who understand the cultural and social/political systems. Please trust their judgment and experience in dealing with the Guatemalans.

Guatemala is also one of the most beautiful areas in the world. This great natural beauty is enhanced by the abundance of native populations found there (mostly Maya). It is one of the most purely indigenous countries in the Western Hemisphere. We hope you will appreciate the rich cultural heritage that exists in Guatemala, and take advantage of the opportunity to understand and appreciate their way of life.

Guatemala has undergone great internal pressures and upheavals. There has been a great deal of bloodshed and atrocities prior to the peace accords of the late 1990's. Most of these activities have greatly subsided, although a few sporadic outbreaks have been reported in the Highlands. We believe that we are geographically far from any conflict and we know that the total isolation found in the Peten is also a magnificent sanctuary. May we suggest some recommendations:

Please do not attract unnecessary attention to yourself by loud or boisterous behavior. Appearance should be neat, clean, and groomed.

Be discreet with wallets, cameras, purses, and especially with bank transactions.

While in the Highlands and Lowlands, do not travel at night in a private vehicle.

Do not be alarmed by the presence of fully armed military personnel.

Do not antagonize any Guatemalan authority.

Try to avoid any political arguments with any native.

Try to see as much of the country and its people as possible. There may be some areas of cities or the country however where you should not go. These will be indicated to you by project personnel. Keep in mind that most of the recommendations listed above would apply equally in areas of Los Angeles, Salt Lake, Denver, New York, and Miami and any other major city in the U.S.

Please remember that you not only portray your country to them, but you are an expedition member on a research project with 52 universities and research institutions. Since your conduct may possibly have a bearing on the future success and participation of the project in Guatemala, please be aware of your conduct and appearance at all times and act accordingly.

For those of you who drink, we will insist that there be no public intoxication. Drinking should be light in public, and for the most part, should be strictly a private affair. The project will cover all soft drinks and water expenses, **but you must pay any and all alcoholic beverages consumed in towns and cities.** We request (and it is now a Guatemalan law) that **there be absolutely no alcoholic beverages once we have left "civilization" and while we are at the sites.** Our experience has indicated the potential hazards and serious problems that detract from, or could even destroy, the success and the scientific purposes of the expedition.

There may be some of you who may have fallen in love with Maya art and artifacts. We insist that there be no purchasing of artifacts or removal of artifacts of any kind from Guatemala. Guatemalan laws are very strict on this issue, and your baggage may be subject to a thorough search by Guatemalan authorities prior to your departure from the country. Any illegal possession of Pre-Columbian or Colonial artifacts will result in severe legal penalties as well as seriously jeopardize the scientific status of the expedition. We will prosecute, jointly with the Guatemalans, any violations of the laws regarding artifacts.

The lab facilities in Guatemala city are at
8a Avenida 17-40, Zona 13, Colonia Aurora 1, which is very close to the international airport. Tell the taxi driver to go the Club Aurora, (former the "Club de Oficiales" (officers club), which is now a spa and workout gym. At the corner of the Club, go south to the Cuerpo de Ingenieros (a military corps of engineers) which is also a Cinderella castle-looking facility. At the gateway into the Turn west (right) the next corner (about 40 yds) and go left (south again) and go 1/2 block to 17-40, the second cement post which is a brown fence on the right side. Phone nos. are 2261-2825 and 2261-2824. Ligia Toledo (our legal representative) has a telephone no. of 2478-1886 and a cell phone of 5906-6060. Edgar Suyuc is the Guatemalan co-director of the project. Cell phone for Dr. Richard Hansen in Guatemala is (502) 5751-1888. Project personnel stay at the Hotel Casa Blanca, which is two blocks to the north of the Laboratory.

There are several small grocery stores just around the corner, a bread store at the north end of the street, next to Eddy's Gourmet (which is not too bad).

Additional notes and travel

There should be a helicopter based at the Maya International Hotel in Flores. If you somehow find yourself in an independent position in coming either to Flores, Carmelita, or coming into the Mirador Basin, please note the following information concerning the Flores-Carmelita-Mirador section of the trip:

In Flores, our agent is Jaime Crasborn (5978-1367). He can help you get to one of three places where we usually stay: the Jaguar Inn (actually in Santa Elena), owned by the Soliz family (preferable) or at the Posada del Lago, owned by Oscar Tun, located on the shore of San Miguel (take a boat on the north side of Flores to the shore of San Miguel). You can charge your rooms, meals, soft drinks, and water there. Please see that the meals are modest (no lobster or other high priced items, and NO alcoholic beverages will be paid for by the project). We also have an account at the Maya International Hotel, where the helicopter will be based. If you somehow missed the trip to Carmelita, you can check with our purchasing agent, Jaime Crasborn (5978-1367) about how to get there. Jaime can be counted on for about everything, and he is a crucial contact in Flores-Carmelita.

In Carmelita, our storage facility is on the east side of the runway in the long, cement floor building next to the house of Brigido Perez. Brigido, who recently passed away, had his grandson Santiago in charge of storing and watching our materials. We

can eat with the Perez family or at the offices of ACTUNAC, a local tourist organization and the Visitor's Center (with the green roof) across the airstrip.

Don Ramon Hernandez and Don Claudio have the primary stores in the village, although several others are now starting to appear. Cold soft drinks, beers, and limited items can be purchased there.

Our mules are always coming in and out, and will always be going to our bodega. Check with Abel Centeno about when the next available mule trains will be in. Please have your gear ready to go early in the morning, as muleteers have to load the mules and get the gear to the first camp site on the trail so that they have time to cut ramon branches for the mules to eat. You will be hiking through at least nine Maya sites on the trail consisting of Preclassic and Late Classic Maya settlements.

Do not swim in any of the lakes or aguadas on the trail, regardless of how tempting it appears or how hot you think you are. Large crocodiles inhabit these lagoons, and the consequences could be serious. Always keep an eye out for snakes. Most are harmless, but **never** take them for granted.

Please make sure that you have a local guide or workman with you, who can be procured anywhere in Carmelita, as the mules move quickly through the forest and often cannot be kept up with. This means that you will not see your luggage until the first night once it is loaded on the mules. There are hundreds of forks on the trail, and you will be hopelessly lost for days if not weeks, by disregarding this bit of advice. Please have your night time gear (tents, sleeping bag, etc.) in a duffle bag and marked in the costal (gunny sack bag that the muleteers pack everything into) so that we don't have to open every bag to find your gear. Try to keep all the night time gear in the same bag.

You should have lunches prepared for the trail by someone in Carmelita, particularly with the Community Guide Association or the ACTUNAC people. Please be sure you sign for all food so we can pay the bill. Or you pay the bill, get a receipt, and we will reimburse you.