

## **Spanish Immersion and Sustainability in Guatemala**

### **Week 1: Arrival and program orientation: Antigua, Guatemala**

Departing from Los Angeles, travel with your group to the beautiful and historic city of Antigua Guatemala. Walk down cobblestone streets, admire the colorful storefronts and colonial churches, visit local markets, and enjoy the taste of freshly made tortillas. Staying in a cozy guest house, the group will spend 3-4 days setting the foundations for an incredible journey ahead. You'll learn more about the program and our fellow group members, and discuss strategies for staying safe and healthy while traveling.

### **Week 2: Sustainable building and design: Comalapa, Guatemala**

Head from the Antigua towards the small city of Comalapa, where the group will work with an organization focused on sustainable and natural building. Help with construction projects that are made from both recycled and traditional materials, learn about local artists and art forms, while living together as a group in sustainably built guesthouses.

### **Weeks 3-4: Spanish language immersion: Lago Atitlan, Guatemala**

Travel west from Comalapa towards the ancient volcanic crater lake of Lago Atitlan. Here you'll move in with host families and start your study of Spanish. You and your teacher might have class on the beach by the lake, or take a stroll through town to see some of the colorful murals, or learn about the traditional weaving methods for which the town is known. In addition to classes, you'll have the opportunity to swim, hike, and learn about traditional arts and business models in the community.

### **Week 5: Sustainable Agriculture: Lago Atitlan, Guatemala**

After two weeks focused on Spanish, we'll dive into a week of farming. Working alongside local farmers, the group will help with efforts to diversify coffee fields, implement gray water systems, or help in organic gardens. Through hands on experience, learn about permaculture, sustainable agriculture, and ecosystem restoration.

### **Weeks 6 - 7: Spanish language immersion: Quetzaltenango, Guatemala**

Continue west from the lake towards Quetzaltenango (AKA Xela), Guatemala's second largest city, to start two weeks of 1:1 Spanish language study. You'll live with local families, walking distance from the school. You'll have Spanish classes in the morning and spend the afternoons

participating in activities like cooking classes, dance classes, and perhaps a local soccer game. You'll have the weekend to plan activities and excursions as a group!

### **Week 8: Environmental conservation, trekking, and retreat: Pachaj, Guatemala**

Heading out of the city, the group will stay in a smaller, more indigenous community outside of Xela where you'll again move in with host families. Here we'll partner with a locally run reforestation and environmental justice organization. Help with their efforts to plant trees and raise awareness of environmental issues, while also learning about the Mayan cosmovision, taking excursions to the local market, and playing soccer with community members. You'll depart with guides from Pachaj on your trek at the end of the week. Hiking through forests, cornfields, and coffee plantations, we make our way back to the tranquil shores of Lago Atitlan.

### **Week 9: Student Directed Travel and final retreat: Guatemala**

Put your newly acquired travel skills to use! Your group will plan, organize and implement the adventures this week - how you get there, where you'll stay, how you manage your budget, and what you'll do are up to the group to decide. Past groups have visited the stunning sapphire pools of Semuc Champey, explored the caves at Lanquin, or visited ancient Mayan ruins. What will your group decide? We'll end our student directed travel at a comfy retreat outside of Antigua, and have a chance to celebrate and reflect on the semester before we head home.

***\*Carpe Diem reserves the right to make changes to the program at any time, and indeed has the responsibility to do so in some instances; changes may be required to provide the best possible experience, protect the safety of participants, or respond to changes in weather or political conditions.***