

High School Group Trip Sample Itinerary

Destination: San Juan la Laguna, Guatemala

This sample itinerary is from a group of 21 Canadian high school students and 3 teachers that came to Guatemala for 8 days of community service learning work and cultural immersion.

Highlights

- Projects were carefully selected to address real community development needs and the students were divided into 4 small work groups. Each group stayed with their project for the whole week to encourage increased participation in and deeper understanding of the 'why' their work was important.
- In the afternoons, a series of cultural activities were planned to stimulate curiosity and understanding.
- The students stayed with local Mayan host families.

Any high school itinerary is customizable to your specific group size, needs, and goals.

Saturday

Arrival to Guatemala City (GUA) followed by private 1-hour shuttle bus transfer to Antigua

Sunday

Traditional Guatemalan breakfast, with special meals made according to dietary restrictions

Antigua walking tour with professional, English-speaking guides

After lunch, private 2.5-hour shuttle bus transfer to Panajachel, Lake Atitlan

From Panajachel, private 1-hour ferry ride across lake to San Juan la Laguna, the site for all activities in the coming week

Meet with host families in San Juan and go to homes to settle in

Dinner with host family

Monday

Breakfast with host family

Gather in San Juan central park for an introduction to community service learning projects

Spend morning in small work groups getting to know project site and start with needed projects

Following lunch with host families, students again gather in central park for a San Juan walking tour with English-speaking guides

Tour ends at school library for a talkabout Mayan ancient to modern history and culture

Afternoon free time and futbol (soccer) with area kids, followed by dinner with host families

Evening whole group reflection meetup in central park

Tuesday

Breakfast with host family

Gather in San Juan central park for an introduction to community service learning projects

Spend morning in small work groups getting to know project site and start with needed projects

Following lunch with host families, students split into two groups for a weaving workshop (GroA) and a painting workshop (Group B)

- San Juan is famous for its cooperatives of women weavers using the traditional practice of backstrap weaving. Students make their own scarves, which are later presented as gifts from the cooperative families.
- Additionally, San Juan is known for its art and painting, many depicting different Mayan myths. Students receive their Mayan nahual reading and paint their nahual symbol.

T'zutujil (local Mayan language) classes at workshop sites or free time

Dinner with host families, followed by whole group reflection meetup in central park

Wednesday

Breakfast with host families

Spend morning working at project sites

Following lunch with host families, students alternate activities and Group A goes to painting workshop and Group B goes to weaving

T'zutujil (local Mayan language) classes at workshop sites or free time

Dinner with host families and restful night in

Thursday

Breakfast with host families

Spend morning working at project sites

Following lunch with host families, students gather at San Juan lakefront for a sacred, personalized Mayan cacao and fire ceremony (in English)

Dinner with host families

Futbol (soccer) game with local girls' school

Friday

Breakfast with host families

To demonstrate learning from the week and let students have some ownership in their projects, the day starts with student-led tours of work sites and how these sites support the San Juan community

Each group returns to individual project sites to finish any last items

Buffet lunch at local vegetarian restaurant, the social business area of one of the participating organizations

Free time in afternoon to prepare for the going away party

Gather at library for the going away party

- Families prepare pepian, traditional Guatemalan dish
- Live marimba, traditional Guatemalan music
- Students offer reflective speeches and distribute any gifts brought from home

Return home and pack for return to Antigua

Saturday

Hike to Rostro Maya lookout spot for sunrise over Lake Atitlan

Breakfast with host families

Private 1-hour ferry ride across lake to Panajachel

Private 2.5-hour shuttle bus transfer to Antigua

Following lunch in Antigua, free time in afternoon

Special closing reflection dinner at Antigua restaurant

Sunday

Private 1-hour shuttle bus transfer to Guatemala City airport for departure