



# GUATEMALA COUNTRY GUIDE

 **elevate<sup>SM</sup> destinations**



**PURPOSE OF THE COUNTRY GUIDE .....3**

**KNOW BEFORE YOU GO .....3**

- Passport .....3
- Visa .....3
- Insurance.....3
- Immunizations.....4
- Other Health Considerations.....4
- Communications.....5
- Essential Travel Documents .....6
- Money .....7

**IN-COUNTRY INFO .....8**

- Time .....8
- Electricity.....8
- Water & Food Safety .....8
- Bathrooms .....8
- Waste Disposal .....9
- Local Cuisine & Drink .....9
- Weather Conditions.....10

**CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS .....11**

- Language.....11
- Photography .....13
- Human Trafficking in Travel .....13
- Responsible Travel Tips .....14

# PURPOSE OF THE COUNTRY GUIDE

Bienvenidos a Guatemala! In this document you will find a plethora of information that will be useful during your journey. The information listed in this guide includes cultural guidelines, communication tips and tricks, health and safety recommendations, and so much more! Please note that all information specific to your trip, such as inclusions and exclusions, flight recommendations, etc. is listed in your [Online Portal](#). For any questions unanswered by either the country guide or the Online Portal, please don't hesitate to reach out to an Elevate Destinations staff member. We hope that this document proves to be helpful and that you are getting excited for your journey to Guatemala!

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

### Passport

Travelers to Guatemala should ensure that the validity of your passports extends at least 6 months beyond the end of your intended stay (October 12, 2024 if you are departing Guatemala on April 12), and should have at least 2 blank (unstamped) visa pages in your passport to enter and exit the country. If you are out of visa pages, or your passport is going to expire in less than 6 months from the date you plan to exit Guatemala, you will need to renew your passport as soon as possible.

If you'd like assistance renewing your passport, we recommend [A1 Passport and Visa Services](#) in Washington D.C. for their excellent customer service. To do so, please email them at [info@a1passportvisa.com](mailto:info@a1passportvisa.com) and let them know you are working with Elevate Destinations on your travel arrangements.

We recommend travelers scan a copy of your passport and email it to yourselves. This way, you will always have a copy if something happens to it while traveling.

### Visa

Citizens from the U.S. do not need a visa for a stay of 90 days or less in Guatemala.

### Insurance

Elevate Destinations will purchase emergency evacuation coverage for you. This policy covers emergency evacuations due to medical, political, or natural disasters from April 5 – 12, 2024. This policy also provides \$5,000 of emergency medical coverage. More details about this coverage are noted in [this brochure](#).

This coverage does not include trip cancellation or interruption benefits and also does not cover pre- or post-trip days of travel. We strongly suggest you purchase additional coverage to cover your non-refundable expenses in the event you need to cancel your trip or have additional expenses incurred on the trip.

Elevate strongly recommends purchasing additional travel and medical insurance and Cancel for Any Reason Coverage (CFAR). Cancel for Any Reason' (CFAR) coverage to cover trip related expenses. Please note that some CFAR insurance options are time-sensitive. Please be ready to purchase an insurance policy within 14 days of making your first trip payment.

Medical insurance that covers you in Guatemala is also required for this trip. To purchase additional medical insurance in the country of travel, below are two insurance brokers that Elevate Destinations recommends.

1. [USI Travel Insurance Services](#)  
Email: [info@travelinsure.com](mailto:info@travelinsure.com)  
Phone Number: (800) 937-1387
2. Travel Insurance Center (Dan Drennen)  
Email: [dan@travelinsurancecenter.com](mailto:dan@travelinsurancecenter.com)  
Phone Number: (402) 343-3621

Elevate Destinations is not equipped to answer specific questions on insurance. Please contact the insurance broker or company for specific information.

## Immunizations

Prior to travel, Elevate Destinations strongly recommends that you look into recommended immunizations for your time in Guatemala. Given that we are not a licensed Health Care provider, we cannot advise travelers on which immunizations you may need. We recommend that all travelers do the following:

- a) Consult with a travel clinic or your personal physician regarding immunizations and other precautions you may need to take in order to participate in this journey. You will need to do this well in advance of your trip as some vaccinations require time to take effect, and you may need to allow time between a series of shots.
- b) Visit [the CDC Website for Guatemala](#) to view recommended vaccines and medicines, travel health notices for the region, and other tips for staying healthy and safe.

## Other Health Considerations

This will be an amazing journey, but as with all travel, a spirit of adventure and a degree of flexibility will enhance your enjoyment of this program.

We recommend a medium level of physical fitness, as some of the drives may be long, with sections of bumpy roads. For the most satisfying experience, and in fairness to your fellow travelers, please note that this trip requires the following:

- Ability to walk at least one mile without difficulty



- Ability to spend extended periods of time on your feet
- Ability to climb sets of stairs without assistance
- Ability to keep pace with an active group of travelers and to be on time for all scheduled activities
- Ability to ride comfortably in a vehicle for extended periods of time

Additionally, plan to carry along an adequate supply of any prescribed medications you may require while traveling. Prescription medicines should always be carried in your hand luggage (not in checked baggage) in their original, labeled containers only.

Elevate Destinations also recommends that all travelers make and print a **list of medications and any existing health conditions** to bring on your trip. You may choose to carry this on your person or give it to your guide. Having this list could be life saving in the unlikely case of an emergency.

Zika virus, dengue fever, and chikungunya virus are spread through mosquito bites and are present in all Latin American countries, including Guatemala. Antigua and Chajul are at elevations where there is minimal mosquito activity. While infection of any of the aforementioned viruses is very unlikely, it is advised as a precaution to consistently use mosquito repellent or long sleeved clothing to avoid risk of transmission.

## Communications

**WiFi:** In most of Antigua as well as all your hotels in Guatemala, WiFi will be available. Speed, bandwidth, and availability will likely be less reliable than you are used to. Oftentimes, connection is stronger in the lobby of hotels than in individual rooms.

**International calls:** If you are in Guatemala and trying to reach a number *outside* of the country on a U.S. number, dial 00 before dialing the country code and local number. To call numbers in Guatemala *from* a U.S. number, dial +502 + [telephone number].

**Staying connected:** Here are the most common methods for making local/international calls:

1. **Smart Phone apps:** Apps such as Skype, WhatsApp, and Viber (when WiFi is available).
2. **Getting an international calling package:** Setting up international coverage from your cell phone provider for the duration of your trip is often the simplest option and the best to avoid roaming charges.
3. **Use a local phone/ SIM card:** Best for making calls within Guatemala as international calls can get expensive. Local SIM cards are inexpensive, can be found at a variety of stores, and often have pay-as-you-go plans where you can “top up” your credit for use in the country. Please be aware of any requirements your phone has in order to accept the local SIM cards (i.e. size of SIM card, jailbroken, etc). Please also let us know in advance if you would like assistance purchasing a local phone.

4. **Call from hotel or internet café:** Please be advised that some hotels impose a surcharge that can be more than double the cost of international calls. Be sure to check the hotel policy before placing an international call from a hotel.

## Safety Recommendations

Your guide will give you current briefings on safety while in-country, but here are some basic ground rules for safety while traveling:

- Keep all valuables in the hotel safe.
- Avoid flashing money. Be mindful of your belongings at all time. Keep bags in front of you in crowds, and on your lap when at restaurants.
- Pay attention: avoid walking around with your smartphone in hand.
- Be vigilant when crossing roads - Pedestrians do not have the right of way.
- Stick with the group.
- Always make sure that others know of your whereabouts and movements.
- Avoid street protests or large gatherings.
- Do not wear expensive or sentimentally valuable jewelry while traveling.
- We encourage you to register with STEP (see below).

### Smart Traveler Tip!

We recommend that all travelers from the USA sign-up for the [State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#)! This is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in case of an emergency. Enrolling in this program has enormous benefits in case of an emergency while abroad:

- You will receive information from the Embassy about safety conditions in your destination
- Enrolling lets the U.S. Embassy in that country know that you are there and helps them contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family-related.

## Essential Travel Documents

In case of emergency, it is advisable to make photocopies of your important documents and leave a few copies in your luggage, your money belt, and with relatives or friends at home. Also email a scanned copy to yourself or take a screenshot or photo of the document and save it in an "Important Travel Documents" folder in your photo app on your phone.

*These are the documents you should have printed and with you during your travel:*

- A photo copy of your passport
- A list of medications and any existing health conditions



- International flight itinerary or e-tickets
- Medical insurance policy details and 24-hour emergency number
- Emergency contact sheet (provided by Elevate Destinations prior to your departure)
- Bank and credit card details, camera serial numbers, etc.

## Money

The local currency in Guatemala is the Quetzal (GTQ), named for the national bird. In most cases, you can also use United States Dollars (USD) in Guatemala and expect that shopkeepers will give you change in GTQ. However, note that you may not get the best exchange rate if you use USD.

### Smart Traveler Tip!

Be sure to notify your bank and credit card companies of your travel plans, in case they view your activity as fraudulent and put a block on your card.

**For your extra personal costs and shopping, bringing USD \$30-\$50 per day is a good rule of thumb.**

Local currency can be obtained at authorized facilities (such as ATMS, hotels and banks). It is recommend to obtain money from an international ATM at the airport upon arrival, taking out around \$50-100 USD (app. 400-800 GTQ). It is suggested that you save all receipts from your currency exchange transactions. Be aware that only paper currency will normally be accepted for exchange, and bills must be crisp, clean, and new.

**Cash:** Guatemala is primarily a cash economy, so we recommend bringing the funds you will need for personal spending in cash or withdrawing cash out of ATMs in country.

**Change:** Ask for smaller bills when you change money, or use your large bills at large shops to receive more change. In many cases, people (local vendors especially) don't have change.

**Credit Cards:** Credit cards (Visa preferred) are acceptable in larger establishments, while cash is more appropriate everywhere else. Most merchants will charge an additional 3-5% of the bill for a credit card transaction.

**ATM/Debit Cards:** You can use your debit card to withdraw money from ATMs.

Banks and ATMs are available in most major cities, and your guide can generally help with withdrawing cash throughout your trip. There is usually a small fee per transaction on top of what your own bank charges for withdrawing cash at an ATM.

*\*Note: ATMs in remote areas can be finicky and may not work on a given hour or day. We recommend traveling with 1-3 crisp \$100 bills stored safely in your carry-on luggage to be exchanged in the case that ATMs are not working for you.*

# IN-COUNTRY INFO

## Time

Guatemala is in the Central Standard Time zone (UTC-6) and does not observe Daylight Savings. When you are traveling in April, the time in Guatemala will be 2 hours behind Eastern Time (ET) and 1 hour ahead of Pacific Time (PT).

### Smart Traveler Tip!

Consider downloading a conversion app for things like currency, temperature, time, and distance while traveling. Here are some that we like: Units - Free Unit Converter, Convert Units for Free, Converter+, GlobeConvert

## Electricity

Guatemala uses 110 volt electricity with 2-pronged outlets, the same as the United States. The plugs rarely have three holes, however, so be sure to bring an adapter if your chargers are three-pronged.

## Water & Food Safety

It is strongly recommended not to drink tap water on this trip. Elevate Destinations encourages travelers to pack a reusable water bottle to fill up with clean drinking water. In Guatemala, there are *eco-filtro* water purifiers accessible throughout the country. These are large water canteens that you can fill your water bottles from. Some people also choose to brush their teeth with clean drinking water but this is up to personal preference based on how hardy you feel your stomach is. Do not use ice unless you know it was made from clean drinking water. Bottled water and soft drinks will be supplied at all meals and will be available in the vehicle on travel days.

We recommend travelers only eat foods that have been cooked well. Fresh vegetables and fruits bear the risk of having been washed in contaminated water. Fruits you can peel are usually safe (i.e. bananas).

## Bathrooms

We recommend carrying toilet paper or tissues with you as some bathrooms, especially in more remote areas or restaurants, may not have any. Please also remember that in Guatemala you should throw the toilet paper and any feminine hygiene products into the bin provided and not into the toilet itself, as this can cause problems with the delicate sewage system.



## Waste Disposal

To minimize your impact on the country you are visiting, please consider the following guidelines:

- Leave no trace — everything that you bring with you should go home with you
- If you plan on shopping, make sure that you have extra room in your luggage or an extra bag to check on your way home (don't dump items to make room!)
- Avoid packing with plastic baggies and instead purchase reusable packing cubes, cloth bags, and reusable toiletry bags
- Bring a reusable water bottle that you can refill
- Remove packaging or tags of any newly purchased items before you go

## Local Cuisine & Drink

Traditional Guatemalan cuisine is centered mainly around tortillas, beans, and corn tamales.\* Some popular dishes throughout the country include:

- **Chiles Rellenos** - Chilies stuffed with vegetables
- **Robalo** - Snook Fish
- **Ceviche** - A mix of raw seafood, tomatoes, onions, parsley, cilantro, and lemon
- **Tapado** – A seafood soup with coconut milk, rice and beans found in Rio Dulce area
- **Kak Ik** – a Q'eqchi ceremonial soup prepared with turkey, tomato, bell peppers and spices
- **Pollo en Jocon** – Chicken with potatoes in a green tomato sauce
- **Suban Ik** – A ceremonial dish of the Kaqchikel made with pork, chicken, sweet peppers, & tomatoes
- **Pepian** – A spicy chicken casserole with a tomato sauce
- **Coffee** - There's nothing like a good cup of Guatemalan coffee!

*\*Elevate has made note of all allergies and dietary restrictions as per your Registration Forms, and have passed the information along to our local team to ensure the dishes you are served are safe.*

Chajul locals are very proud of their cuisine, which is primarily corn-based. Please be respectful of corn, as it is their main staple. Even if you have had your fair share of tortillas during your travels, and cannot imagine eating any more corn products, please be gracious, do not complain or make faces (even in a joking manner), and understand that families can get offended very easily. Additionally, most Chajul families eat with their hands and do not use utensils. Follow the locals' lead when eating with families. Additionally, when offered something (like fruit or a snack) it is usually considered rude to refuse. Even if you don't want something, it is generally best to accept it and even if you do not plan to eat it, say thank you and that you will save it for later.

**Alcohol:** Alcohol is against Evangelical religious beliefs and thus negatively regarded in Chajul. Additionally, many men in Chajul drink alcohol in excess and are often alcoholics to the point that

they frequently pass out, sometimes in public. Women in Chajul never drink. If you drink any amount of alcohol in Chajul, you will most likely be viewed as an alcoholic. Therefore, while being a guest of Limitless Horizons Ixil, we request that you refrain from drinking any alcohol while visiting Chajul. It is fine to enjoy a glass of wine with dinner near or at your hotel in Nebaj.

## Weather Conditions

Guatemala's weather is eternally comfortable: not too hot and not too cold. There are two main seasons: wet and dry. Temperatures average 72 degrees Fahrenheit year-round but vary more according to altitude than to season. April marks the end of the dry season in Guatemala, with the probability of precipitation starting from 10% at the start of the month and increasing to 20% by the end of the month.

High	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Guatemala City	74°F	76°F	78°F	80°F	79°F	76°F	76°F	76°F	75°F	74°F	73°F	73°F
Huehuetenango	75°F	77°F	80°F	81°F	79°F	76°F	75°F	76°F	75°F	74°F	73°F	74°F
Puerto San José	89°F	90°F	91°F	92°F	90°F	89°F	89°F	89°F	88°F	88°F	89°F	89°F
Flores	82°F	85°F	90°F	94°F	94°F	90°F	88°F	89°F	89°F	87°F	84°F	82°F

  

Low	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Guatemala City	56°F	57°F	59°F	61°F	63°F	63°F	62°F	62°F	62°F	61°F	59°F	57°F
Huehuetenango	45°F	46°F	48°F	52°F	55°F	57°F	55°F	55°F	57°F	55°F	51°F	46°F
Puerto San José	67°F	68°F	71°F	74°F	75°F	75°F	74°F	74°F	74°F	73°F	71°F	69°F
Flores	65°F	65°F	67°F	70°F	73°F	73°F	72°F	72°F	72°F	71°F	68°F	66°F

Note that Antigua, Guatemala sits at an elevation of around 5,000 ft., similar to Denver, Colorado. You will spend a few days acclimating in Guatemala before traveling to the Ixil Triangle (Chajul and Nebaj), where altitudes can reach 7,000 ft. Expect cooler temperatures at this elevation and talk to your doctor if you have questions or concerns about altitude. Some people experience some shortness of breath, fatigue, dehydration, or quicker sunburn. Please drink plenty of purified water, use sunscreen and hats, and rest when needed.



# CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Experiencing different cultures is one of the joys of traveling. Please take note of the information below to better understand and respect these cultural differences in Guatemala.

- **Tipping:** Tipping is always appreciated, but not required. Feel free to leave a tip if you experienced exceptional service. Note that tips for guides, drivers, and restaurant staff at group meals have already been covered.
- **Bargaining/haggling:** Bargaining for curios & souvenirs at markets can be an enjoyable way to engage with some of the locals you will encounter on this trip. Prices in hotels, restaurants, and shops are generally fixed and bargaining is not required. Here are some bargaining tips:
  - Be prepared to take your time in reaching a deal. You need not feel obliged to buy something.
  - Let the vendor share their asking price first. It will seem rushed for you to come right out asking the price of items, and lower your esteem as a good bargainer!
  - Begin bargaining over an item you don't necessarily care for, and then move to the item you actually wanted as a "good-enough" alternative when the price for the first item is too much.
  - Ask for another item or two to be thrown in. This way you can often find a really good deal and the vendor gets to move more goods.
  - Bargaining may be the only chance the vendor gets to have social interaction during a long day at the market. Remember to have fun!

## Language

The official language of Guatemala, Spanish, although there are at least 23 other indigenous languages spoken throughout the country. Try brushing up on these useful terms and phrases before your trip!

English Phrase	Spanish
Hello	Hola, buenos dias
How are you?	¿Como estas?
Please	Por favor
Thank you	Gracias
You're welcome	De nada
Yes	Si
No	No
Excuse me (I'm sorry)	Lo siento
What is your name?	¿Como se llama?

English Phrase	Spanish
My name is ____.	Me llamo _____.
Nice to meet you.	Mucho gusto.
Where is the Toilet?	¿Dónde está el baño?
Goodbye	Adios
Is this water pure?	¿Es agua pura? Or ¿Es agua salvasidas?

## Local Customs & Culture

Here are a few “do’s and don’ts” to help familiarize you with local customs & cultures:

- **Greetings:** Simply saying “*hola*” is considered too casual. Other greetings to use instead include “*buenos días*” (good morning), “*buenas tardes*” (good afternoon), and “*buenas noches*” (good evening).
- While in the rest of Guatemala, man-to-woman and woman-to-woman kiss on the cheek greetings are common, in Chajul this is not. There are few local greeting customs. Men sometimes shake hands with each other and with women, particularly in professional settings. Women sometimes face one another and grab or pat each other’s arms. Women may also shake hands with each other in professional settings. Under most circumstances, cheek kisses and/or hugs are not appropriate. In general, follow the lead of the locals you are meeting. In addition, when meeting someone or beginning an activity, it is best and most common to engage in some small talk at first, rather than getting right down to business.
- It is common in the streets of Chajul to see and hear both children and adults staring and/or shouting “*gringo*,” “*brinko*” (how Ixil often say gringo), “*Chino*” (a term they use for any person they deem to look Asian), or “*hola*” to foreign visitors. In addition, people sometimes make a hissing noise at others to get their attention. None of this is meant to be offensive. Foreigners are still quite rare in Chajul, thus they stick out and are very interesting to locals. It is appropriate to either greet them back with “*hola*” or “*buenos días / buenas tardes*” or to just walk by.
- **Signs of Respect:** Visitors should be mindful that Guatemala is a fairly conservative country and therefore revealing clothing and public displays of affection are discouraged. It is advised to keep shoulders and knees covered when out in public. Extended eye contact is seen as polite and commonplace, while indirect eye contact during a conversation may indicate disinterest. The most important thing is to be polite, friendly, and respectful. If you do not know what to do in any given situation, never be afraid to ask.
- **Pace of life:** The pace of Guatemalan life is slower and more relaxed than most travelers are accustomed to. This requires some getting used to and a willingness to adapt to a different lifestyle. Travel with an open-mind and flexibility and expect that things may start late.

- **Gender Considerations:** Guatemalan culture is still rather “macho” and women are often treated differently than men. Cat calls are common toward women and it is advised that one should not engage and continue moving. Women should not walk alone at night or visit bars/clubs without a companion.
- **Religion:** About 60% of Guatemala’s population is Catholic, with the remaining majority being protestant and a smaller percentage having Indigenous Mayan beliefs. As a whole, Chajul is extremely religious, primarily Evangelical Christian (with a Catholic minority). Be respectful of local religion and try to avoid religious discussions in general. Most locals do not understand different religions or backgrounds and therefore can become offended and/or believe you are against God if you try to open a discussion about religion or tell them that you practice a different religion.
- **Gift Giving:** Please do not give anyone in the streets money, candy, tips, toys, or gifts. We do not want to encourage begging or the association of foreign visitors with handouts. Limitless Horizons Ixil strives to cultivate sustainable programs, fair wages, and services by evenly distributing opportunities to families, children, and community members in need of fair work. If you would like to give a gift, please consider giving it to Limitless Horizons Ixil where the organization can fairly share it among students or the community, or ask our staff for advice on appropriate ways to gift in Chajul.

## Photography

Guatemala is a beautiful country, and you will want to take lots of pictures. When photographing people, always ask permission first - this is a sign of respect. You can do this with gestures or ask your guide to translate. The only exception to this is when you are photographing a public scene with a lot of people in it, aiming at no one in particular. Because so many local people are asked for permission to be photographed, many will expect a tip or an outright fee for this. Always be considerate of anyone's desire not to be photographed. There are some places where photography is prohibited, and these areas are usually marked. If you are uncertain about whether or not photography is permitted, your guide will be there to advise you.

If you are interested in learning how to engage in ethical photography during your travels, check out our blog post, [Nine questions to help decolonize your photography](#).

## Human Trafficking in Travel

Elevate Destinations has signed *the Code of conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism* and expects all of its partners to refuse involvement, both direct and indirect, in the commercial sexual exploitation of children. A “child” is defined as a person younger than 18 years of age, according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We encourage our travelers and suppliers to report the sexual exploitation of children. Information, even the smallest amount, can represent the missing piece of an ongoing investigation by law enforcement. If you are uncomfortable with leaving your name and contact information, you can report

anonymously to law enforcement or NGOs. Report a concern [using this form](#); alternatively, you can email [protect@ecpat.net](mailto:protect@ecpat.net) to report sexual exploitation of children.

Read about Elevate's values & vision, our [sustainability commitment](#), our programs that give back, and more on our website at [www.elevatedestinations.com](http://www.elevatedestinations.com). Our team members are always excited to share more on this topic. We acknowledge that to maintain truly sustainable travel products takes ongoing commitment. We continue to monitor our programs on the ground in order to improve them, and welcome your thoughts, feedback, and encouragement!

## Responsible Travel Tips

Elevate Destinations takes pride in its leadership in the field of responsible travel. We take care in selecting our local partners that share our environmental and social values and are avid supporters of locals working in the tourism industry as they are both the most impacted and impactful players at the local level. All of your ground costs on this trip are carbon offset using [South Pole Flights Carbon Calculator](#), and we encourage you to offset your international flights as well.

Here are a few tips that can help enrich your experience as a responsible traveler:

- **Keep an open mind:** Try to observe local customs and respect traditional cultures and people.
- **Language:** Learn a few basic greetings and “thank you” in the local language.
- **Local economy:** Support locally owned businesses, restaurants, and other services. Shop from local artisans to promote traditional crafts and encourage contemporary arts.
  - That said, do note that just as we want to be cautious about building the association between foreigners and free handouts, we also want to dispel the association that all foreigners come to shop. Chajul boasts incredible artisan products and when walking through town you will likely be asked if you want to buy *típico* (typical products). Please decline politely. If you are interested in buying artisan products, simply let Limitless Horizons Ixil staff know and they can direct you to sustainable ways to buy Chajul's incredible artisan products, including products created by our mothers and scholars in Limitless Horizons Ixil's Artisan program.
- **Respect:** It is important to acknowledge the privacy and dignity of others and ask before photographing or filming people. Ask permission before entering sacred places, homes or private land, and take heed of local customs (i.e. remove shoes, hats, cover hair with shawl, etc). Please ask your guide if you are unsure; they are there to support your introduction to the culture!
- **Community and environment:** Contribute to organizations that support traditional cultures and protect the natural environment. Keep to designated trails, and do not disturb plants and animals or their natural habitats.
- **Animal products:** Avoid purchasing crafts, clothing, furniture or other products that are derived from members of protected or endangered animal species.
- **Use alternatives to single-use plastics:** Avoid using plastic bags and try to minimize the use of other disposables. When traveling in areas away from cities, make sure to take out what you take in. Try using a reusable water bottle and treating your own drinking water when possible – check out what our friends at [Travelers Against Plastic](#) are doing!

### Smart Traveler Tip!

In travel, especially in the developing world, things happen. Expect the unexpected! Keep an open mind, be flexible, and enjoy the moment. Sometimes the best memories come out of the unplanned.