



A Ministry of New Mission Systems International

Short-term Missions Guide

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What We Hope For in Short-term Missions

We love it when a short-term missions group and Pachuca's churches are mutually blessed. To this end, we desire groups to be made up of mature Christians who are flexible, service-oriented, prayerful, and have a love for the people, language, and culture of Mexico.

We have already been praying for your group and the projects that are planned for your visit. We know that God is going to do great things through you and with you!

Pachuca



The full name of the capital city of the State of Hidalgo is Pachuca de Soto, named after the congressman that promoted the founding of the State in the 1860s. Pachuca was a major mining location for both silver and gold for more than 500 years. However, all mines are now closed.

Today the city has a population of more than one million. The latest estimate we have heard put the metro area at about 1.5 million.

Climate and Dress

Pachuca sits at almost 8,000 ft. above sea level. It has two major climatic seasons, Rainy and Dry. The Rainy season usually begins at the end of May and goes till the first of October. Most of the time temperatures range from 50 to the upper 70s. In the winter months, temperatures can actually reach freezing, but still warms up to the upper 60s and lower 70s in the afternoons.

A light sweater or jacket is recommended for the early morning and late afternoon and evening.



Work Attire

If you are involved in a construction project, normal work clothes are expected. It should be remembered that the sun is very strong and can quickly cause sunburn. Hats are often helpful. Remember, that clothing during work times should be protective and durable.

Daily Attire

Usually, casual clothes are fine. Shorts are more common now than before in Pachuca, but remember, it can be very cool in the morning and evening and often shorts are uncomfortable. Please use common sense about things like shorts- and skirt-length and about the messages on T-shirts.

Church Attire

Sunday dress is informal. We would suggest nice slacks and sport shirts for men. A button-down, a polo shirt, or even a nice T-shirt is fine. Women are also often informal, slacks are fine. Clean tennis shoes are okay. While women wear sandals, they are rarely seen on men.

Housing

Housing for groups is often in the home of one of the missionary families, the home of the national pastor or other Mexican leaders. Most have had experience hosting groups from the United States and they have prepared for your visit.

Water

Please do not drink water from the faucet. The families where you will be located use bottled water. We suggest that you use this water even for brushing teeth. You will notice that your family may not do that, including the missionary family, but please remember that you are in Mexico only a short time and we want to avoid all chances of sickness that we can.



Shoes

While you are in the home of one of our Mexican friends, please use your shoes or slippers. Most Mexicans do not go barefoot, not even in the home. They will be very concerned for you and for your health if you are in the house barefoot.

Toilets

In most homes, toilet paper is put in a trash can near the toilet and not flushed. Toilets clog easily.

Special Requests

We will attempt to accommodate specific requests, like staying in an English- or Spanish-speaking home, but we can offer no guarantees. Also please be aware that some special diet needs cannot always be accommodated in Mexico.

If you have an allergy to a food please let us know so that can be dealt with. It is also good to know other allergies (cats, dogs, etc) and we will try to match homes with people that have special needs in this area.

Gifts

A simple gift is appropriate for the host family where you are staying. Something that represents your area, city, state, or university is often nice.

Culture

During your stay, you will almost certainly be confronted with some cultural differences. The Mexican people are warm, and will generally extend grace to you as a visitor. However, do your best to be sensitive to the cultural norms that you observe.

Greetings

One important cultural practice in Mexico is the greeting. A woman and a man greet one another with a gentle handshake and a kiss on the cheek. Women also greet each other with a gentle handshake and a kiss on the cheek. Men greet one another with a handshake and possibly a hug, but no kiss.

Also, it is customary to greet everyone in the room upon entering, and to greet everyone again before leaving. Failing to greet someone can be terribly offensive.

Food

As a mission team, we will do our best to ensure that the foods that you will be eating are always palatable. (Pachuca is home to many delicious traditional dishes.) However, in homes or elsewhere, you might be served something that is unfamiliar. As a rule, please do your best to accept food and drink graciously, so as not to offend our Mexican brothers and sisters.

Medical

- Please bring the medicine you need for your time here. Many medicines are available here, but they do not always use the same name and can be a bit difficult to find.
- Please check with your doctor if you are on any medicines that would be sensitive to altitude. Pachuca is higher than Denver!
- Several have told us that taking Pepto-Bismol, one tablespoon each day beginning a few days before coming to Mexico and continuing throughout their stay, have helped avoid stomach problems.

- It is good to check with a doctor and have your group bring a small first aid kit with medicines he or she may recommend.
- We also suggest, if possible, that groups bring a nurse or doctor as part of the work group, especially those groups with a sports or health emphasis. This isn't necessarily a requirement, but can be helpful.
- All groups need to be aware of all medical issues for members of their group. Please be proactive in knowing those issues. Also be aware of the air pollution and the high altitude, both of which may affect stamina and breathing issues.
- Medical release forms, insurance, and any minors in the group are the responsibility of your group, church, or organization.
- Feel free to contact us in advance with any questions about special medical, diet, or other health needs.

Group Size

As a rule, groups of 10 or fewer are generally preferred for several reasons:

- It allows for easier transport to/from the airport and around the city during your group's stay
- It provides a way for your group to participate in some church ministry that would be impossible for a larger group's overwhelming size in smaller contexts
- As a rule, we've found that smaller groups tend to connect to the local ministry more readily and make stronger relationships with the local people

However, specific projects may require a larger group. As we plan your trip together, we'll be talking about what size group best fits the project's needs and your group's needs.

Bus/van Rental

If your group is larger than 10 or 12 people, we may need to plan for to rent a bus or van to accommodate travel during your visit. With past groups, these vehicles have cost around \$200 USD/day to rent; please budget accordingly! Again, as we design your trip together, we'll be in contact and let you know if it looks like a rental is necessary.

Money and Exchange

Group Hosting Money

Hosting money will cover almost everything while you're here: getting around, all meals except eating out, and housing. \$30/night/person should be made in one lump sum to our mission agency a few weeks in advance of your arrival. Make your check out to "NMSI" and put a note in the Memo to let us know what it's designated for, beginning with the name of your contact missionary: i.e. "Alvarado, First Christian hosting money." Mail the check to our mission agency:

- NMSI • 2701 Cleveland Ave • Suite 200 • Fort Myers, FL • 33901

Project Money

If your group is going to be part of a work project, VBS, camp, or other project, please send the project money a couple of weeks in advance of your trip to our mission agency. Make your check out to "NMSI" and

put a note in the Memo to let us know what it's designated for, beginning with the name of your contact missionary: i.e. "Greer, First Christian project money." Mail the check to:

- NMSI • 2701 Cleveland Ave • Suite 200 • Fort Myers, FL • 33901

Personal Money

Money for personal souvenir shopping, eating out, tithes to area churches, and travel outside of Pachuca should be brought either in the form of cash (for exchange) or card (for use at ATMs). We recommend using a card to get pesos at an ATM over cash exchange because you'll usually get a better exchange rate. Traveler's cheques are not recommended.

Most credit/debit/charge cards are accepted in Mexico, especially MasterCard and Visa. It is a good idea to let your card company know you will be traveling in Mexico and give them the dates. Many times after one or two usages, the card company will put on a security block for charges coming from Mexico unless they know you are traveling there. Also, you might want to ask your card company charges commissions on foreign purchases.

"How much personal spending money should bring with me? Like \$100?"

We always get this question and we always get it "wrong" because it depends on the individual. Some folks want to buy a souvenir gift for every family member, friend, and coworker so they're gonna need \$300. Others take pride in how little they spent while out of the country and can squeak by on \$20. That being said, \$100 sounds about right.

Emergency Money

We ask that at least one person with the group has access to a major charge/credit card in case of emergency. Most hospitals will take payment by card!

Phones and Computers

Mobile Phones

If the group feels the need to have a contact through a US cell phone we ask that only the leader or a designated person bring a cell phone. Please only one! You will need to check and make sure you have service in Mexico. Several of the US wireless companies have plans that permit usage in Mexico, but you will most likely have to arrange those plans and international calling is expensive.

Computers and Email

Email can be accessed while here in Mexico, but we cannot promise that you will have access everyday or that you will have time to answer all emails or answer those emails in detail.

Internet Phone

We have access to an Internet broadband phone (VOIP) that has a US number. This phone will be available to your group leader or other designated person if there is any need to contact the United States. Usage of this phone for others of the group will be at the request of the group leader.

Distractions

We want to encourage you to take advantage of your time in Pachuca to unplug from your everyday grind of phone, email, computer, iPod, Twitter, Facebook, pager, MySpace, fax machine, etc. Your trip can become a great way to get away from the noise, minister simply, and listen to God.

Travel Documents

Passports

Passports are required for entry into Mexico and reentry into the United States.

Visas

On the airplane, or at the Mexico City Airport you will receive a Tourist Card/Visa. Your Visa paper will ask for a Mexico address, use "Cerrada de Pedro Ma. Anaya No.108 • Col. Lopez Mateos • Pachuca, Hgo C.P. 42094". Please remember that you are a "tourist" while in Mexico, not a student or worker. Please keep your Visa in a safe place until you get to Pachuca. After arriving in Pachuca, your travel documents (Passports, Visas, and paper airline tickets) will be collected and put into the Duggins' safe. Loss of the Tourist Card/Visa costs about \$45.00 to replace, this is done at the Mexico City Airport.

Minors

Please check also with your airline or with the US State Department about minors traveling to Mexico. A signed and notarized permission is usually required for a minor to travel outside of the United States when not traveling with both parents or guardians. Be aware that if there is shared custody of a minor, that permission is usually needed from the other parent as well, even if the minor is traveling with one of the parents. A death certificate may also be needed if one parent is deceased.

Non-US Citizens

If someone in your group is not a US citizen, please check with the State Department that return travel from Mexico to the US is possible. Not all US visas permit reentry after leaving the country.

Travel Arrangements

Flights

Please book one arrival flight and one departure flight for your whole group. This helps us to minimize travel time between Pachuca and the Mexico City airport, and maximize your group's ministry time. Please let us know your airline, flight numbers, and travel dates well in advance.

We request you do all that is possible to avoid Sunday flights. Sunday celebrations end at 1 pm and we often plan special fellowship times when groups are in Pachuca from the United States. Even afternoon flights often mean that groups have to leave Pachuca for the airport before noon, disrupting church activities.

Bus to and from Pachuca

The most efficient way to travel between the Mexico City airport and Pachuca is by the direct bus service from the airport. These buses travel between Mexico City and Pachuca daily every hour until 9:45 pm. Because of frequent delays, please plan to arrive at the airport before 6 pm. This should give the group time to pass through immigration and customs in time to arrange for bus transportation. *Also, please avoid travel on Sundays.*

Customs and Immigration

Usually before boarding or while on the plane, you'll be issued a paper tourist card, or "visa." Fill it out with "Cerrada de Pedro Ma. Anaya No.108 • Col. Lopez Mateos • Pachuca, Hgo C.P. 42094" in the address.

After de-boarding the plane, follow the crowd to immigration. Stand in the "foreigners" line. If the immigration agent asks you why you're traveling, mention that you are a tourist. (You're not traveling as a

student or business worker, as those require different visas.) After immigration, follow the crowd to the baggage claim. Pick up your luggage and head to customs.

Customs has big scanners for your luggage and then you'll push a button -- if the button triggers a green light, you're free to go; if it triggers a red one, a customs agent will manually inspect your baggage. After customs, walk through the sliding glass doors. Unless we've made other arrangements, one of us will be on the other side waiting for you.

Mexico City Airport's International Terminals

The Mexico City Airport now has two terminals. Where we meet will depend on which airline you fly with since several are now entering at the new terminal. We will always meet you after you pass through immigration and customs, unless other arrangements have been made.

Terminal 1 of the Mexico City Airport has two exits from the customs area, however the area is open where you pick up your luggage. On the TV screens Exit 2 or Exit 3 will appear. However, because the area is open, you may come out the exit not listed on the screens for those waiting for passengers. We will be waiting at the exit on the screens indicated for your flight, but if we do not see the group in a reasonable time frame we will check the other exit. In other words, be patient if you do not see one of the missionary families. They may be walking between the two exits. Terminal 2 of the Mexico City airport does not have this problem.

Airport Pickup

Unless we've made other arrangements, one of us will be present to pick you up in the airport. **We'll meet you just after you exit through the sliding glass doors after customs.**

In case there's no one there to pick you up after waiting and waiting and waiting:

In the exceedingly rare event that none of us are there to meet you in the airport and that cell phones are not working, we want you to be aware of the following information:

A bus can be taken to Pachuca. Buses to Pachuca leave from the airport every hour and cost \$139.00 MXN (about \$11.00 USD). Of course, you can always try to contact us, but US cell phones in Mexico are notoriously unreliable, so we want to have all of our bases covered just in case.

To get to the bus in Terminal 1 (if the floor is white tile, you're in Terminal 1): After briefly mourning that we're not there to get you, head upstairs to the food court. Turn into the hallway at Krispy Kreme; at the end of the hall is the bus ticket counter. Purchase tickets for *Pachuca* - "pah-CHOO-ka"

To get to the bus in Terminal 2 (if the floor is grey slate/cement, you're in Terminal 2): After briefly mourning that we're not there to get you, turn right and walk all the way to the end of the corridor. The bus ticket counter is through the glass doors to the rightish. Purchase tickets for *Pachuca* - "pah-CHOO-ka"

The bus trip typically takes a little less than 2 hours. When you arrive at the bus terminal in Pachuca, get your luggage from under the bus, and take a taxi to Eric's house "*Cerrada de Pedro Ma. Anaya No.108 • Col. Lopez Mateos*"). Eric's house is only a few blocks up the hill. The taxi fee should be around \$35 MXN (about \$3 USD).

When you arrive at Eric's house, we will apologize profusely and describe in detail the unforeseen events that prevented us from eagerly greeting you when you exited customs.

Travel Insurance

Although we don't require travel insurance, some short-term groups may want to purchase travel insurance to cover emergencies while in Mexico. These policies can cover emergency medical care and emergency evacuation. Fortunately, there have been few such emergencies over the years. A local insurance broker could give you information about those policies. Or here are a couple of places to look:

- www.missionaryhealth.net • www.gninsurance.com

(We are not affiliated with these insurers, and we don't have experience with their travel insurance.)

Leadership and Responsibility of Groups

- Although it's never happened, and we don't expect it to, we reserve the right to send home any member of a short-term mission group at any time for any reason, at their expense.
 - Group leaders and the sponsoring church or organization assume full responsibility of all members of the group.
 - For student trips (college and high school), we prefer all students to be at least 16-years-old. Also, at least two adult leaders should come on student trips, one male and one female, if the group is mixed gender. Remember, all release forms for minors are the responsibility of your group.
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Some Ideas to Make the Most of Your Trip

Pray

Begin praying daily about your trip now. Ask God to shape you and prepare your heart for service. Also, ask Him to open your eyes to see Him in new ways on your trip. Your group may even want to pray together in preparation for the trip. Great ministry will happen while you're here!

Brief

It can be incredibly helpful to spend time as a group going over some basics about short-term missions. If you need a starting place, the *Short-term Missions Handbook* by Tim Dearborn can be helpful. Be sure to check out our website (ImpactoLatino.org) to become familiar with our mission, ministry, and location. Also, learning a few basic phrases in Spanish is a great way to make the most of your short time with your host families and other people in Pachuca.

Debrief

No short-term missions trip is complete without a good time to talk and share experiences together as a group. Plan a time to do this together immediately after your return home. Also, we will try to schedule group talk times into your trip itinerary.

Personal Packing Checklist

Depending on your specific trip and project, this list may be incomplete. However, it's a good place to start!

- **Clothing** (See also, "Clothing and Dress")
 - Change of clothes for each day:
 - Clothing should be nice, clean, but not flashy
 - Men: plain Ts, polo shirts, pants, and nice jeans
 - Women: pants, nice jeans, and conservative shirts/blouses
 - Work project clothing:
 - At least one set of clothing to "ruin"/work in
 - Work gloves, hat, bandana
 - Dress clothing:
 - One dress shirt/pants for men
 - One dress/skirt or slacks/blouse for women
 - Closed-toed shoes highly recommended
 - Jacket or sweater
 - Plan to not have access to a washer/dryer
 - **Money** (See also, "Money and Exchange")
 - Money for personal souvenir shopping, eating out, tithes to area churches, should be brought in the form of cash or credit/charge/debit cards (no traveler's cheques, please)
 - Remember that your group needs to send a check for Group Hosting Money and for Project money to our Mission Agency in advance. (See "Money and Exchange")
 - **Other**
 - Backpack or messenger bag
 - Bible, notebook, pen, journal
 - Passport (Visas are issued en route)
 - Small gifts for Mexican pastors, translators, friends, and hosts (souvenir from your hometown can be nice)
 - Reusable water bottle
 - 4-inch paint brush
 - camera (optional, disposable recommended)
 - sleeping bag/pillow
 - towel
 - NVI Spanish Bible (Nueva Versión Internacional) to give to the church
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Contact Information

When calling from the US, all numbers should be dialed as written. When calling within Mexico from a US cell phone, it depends on your plan and your carrier. You can try dropping the first and/or second prefix(es).

- 011-52-771-716-5596 Eric and Dee Duggins Home
- 011-521-771-129-0180 Eric cell phone
- 011-521-771-129-0175 Dee cell phone

- 011-52-771-716-6536 Sergio & Holly Alvarado Home
- 011-521-771-202-7710 Sergio cell phone

- 011-521-711-202-7458 Luke cell phone
- 011-521-771-202-7459 Lindsay cell phone

- 011-52-771-714-7298 Jorge and Juanita Del Angel Home (National Workers)
- 011-521-771-185-9557 Juanita cell phone (speaks English)
- 011-521-771-129-0345 Jorge cell phone

- (765) 274-4392 Internet Phone, Indiana area code, rings Duggins in Pachuca
- (972) 212-6802 Internet Phone, Dallas area code, rings Greers in Pachuca