

In order to get the most from your trip, please ensure that you have read and understood all of the information provided, and do not hesitate to contact GVI with any questions. Note that information is regularly updated and reviewed by staff in the field and may be changed without notice. If you would like an updated copy of the information please contact GVI at any time.



Mexico Turtles - Program 387

Version 14.01



Arrival

Please note that arrival logistics may be altered at short notice – check for updates regularly to ensure you are aware of any late changes.

Where do I need to be?

Hotel Colorado in Playa del Carmen, Quintana Roo, Mexico.

When do I need to get there?

10:00 am on the expedition start date.

How do I get there?

Most volunteers arrange international flights to arrive at Cancun International Airport the day before expedition starts. If requested, GVI staff will be at the airport from 6pm to 11pm, and can help you get to your accommodation (see below).

If you are arriving before the scheduled meeting time you may want to arrange your own transport to Playa del Carmen. ADO Buses to Playa del Carmen are regular and cost roughly US\$12 (an onward taxi will be about US\$2). Please ensure field staff are made aware of your arrival plans.



Pre-Program Accommodation

Those arriving before the program start date will be responsible for arranging their own accommodation at their own cost. The following are convenient options that participants and staff have used in the past:

Hotel Colorado US\$30-40

Calle 4 entre Av. 20 y 25 Centro
Playa del Carmen, Q. Roo
+[52] 9848730381
hotcolora@hotmail.com

Hostal Happy Gecko US\$9

Av 10 entre calle 4 y 6
+[52] 984 147 0692
happygeckohostel@gmail.com

Playa del Carmen Hotel H&A US\$50-60

Av. 20 entre calle 2 y 4
+[52] 984 873 3177
reservas@playa-del-carmen-hotel.de

(Say you're with GVI to get a special rate)



Departure

At the end of the expedition you will be transferred back to Playa del Carmen town centre by approximately 3pm. We recommend you do not book a flight out of Cancun until at least 6 pm, though you may want to leave time to explore a little more.

Please note that neither GVI nor our partners in the field can be held responsible for missed travel connections. You may want to keep plans flexible or allow a day or two after the programme end date before arranging onward travel.



Visa Requirements

It is your responsibility to ensure you have the correct visa for your trip.

Field staff advise that you enter the country using a **tourist visa**.

For most nationalities this doesn't need to be arranged in advance. Check with the immigration authorities of the countries you intend to visit, or see www.inm.gob.mx.



Communications

This program is run by GVI staff in Mexico. Our professional and experienced team will be your primary point of contact when in the field, and will do our best to help resolve issues you encounter and answer your questions.

Primary Contact:

Name: Country Director
Tel: +[521] 984 1164 208
Local Tel: (044/045) 984 1164 208
Email: mexico@gviworld.com

Alternative Contact:

Name: Program Coordinator
Tel: +[521] 984 8762 067
Local Tel: (044/045) 984 8762 067
Email: playaoffice@gviworld.com

GVI 24-hr Emergency Contact:

Tel: +44 208 0903080



Mailing address:
(Post to participants/field staff)

Attn: Cynthia Arochi Z. FAO your name
Apartado Postal 16 Centro
Playa del Carmen, Solidaridad, C.P. 77710
MEXICO



Physical address:
(Delivery of larger items by courier, e.g. lost luggage)

Attn: Cynthia Arochi Z. FAO your name
Avenida 40 entre calle 8 y 10. dpto. 2A
(edificio blanco y cafe)
Centro, 77710
Playa del Carmen
Quintana Roo, Mexico

If your bags go missing in transit, **don't panic!** This does occasionally happen, and you are usually reunited with your belongings within a few days. Consult airline representatives in the baggage claim area. You may be given a file/reference number; it is wise to also ask for a contact telephone number for follow-up.



Keeping In Touch

You will have limited access to long-distance communications whilst on the programme, so make sure friends and family know how often they can expect to hear from you. Participants typically use internet cafes to keep in touch, with access to phone and internet in Tulum about once a week.

Mobile/cell phone reception is limited on base. Reception is more reliable in the town of Tulum.



Living Conditions

Facilities will be more basic than you are accustomed to – please travel with an open mind and a willingness to adapt to local conditions.

Accommodation is in shared (mixed sex) huts with shared bathroom facilities at the field station. There is bottled water available for cooking and drinking only.

Bucket flush toilet facilities are available, and participants share base duties, including cleaning and other chores..



Food

Volunteers take it in turns to prepare meals for the group. Food is a very basic, mostly vegetarian diet, with meat available about once a week. Breakfast could be porridge, fruit or cereal, lunch is beans, vegetables, pasta and sauce, etc. and a typical evening meal may include lentils, pasta, beans, rice and vegetables.



Electricity

Please ensure that you have the correct adaptors for personal electrical items.

Supply: 110V 60Hz

Source: Renewable energy & Generator (there are designated times for charging your electronic items)

Sockets: US style (with earth pin)
US style (no earth)



Laundry

You can wash your clothes on base (hand washing) or take them to Tulum on your day off. Cost is around US\$1.50 per kilo with a minimum charge of around US\$3.75.

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Australasia

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Getting Around

You will be based 45 kilometres (30 miles) away from Tulum and working on beaches to the South of base and in the nearby communities. Travelling outside the base is reliant on taxis (US\$35.00 return per person on communal taxi).

Travelling around the local area is easy and is best done using public buses with cheap and reliable buses between all major towns.



Exploring Further

In your down time you will be free to travel in the local area. During the programme you will have two free days scheduled in different days of the week to ensure there is a permanent turtle monitoring. In this time you could do daytrips such as visiting Tulum or Coba Mayan ruins, do some cenote diving, visit Playa del Carmen, etc. Before and after your programme you could go to Merida, Chichen Itza, Chiapas or Central America - the possibilities are endless!



Security

For information about security issues in the country you are travelling to please see the following resources:

UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office:
www.fco.gov.uk

US Government State Department:
www.state.gov/travel

Information for Canadians Abroad:
www.voyage.gc.ca

Australian Government Travel Advice:
www.smartraveller.gov.au

New Zealand Government Travel Advice:
www.safetravel.govt.nz

Whenever travelling you should be aware of the risk of opportunist crime and take common sense precautions to minimise the chance of becoming a victim. The vast majority of visits to Mexico are trouble-free, but if you have any specific questions about your safety and security on the programme please contact GVI.



Finance

Local currency: Mexican Peso

Participants typically spend approximately US\$50-70 per week for phone cards, internet, bottled water, buses, food, drinks, etc. and you may want to bring additional funds to allow for extra activities and travel. For those who want to sample more of the area and Central America before or after the program, we suggest an approximate figure of US\$40-50 per day. Accommodation costs vary, but throughout the Yucatan you can generally expect to pay around US\$15 for a hostel room or to share a basic hotel room.

We recommend that you travel with cash (pesos, US\$ are widely accepted) as your main source of funds, although having a credit/debit card as a backup is wise. The nearest ATM to base is in Tulum. In major towns (Playa del Carmen, Cancun, Merida, Mexico City) ATMs points are widely available. However, be aware that if you travel around small towns in the Yucatan Peninsula ATM points are few and far between!

When budgeting, you might want to know that there are some snacks and drinks for sale at the base.



Shopping

You can find almost all sorts of items (food, toiletries) in Tulum. Dive equipment and more specialized items are better to be found in Playa del Carmen (90km/60mi) or Cancun (150km/100mi).



Background Check

As a service to our partners in the field, and to protect the communities we work, with we require background checks for all participants who will be working unaccompanied with children or vulnerable adults at any point during their placement.

United Kingdom

Criminal Records Bureau Check (CRB)

Australia

Working With Children Check (WWC)

Rest of World

Police Background Check (consult local)

This program does not require a background check. Further information on how to arrange a background check will be sent to you separately where relevant.



Health & Safety

A change of environment, climate, food and lifestyle often results in minor, and occasionally more serious, illness. Please inform staff if you feel unwell at any time.

Please note that GVI cannot provide specific medical advice. Please consult your primary care provider (doctor, GP, etc.) or visit a travel clinic for further information.

Please be forthcoming about any health issues **before** you begin the expedition as failure to do so may have serious consequences for you, the staff and other participants, including your removal from the expedition.

It is also recommended that you take a credit card to ensure you can get immediate treatment in the event of a medical emergency (if suitable insurance is held, you will be reimbursed by your insurance company).

The nearest emergency medical facilities are located in Playa del Carmen. We have emergency procedures in place and a 24 hour doctor available. GVI staff are first aid trained. You will be briefed on Health and Safety on arrival in the orientation meeting.

Pre Departure Training



Staff in the field will provide training on the skills required, but you may benefit from learning more about local history, culture and customs before you travel. You will be sent a GVI Training Manual. Please do read through this before arrival. Keep up to date with how the project is progressing on the blog

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Additional Information

sand).

Physical fitness: It would be a good idea to build up your physical fitness in the preceding weeks to the expedition. A program that includes a certain amount of aerobic exercise is recommended to achieve an appropriate level of fitness. The work that you will be doing is always physically demanding, with the majority of your time spent walking on the beach (up to 12 miles on soft

Flying via the United States

Previous volunteers flying through the United States have experienced problems with return flights of longer than 90 days - some airlines treat Mexico as a USA state. If travelling through the US, please check with US immigration authorities and your airline to ensure you have completed any necessary documentation required.

Insects

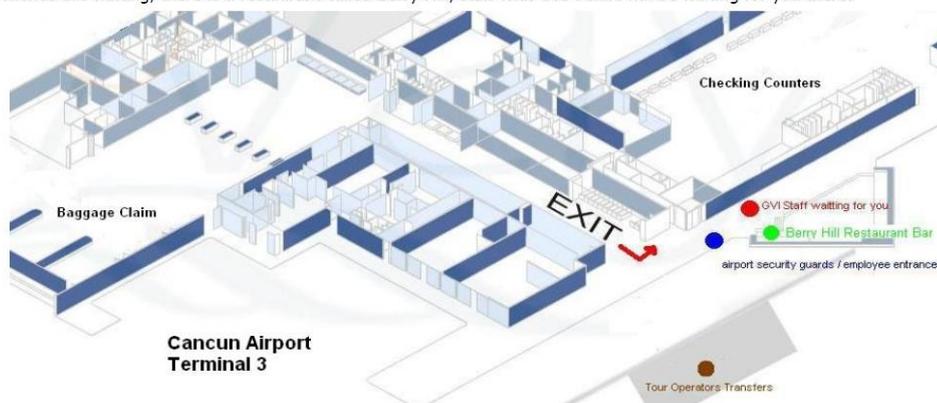
They are abundant in the beach specially in windless nights. Nevertheless, shorts and t-shirts is the preferred attire, changing into long-sleeved shirts and trousers in the evening and/or using insect repellent at dawn and dusk.

Long clothes are always recommended when working in the turtle inspections. Insect repellent is not allowed during turtle patrols as it can be harmful to the turtles. Covering up is the best way to avoid sunburn and insect bites.

Cancun airport

There are three terminals in Cancun airport, many taxi drivers and tour operators will try to get you to go with them, some of them can charge a lot so ask around for prices. The cheapest option is to take the ADO bus which runs every hour from 8am to 10pm (the schedule varies depending on the season www.ado.com.mx).

Terminal 3, International arrivals- as you leave the exit gate you will see many taxi drivers and tour operators in front of you, continue straight forward and you will find the ADO bus. If you arranged to be picked up by GVI staff don't go straight forward, take your left towards where the family and friends are waiting, there is a restaurant called Berry Hill, staff with GVI t-shirt will be waiting for you there.



Terminal 2, mainly national and charters flights- if you arrive to terminal 2, there are two exits and many options of transportation. If you have arranged staff from GVI to pick you up explicitly in terminal 2, they will be waiting inside the terminal, at the restaurant, in front of the boarding gates. If you did not specify the terminal, please make your way to terminal 3 to meet GVI staff at Berry Hill Restaurant, there are airport shuttles available.



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Please note that this kit list is intended to help you pack for your trip but should not be taken as a comprehensive or compulsory list of items to take. Some people are comfortable travelling lighter than others, and there may be some items which you feel you can survive without. If travelling alone you should ensure you can carry all your belongings for a short distance without assistance.



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Essential Equipment

These are items which staff in the field have deemed as required, or which previous volunteers all agree are must-haves. Check the boxes as you pack!

- 1 Large Rucksack (Backpack):** (65+ litres / 4,000+ cubic inches) or a suitcase/holdall.
- 1 Daypack (Backpack):** (25+ litres / 1,500+ cubic inches) will be used nearly every day.
- Waterproof liners** for important and non-waterproof items.
- 1-2 pair of walking boots** / trainers / sneakers or closed-toe footwear. Remember, you will be walking in sandy conditions, therefore good support is essential. A pair of normal running shoes / trainers are popular. Previous volunteers have also suggested Crocs and/or water shoes (wetsuit-type material with rubber soles) are a good option for beach surveys and are generally inexpensive. Sandals are not used on surveys, as they don't offer the required protection.
- 2-3 pairs of trousers** light-weight cargo pants / linen ideal
- 2 working shirts** bring any quick drying old shirts or t-shirts. Avoid holes to prevent insect visitors (no tank tops are allowed in the toy library)
- Casual clothing** t-shirts, jeans, shorts.
- 2-3 pairs of shorts** for walking around Playa del Carmen
- Long-sleeved clothing**
- Swimming trunks** / costume / bikini
- Underwear**
- 1 pair of Sandals** (flip-flops / thongs)
- Water proof jacket/ Poncho**
- Towel**
- Sunglasses** make sure they offer 100% UV protection. Cheap glasses can cause more damage than good.
- Hat**, wide-brimmed
- Insect repellent** Insect repellent we recommend using a natural based product such as citronella and eucalyptus, as DEET-containing repellent is harmful and believed to be carcinogenic.
- Photocopies** It is ESSENTIAL to photocopy all important documents before leaving home, such as passports, air tickets, insurance certificate, medical forms, receipts for traveler's cheques and serial numbers if you bring them.
- Any prescribed medication** you need during your trip. Make sure it bears your name and description of reason and dosage.
- Sun cream** high factor, at least SPF25/30+ or 45+ if you are very pale skinned. Please ensure it is water resistant and biodegradable preferably
- Mosquito net** bring a fine mosquito net to fit a 3ft wide bed. A single bunk bed and box net styles are better than wedge shaped ones. A net treated with DEET will be more effective and a 'Kathmandu' net will also help to keep out sand flies.
- Bedding** bed sheets x 2 (fitted ones are better), pillow cases x 2. In general you will find that bed sheets are enough however temperatures can drop at night in winter so either bring a sleeping bag or you can buy a nice Mexican blanket locally for about \$5.
- Stationery** you will need a notebook and pen for lectures and self studying
- Water bottles** / Camelbak / Platypus water bladder
- Watch**
- Alarm clock**
- Money belt** (bum bag / fanny pack)
- Electrical adaptor**
- Toiletries**
- Hand sanitizer**
- Personal First Aid Kit**, This will be for personal use for minor injuries and to be taken in the walks, an additional extensive medical kit is available on base for larger emergencies.
- Head torch with red filter**, this will be your only light around camp after the generator shuts down, patrols. Most head torches use LED-lights, which save batteries
- Bring two sets of rechargeable batteries** and a charger for your torch. Torches that come with red filters are important for turtle night surveys. You do not need to spend a fortune for a head torch, but good torches in the range of a PETZL Tikka work very well and last longer than cheap models

Highly Recommended Equipment

- Camera**

Optional Equipment

- Warm clothing** a fleece or warm jumper or sweater is ideal
- Headscarf** / shamrag / bandana / baseball cap
- Vitamin tablets**
- Pen knife** / Leatherman
- Travel games / Cards**
- Books**
- Sewing kit**
- CD players** / MP3 player / World Service Radio

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- Snacks** / sweets luxuries from home that you may miss - English teabags, chocolate, Marmite, etc
- Favourite DVD** for movie nights
- Bungees** – can be useful for washing lines, hanging things in your room etc.
- Umbrella** A small, sturdy, strong umbrella can be very useful for sun and rain. Allows for better ventilation than waterproof rain gear.

Many of these items can be purchased in Mexico. Tulum and Playa del Carmen are fast developing cities, with most facilities and shops that you can think of. However, you'll need time to do any shopping you require, so please schedule this into your itinerary. You may prefer to have everything sorted before you depart for Mexico.

Hints on Buying Kit

The climate is hot and humid and shorts and T-shirts are essential.

Even outside the rainy season, short bursts of rain are not uncommon and so some form of lightweight waterproof clothing is also recommended. It can also get cold in the evenings in the winter months so a fleece or jumper is recommended. As in all tropical countries, insects can be a nuisance in Mexico, especially in the evening. Long sleeved shirts and trousers offer the best form of protection. We also recommend bringing either trainers or walking boots to help cover your feet in the evenings to protect them from the mosquitoes and sand fly bites. Walking boots are strongly recommended if you want to do any off road walking or trekking.

Before setting off in search of your essential kit, compile a list of everything that you need. When buying your kit you may find that by mentioning to the store assistants (or ideally the manager) that you are joining a volunteer project enables you to negotiate a discount on your purchases. Often stores are authorised to offer a discount (typically 10-15%) at their discretion, so it is always worth mentioning that the kit is required in aid of a good cause.

Shop around for kit. If you are never going to use items again then it is not worth going for the top brands! Cheap lightweight clothing is sometimes just as good if not better.

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