

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 Healthcare - Program 388

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



### 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 your placement you will be transferred back to Cancun International Airport, unless you are travelling on afterwards.

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](http://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](mailto:mexico@gviworld.com)

#### Alternative Contact:

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

#### GVI 24-hr Emergency Contact:

Tel: +[44] (0) 2080 903 080



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 good access to long-distance communications whilst on the programme. Participants typically buy a SIM card for their cell phones or buy a cheap cell phone once here. Alternatively there are many internet cafes to keep in touch, with access daily. International calls cost between \$0.50 to \$1 per minute.



### Living Conditions

Facilities will probably be more basic that you are accustomed to – please travel with an open mind and willingness to adapt to local conditions. Accommodation is in a shared (mixed sex) room with shared bathrooms in a house, flat or studio. There is running water and the showers are generally warm to hot. Bottled water is available for drinking.



### Food

Breakfasts, lunches and evening meals are cooked by volunteers in the accommodation facilities. Breakfast could be cereal, fresh fruit, eggs, beans or pancakes; lunch and evening meals are generally meats, vegetables, rice and pastas. Vegetarians are catered for, though with less variety than in your home country.



### Electricity

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

Supply: 110V 60Hz  
Source: National Grid  
Sockets: US style (with earth pin)  
US style (no earth)



### Laundry

There are many laundry facilities in Playa del Carmen, which charge by weight and will wash and dry for you, to be picked up a few hours later.

**UK & Europe**

[info@gvi.co.uk](mailto:info@gvi.co.uk)

**North America**

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**Australasia**

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### Getting Around

You will be based in Playa del Carmen. The accommodation is outside downtown but still close to the central area, about 15 minutes by public transportation. You will be working in different venues in Playa del Carmen.



### Exploring Further

In your down time you will be free to travel in the local area and will have two free days per week. In this time you could do daytrips such as visiting Tulum or Coba Mayan ruins, do some cenote diving, visit Tulum or Cancun, 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](http://www.fco.gov.uk)

US Government State Department:

[www.state.gov/travel](http://www.state.gov/travel)

Information for Canadians Abroad:

[www.voyage.gc.ca](http://www.voyage.gc.ca)

Australian Government Travel Advice:

[www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au)

New Zealand Government Travel Advice:

[www.safetravel.govt.nz](http://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

Participants typically spend approximately US\$30-60 per week for socializing, exploring, etc, though this is entirely up to the individual. As all food, is provided on base, your extra costs can be minimal.

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. There are plenty of ATMs in Playa del Carmen and in any major town. However, be aware that if you travel around small towns in the Yucatan Peninsula ATM points are few and far between!



### Shopping

Playa del Carmen has many shops and amenities, including clothes, electrical items, photo shops, spas and pharmacies.



### 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 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 program as failure to do so may have serious consequences for you, the staff and other participants, including your removal from the program.

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 vocabulary list of words in Spanish you will come across. It is vital that you learn this list.

You will also be sent a GVI Training Manual. Please do read through this before arrival.

Keep up to date with how the project is progressing on [blog](#)

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### Additional Information

#### 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.

#### 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](http://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
- 1 pair of sandals** (flip-flops / thongs)
- 1-2 pair of trousers** or leggings to use at the project
- 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 therapy centre)
- Casual clothing** t-shirts, jeans, shorts for walking around Playa del Carmen.
- 1 set of bed sheets and pillow case**
- Light long-sleeved clothing**
- Swimming trunks** / costume / bikini
- Underwear**
- 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
- 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**

### Highly Recommended Equipment

- Camera**

### Optional Equipment

- Warm clothing** a fleece or warm jumper or sweater is ideal.
- Headscarf** / shamrag / bandana / baseball cap
- Vitamin tablets**
- Travel games** / Cards
- Books**
- CD players** / MP3 player / World Service Radio
- 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. Playa del Carmen is a fast developing city, 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 or wellies 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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