

Health

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Travelers to Central America need to be concerned about food- and water-borne, as well as mosquito-borne, infections. Most of these illnesses are not life-threatening, but they can certainly ruin your trip. Besides getting the proper vaccinations, it's important that you bring along a good insect repellent and exercise great care in what you eat and drink.

BEFORE YOU GO

Since most vaccines don't produce immunity until at least two weeks after they're given, visit a physician four to eight weeks before departure. Ask your doctor for an international certificate of vaccination (otherwise known as the yellow booklet), which will list all the vaccinations you've received. This is mandatory for countries that require proof of yellow fever vaccination upon entry, but it's a good idea to carry it wherever you travel.

INSURANCE

If your health insurance does not cover you for medical expenses abroad, strongly consider getting supplemental insurance. Check the Bookings & Services section of www.lonelyplanet.com for more information. See also the **US State Department website** (www.travel.state.gov) for a list of medical evacuation and travel insurance companies. Find out in advance

if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures.

MEDICAL CHECKLIST

- antibiotics
- antidiarrheal drugs (eg loperamide)
- acetaminophen/paracetamol (Tylenol) or aspirin
- anti-inflammatory drugs (eg ibuprofen)
- antihistamines (for hay fever and allergic reactions)
- antibacterial ointment (eg Bactroban) for cuts and abrasions
- steroid cream or cortisone (for poison ivy and other allergic rashes)
- bandages, gauze, gauze rolls
- adhesive or paper tape
- scissors, safety pins, tweezers
- thermometer
- pocket knife
- DEET-containing insect repellent for the skin
- permethrin-containing insect spray for clothing, tents and bed nets
- sunblock
- oral-rehydration salts
- iodine tablets (for water purification)
- syringes and sterile needles

INTERNET RESOURCES

There is a wealth of travel health advice available on the internet. For further information, the **Lonely Planet website** (www.lonelyplanet.com) is a good place to start. A superb book called *International Travel and Health*, which is revised annually and is available online at no cost, is published by the **World Health Organization** (www.who.int/ith/). Another website of general interest is **MD Travel Health** (www.mdtravelhealth.com), which provides complete travel health recommendations for every country, updated daily, also at no cost.

It's usually a good idea to consult your government's travel health website before departure, if one is available.

Australia (www.smarttraveller.gov.au)

Canada (www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

UK (www.doh.gov.uk)

United States (www.cdc.gov/travel/)

FURTHER READING

For further information, see *Healthy Travel Central & South America*, also from Lonely Planet. If traveling with children, Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* may be useful. The *ABC of Healthy Travel*, by E Walker et al, and *Medicine for the Outdoors*, by Paul S Auerbach, are other valuable resources.

IN TRANSIT

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Blood clots may form in the legs during plane flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility. The longer the flight, the greater the risk. Though most blood clots are reabsorbed uneventfully, some may break off and travel through the blood vessels to the lungs, where they could cause life-threatening complications.

The chief symptom of deep vein thrombosis is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle or calf, usually but not always on just one side. When a blood clot travels to the lungs, it may cause chest pain and difficulty breathing. Travelers with any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention.

To prevent the development of deep vein thrombosis on long flights, you should walk about the cabin, perform isometric compressions of the leg muscles (ie contract the leg muscles while sitting), drink plenty of fluids, and avoid alcohol and tobacco.

JET LAG & MOTION SICKNESS

Jet lag is common when crossing more than five time zones, and can result in insomnia, fatigue, malaise or nausea. To avoid jet lag try drinking plenty of fluids (nonalcoholic) and eating light meals. Upon arrival, get exposure to natural sunlight and readjust your schedule (for meals, sleep etc) as soon as possible.

RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

The only required vaccine is yellow fever, and that's only if you're arriving in Guatemala from a yellow fever-infected country in Africa or South America. However, a number of vaccines are recommended. Note that some of these are not approved for use by children and pregnant women – check with your physician.

Vaccine	Recommended for	Dosage	Side effects
hepatitis A	all travelers	1 dose before trip; booster 6-12 months later	soreness at injection site; headaches; body aches
typhoid	all travelers	4 capsules, 1 taken every other day	abdominal pain; nausea; rash
yellow fever	required for travelers arriving from a yellow fever-infected area in Africa or the Americas	1 dose lasts 10 years	headaches; body aches; severe reactions are rare
hepatitis B	long-term travelers in close contact with the local population	3 doses over 6 months	soreness at injection site; low-grade fever
rabies	travelers who may have contact with animals and may not have access to medical care	3 doses over 3-4 weeks	soreness at injection site; headaches; body aches
tetanus-diphtheria	all travelers who haven't had a booster within 10 years	1 dose lasts 10 years	soreness at injection site
measles	travelers born after 1956 who've had only 1 measles vaccination	1 dose	fever; rash; joint pains; allergic reactions
chickenpox	travelers who've never had chickenpox	2 doses 1 month apart	fever; mild case of chickenpox

Bring medications in their original containers, clearly labeled. A signed, dated letter from your physician describing all medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity.

Antihistamines such as dimenhydrinate (Dramamine) and meclizine (Antivert or Bonine) are usually the first choice for treating motion sickness. Their main side-effect is drowsiness. A herbal alternative is ginger, which works like a charm for some people.

IN GUATEMALA

AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

Good medical care is available in Guatemala City, but options are limited elsewhere. In general, private hospitals are more reliable than public facilities, which may experience significant shortages of equipment and supplies. Many travelers use **Hospital Herrera Llerandi** (☎ 2384 5959; 6a Av 8-71, Zona 10; www.herrerallerandi.com). For an online list of hospitals and physicians in Guatemala, go to the **US embassy website** (http://guatemala.usembassy.gov/medical_information.html).

Many doctors and hospitals expect payment in cash, regardless of whether you have travel health insurance. If you develop a life-threatening medical problem, you'll probably want to be evacuated to a country with state-of-the-art medical care. Since this may cost tens of thousands of dollars, be sure you have insurance to cover this before you depart.

Many pharmacies are well-supplied, but important medications may not be consistently available. Be sure to bring along adequate supplies of all prescription drugs.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Cholera

Cholera is an intestinal infection acquired through ingestion of contaminated food or water. The main symptom is profuse, watery diarrhea, which may be so severe that it causes life-threatening dehydration. The key treatment is drinking oral rehydration solution. Antibiotics are also given, usually tetracycline or doxycycline, though quinolone antibiotics such as ciprofloxacin and levofloxacin are also effective.

Cholera outbreaks occur periodically in Guatemala, but the disease is rare among travelers. Cholera vaccine is no longer required, and is in fact no longer available in

some countries, including the US, because the old vaccine was relatively ineffective and caused side effects. There are new vaccines that are safer and more effective, but they're not available in many countries and are only recommended for those at particularly high risk.

Dengue Fever (Breakbone Fever)

Dengue fever is a viral infection found throughout Central America. Thousands of cases occur each year in Guatemala. Dengue is transmitted by aedes mosquitoes, which bite predominantly during the daytime and are usually found close to human habitations, often indoors. They breed primarily in artificial water containers, such as jars, barrels, cans, cisterns, metal drums, plastic containers and discarded tires. As a result, dengue is especially common in densely populated, urban environments.

Dengue usually causes flu-like symptoms, including fever, muscle aches, joint pains, headaches, nausea and vomiting, often followed by a rash. The body aches may be quite uncomfortable, but most cases resolve uneventfully in a few days. Severe cases usually occur in children under the age of 15 who are experiencing their second dengue infection.

There is no treatment for dengue fever except to take analgesics such as acetaminophen/paracetamol (Tylenol) and drink plenty of fluids. Severe cases may require hospitalization for intravenous fluids and supportive care. There is no vaccine. The cornerstone of prevention is protecting against insect bites; see p331.

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A occurs throughout Central America. It's a viral infection of the liver that is usually acquired by ingestion of contaminated water, food or ice, though it may also be acquired by direct contact with infected persons. The illness occurs all over the world, but the incidence is higher in developing nations. Symptoms may include fever, malaise, jaundice, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. Most cases resolve uneventfully, though hepatitis A occasionally causes severe liver damage. There is no treatment.

The vaccine for hepatitis A is extremely safe and highly effective. If you get a booster

six to 12 months after the initial vaccination, it lasts for at least 10 years. You really should get it before you go to Guatemala or any other developing nation. Because the safety of hepatitis A vaccine has not been established for pregnant women or children under the age of two, they should instead be given a gammaglobulin injection.

Hepatitis B

Like hepatitis A, hepatitis B is a liver infection that occurs worldwide but is more common in developing nations. Unlike hepatitis A, the disease is usually acquired by sexual contact or by exposure to infected blood, generally through blood transfusions or contaminated needles. The vaccine is recommended only for long-term travelers (on the road more than six months) who expect to live in rural areas or have close physical contact with the local population. Additionally, the vaccine is recommended for anyone who anticipates sexual contact with the local inhabitants or a possible need for medical, dental or other treatments while abroad, especially if a need for transfusions or injections is expected.

Hepatitis B vaccine is safe and highly effective. However, a total of three injections are necessary to establish full immunity. Several countries added hepatitis B vaccine to the list of routine childhood immunizations in the 1980s, so many young adults are already protected.

Malaria

Malaria occurs in every country in Central America. It's transmitted by mosquito bites, usually between dusk and dawn. The main symptom is high spiking fevers, which may be accompanied by chills, sweats, headache, body aches, weakness, vomiting or diarrhea. Severe cases may involve the central nervous system and lead to seizures, confusion, coma and death.

Taking malaria pills is strongly recommended for all rural areas in Guatemala except at altitudes greater than 1500m. The risk is high in the departments of Alta Verapaz, Baja Verapaz, El Petén and San Marcos, and moderate in the departments of Escuintla, Huehuetenango, Izabal, Quiché, Retalhuleu, Suchitpeque and Zacapa. Transmission is greatest during the rainy season (June through November). There is no risk in Antigua or Lago de Atitlán.

For Guatemala, the first-choice malaria pill is chloroquine, taken once weekly in a dosage of 500mg, starting one to two weeks before arrival and continuing through the trip and for four weeks after departure. Chloroquine is safe, inexpensive and highly effective. Side effects are typically mild and may include nausea, abdominal discomfort, headache, dizziness, blurred vision and itching. Severe reactions are uncommon.

Protecting yourself against mosquito bites is just as important as taking malaria pills (see the recommendations on p331), since no pills are 100% effective.

If you may not have access to medical care while traveling, you should bring along additional pills for emergency self-treatment, which you should undergo if you can't reach a doctor and you develop symptoms that suggest malaria, such as high spiking fevers. One option is to take four tablets of Malarone once daily for three days. If you start self-medication, you should try to see a doctor at the earliest possible opportunity.

If you develop a fever after returning home, see a physician, as malaria symptoms may not occur for months.

Rabies

Rabies is a viral infection of the brain and spinal cord that is almost always fatal if not treated. The rabies virus is carried in the saliva of infected animals and is typically transmitted through an animal bite, though contamination of any break in the skin with infected saliva may result in rabies. Rabies occurs in all Central American countries. In Guatemala the risk is greatest in the northern provinces along the Mexican border. Most cases are related to dog bites.

Rabies vaccine is safe, but a full series requires three injections and is quite expensive. Those at high risk for rabies, such as animal handlers and spelunkers (cave explorers), should certainly get the vaccine. In addition, you should consider asking for the vaccine if you might be traveling to remote areas and might not have access to appropriate medical care if needed. The treatment for a possibly rabid bite consists of rabies vaccine with rabies immune globulin. It's effective, but must be given promptly. Most travelers don't need rabies vaccine.

All animal bites and scratches must be promptly and thoroughly cleansed with large amounts of soap and water and local health authorities must be contacted to determine whether or not further treatment is necessary (see opposite).

Typhoid

This fever is caused by ingestion of food or water contaminated by a species of salmonella known as *Salmonella typhi*. Fever occurs in virtually all cases. Other symptoms may include headache, malaise, muscle aches, dizziness, loss of appetite, nausea and abdominal pain. Either diarrhea or constipation may occur. Possible complications include intestinal perforation, intestinal bleeding, confusion, delirium or (rarely) coma.

Unless you expect to take all your meals in major hotels and restaurants, typhoid vaccine is a good idea. It's usually given orally, but is also available as an injection. Neither vaccine is approved for use in children under the age of two.

The drug of choice for typhoid fever is usually a quinolone antibiotic such as ciprofloxacin (Cipro) or levofloxacin (Levaquin), which many travelers carry for treatment of travelers' diarrhea. However, if you self-treat for typhoid fever, you may also need to self-treat for malaria, since the symptoms of the two diseases may be indistinguishable.

Yellow Fever

Yellow fever no longer occurs in Central America, but many countries in this region, including Guatemala, require yellow fever vaccine before entry if you're arriving from a country in Africa or South America where yellow fever is known to occur. If you're not arriving from a country with yellow fever, the vaccine is neither required nor recommended. Yellow fever vaccine is given only in approved yellow fever vaccination centers, which provide validated international certificates of vaccination (also known as yellow booklets). The vaccine should be given at least 10 days before departure and remains effective for approximately 10 years. Reactions to the vaccine are generally mild and may include headaches, muscle aches, low-grade fevers, or discomfort at the injection site. Severe, life-threatening reactions have been described but are extremely rare.

Other Infections

CHAGAS' DISEASE

This is a parasitic infection that is transmitted by triatomine insects (reduviid bugs), which inhabit crevices in the walls and roofs of substandard housing in South and Central America. The triatomine insect lays its feces on human skin as it bites, usually at night. A person becomes infected when he or she unknowingly rubs the feces into the bite wound or any other open sore. Chagas' disease is extremely rare in travelers. However, if you sleep in a poorly constructed house, especially one made of mud, adobe or thatch, you should be sure to protect yourself with a bed net and a good insecticide.

HISTOPLASMOSIS

Caused by a soil-based fungus, histoplasmosis is acquired by inhalation, often when the soil has been disrupted. Initial symptoms may include fever, chills, dry cough, chest pain and headache, sometimes leading to pneumonia. Histoplasmosis has been reported in European travelers returning from Mazatenango.

HIV/AIDS

This has been reported in all Central American countries. Be sure to use condoms for all sexual encounters.

LEISHMANIASIS

This occurs in the mountains and jungles of all Central American countries. The infection is transmitted by sandflies, which are about one third the size of mosquitoes. Leishmaniasis may be limited to the skin, causing slowly growing ulcers over exposed parts of the body, or (less commonly) disseminate to the bone marrow, liver and spleen. The disease may be particularly severe in those with HIV. In Guatemala, most cases of cutaneous leishmaniasis are reported from the northern parts of the country at elevations less than 1000m. The greatest risk occurs in the forested areas of El Petén. The disseminated form may occur in the semiarid valleys and foothills in the east central part of the country. There is no vaccine for leishmaniasis. To protect yourself from sandflies, follow the same precautions as for mosquitoes (opposite), except that netting must be of finer mesh (at least 18 holes to the linear inch).

LEPTOSPIROSIS

This is acquired by exposure to water contaminated by the urine of infected animals. Outbreaks often occur at times of flooding, when sewage overflow may contaminate the water sources. The initial symptoms, which resemble a mild flu, usually subside uneventfully in a few days, with or without treatment, but a minority of cases are complicated by jaundice or meningitis. There is no vaccine. You can minimize your risk by staying out of bodies of fresh water that may be contaminated by animal urine. If you're visiting an area where an outbreak is in progress, as occurred in Guatemala after flooding in 1998, you can take 200mg of doxycycline once weekly as a preventative measure. If you actually develop leptospirosis, the treatment is 100mg of doxycycline twice daily.

ONCHOCERCIASIS (RIVER BLINDNESS)

Onchocerciasis is caused by a roundworm that may invade the eye, leading to blindness. The infection is transmitted by black flies, which breed along the banks of rapidly flowing rivers and streams. In Guatemala, the disease occurs in heavily forested areas between 500m and 1500m, chiefly the Pacific slope of the Sierra Madre and in Escuintla along the Verde and Guachipilín rivers.

TYPHUS

This may be transmitted by lice in scattered pockets of the country.

TRAVELER'S DIARRHEA

To prevent diarrhea, avoid tap water unless it has been boiled, filtered or chemically disinfected (see p332); only eat fresh fruits or vegetables if cooked or peeled; be wary of dairy products that might contain unpasteurized milk; and be highly selective when eating food from street vendors.

If you develop diarrhea, be sure to drink plenty of fluids, preferably an oral rehydration solution containing lots of salt and sugar. A few loose stools don't require treatment, but if you start having more than four or five stools a day, you should start taking an antibiotic (usually a quinolone drug) and an antidiarrheal agent (such as loperamide). If diarrhea is bloody or persists for more than 72 hours or is accompanied by fever, shaking chills or severe abdominal pain, you should seek medical attention.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Animal Bites

Do not attempt to pet, handle or feed any animal, with the exception of domestic animals known to be free of any infectious disease. Most animal injuries are directly related to a person's attempt to touch or feed the animal.

Any bite or scratch by a mammal, including bats, should be promptly and thoroughly cleansed with large amounts of soap and water, followed by application of an antiseptic such as iodine or alcohol. The local health authorities should be contacted immediately for possible postexposure rabies treatment, whether or not you've been immunized against rabies. It may also be advisable to start an antibiotic, since wounds caused by animal bites and scratches frequently become infected. One of the newer quinolones, such as levofloxacin (Levaquin), which many travelers carry in case of diarrhea, would be an appropriate choice.

Mosquito Bites

To prevent mosquito bites, wear long sleeves, long pants, hats and shoes (rather than sandals). Make sure you bring along a good insect repellent, preferably one that contains DEET, which should be applied to exposed skin and clothing, but not to eyes, mouth, cuts, wounds or irritated skin. Products containing lower concentrations of DEET are as effective, but for shorter periods of time. In general, adults and children over 12 should use preparations containing 25% to 35% DEET, which usually lasts about six hours. Children between two and 12 years of age should use preparations containing no more than 10% DEET, applied sparingly, which will usually last about three hours. Neurologic toxicity has been reported from DEET, especially in children, but appears to be extremely uncommon and generally related to overuse. Compounds containing DEET should not be used on children under the age of two.

Insect repellents containing certain botanical products, including oil of eucalyptus and soybean oil, are effective but last only 1½ to two hours. Repellents containing DEET are preferable for areas where there is a high risk of malaria or yellow fever. Products based on citronella are not effective.

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

The following are some traditional remedies for common travel-related conditions.

- Jet lag – melatonin
- Mosquito-bite prevention – oil of eucalyptus or soybean oil
- Motion sickness – ginger

For additional protection, you can apply permethrin to clothing, shoes, tents and bed nets. Permethrin treatments are safe and remain effective for at least two weeks, even when items are laundered. Permethrin should not be applied directly to skin.

Don't sleep with the window open unless there is a screen. If sleeping outdoors or in an accommodation that allows entry of mosquitoes, use a bed net, preferably treated with permethrin, with edges tucked in under the mattress. The mesh size should be less than 1.5mm. If the sleeping area is not otherwise protected, use a mosquito coil, which will fill the room with insecticide through the night. Repellent-impregnated wristbands are not effective.

Snake Bites

Snakes are a hazard in some areas of Central America. In Guatemala the chief concern is *Bothrops asper*, the Central American or common lancehead, also called the fer-de-lance and known locally as *barba amarilla* (yellow beard) or *terciopelo* (velvet skin). This heavy-bodied snake reaches up to 2m in length and is commonly found along fallen logs and other small animal runs, especially in the northern provinces.

In the event of a venomous snake bite, place the victim at rest, keep the bitten area immobilized and move the victim immediately to the nearest medical facility. Avoid tourniquets, which are no longer recommended.

Sun

To protect yourself from excessive sun exposure, you should stay out of the midday sun, wear sunglasses and a wide-brimmed sun hat, and apply sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher, with both UVA and UVB protection. Sunscreen should be generously applied to all exposed parts of the body approximately 30 minutes before sun exposure and should

be reapplied after swimming or vigorous activity. Travelers should also drink plenty of fluids and avoid strenuous exercise when the temperature is high.

Water

Tap water in Guatemala is not safe to drink. Vigorous boiling for one minute is the most effective means of water purification. At altitudes greater than 2000m, boil for three minutes.

Another option is to disinfect water with iodine pills. Instructions are usually enclosed and should be carefully followed. Or you can add 2% tincture of iodine to 1 quart or liter of water (five drops to clear water, 10 drops to cloudy water) and let stand for 30 minutes. If the water is cold, longer times may be required. The taste of iodinated water may be improved by adding vitamin C (ascorbic acid). Iodinated water should not be consumed for more than a few weeks. Pregnant women, those with a history of thyroid disease and those allergic to iodine should not drink iodinated water.

A number of water filters are on the market. Those with smaller pores (reverse osmosis filters) provide the broadest protection, but they are relatively large and are readily plugged by debris. Those with somewhat larger pores (microstrainer filters) are ineffective against viruses, although they remove other organisms. Manufacturers' instructions must be carefully followed.

Safe-to-drink, inexpensive purified water (*agua pura*) is widely available in hotels, shops and restaurants. Salvavida is a universally trusted brand.

CHILDREN & PREGNANT WOMEN

In general, it's safe for children and pregnant women to go to Guatemala. However, because some of the vaccines listed on p327 are not approved for use in children and pregnant women, these travelers should be particularly careful not to drink tap water or consume any questionable food or beverage. Also, when traveling with children, make sure they're up-to-date on all routine immunizations. It's sometimes appropriate to give children some of their vaccines a little early before visiting a developing nation. You should discuss this with your pediatrician. Lastly, if pregnant, you should bear in mind that should a complication such as premature

labor develop while abroad, the quality of medical care may not be comparable to that in your home country.

Since yellow fever vaccine is not recommended for pregnant women or children less than nine months old, these travelers, if

arriving from a country with yellow fever, should obtain a waiver letter, preferably written on letterhead stationery and bearing the stamp used by official immunization centers to validate the international certificate of vaccination.

Language

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There are 21 Mayan indigenous languages used in and around Guatemala, but Spanish is still the most commonly spoken language, and what visitors will encounter on a daily basis. If you're keen to try out some Mayan languages, see the short and sweet Mam and K'iche' sections at the end of this chapter.

It's easy enough to pick up some basic Spanish, but for those who want to delve a little deeper, courses are available in Antigua (p106), Panajachel (p129), San Pedro La Laguna (p143), Nebaj (p158), Quetzaltenango (p168), Todos Santos Cuchumatán (p186), Monterrico (p206), Cobán (p220) and near Flores (p283 and p284). Alternatively, before you leave home you can study books, records and tapes, resources that are often available free at public libraries. Evening or college courses are also an excellent way to get started. For food-related words and phrases, see p59.

For a more comprehensive guide to the Spanish of Guatemala, get a copy of Lonely Planet's *Latin American Spanish Phrasebook*.

PRONUNCIATION

Spanish spelling is phonetically consistent, meaning that there's a clear and consistent

relationship between what you see in writing and how it's pronounced.

Vowels

a	as in 'father'
e	as in 'met'
i	as in 'marine'
o	as in 'or' (without the 'r' sound)
u	as in 'rule'; the 'u' is not pronounced after q and in the letter combinations gue and gui , unless it's marked with a diaeresis (eg <i>argüir</i>), in which case it's pronounced as English 'w'
y	at the end of a word or when it stands alone, it's pronounced as the Spanish i (eg <i>ley</i>); between vowels within a word it's as the 'y' in 'yonder'

Consonants

Most Spanish consonants are pronounced much the same way as their English counterparts. A few of the exceptions are listed below.

While the consonants **ch**, **ll** and **ñ** are generally considered distinct letters, **ch** and **ll** are now often listed alphabetically under **c** and **l** respectively. The letter **ñ** is still treated as a separate letter and comes after **n** in dictionaries.

b	similar to English 'b,' but softer; referred to as 'b larga'
c	as in 'celery' before e and i ; otherwise as English 'k'
ch	as in 'church'
d	as in 'dog,' but between vowels and after l or n , the sound is closer to the 'th' in 'this'
g	as the 'ch' in the Scottish <i>loch</i> before e and i ('kh' in our guides to pronunciation); elsewhere, as in 'go'
h	invariably silent. If your name begins with this letter, listen carefully if you're waiting for public officials to call you.
j	as the 'ch' in the Scottish <i>loch</i> (written as 'kh' in our guides to pronunciation)
ll	as the 'y' in 'yellow'
ñ	as the 'ni' in 'onion'

r	a short r except at the beginning of a word, and after l , n or s , when it's often rolled
rr	very strongly rolled
v	similar to English 'b,' but softer; referred to as 'b corta'
x	usually pronounced as j above; in some indigenous place names it's pronounced as an 's'; as in 'taxi' in other instances
z	as the 's' in 'sun'

Word Stress

In general, words ending in vowels or the letters **n** or **s** have stress on the next-to-last syllable, while those with other endings have stress on the last syllable. Thus *vaca* (cow) and *caballos* (horses) both carry stress on the next-to-last syllable, while *ciudad* (city) and *infeliz* (unhappy) are both stressed on the last syllable.

Written accents will almost always appear in words that don't follow the rules above, eg *sótano* (basement), *América* and *porción* (portion).

GENDER & PLURALS

In Spanish, nouns are either masculine or feminine, and there are rules to help determine gender (there are of course some exceptions). Feminine nouns generally end with **-a** or with the groups **-ción**, **-sión** or **-dad**. Other endings typically signify a masculine noun. Endings for adjectives also change to agree with the gender of the noun they modify (masculine/feminine **-o/-a**). Where both masculine and feminine forms are included in this language guide, they are separated by a slash, with the masculine form first, eg *perdido/a*.

If a noun or adjective ends in a vowel, the plural is formed by adding **s** to the end. If it ends in a consonant, the plural is formed by adding **es** to the end.

ACCOMMODATIONS

I'm looking for ...	<i>Estoy buscando ...</i>	<i>e-stoy boos-kan-do ...</i>
Where is ...?	<i>¿Dónde hay ...?</i>	<i>don-de ai ...</i>
a hotel	<i>un hotel</i>	<i>oon o-tel</i>
a boarding house	<i>una pensión/ residencial/ un hospedaje</i>	<i>oo-na pen-syon/ re-see-den-syal/ oon os-pe-da-khe</i>
a youth hostel	<i>un albergue juvenil</i>	<i>oon al-ber-ge khoo-ve-neel</i>

MAKING A RESERVATION

(for phone or written requests)

To ...	<i>A ...</i>
From ...	<i>De ...</i>
Date	<i>Fecha</i>
I'd like to book ...	<i>Quisiera reservar ... (see the list under 'Accommodations' for bed and room options)</i>
in the name of ...	<i>en nombre de ...</i>
for the nights of ...	<i>para las noches del ...</i>
credit card ...	<i>tarjeta de crédito ...</i>
number	<i>número</i>
expiry date	<i>fecha de vencimiento</i>
Please confirm ...	<i>Puede confirmar ...</i>
availability	<i>la disponibilidad</i>
price	<i>el precio</i>

Are there any rooms available?

¿Hay habitaciones libres? ai a-bee-ta-syon-es lee-bres

I'd like a ...	<i>Quisiera una</i>	<i>kee-sye-ra oo-na</i>
room.	<i>habitación ...</i>	<i>a-bee-ta-syon ...</i>
double	<i>doble</i>	<i>do-ble</i>
single	<i>individual</i>	<i>een-dee-vee-dwal</i>
twin	<i>con dos camas</i>	<i>kon dos ka-mas</i>

How much is it per ...?	<i>¿Cuánto cuesta por ...?</i>	<i>kwan-to kwes-ta por ...</i>
night	<i>noche</i>	<i>no-che</i>
person	<i>persona</i>	<i>per-so-na</i>
week	<i>semana</i>	<i>se-ma-na</i>

full board	<i>pensión completa</i>	<i>pen-syon kom-ple-ta</i>
private/shared bathroom	<i>baño privado/ compartido</i>	<i>ba-nyo pree-va-do/ kom-par-tee-do</i>
too expensive	<i>demasiado caro</i>	<i>de-ma-sya-do ka-ro</i>
cheaper	<i>más económico</i>	<i>mas e-ko-no-mee-ko</i>
discount	<i>descuento</i>	<i>des-kwen-to</i>

Does it include breakfast?

¿Incluye el desayuno? een-kloo-ye el de-sa-yoo-no

May I see the room?

¿Puedo ver la habitación? pwe-do ver la a-bee-ta-syon

I don't like it.

No me gusta. no me goos-ta

It's fine. I'll take it.

OK. La alquilo. o-kay la al-kee-lo

I'm leaving now.

Me voy ahora. me voy a-o-ra

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

In their public behavior, South Americans are very conscious of civilities, sometimes to the point of ceremoniousness. Never approach a stranger for information without extending a greeting, and use only the polite form of address, especially with the police and public officials. Young people may be less likely to expect this, but it's best to stick to the polite form unless you're quite sure you won't offend by using the informal mode. The polite form is used in all cases in this guide; where options are given, the form is indicated by the abbreviations 'pol' and 'inf.'

Saying *por favor* (please) and *gracias* (thank you) are second nature to most Guatemalans and a recommended tool in your travel kit. The three most common Spanish greetings are often shortened to simply *buenos* (for *buenos días*) and *buenas* (for *buenas tardes* and *buenas noches*).

Hello.	<i>Hola.</i>	o-la
Good morning.	<i>Buenos días.</i>	bwe-nos dee-as
Good afternoon.	<i>Buenas tardes.</i>	bwe-nas tar-des
Good evening/ night.	<i>Buenas noches.</i>	bwe-nas no-ches
Goodbye.	<i>Adiós.</i>	a-dyos (rarely used)
See you soon.	<i>Hasta luego.</i>	as-ta lwe-go
Yes.	<i>Sí.</i>	see
No.	<i>No.</i>	no
Please.	<i>Por favor.</i>	por fa-vor
Thank you.	<i>Gracias.</i>	gra-syas
Many thanks.	<i>Muchas gracias.</i>	moo-chas gra-syas
You're welcome.	<i>De nada.</i>	de na-da
Pardon me.	<i>Perdón.</i>	per-don
Excuse me.	<i>Permiso.</i>	per-mee-so
(use when asking permission)		
Forgive me.	<i>Disculpe.</i>	dees-kool-pe
(use when apologizing)		

How are things?

¿Qué tal? ke tal

What's your name?

¿Cómo se llama? ko-mo se ya-ma (pol)

¿Cómo te llamas? ko-mo te ya-mas (inf)

My name is ...

Me llamo ... me ya-mo ...

It's a pleasure to meet you.

Mucho gusto. moo-cho goos-to

The pleasure is mine.

El gusto es mío. el goos-to es mee-o

Where are you from?

¿De dónde es/eres? de don-de es/er-es (pol/inf)

I'm from ...

Soy de ... soy de ...

Where are you staying?

¿Dónde está alojado? don-de es-ta a-lo-kha-do (pol)

¿Dónde estás alojado? don-de es-tas a-lo-kha-do (inf)

May I take a photo?

¿Puedo sacar una foto? pwe-do sa-kar oo-na fo-to

DIRECTIONS

How do I get to ...?

¿Cómo puedo llegar a ...? ko-mo pwe-do ye-gar a ...

Is it far?

¿Está lejos? es-ta le-khos

Go straight ahead.

Siga/Vaya derecho. see-ga/va-ya de-re-cho

Turn left.

Voltee a la izquierda. vol-te-e a la ees-kyer-da

Turn right.

Voltee a la derecha. vol-te-e a la de-re-cha

I'm lost.

Estoy perdido/a. es-toy per-dee-do/a

Can you show me (on the map)?

¿Me lo podría indicar (en el mapa)? me lo po-dree-a een-dee-kar (en el ma-pa)

SIGNS

Entrada	Entrance
Salida	Exit
Información	Information
Abierto	Open
Cerrado	Closed
Prohibido	Prohibited
Comisaría	Police Station
Servicios/Baños	Toilets
Hombres/Varones	Men
Mujeres/Damas	Women

north

norte nor-te

south

sur soor

east

este/oriente es-te/o-ryen-te

west

oeste/occidente o-es-te/ok-see-den-te

here

aquí a-kee

there

allí a-ye

avenue

avenida a-ve-nee-da

block

cuadra kwa-dra

street

calle/paseo ka-lye/pa-se-o

HEALTH

I'm sick.

Estoy enfermo/a. es-toy en-fer-mo/a

I need a doctor.

Necesito un médico. ne-se-see-to oon me-dee-ko

Where's the hospital?

¿Dónde está el hospital? don-de es-ta el os-pee-tal

EMERGENCIES

Help!	<i>¡Socorro!</i>	so-ko-ro
Fire!	<i>¡Incendio!</i>	een-sen-dyo
I've been robbed.	<i>Me robaron.</i>	me ro-ba-ran
Go away!	<i>¡Déjeme!</i>	de-khe-me
Get lost!	<i>¡Váyase!</i>	va-ya-se

Call ...!	<i>¡Llame a ...!</i>	ya-me a
an ambulance	<i>una ambulancia</i>	oo-na am-boo-lan-sya
a doctor	<i>un médico</i>	oon me-dee-ko
the police	<i>la policía</i>	la po-lee-see-a

It's an emergency.

Es una emergencia. es oo-na e-mer-khen-sya

Could you help me, please?

¿Me puede ayudar, por favor? me pwe-de a-yoo-dar por fa-vor

I'm lost.

Estoy perdido/a. es-toy per-dee-do/a

Where are the toilets?

¿Dónde están los baños? don-de es-tan los ba-nyos

I'm pregnant.

Estoy embarazada. es-toy em-ba-ra-sa-da

I've been vaccinated.

Estoy vacunado/a. es-toy va-koo-na-do/a

I'm allergic to ...	<i>Soy alérgico/a (a) ...</i>	soy a-ler-khee-ko/a (a) ...
antibiotics	<i>los antibióticos</i>	los an-tee-byo-tee-kos

nuts	<i>las nueces</i>	las nwe-ses
penicillin	<i>la penicilina</i>	la pe-nee-see-lee-na
peanuts	<i>al maní</i>	al ma-nee

I'm ...	<i>Soy ...</i>	soy ...
asthmatic	<i>asmático/a</i>	as-ma-tee-ko/a
diabetic	<i>diabético/a</i>	dya-be-tee-ko/a
epileptic	<i>epiléptico/a</i>	e-pee-lep-tee-ko/a

I have ...	<i>Tengo ...</i>	ten-go ...
altitude sickness	<i>soroche</i>	so-ro-che
diarrhea	<i>diarrea</i>	dya-re-a
nausea	<i>náusea</i>	now-se-a
a headache	<i>un dolor de cabeza</i>	oon do-lor de ka-be-sa
a cough	<i>tos</i>	tos

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES**Do you speak (English)?**

¿Habla/Hablas (inglés)? a-bla/a-blas (een-gles) (pol/inf)

Does anyone here speak English?

¿Hay alguien que hable inglés? ai al-gyen ke a-ble een-gles

I (don't) understand.

Yo (no) entiendo. yo (no) en-tyen-do

How do you say ...?

¿Cómo se dice ...? ko-mo se dee-se ...

What does ...mean?

¿Qué quiere decir ...? ke kye-re de-seer ...

Could you please ...?	<i>¿Puede ..., por favor?</i>	pwe-de ... por fa-vor
repeat that	<i>repetirlo</i>	re-pe-teer-lo
speak more slowly	<i>hablar más despacio</i>	a-blar mas des-pa-syo
write it down	<i>escribirlo</i>	es-kree-beer-lo

NUMBERS

0	<i>cero</i>	se-ro
1	<i>uno</i>	oo-no
2	<i>dos</i>	dos
3	<i>tres</i>	tres
4	<i>cuatro</i>	kwa-tro
5	<i>cinco</i>	seen-ko
6	<i>seis</i>	says
7	<i>siete</i>	sy-e-te
8	<i>ocho</i>	o-cho
9	<i>nueve</i>	nwe-ve
10	<i>diez</i>	dyes
11	<i>once</i>	on-se
12	<i>doce</i>	do-se
13	<i>trece</i>	tre-se
14	<i>catorce</i>	ka-tor-se
15	<i>quince</i>	keen-se
16	<i>dieciséis</i>	dye-see-says
17	<i>diecisiete</i>	dye-see-sye-te
18	<i>dieciocho</i>	dye-see-o-cho
19	<i>diecinueve</i>	dye-see-nwe-ve
20	<i>veinte</i>	vayn-te
21	<i>veintiuno</i>	vayn-tee-oo-no
30	<i>treinta</i>	trayn-ta
31	<i>treinta y uno</i>	trayn-ta ee oo-no
40	<i>cuarenta</i>	kwa-ren-ta
50	<i>cinquenta</i>	seen-kwen-ta
60	<i>sesenta</i>	se-sen-ta
70	<i>setenta</i>	se-ten-ta
80	<i>ochenta</i>	o-chen-ta
90	<i>noventa</i>	no-ven-ta
100	<i>cien</i>	syen
101	<i>ciento uno</i>	syen-to oo-no
200	<i>doscientos</i>	do-syen-tos
1000	<i>mil</i>	meel
5000	<i>cinco mil</i>	seen-ko meel
10,000	<i>diez mil</i>	dyes meel
50,000	<i>cinquenta mil</i>	seen-kwen-ta meel

SHOPPING & SERVICES

I'd like to buy ...

Quisiera comprar ... kee-sye-ra kom-prar ...

I'm just looking.

Sólo estoy mirando. so-lo es-toy mee-ran-do

May I look at it?

¿Puedo mirarlo/la? pwe-do mee-rar-lo/la

How much is it?

¿Cuánto cuesta? kwan-to kwes-ta

That's too expensive.

Es demasiado caro. es de-ma-sya-do ka-ro

Could you lower the price?

¿Podría bajar un poco el precio? po-dree-a ba-khar oon po-ko el pre-syo

I don't like it.

No me gusta. no me goos-ta

I'll take it.

Lo llevo. lo ye-vo

Do you

¿Aceptan ...? a-sep-tan ...

accept ...?

American dólares do-la-res

dollars americanos a-me-ree-ka-nos

credit cards tarjetas de tar-khe-tas de

crédito kre-dee-to

traveler's cheques de che-kes de

checks viajero vya-khe-ro

less

menos me-nos

more

más mas

large

grande gran-de

small

pequeño/a pe-ke-nyo/a

I'm looking

Estoy buscando ... es-toy boos-kan-do ...

for (the) ...

ATM el cajero el ka-khe-ro

automático ow-to-ma-tee-ko

bank el banco el ban-ko

bookstore la librería la lee-bre-ree-a

embassy la embajada la em-ba-kha-da

exchange house la casa de la ka-sa de

cambio kam-byo

general store la tienda la tyen-da

laundry la lavandería la la-van-de-ree-a

market el mercado el mer-ka-do

pharmacy/ la farmacia/ la far-ma-sya/

chemist la droguería la dro-ge-ree-a

post office los correos los ko-re-os

supermarket el supermercado el soo-per-mer-ka-do

tourist office

la oficina de la o-fee-see-na de

turismo too-rees-mo

I want to change some money/traveler's checks.

Quiero cambiar dinero/ kye-ro kam-byar dee-ne-ro/
cheques de viajero. che-kes de vya-khe-ro

What is the exchange rate?

¿Cuál es el tipo de cambio? kwal es el tee-po de kam-byo

How many quetzals per dollar?

¿Cuántos quetzales por kwan-tos ket-za-les por
dólar? do-lar

I want to call ...

Quiero llamar a ... kye-ro lya-mar a ...

airmail

correo aéreo ko-re-o a-e-re-o

letter

carta kar-ta

registered mail

certificado ser-tee-fee-ka-do

stamps

estampillas es-tam-pee-lyas

TIME & DATES

What time is it? *¿Qué hora es?*

ke o-ra es

It's one o'clock.

Es la una. es la oo-na

It's six o'clock.

Son las seis. son las says

midnight

medianoche me-dya-no-che

noon

mediodía me-dyo-dee-a

half past two

dos y media dos ee me-dya

now

ahora a-o-ra

today

hoy oy

tonight

esta noche es-ta no-che

tomorrow

mañana ma-nya-na

yesterday

ayer a-yer

Monday

lunes loo-nes

Tuesday

martes mar-tes

Wednesday

miércoles myer-ko-les

Thursday

jueves khwe-ves

Friday

viernes vyer-nes

Saturday

sábado sa-ba-do

Sunday

domingo do-meen-go

January

enero e-ne-ro

February

febrero fe-bre-ro

March

marzo mar-so

April

abril a-breeel

May

mayo ma-yo

June

junio khoo-nyo

July

julio khoo-lyo

August

agosto a-gos-to

September

septiembre sep-tyem-bre

October

octubre ok-too-bre

November

noviembre no-vyem-bre

December

diciembre dee-syem-bre

TRANSPORTATION

Public Transportation

What time does ... *¿A qué hora ...*

a ke o-ra ...

... leave/arrive? *sale/llega?*

sa-le/ye-ga

What time does it open/close?

¿A qué hora abre/cierra? a ke o-ra a-bre/sye-ra

the bus	<i>el autobús/ la camioneta</i>	el ow-to-boos/ la ka-mee-o-ne-ta
the pickup	<i>el picop/ la camioneta</i>	el pee-kop/ la ka-mee-o-ne-ta
the bus (long distance)	<i>el autobús/ la flota</i>	el ow-to-boos/ la flo ta
the plane	<i>el avión</i>	el a-vyon
the ship	<i>el barco/buque</i>	el bar-ko/boo-ke
airport	<i>el aeropuerto</i>	el a-e-ro-pwer-to
bus station	<i>la estación de autobuses</i>	la es-ta-syon de ow-to-boo-ses
bus stop	<i>la parada de autobuses</i>	la pa-ra-da de ow-to-boo-ses
luggage check room	<i>la guardería/ el equipaje</i>	la gwar-de-ree-a/ el e-kee-pa-khe
ticket office	<i>la boletería</i>	la bo-le-te-ree-a

I'd like a ticket to ...*Quiero un boleto a ...* kye-ro oon bo-le-to a ...**What's the fare to ...?***¿Cuánto cuesta hasta ...?* kwan-to kwes-ta a-sta ...

student's 1st class	<i>de estudiante primera clase</i>	de es-too-dyan-te pree-me-ra kla-se
2nd class	<i>segunda clase</i>	se-goon-da kla-se
single/one-way	<i>ida</i>	ee-da
return/round-trip	<i>ida y vuelta</i>	ee-da ee vwel-ta
taxi	<i>taxi</i>	tak-see

Private Transportation

I'd like to hire a/an ...	<i>Quisiera alquilar ...</i>	kee-sye-ra al-kee-lar ...
bicycle	<i>una bicicleta</i>	oo-na bee-see-kle-ta
car	<i>un auto</i>	oon ow-to
4WD	<i>un todo terreno</i>	oon to-do te-re-no
motorbike	<i>una moto</i>	oo-na mo-to
pickup (truck)	<i>camioneta</i>	ka-myo-ne-ta
truck	<i>camión</i>	ka-myon
hitchhike	<i>hacer dedo</i>	a-ser de-do

Is this the road to (...)?*¿Se va a (...) por esta carretera?* se va a (...) por es-ta ka-re-te-ra**Where's a petrol station?***¿Dónde hay una gasolinera/un grifo?* don-de ai oo-na ga-so-lee-ne-ra/oon gree-fo**Please fill it up.***Lleno, por favor.* ye-no por fa-vor**I'd like (20) liters.***Quiero (veinte) litros.* kye-ro (vayn-te) lee-tros**ROAD SIGNS**

Acceso	Entrance
Aparcamiento	Parking
Ceda el Paso	Give Way
Despacio	Slow
Dirección Única	One-Way
Mantenga Su Derecha	Keep to the Right
No Adelantar/No Rebase	No Passing
Peaje	Toll
Peligro	Danger
Prohibido Aparcar/No Estacionar	No Parking
Prohibido el Paso	No Entry
Pare/Stop	Stop
Salida de Autopista	Exit Freeway

diesel	<i>diesel</i>	dee-sel
leaded (regular)	<i>gasolina con plomo</i>	ga-so-lee-na kon plo-mo
gas/petrol	<i>gasolina</i>	ga-so-lee-na
unleaded	<i>gasolina sin plomo</i>	ga-so-lee-na seen plo-mo

(How long) Can I park here?*¿(Por cuánto tiempo) Puedo aparcar aquí?* (por kwan-to tyem-po) pwe-do a-par-kar a-kee**Where do I pay?***¿Dónde se paga?* don-de se pa-ga**I need a mechanic.***Necesito un mecánico.* ne-se-see-to oon me-ka-nee-ko**The car has broken down (in ...).***El carro se ha averiado (en ...).* el ka-ro se a a-ve-rya-do (en ...)**The motorbike won't start.***No arranca la moto.* no a-ran-ka la mo-to**I have a flat tyre.***Tengo un pinchazo.* ten-go oon peen-cha-so**I've run out of petrol.***Me quedé sin gasolina.* me ke-de seen ga-so-lee-na**I've had an accident.***Tuve un accidente.* too-ve oon ak-see-den-te**TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN****I need ...** *Necesito ...* ne-se-see-to ...**Do you have ...?** *¿Hay ...?* ai ...**a car baby seat** *un asiento de seguridad para bebés* oon a-syen-to de se-goo-ree-da pa-ra be-bes**a child-minding service** *un servicio de cuidado de niños* oon ser-vee-syo de kwee-da-do de nee-nyos**a children's menu** *una carta infantil* oona kar-ta een-fan-teel

a creche	<i>una guardería</i>	oo-na gwar-de-ree-a
(disposable) diapers/nappies	<i>pañales (de usar y tirar)</i>	pa-nyo-les de oo-sar ee tee-rar
an (English-speaking) babysitter	<i>una niñera (de habla inglesa)</i>	oo-na nee-nye-ra (de a-bla een-gle-sa)
formula (milk)	<i>leche en polvo</i>	le-che en pol-vo
a highchair	<i>una trona</i>	oo-na tro-na
a potty	<i>una pelela</i>	oo-na pe-le-la
a stroller	<i>un cochecito</i>	oon ko-che-see-to

Do you mind if I breast-feed here?

¿Le molesta que dé de pecho aquí? le mo-les-ta ke de de pe-cho a-kee

Are children allowed?

¿Se admiten niños? se ad-mee-ten nee-nyos

MODERN MAYAN

Since the classic period, the two ancient Mayan languages, Yucatecan and Cholan, have subdivided into 35 separate Mayan languages (such as Yucatec, Chol, Chortí, Tzeltal, Tzotzil, Lacandón, Mam, K'iche' and Kaqchiquel), some of them unintelligible to speakers of others, some not. Indigenous languages are seldom written, but when they are, the Roman alphabet is used. Most literate Maya will only be able to read and write Spanish, the language of government, schools, the church and the media – they may not be literate in Mayan.

Pronunciation

There are several rules to remember when pronouncing Mayan words and place names. Mayan vowels are pretty straightforward, but consonants can be tricky.

c	always hard, as in 'cat'
j	an aspirated 'h' sound, eg <i>jipijapa</i> is pronounced 'hee-pee-haa-pa' and <i>abaj</i> is pronounced 'a-bah'; to get the 'ah' sound, imagine the 'h' sound from 'half' at the end of a word
u	as in 'prune', except when it occurs at the beginning or end of a word, in which case it's like English 'w'; thus <i>baktun</i> is 'bak-toon,' but <i>Uxactún</i> is 'wa-shak-toon' and <i>ahau</i> is 'a-haw'
x	as English 'sh'

Mayan glottalized consonants (indicated by an apostrophe: **b'**, **ch'**, **k'**, **p'**, **t'**) are similar to normal consonants, but are pronounced

more forcefully and 'explosively.' An apostrophe following a vowel signifies a glottal stop (like the momentary stop between the syllables in 'oh-oh!'), not a more forceful vowel.

Another rule to remember is that in most Mayan words the stress falls on the last syllable. Sometimes this is indicated by an acute accent, sometimes not. The following place names are useful guides to pronunciation:

Abaj Takalik	<i>a-bah ta-ka-leek</i>
Aceanceh	<i>a-kan-keh</i>
Ahau	<i>a-haw</i>
Kaminaljuyú	<i>ka-mee-nal-hoo-yoo</i>
Pop	<i>pope</i>
Tikal	<i>tee-kal</i>
Uxactún	<i>wa-shak-toon</i>

K'ICHE'

K'iche' is widely spoken throughout the Guatemalan Highlands, from around Santa Cruz del Quiché to the area adjacent to Lake Atitlán and around Quetzaltenango. There are estimated to be around two million K'iche' Maya living in Guatemala, giving you plenty of opportunity to practice some of the common terms and phrases listed below.

Greetings & Civilities

These are great icebreakers, and even if you're not completely and accurately understood, there'll be goodwill and smiles all around just for making the effort.

Good morning.	<i>Saqarik.</i>
Good afternoon.	<i>Xb'eqji.</i>
Good evening/night.	<i>Xokaq'ab'.</i>
Goodbye.	<i>Chab'ej.</i>
Bye. See you soon.	<i>Kimpetik ri.</i>
Thank you.	<i>Uts awech?</i>
Excuse me.	<i>Kyunala.</i>
What's your name?	<i>Su ra'b'i?</i>
My name is ...	<i>Nu b'i ...</i>
Where are you from?	<i>Ja kat pewi?</i>
I'm from ...	<i>Ch'qap ja'kin pewi ...</i>

Useful Words & Phrases

Where is (a/the) ...?	<i>Ja k'uichi' ri ...?</i>
bathroom	<i>b'anb'al chulu</i>
bus stop	<i>tek'lib'al</i>
doctor	<i>ajkun</i>
hotel	<i>jun worib'al</i>
police station	<i>ajchajil re tinamit</i>

Do you have ...?	<i>K'olik ...?</i>
boiled water	<i>saq'li</i>
coffee	<i>kab'e</i>
copal	<i>kach'</i>
a machete	<i>choyib'al</i>
rooms	<i>K'plib'al</i>

We have it.	<i>K'olik.</i>
We don't have it.	<i>K'otaj.</i>

blanket	<i>K'ul</i>
soap	<i>ch'ipaq</i>
vegetables	<i>ichaj</i>
good	<i>utz</i>
bad	<i>itzel</i>
open	<i>teb'am</i>
closed	<i>tzapilik</i>
hard	<i>ko</i>
soft	<i>ch'uch'uj</i>
hot	<i>miq'in</i>
cold	<i>joron</i>
sick	<i>yiwab'</i>
north (white)	<i>saq</i>
south (yellow)	<i>K'an</i>
east (red)	<i>kaq</i>
west (black)	<i>K'eq</i>

Numbers

1	<i>jun</i>
2	<i>keb'</i>
3	<i>oxib'</i>
4	<i>kijeb'</i>
5	<i>job'</i>
6	<i>waq'ib'</i>
7	<i>wuqub'</i>
8	<i>wajxakib'</i>
9	<i>b'elejeb'</i>
10	<i>lajuj</i>
11	<i>julajuj</i>
12	<i>kab'lajuj</i>
13	<i>oxlajuj</i>
14	<i>kajlajuj</i>
15	<i>o'lajuj</i>
16	<i>waklajuj</i>
17	<i>wuklajuj</i>
18	<i>wajxaklajuj</i>
19	<i>b'elejlajuj</i>
20	<i>juwinak</i>
30	<i>lajuj re kawinak</i>
40	<i>kawinak</i>
50	<i>lajuj re oxk'al</i>
60	<i>oxk'al</i>
70	<i>lajuj re waqk'al</i>
80	<i>waqk'al</i>
90	<i>lajuj re o'k'al</i>

100	<i>o'k'al</i>
200	<i>lajuj K'al</i>
400	<i>omuch'</i>

MAM

Mam is spoken in the department of Huehuetenango, in the western portion of the country. This is the indigenous language you'll hear in Todos Santos Cuchumatán, which is nestled among the Cuchumatanes mountains.

Greetings & Civilities

Luckily, in Mam you only need two phrases for greeting folks, no matter what time of day it is.

Good morning/
afternoon/evening.

Chin q'olb'el teya.
(informal singular)
Chin q'olb'el kyeyea.
(informal plural)

Goodbye.
Bye. See you soon.

Chi nej.
Chi nej. Ak q'li qib'.

Thank you.

Chonte teya.

How are you?

Tzen ta'ya?

Excuse me.

Naq samy.

What's your name?

Tit biya?

My name is ...

Luan bi ...

Where are you from?

Jaa'tzajnia?

I'm from ...

Ac tzajni ...

Useful Words & Phrases

Where is (a/the) ...?	<i>Ja at ...?</i>
bathroom	<i>bano</i>
doctor	<i>medico/doctor</i>
hotel	<i>hospedaje</i>

Many words in Mam have been in disuse for so long that the Spanish equivalent is now used almost exclusively.

Where is the bus stop? *Ja ne camioneta? (literally, where does the pickup stop?)*

How much is the fruit and vegetables? *Je te ti lobj?*

Do you have ...?	<i>At ...?</i>
boiled water	<i>kqa'</i>
coffee	<i>café</i>
rooms	<i>cuartos</i>

Is there somewhere we can sleep? *Ja tun kqta'n?*

We have it.	<i>At.</i>
We don't have it.	<i>Nti'.</i>
I'm cold.	<i>At xb'a'j/choj.</i>

I'm sick.**good****bad****open****closed****hard****soft****hot****north (white)***At yab'**banex/g'lan**K'ab'ex/nia g'lan**jqo'n**jp'u'n**kuj**xb'une**kyaq**okan***south (yellow)****east (red)****west (black)***eln**jawl**kub'el***Numbers**

The numbers from one to 10 are the same as in K'iche' (p341). For numbers higher than 10, Mam speakers use the Spanish equivalents.



Also available from Lonely Planet:
Latin American Spanish Phrasebook

Glossary

abrazo – embrace, hug; in particular, the formal, ceremonial hug between political leaders

alux, aluxes – Mayan for gremlin, leprechaun, benevolent ‘little people’

Apartado Postal – post-office box; abbreviated Apdo Postal

Ayuntamiento – often seen as H Ayuntamiento (Honorable Ayuntamiento) on the front of town hall buildings; translates as ‘Municipal Government’

barrio – district, neighborhood

billete – bank note (unlike in Spain, where it’s a ticket)

boleto – ticket (bus, train, museum etc)

bolo – colloquial term for drunk (noun)

cabañas – cabins

cacique – Mayan chief; also used to describe provincial warlord or strongman

caféteria – literally ‘coffee-shop,’ but refers to any informal restaurant with waiter service; not usually a *caféteria* in the North American sense of a self-service restaurant

cajero automático – automated teller machine(ATM)

callejón – alley or narrow or very short street

camión – truck or bus

camioneta – bus or pickup truck

cardamomo – cardamom; a spice grown extensively in the Verapaces and used as a flavor enhancer for coffee and tea, particularly in the Middle East

casa de cambio – currency exchange office; offers exchange rates comparable to those of banks and is much faster to use (uncommon in Guatemala)

cazuela – clay cooking pot; usually sold in a nested set

cenote – large, natural limestone cave used for water storage (or ceremonial purposes)

cerveza – beer

Chac – Mayan god of rain

chac-mool – Mayan sacrificial stone sculpture

chapín – citizen of Guatemala

charro – cowboy

chicle – sap of the saponilla tree; used to manufacture chewing gum

chideros – men who collect *chicle*

chingar – literally ‘to rape’ but in practice a word with a wide range of colloquial meanings similar to the use of ‘to screw’ in English

Chinka’ – small, non-Mayan indigenous group living on the Pacific Slope

chuchkajau – Mayan prayer leader

chuj – traditional Mayan sauna; see also *tuj*

chultún – artificial Mayan cistern

cigarro – cigarette

cocina – kitchen; also used for a small, basic one-woman place to eat, often located in or near a municipal market, and in the phrases *cocina económica* (economical kitchen) or a *cocina familiar* (family kitchen)

cofradía – religious brotherhood, most often found in the Highlands

colectivo – jitney taxi or minibus (usually a Kombi or minibus) that picks up and drops off passengers along its route

comal – hot griddle or surface used to cook tortillas

comedor – basic and cheap eatery, usually with a limited menu

completo – full; a sign you may see on hotel desks in crowded cities

conquistador – explorer-conqueror of Latin America from Spain

copal – tree resin used as incense in Mayan ceremonies

correos – post office

corte – Mayan wraparound skirt

costumbre – traditional Mayan rites

criollos – people born in Guatemala of Spanish blood

cruce – crossroads, usually where you make bus connections; also known as *entronque*

curandero – traditional indigenous healer

damas – ladies; the usual sign on toilet doors

dzul, dzules – Mayan for foreigners or ‘townsfolk’

encomienda – Spanish colonial practice of putting indigenous people under the ‘guardianship’ of landowners; practically akin to medieval serfdom

entronque – see *cruce*

faja – Mayan waist sash or belt

ferrocarril – railroad

finca – plantation, farm

galón, galones – US gallons; fluid measure of 3.79L

glyph – symbolic character or figure; usually engraved or carved in relief

gringo/a – a mildly pejorative term applied to a male/female North American visitor; sometimes applied to any visitor of European heritage

gruta – cave

guayabera – man’s thin fabric shirt with pockets and appliquéd designs on the front, over the shoulders and

down the back; often worn in place of a jacket and tie on formal occasions

hacienda – estate; also ‘treasury,’ as in Departamento de Hacienda, Treasury Department

hay – pronounced like ‘eye,’ meaning ‘there is’ or ‘there are’; you’re equally likely to hear *no hay*, meaning ‘there isn’t’ or ‘there aren’t’

hombre/s – man/men

huipil – Mayan woman’s woven tunic; often very colorful and elaborately embroidered

IVA – impuesto al valor agregado or value-added tax; on hotel rooms it is 12%

juego de pelota – ball game

kaperraj – Mayan woman’s all-purpose cloth; used as a head covering, baby sling, produce sack, shawl and more

Kukulcán – Mayan name for the Aztec-Toltec plumed serpent Quetzalcóatl

ladino – person of mixed indigenous and European race; a more common term in Guatemala than *mestizo*

lancha – motorboat used to transport passengers; driven by a *lanchero*

larga distancia – long-distance telephone

lavandería – laundry; a *lavandería automática* is a coin-operated laundry

leng – in the highlands, a colloquial Mayan term for coins

libra – pound; weight measurement of 0.45kg

lleno – full (fuel tank)

machismo – maleness, masculine virility

malecón – waterfront boulevard

manglar – mangrove

manzana – apple; also a city block; see also *supermanzana*

mariachi – small group of street musicians featuring stringed instruments, trumpets and often an accordion; sometimes plays in restaurants

marimba – Guatemala’s xylophone-like national instrument

mestizo – person of mixed indigenous and European blood; the word *ladino* is more common in Guatemala

metate – flattish stone on which corn is ground with a cylindrical stone roller

milla – mile; distance of 1.6km

milpa – maize field

mirador – lookout, vista point

mochilero – backpacker

mordida – ‘bite’; small bribe paid to keep the wheels of bureaucracy turning

mudéjar – Moorish architectural style

mujer/es – woman/women

na – thatched Mayan hut

onza – ounce; weight of 28g

pachete – a squash-type vegetable; can be eaten or used as a loafah

palacio de gobierno – building housing the executive offices of a state or regional government

palacio municipal – city hall; seat of the corporation or municipal government

palapa – thatched shelter with a palm-leaf roof and open sides

panza verde – literally ‘green belly,’ a nickname given to Antigua residents who are said to eat lots of avocados

parada – bus stop; usually for city buses

picop – pickup truck

pie – foot; measure of 0.30m

pisto – colloquial Mayan term for money, quetzals

posada – guesthouse

propino, propina – a tip, different from a *mordida*, which is really a bribe

punta – sexually suggestive dance enjoyed by the Garifuna of the Caribbean coast

puro – cigar

Quetzalcóatl – plumed serpent god of the Aztecs and Toltecs; see also *Kukulcán*

rebozo – long woolen or linen scarf covering the head or shoulders

refago – Mayan wraparound skirt

retablo – ornate, often gilded altarpiece

retorno – ‘return’; used on traffic signs to signify a U-turn or turnaround

roofcomb – a decorative stonework lattice atop a Mayan pyramid or temple

rutelero – jitney

sacbé, sacbeob – ceremonial limestone avenue or path between great Mayan cities

sacerdote – priest

sanatorio – hospital, particularly a small private one

sanitario – literally ‘sanitary’; usually means toilet

secadora – clothes dryer

Semana Santa – Holy Week preceding Easter

stela, stelae – standing stone monument(s); usually carved

supermanzana – large group of city blocks bounded by major avenues; see also *manzana*

supermercado – supermarket; anything from a corner store to a large, US-style supermarket

taller – shop or workshop

taller mecánico – mechanic’s shop, usually for cars

teléfono comunitario – community telephone; found in the smallest towns

tepezcuintle – edible jungle rodent the size of a rabbit

tequila – clear, distilled liquor produced, like pulque and mescal, from the maguey cactus

tienda – small store that may sell anything from candles and chickens to aspirin and bread

típico – typical or characteristic of a region; particularly used to describe food

tocoyal – Mayan head covering

traje – traditional clothing worn by the Maya

tuj – traditional Mayan sauna; see also *chuj*

túmulos – speed bumps found in many towns; sometimes indicated by a highway sign bearing a row of little bumps

tzut – Mayan man's equivalent of a *kaperraj*

viajero – traveler

vulcanizadora – automobile tire repair shop

xate – low-growing fern native to the Petén region and exported for use in floral arrangements, particularly in the US

xateros – men who collect *xate*

zonas – zones

zotz – bat (the mammal) in many Mayan languages

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