

Lost & Found International



**Short Term Missions
Manual**

Welcome!

Thank you so much for deciding to visit us here in Arriaga, Chiapas, Mexico. We look forward to spending time with you as we labor together for the glory of Jesus Christ! Our hope is that your ministry trip will develop and deepen your relationship with the Lord on many different levels. Our heart's desire is that Christ be magnified in a greater measure in your lives and the lives of those you will touch in your coming visit.

On the following pages we have done our best to put together some information about our ministry, missions and some practical ideas to help facilitate your plans for your trip. We may not have covered all your questions or concerns, so please feel free to contact us with anything else you might need or want to know.

In our years of mission's experience we have learned a few things about receiving teams. Something that we feel is very important to relay to you is this...*lay your expectations at the feet of Jesus*. Be open for Him to work in and around you the way He sees fit.

***For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.
Isa 55:8-9***

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

We sincerely look forward to your visit. May the grace of God be with you!

Hid in Him,

Bill and Tammy
Lost and Found International.

Arriaga, Chiapas

Arriaga is a city and one of the 119 municipalities of Chiapas, in southern Mexico.

As of 2005, the municipality had a total population of 34,032. It covers an area of 653.3 km² and is bordered by the Pacific Ocean and the neighbouring state of Oaxaca, as well as by the Chiapas municipalities of Cintalapa, Jiquipilas, Villaflores and Tonalá. The name of the city honours Ponciano Arriaga, the name given to it upon creation of the municipality on 28 May 1910. It was given city status on 1 December 1943.

Climate and Dress

Arriaga sits at almost 300 ft. above sea level. It has two major climatic seasons, Rainy and Dry. The Rainy season usually begins at the end of May and goes till the first of October. Most of the time temperatures range from 80s to well up in the 100s. Winter is the time we experience winds that will knock semi trailers off the road, Cold is not a term you will find in the vocabulary of the folks that live in Arriaga..

Work Attire

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

Daily Attire

Usually, casual clothes are fine. Shorts are more common now than they were a few years ago in Arriaga. Please use common sense about things like shorts- and skirt-length and about the messages on T-shirts. If you happen to have a piercing (nose, tongue, bellybutton, etc) please be sure and leave your hardware at home as it may be an obstacle to the message you have to share. On to another topic, swimming. We are located close to the ocean and we will try to make a day trip to the beach while you are here so be sure and bring something to swim in. Something modest for the ladies such as a one piece and regular swim trunks for the men (please no speedos).

Church Attire

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

Bugs

During the rainy season you can expect a lot of mosquitos, as well as sand flees at the beach, so we recommend that you bring enough repelent to protect you while you are here

Toilets

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

Special Requests

We will attempt to accommodate specific requests, Also please be aware that some special diet needs cannot always be accommodated in Mexico.

If you have an allergy to a food please let us know so that can be dealt with. It is also good to know other allergies (cats, dogs, etc).

Culture

During your stay, you will almost certainly be confronted with some cultural differences. The Mexican people are warm, and will generally extend grace to you as a visitor. However, do your best to be sensitive to the cultural norms that you observe. of the greatest compliments you could make would be to communicate with the people with what ever little bit of Spanish that you might know, instead of trying to get them to understand English.

Greetings

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

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

Food

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

Water

Please do not drink water from the faucet. As a rule you should always drink bottled water, even in hotels. We suggest that you use this water even for brushing teeth. Please remember that you are in Mexico only a short time and we want to avoid all chances of sickness that we can.

Medical

- Please bring the medicine you need for your time here. Many medicines are available here, but they do not always use the same name and can be a bit difficult to find.

- Several have told us that taking Pepto-Bismol, one tablespoon each day beginning a few days before coming to Mexico and continuing throughout their stay, have helped avoid stomach problems. Please make sure you read the instructions, since Pepto does have a few precautions.
- It is good to check with a doctor and have your group bring a small first aid kit with medicines he or she may recommend.
- We also suggest, if possible, that groups bring a nurse or doctor as part of the work group, especially those groups with a sports or health emphasis. This isn't necessarily a requirement, but can be helpful.
- All groups need to be aware of all medical issues for members of their group. Please be proactive in knowing those issues.
- Feel free to contact us in advance with any questions about special medical, diet, or other health needs.

Money and Exchange

Project Money

If your group is going to be part of a work and have agreed to help with project expenses, VBS, camp, or other project, please send the project money a couple of weeks in advance of your trip to our mission agency. Please attach a note designating the money, i.e. "FCC Project Money." Mail the check to:

- Lost & Found Int. P.O. Box 84. Stillwater OK 74076

Personal Money

Money for personal souvenir shopping, eating out, tithes to area churches, and travel outside of Arriaga should be brought either in the form of cash (for exchange) or card (for use at ATMs). Usually, using a debit card at an ATM gives you the best exchange rate. Traveler's cheques are not recommended.

Most credit/debit/charge cards are accepted in Mexico, especially MasterCard and Visa. It is a good idea to let your card company know you will be traveling in Mexico and give them the dates. Many times after one or two usages, the card company will put on a security block for charges coming from Mexico unless they know you are traveling there. Also, please be reminded that most card companies charge a 2%-3% commission on all foreign purchases.

Please be sure and change whatever money you will need for your time in Chiapas at the airport in Mexico City. You will get the best rate and avoid trying to change it in Chiapas, where there are no exchange houses and the banks have very strict rules about exchanging foreign currency

Emergency Money

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

Phones and Computers

Mobile Phones

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

Computers and Email

Email can be accessed while here in Mexico, but we cannot promise that you will have access everyday or that you will have time to answer all emails or answer those emails in detail. If you do bring a laptop we have wireless accessability in the orphanage

Distractions

We want to encourage you to take advantage of your time in Arriaga to unplug from your everyday grind of phone, email, computer, iPod, Twitter, Facebook, pager, MySpace, etc. Your trip can become a great way to get away from the noise, minister simply, and listen to God. If you decide to bring any of these Items please know that as a rule we do not let the children play with these items, simple because many of them don't know how to take care of what belongs to others.

Travel Documents

Passports

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

Visas

On the airplane, or at the Mexico City Airport you will receive a Tourist Card/Visa. Your Visa paper will ask for a Mexico address, use "Arriaga" as the city and "Chiapas" as the state. Please remember that you are a "tourist" while in Mexico, not a student or worker. Please keep your Visa in a safe place until you get to Arriaga. After arriving in Arriaga, your travel documents (Passports, Visas, and paper airline tickets) will be collected and put into the Ministries safe. Loss of the Tourist Card/Visa costs about \$45.00 to replace, this is done at the Mexico City Airport.

Minors

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

Non-US Citizens

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

Travel Arrangements

Flights

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

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

Recently Continental Airlines added a direct flight from Houston, Tx to Tuxtla-Gutierrez, Chiapas which is a huge blessing because it avoids the hassle of the Mexico City Airport which can be a challenge. This direct flight as of June 2010 Fly's into Chiapas on Saturday and out to Houston on Sunday or into Chiapas on Wed. and out on Thurs. It's definitely worth looking into.

Customs and Immigration

After de-boarding the airplane, make your way to immigration (follow the crowd). At the immigration area, you will have the option of two lines: one for Mexican nationals and the other for foreigners. When you make it to the immigration desk, you will be asked for your passport and tourist paper/Visa.

Next you'll go to baggage claim (unless you were told that the bags were checked all the way to Tuxtla). After picking up your luggage, you go to customs. At the customs checkpoint you may be asked to push a button. If the button triggers a red light, your baggage will be searched, if the button triggers a green light, you are free to pass through the sliding glass doors. From there you will head to the national flight desk where you will recheck your bags for your flight to Chiapas. The easiest way to get to the national area is to let one of the baggage boys carry your bags. He will ask what airline and then all you need to do is follow. The average tip for their service is 10 pesos a bag. After you have checked your bags and have your boarding pass now would be a good time to change your money.

Mexico City Airport's International Terminals

The Mexico City Airport now has two terminals.

Terminal 1 is one long building with International flights on one end and National flights on the other.

Terminal 2 is on the other side of the tarmac and you will have to either take a shuttle bus or a tram to get to terminal one for your domestic connection. you should allow if at all possible at least 2 hours between flights to be able to clear customs and immigration as well as going from one end to the other or one terminal to the other.

Travel Insurance

Although we don't require travel insurance, some short-term groups may want to purchase travel insurance to cover emergencies while in Mexico. These policies can cover emergency medical care and emergency evacuation.

Fortunately, there have been few such emergencies over the years. A local insurance broker could give you information about those policies. Or here are a couple of places to look www.missionaryhealth.net www.gninsurance.com
(We are not affiliated with these insurers, and we don't have experience with their travel insurance.)

Leadership and Responsibility of Groups

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

Some Ideas to Make the Most of Your Trip

Pray

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

Brief

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

Debrief

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

A Word About the Children

- The Children that live with us in the orphanage come to us damaged in many ways yet we try to treat them as normal as possible. Our goal is to help them become as healthy and whole as we possible can in the few short years that they will be with us. With that said here are a few comments about how we operate.
- We run a very tight schedule with them which gives them a sense of stability.
- We teach them that every decision has consequences
- We have instructed them in what are acceptable expressions of love (hugs etc)
- Please don't make promises that you can't keep (taking their picture and promising to send copies). we want them to trust our word.
- We are blessed when teams bring gifts, but we don't want to create materialistic mentality in the children so please speak with someone in leadership before you give, this will help us greatly.

- Upon your arrival in Arriaga we will have a time of orientation where we can discuss in more detail all the in's and out's of life in Mexico with a house full of wonderful children.
- Come prepared to play, laugh, sing, and just enjoy what the Lord has done and is doing here in Arriaga.

Packing Checklist

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

Clothing (See also, "Clothing and Dress")

Change of clothes for each day:

Clothing should be nice, clean, but not flashy

Men: plain Ts, polo shirts, pants, and nice jeans

Women: pants, nice jeans, and conservative shirts/blouses

Work project clothing:

At least one set of clothing to "ruin"/work in

Work gloves, hat, bandana

Dress clothing:

One dress shirt/pants for men

One dress/skirt or slacks/blouse for women Closed-toed shoes highly recommended

Jacket or sweater Plan to not have access to a washer/dryer

Money

Money for personal souvenir shopping, eating out, tithes to area churches, should be brought in the form of cash or credit/charge/debit cards (no traveler's cheques, please)

Other

Backpack or messenger bag

Bible, notebook, pen, journal

Passport (Visas are issued en route)

Small gifts for Mexican, translators, friends, and hosts (souvenir from your hometown can be nice)

Reusable water bottle

camera (optional, disposable recommended)

Bug repellent

Contact Information

When calling from the US, all numbers should be dialed as written.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • 011-52-966-662-2635 | Children's Home |
| • 011-521-966-664-0117 | Bill's cell phone |
| • 011-521-966-666-8350 | Tammy's cell phone |
| • 011-52-966-662-3366 | Ronnie & Ivonne Mouser's Home |
| • 011-521-966-664-9001 | Ronnie's cell phone |

Facts About Mexico



The three colors of Mexico's flag hold deep significance for the country and its citizens: green represents hope and victory, white stands for the purity of Mexican ideals and red brings to mind the blood shed by the nation's heroes.



The flag's dramatic emblem is based on the legend of how the Mexicas (or Aztecs) traveled from Aztlán to find the place where they could establish their empire. The god Huitzilopochtli advised them that a sign—an eagle devouring a serpent atop a Nopal cactus—would appear to them at the exact spot where they should begin construction. On a small island in the middle of a lake, the Mexicas came upon the scene exactly as Huitzilopochtli had described it. They immediately settled there and founded the city of

- Mexico is the third-largest country in Latin America after Brazil and Argentina.
- At the beginning of the 21st century, Mexico's population surpassed 100 million.



- Mexico has the largest population of Spanish speakers in the world.
- With almost 25 million residents, Mexico City is one of the most populous metropolitan areas in the world.
- Mexico has the world's second-highest number of Catholics after Brazil.
- At nearly 2,000 miles, the border between Mexico and the United States is the second-longest in the world, after the border between the United States and Canada.
- Mexicans comprise the largest group of legal immigrants in the United States.
- Mexico is located in an area known as the Pacific “Ring of Fire.” This region, one of Earth's most dynamic tectonic areas, is characterized by active volcanoes and frequent seismic activity. The highest point in the country, Citlaltépetl (also called Orizaba) and the active volcano Popocatépetl are among the many volcanic peaks in Mexico.



Facts About Chiapas



Early History

Chiapa de Corzo, a Mayan settlement in the center of Chiapas, shows evidence of human occupation since 1400 B.C., though little is known about the inhabitants of that area. Around 600 A.D., the Mayan city of Palenque was established and the first large structures were begun. However, much of the early history of the city--like that of the state--remains a mystery to archaeologists.

Chiapas represents a small portion of the region once inhabited by the Mayan Indians. For at least 2,000 years, the Mayan culture flourished throughout Mesoamerica. Skilled weavers and temple builders, they left behind a wealth of archaeological treasures for later generations to discover and admire.

The Mayans who originally occupied the region were later conquered by the Chiapa Indians. Evidence suggests that the Aztecs appeared in the area during the 15th century, although they were unable to completely displace the Chiapa tribe. In Náhuatl, the language of the Aztecs, *Chiapas* means *the place where the chia sage grows*.

Middle History

In 1522, after conquering the Aztec Empire, Hernán Cortés sent tax collectors to the area that is now Chiapas. Soon after, Cortés dispatched his emissary, Luis Marín, to the region to subdue the indigenous Tzotzile Indians. Marín was fiercely opposed in the highlands, and reinforcements were dispatched to help control the natives, many of whom chose suicide over being conquered.

Although formal combat ended in 1528, the natives continued to resist Spanish rule into the 17th century.

While many Mexican states flourished during the Spanish colonial period--in large part because of their natural resources--resource-poor Chiapas languished in poverty and discontent. The melding of Indian and Spanish blood that produced the mestizo population was less pronounced in Chiapas than elsewhere in the country. Consequently, the identity of the Chiapas Indians was better preserved than that of neighboring cultures. Even today, many of Chiapas' ethnic groups

Recent History

Under the leadership of Catholic priest Matías Antonio de Córdoba, Chiapas declared independence from Spain in 1821; in 1824, the state joined the Mexican alliance. Chiapas' constitution was drafted in 1826, and the state was fully incorporated into Mexico in 1841.

Conflicts between colonial landowners and the indigenous people continued throughout the 19th century. However, the Mexican Revolution, which started in 1910, left Chiapas largely untouched.

The primary industries in Chiapas include crude oil production, manufacturing, agriculture and coffee export. Chiapas opened its first assembly plant in 2002, a fact that highlights the historical lack of industry in this area. Tourism, another important industry, brings countless visitors to the state each year to visit Tuxtla Gutiérrez, San Cristóbal and other landmarks.

Chiapas ranks second among the Mexican states in the production of cacao, the product used to make chocolate, and is responsible for 60 percent of Mexico's total coffee output. Other significant crops are sugar cane, bananas and other fruits.



Archeological Sites and Ruins

A major tourist destination in the area is Palenque, a Mayan archeological site near the Usumacinta River. Although much smaller than the huge sites at Tikal or Copán, Palenque contains some of the finest architecture, sculpture and stucco reliefs the Mayans ever produced.

Chinkultic is another moderate-size archeological ruin in the state. This Pre-Columbian Mayan city flourished in the Mayan Classic Era, which spanned the 3rd through 9th centuries.

The Sumidero Canyon

The Sumidero Canyon was once the site of an epic battle between the Spaniards and Chiapanecan Indians. The Chiapanecans chose to throw themselves from the high edges of the canyon rather than be defeated by Spanish forces.

Today, the canyon is a popular destination for ecotourism. Visitors often take boat trips down the river that runs through the canyon and enjoy the area's natural beauty including the many birds and abundant vegetation.

Bonampak Ruins

The Mayan ruins of Bonampak in the Lacandon rainforest (La Selva Lacandona) feature some of the finest remaining Maya murals. The realistically rendered paintings depict human sacrifices, musicians and scenes of the royal court.

Capital: Tuxtla Gutiérrez

Major Cities (population):

Tuxtla Gutiérrez (503,320)

Tapachula (282,420)

Ocosingo (170,280)

San Cristóbal de las Casas (166,460)

Las Margaritas (98,374)

Size/Area: 28,653 square miles

Population: 4,293,459 (2005 Census)

Year of statehood: 1823

San Cristobal de las Casas ("Sahn-Kris-toh-bahl-de-lahs-cahsas") was once Capital of the state of Chiapas, when the state was under Guatemalan rule; it may still have been but for its reluctance at first to join union with Mexico; in 1892 it fell out of favor with the powers of the day and the capital was moved to neighboring Tuxtla Gutierrez.

San Cristobal de las Casas shares a similar history to that of indigenous Patzcuaro; deriving part of its name from Bartolome de la Casas, the bishop sent here by the Spaniards to rebuild bridges with the indigenous local population. Like Vasco de Quiroga in Patzcuaro, *de las Casas* endeared himself to the local population by promoting self-sufficiency and education.

San Cristobal is characterized by its peaceful and welcoming atmosphere, coupled with an artistic and bohemian flair which attracts many European visitors, especially.



The colonial streets and alleyways lined with red-roof tiles and white-washed walls beg wanderers to explore and discover the nooks and crannies; alleyways open up into picturesque arcades and plazas showing off their authentic colonial architecture and hosting churches, museums, cafés, restaurants and artisan workshops, among other delights. The city is situated at 7,000 feet above sea level, in a lush green valley where the air is fresh and you can experience that unique clarity of highland light.

Although San Cristobal is the principal market town and commercial center in this area, it's also the best hub from which to explore the surrounding indigenous villages and the magnificent natural beauty for which Chiapas is known.

With easy access most commonly by road from the state's capital city, Tuxtla Gutierrez, good local infrastructure and amenities, and surrounded by some of Mexico's most breath-taking scenery and unspoiled natural wonders, it's no surprise that San Cristobal is Chiapas's top destination and hub for further exploration of this alluring region in southern Mexico.

NB: Don't miss the coffee! Chiapas is one of Mexico's (and the world's) premier coffee growing regions. If you like coffee, make sure you taste some local blends; they are organic and exceptional.

Military Checkpoints: Expect to pass through at least one, but probably several of these on your road trip through Chiapas. Don't be alarmed, the soldiers may or may not check your car's trunk; they are polite, respectful and can even provide local advice and directions if you need it.

Special Note About Photography: The people in this region do not, as a rule, like photographs taken of them and the things they own. In some of the surrounding villages, it is prohibited to take photographs all together, with those who do not comply facing equipment confiscation, fines and even temporary imprisonment. Ask before you take photographs of people and their possessions; you may be asked to pay a small fee for the privilege.

About Tuxtla Gutierrez

Tuxtla Gutierrez and neighboring San Cristobal de las Casas and Comitan are in the state of Chiapas, a region east of Oaxaca and south of Villahermosa and which is undoubtedly Mexico's most stunning natural scenic area: mostly wild and rugged, it is rich in indigenous life and culture.

Chiapas' thickly wooded jungles, mountains and valleys, coupled together with its traditional cultures and indigenous roots have kept its look, feel and style very distinct from the rest of Mexico. Although there are some cities, symbols and events here which reveal the area's colonial heritage, the people here are still well connected with their indigenous roots and life in many parts of the state continues to be lived according to custom and ritual.

Many argue that the natural beauty of this area has no parallel in Mexico. Deep green forested valleys; awesome waterfalls and high mountains with deep canyons and gorges; a colossal wealth of flora, fauna and wildlife, and glorious lakes certainly make this area one of Mexico's most unspoiled and scenically awesome natural habitats.

Away from the larger towns, Spanish is a second language as people here have stayed true to their indigenous cultures and tongue. You'll see a lot of indigenous people going about their everyday life, often wearing their traditional dress.

Tuxtla Gutierrez ("Toox-tlah Goo-Tee-Eh-Rehs") is the capital city of the State of Chiapas. In contrast to the rest of Chiapas, it is a modern, bustling city growing very quickly. Tuxtla Gutierrez became the state Capital in 1892 and today is the main gateway to Chiapas for visitors, as it offers excellent road and air connections to and from the rest of Mexico.

Some travelers looking for the wild, unspoiled and truly indigenous side of Mexico use the capital city as a set-off point only, although in doing so they miss a lot of what the city has to offer.

One of Mexico's finest zoos is based here and it's also the best place to get access to the amazing boat trips through the Cañon del Sumidero (see Key Attractions).

Don't miss the coffee! Chiapas is one of Mexico's (and the world's) premier coffee growing regions. If you like coffee, make sure you taste some local blends; they are exceptional.