

Mexico City

Craig & Natalia Baumtrog



We are the Baumtrog family: Craig, Natalia, Noah, and Jackson. Our stories came together over 13 years ago. We met and studied at IBRP, a Bible seminary in Argentina. God called us both individually and prepared us for ministry and missions. Over the past years, we have lived in 4 countries and various cultures.

While in every country, God allowed us to serve the next generation, and we have seen God move and transform lives. That's what excites us the most!

Since April 2022, we have served in Mexico City, pioneering the Red Universitaria ministry in Latin America's largest university, UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico). We are a part of the RU team located in Guanajuato, Mexico, and 11 other countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

UNAM

It is the largest campus and one of the most prestigious in Latin America, located in Ciudad Universitaria, Mexico City (university city).

In the 2022-23 school year, 373,000 students are studying on this campus.

More than 40 thousand faculty members, 47 buildings, and over 120 degrees are offered. UNAM has its bus system, security, fire department, and a pro soccer team called PUMAS.

Most students studied in a UNAM prep school, so they can directly access UNAM to learn. Less than 10% of those applying from other prep schools to study here enter the school annually. Some faculties only allow 15 new students a year. It is a very competitive school. The symbolic amount paid per semester at UNAM to get your bachelor's degree is about 5 -10 cents a semester.

BUDGET

Committing to a missions trip of any kind will cost you some time and money.

Here is a **breakdown of the expenses**:

- \$43.00 per day per person (travel days included) plus the hotel choice amount. This will cover all housing, food, transportation, some ministry expenses, and local help on the ground. **Please note:** We have two primary hotel options with different prices and amenities. See the hotels section to choose which accommodations suit you and **add that cost to the \$43** to find your daily per-person cost. **Please include the total per diem amount for travel days as well. This gives us a work funds buffer.**
- Airfare: You are responsible for booking all of your flights. The missionary will **NOT** handle any of this responsibility or money. Please have everyone arrive on the same flight on the same day, and try to avoid red-eye flights. **Before purchasing, fly into MEX (Benito Juarez International Airport) and confirm the flight details.**
- **One-time \$55 per person.** For “Free Day” and “Cultural Experiences” (See below).
- **MANDATORY** insurance: \$4.50 per day per person purchased through ACE/Chubs.

Cultural activities included and its websites:

- **Castillo de Chapultepec** is a history museum and the only real royalty castle in Latin America: <https://mnh.inah.gob.mx/quienes-somos>
- **Torre Latinoamericana** is the best panoramic view of Mexico City, the largest city in Latin America: <https://www.miradorlatino.com/>
- Entrance to your free day pick.

Free day options (pick one):

- **Piramides de Teotihuacan** (pyramids) a pre-hispanic city: <https://www.inah.gob.mx/zonas/23-zona-arqueologica-de-teotihuacan>
- **Tepotztlán** is one of the 128 Pueblos Magicos (magic towns) of Mexico. Optional 90 minutes of hiking to the top of the Tepotztlán for a breathtaking view: <https://www.voyagemexique.info/es/tepoztlan/#1> Subir a la cima del Tepozteco

HOTELS

Novo Coapa

This hotel is the closest to us. It has a Starbucks, Krispy Cream, and a supermarket across the street. Breakfast is not included.

- Hotel cost per day per person: \$36 (plus \$8 for breakfast) = \$ 44

Website: <https://www.hotelnovocoapa.com/>

City Express Plus by Marriott Periferico Sur Tlalpan

This excellent option includes a buffet breakfast—only 12 minutes from us.

- Hotel cost per day per person: \$ 55

Website: <https://www.marriott.com/en-us/hotels/mexpp-city-express-plus-periferico-sur-tlalpan/overview/?scid=f2ae0541-1279-4f24-b197-a979c79310b0>

GETTING STARTED

Here is a step-by-step guide to get things rolling.

1.) Communicate with the Baumtrogs and confirm dates and budget.

2.) Go to <https://wideopenmissions.org/go-short-term/short-term-trips> and follow the instructions to register your team. (Each team member must be registered and have signed the assumption of risk, ACE/Chub insurance designation, code of conduct, team member emergency contact, and background check release.)

A) Please note EVERY team member must be enrolled in the insurance. An AGWM missionary is not allowed to accept a team without this insurance. The cost is \$4.50/ day/ person and should be included in your budget.

B) This process occasionally changes, and we are only sometimes kept informed, but the staff at Wide Open Missions is eager and available to walk you through this whole process.

C) Here are two contacts in the office:

Simon Parks (Lead): sparks@ag.org, 417-862-2781 Ext. 2067 Susan Shahan (LAC): sshahan@ag.org, 417-862-2781 Ext. 2031

3.) Passports: Everyone needs a passport to enter Mexico. Double-check that they **do not expire within two months of your arrival** or that person will not be permitted to enter the country. Make two copies of each passport: bring one and leave one at home.

4.) Download and complete the required forms (these will be sent to you at the MAPS office). Distribute these to each team member and give them a time frame to return them. Sometimes, it is best to have the team meet and complete the forms in person. At this point, you should have received a confirmation number from AGWM and have already submitted the Team Registration Form. Once you have completed the forms, please send them to the MAPS office with the information below. **If you have any questions about the team registration process, contact the MAPS office (Wide Open Missions) at (417) 862-2781 extension 2067.**

Fax: (417) 862-1878

Email: mapsteams@ag.org

Address: AGWM-PFL, 1445 N. Boonville Ave, Springfield, MO 65802

8.) Raise your budget.

9.) Send your per diem, free day, cultural experiences, and work funds to Craig 1-month before arrival.

10.) Head to Mexico City!

MONEY STUFF

Every missionary has different preferences on how to handle a team's finances. There are many options, and we are flexible, but the following is how we **prefer** to hold the funds.

Once the team money has been collected, you can go to a Credit union and deposit it into our account (or make a wire transfer). **We will keep track of all in-country team expenses, pay as we go**, and provide a complete detailed report of all payments to the team leader at the end of the trip. If any funds are left over, we ask that you consider donating to our ministry or one of the ministries you have partnered with while here. However, other options, including writing you a check for the remaining balance, can be discussed.

The benefit of having the missionary handle the in-country finances is that it releases you from some stress and helps the missionary account for how much funds are available as the trip progresses. Some items, such as hotels, can only be paid by credit card. We prefer that the money be sent in at least one month before the trip so that we can transfer it into local currency. Also, often, we need to pay deposits or purchase materials before you arrive in the country. It also prevents surprises when traveling with foreign credit cards or large amounts of cash.

Some teams prefer to channel the money through AGWM. We are open to that process as well. It adds more work on reporting for us, but we are happy to work with you however you feel most comfortable.

SPENDING MONEY

Each team member will want to bring some spending money to buy souvenirs, snacks, drinks, etc. We will take you to a unique artisan market to buy souvenirs, and sometimes, you will want to purchase other items like snacks and sodas between meals.

We highly recommend bringing an ATM card with you. It is the easiest way for you to obtain Pesos. It is a significant pain to exchange cash in a bank, so withdrawing from an ATM is best.

BE SURE TO NOTIFY YOUR BANK OR CARD COMPANY THAT YOU'LL BE IN MEXICO!

Most places will take credit cards as well.

Instruct team members who bring cash to bring larger dollar bills to exchange as they arrive at the airport. Especially if they are not carrying an ATM card, we can only exchange money when you arrive in Mexico City.

Do **NOT** bring traveler's checks, money orders, credit gift cards, or checks. None of these will be accepted except in banks, which have high fees to cash them in. It is not worth it. Bring cash or/ and an ATM card.

PACKING LIST

Shoes: 1 or 2 pairs of comfortable tennis shoes; you will be walking a lot.

Tops: Be modest. T-shirts for most days are ideal. Nothing tight, revealing, see-through, and no bra straps showing. It's a good idea to plan two shirts daily because we often sweat or get wet, and you may want to change. Sometimes, it can be chilly in the evening so you might want a light sweatshirt or jacket - your rain jacket could double for this.

Pants: On ministry days, jeans, capris, and cargo pants will be required. For the free day and downtime, modest shorts are acceptable. Again, modesty is essential. We need to be a witness in what we do and how we look. **NO YOGA PANTS OR LEGGINGS!**

Church: Churches are conservative: nice jeans with no holes or strings, capris, and modest skirts, but with a nicer top (polo, button down, etc.). Also acceptable are khakis or slacks with a collared shirt and modest dresses or skirts that fall below the knee.

Toiletries: Besides the usual (soap, shampoo, toothbrush & paste, deodorant, etc.), you'll want sunscreen, bug spray, allergy medicine (mold & pollen can be problems here - bring Benadryl), Aspirin or IBU, Tums, antidiarrheal, **motion sickness medicine** (if you get car sick, please bring this!), etc. It is a good idea to pack everything in Ziplocks to avoid explosions on the airplane.

Snacks: Feel free to pack some snacks. It'll also save space for souvenirs on the way home.

Rain Gear: If you have a waterproof jacket, BRING IT! You'll be glad you did. If not, a small umbrella will be helpful. The rainy season is between June- September.

Miscellaneous: a backpack to carry daily, water bottle, phone charger, extra medications, *suitcase lock* (good for keeping things safe in the hotel room while you are out!), etc. There may be specific things based on what you'll be doing.

SPECIAL NOTES

Please read and communicate these special notes with your team:

Packing: Please come prepared with everything you may need personally and ministry-wise. We will communicate in advance if we plan to buy any supplies in the country. Otherwise, we will be too busy after you arrive to make extra trips to find things that still need to be brought.

Flexibility: The most essential quality in a short-term (or long-term) missionary is flexibility, which starts right now. Plans will change on our end before you arrive. Although we are typical “gringos” and like to be well-prepared and plan, we work in a culture that is much less structured, and programs and details will have to be tweaked along the way. The good news is that God knows exactly what will happen and where He needs us. Even though these changes to *our* plans may be frustrating, I believe they all fit into *His* greater plan.

Transportation: We typically hire buses and drivers to pick you up and drop you off at our daily activities, and we must stick to our schedule. Please be at the bus **on time, AKA 5 minutes early!**

Water: Each team member should bring a refillable water bottle on the trip. The water in Mexico is not drinkable! We will always have purified water with us at all activities. We want you to stay hydrated!

Meals at UNAM and Churches: We will often eat meals at the school and churches where we minister. For them, cooking these meals is a labor of love and a way to invest in their community. They often serve us large portions - do your best to eat everything you are served or try to ask them for a smaller portion. If you cannot finish your food, do **not** throw it away; share it with someone else. Always be sure to say “gracias” to the cooks and that the food was “rico” or “delicioso.”

Special dietary needs: For us, the best part of visiting a new place is trying all of the new foods! Please explain to your team members that they must be willing to eat whatever is served. If there are any special dietary needs or allergies, please advise us, but the individual should come prepared with their own food. This country is not overly accommodating to food allergies and especially not to food “preferences.” We will eat a lot of rice and beans, which works well for gluten allergies, but don't expect any gluten-free options on the menu.

Poverty and needs: You will likely encounter poverty and people asking for help. Please remember that the church is the community's permanent representative of Jesus. The pastor

knows the needs of the community and the people personally, and frequently, the people asking for help are not the most in need. If you feel the Lord laying upon your heart to give, we highly recommend giving it as an offering to the church for the “needs of the community.” Providing aid through the Mexican church is better than the “rich American.” Also, all church services will have an offering; we recommend planning to **give in those offerings**. Be discreet when opening up your wallet and placing the money in the basket, but give generously to God’s work in these communities.

Children: The children you encounter will touch your heart. Please use extreme caution in your conversations with them. It is common to want to take the kids out of their situation, but don’t say anything like that to the kids. Even as a joke, people will say, “You’re so cute; I wish I could just take you back with me.” Nowadays, even comments like that can, and have been, misconstrued as human trafficking and will cause legal problems for you, your church, the missionary, and the local pastor. Avoid comments such as these.

Cultural Sensitivity: You will be in Mexico at the invitation of the national church through your host missionary (us). Please try to adapt to the Mexican way of doing things. For example, a service may start at 6:30, but we may not begin until 7:30 - roll with it and enjoy the ride. Also, avoid questions of possible numbers or attendance to nationals - frequently, pastors are embarrassed to share such details, and to ask is not culturally sensitive.

Leadership: As the host missionaries, many teams do not understand all the responsibilities and details that fall on us, and nothing is more important than communication. Please explain to your team how the communication must be structured for us to alleviate stress and stay organized. We, the host missionaries, will communicate all the necessary details to the team leader, and you, in turn, will communicate those to your team and organize the remaining information. If a team member has questions, problems, concerns, etc., their first stop will be to you. If you can’t answer the question, you can ask us the question, and we will provide you with the answers you need. Organizing communication like this gives us much less stress and puts us in a critical role. We are here to bless these churches and pastors, not to cause them more work.

Team Devotionals: You are expected to have daily team devotionals to amplify the spiritual aspect of your team and keep yourselves spiritually prepared. This, however, is not our responsibility, but the team leader’s - please take it seriously. You can handle it however you want, but I encourage you to be stubborn. Your team will tire as the week progresses, but nothing is more critical than the devotional and prayer times.