

**San Agustín Parish
Cuanacaxtitlan, Guerrero, Mexico
Travel Overview**



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Preparing for Travel to San Agustín

First time travelers to Guerrero need to allow several months to prepare. **Volunteers pay their own travel and living expenses**; the Sister Parish committee will provide information on the daily stipend needed to cover living costs at San Agustín. This money should be paid in US currency to the PIME staff upon arrival. It includes the expenses of transportation to and from the airport, food, lodging, and utilities. Additional spending money may be desirable to purchase incidentals such as cold drinks, items from local markets or souvenirs. PIME can exchange US currency to Mexican currency.

Travel is recommended during the dry season of January to March with the dates coordinated to accommodate with PIME's obligations. Often, Monday is the ideal day to arrive in Acapulco. The climate is warm during the day. Late-spring clothing such as light weight pants or capris and short sleeve shirts are appropriate. The temperature drops after sunset. A lightweight fleece or windbreaker is recommended. Sun glasses and hats are recommended. Sturdy walking shoes for uneven terrain should be included. When travel includes a Sunday stay, the opportunity to travel to west coast beaches may be available. Plan to bring beach clothes/bathing suits.

Check the US Department of State website, www.travel.state.gov for current information on travel to Mexico. This website contains links to other valuable information sources.

- Passports are required for entry into Mexico.
- Travel itineraries and contact information should be provided to the Sister Parish committee.
- The Sister Parish committee will register all travelers to San Agustín as a group with the US Embassy. Registration at the U.S. Embassy makes your presence and whereabouts known, in case it is necessary for a consular officer to contact you in an emergency.

Travel Arrangements

A mission team should work with a travel agent to purchase tickets on one itinerary and the team should travel on the same flight. Flights need to be booked through to Acapulco, arriving by early afternoon; it is best to fly directly from the US to Acapulco, avoiding connecting flights in Mexico City. Volunteers will need to clear Mexican Customs upon arrival in Acapulco (or in Mexico City if the flight touches down there).

Any medical/health related equipment or supplies that will be taken to Cuana must have import permits obtained in advance of your arrival. Inappropriately documented items are subject to confiscation by the Mexican Customs. Regaining possession of the items again may not be possible even if exorbitant fees are paid, or the items may be returned months later at your expense.

Transportation from Acapulco to Cuana will be arranged by PIME; the drive takes about three hours. The roads are paved for most of the trip; however the last portion of the drive is made on unpaved roads. Arrival in Cuana before sunset is desirable since the roads can be difficult and there are no street lights.

Living Arrangements

Volunteers are provided housing in the San Agustín Church complex in Cuana. The facility has some modern conveniences including electricity, indoor plumbing with cold water showers, and internet access. Potable water (purified) is available, bring a water bottle. The Sister Parish committee will remain in contact with PIME staff during a mission trip and can contact the volunteers' local family members. Communication to the US is available via the internet; personal cell phones with international capability function in Cuana.

Shared and dorm room style accommodations are made available. It is preferable for travelers to bring a twin-size sheet set and hand/bath towels. Bathrooms are shared, and set up as a room with a sink, toilet, and open shower with a floor drain. It is advisable to bring sandals for the shower. Clothes lines are available to dry towels and hand washed clothing items.

Breakfast is a self-serve meal of light fare including toast and cold cereals. The noon meal may be prepared by PIME staff or consumed at other work locations. The dinner meal is prepared by PIME staff in Cuana and is typical local Mexican foods. Care is taken to ensure that the food is safe and well prepared. Travelers may want to bring packable snack items such as granola bars or crackers and peanut butter for times spent away from San Agustín.

Pack a water bottle to refill daily for fresh water when away from Cuana. A water-filtration system or water purification tabs are not required. Travelers are reminded not to eat uncooked fruits or vegetables with the skin and not to drink beverages with ice when uncertain if the water has been boiled or sanitized.

PIME can exchange US currency into pesos at the prevailing exchange rate.

Review the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website, www.cdc.gov/travel for information on health considerations. This site offers information to assist travelers and their health-care providers in deciding the vaccines, medications, and other measures necessary to prevent illness and injury during international travel.

- Review the CDC website to determine your immunization needs. Set up an appointment with a health-care provider 4 to 6 weeks before your trip. Many vaccines take time to become effective, and some vaccines must be given in a series.
- Put together a Travelers' Health Kit, pack sufficient quantity of your prescribed medications and a prescribed antibiotic to self-treat moderate to severe diarrhea. In addition, bring an over-the-counter medication to prevent diarrhea, sunscreen, insect repellent with DEET, and alcohol-based hand gels containing at least 60% alcohol to wash your hands when soap and clean water are not readily available.