



Mesoamerican Permaculture Institute (IMAP)

PLANTING FRUIT TREES



WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

In recent years the coffee crisis caused by the *roya* disease has jeopardized the livelihoods of the men and women who depend on coffee for income generation. In addition, unlike “sun” coffee grown throughout the world, a sizable percentage of Guatemalan coffee needs shade to grow properly.

By planting fruit trees in coffee fields alongside small-holder farmers, you will do more than just provide shade for coffee trees. You will contribute to the preservation of the local ecosystem while enabling local men and women to produce food for their families and improve their livelihoods through the sale of papaya, avocado, passion fruit and lemon in the local market.

OBJECTIVE

The goal of this trip is to empower a family to produce fruit in their coffee fields, generate income by selling the fruit in the local market and conserve the local ecosystem.

10 THINGS YOU WILL LEARN

1. What the Guatemalan civil war was like, as told by a woman who lived through it.
2. What Mayan cosmology is all about.
3. What your personal nawal is, and what it means.
4. The who, when, why, what and where of Guatemala's coffee crisis.
5. How to address the coffee crisis through permaculture.
6. What traditional Guatemalan food tastes like.
7. How foreign aid can sometimes have disastrous effects.
8. How sustainable reforestation can create healthy eco-systems.
9. How permaculture principles can help with soil conservation, land and water management.
10. How a local community can grow their own food and reach food sovereignty.

ITINERARY



Day 1 – Arrival and orientation

Welcome, welcome, welcome! Here's what your first day looks like:

- Arrive at Aurora Airport in Guatemala City
- Shuttle bus to IMAP
- Orientation to the week's activities
- Over dinner, orientation with a member of the IMAP team

Day 2 – It's More than Tree Planting: Mayan Cosmology, Coffee, and Site Preparation

After a delicious breakfast prepared by a women's group, complete with coffee from their own harvest and jam from their own kitchens, you will find out what how your Mayan sign is, and we'll discuss how the day is connected the wider natural world according to Mayan cosmology. Then it will be time to get your hands dirty!

- 7:30 am – 8:30 am: Breakfast at IMAP prepared by a local women's group
- 9:00 am - 10:00 am : On-site at IMAP – Reflection on Mayan cosmology
- 10:00 am – 11:30 am: Prepare organic materials & compost for tree planting site
- 11:30 am – 12:30 am: Hear one woman's experience of the 36-year civil war
- 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm: Lunch
- 2:00 pm: While hiking up to the coffee field, learn about the coffee crisis in Guatemala
- 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm: Carry organic materials/compost to the field, site and soil preparation
- 6:00 pm: Dinner and reflection of the day with an IMAP team member

Day 3 – Digging, Planting, Digging, Planting

After our daily Mayan cosmology reflection, you'll begin planting trees. While digging and planting, you'll deepen your knowledge of sustainable reforestation, and you'll understand why it's important to diversify coffee fields and how Mayan cosmology can help determine the best time to plant.



- 7:30 am – 8:30 am: Breakfast
- 8:30 – 9:00 am: Mayan cosmology reflection
- 9:30 am – 12:30 pm: Continue site preparation
- 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm: Lunch
- 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm: Tree planting
- 6:00 pm: Dinner & free evening

Day 4 – Seeing the Forest For the Trees

Through a guided hike of Mount Iquitieu, you'll walk through Lake Atitlan's only primary growth forests, and better understand why biodiversity, specifically tree diversity, is essential to a healthy ecosystem. The afternoon will be dedicated to tree planting.

- 7:30 am: Breakfast at the women's group
- 8:30 – 9:00 am: Mayan cosmology reflection
- 9:30 am – 12:30 pm: Tour of Iquitieu
- 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm: Lunch
- 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm: Tree planting
- 6:00 pm: Dinner and daily reflection

Day 5 – A Farmer's Field

Today you will visit a farmer's "food forest" – he grows avocado, passion fruit, papaya, and lemon among his agricultural crops using permaculture techniques. You'll see the potential for what local farmers can do by integrating fruit trees.



- 7:30 am: Breakfast at the women's group
- 8:30 – 9:00 am: Mayan cosmology reflection
- 9:30 am – 12:30 pm: Tour of farmer's field
- 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm: Lunch
- 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm: Tree planting
- 6:00 pm: Dinner and daily reflection

Day 6 – Plant Fruit Trees in a Relocated Community

Chukumuk is one of the most vulnerable communities in Guatemala. Its entire population is comprised of men, women and children who were relocated from Panabaj after their village was destroyed during hurricane Stan in 2005. Despite huge investment from the Spanish government on schools, roads and housing, the community has little to no source of income. They are isolated from local markets and due to the poor soil quality in the region, have no areas in which to carry out the subsistence agriculture on which many of them used to depend. Today you will learn the history and struggles of a relocated community and see first hand the detrimental affects of aid if not used conscientiously. You will then plant trees using permaculture principles that can be implemented to improve people's lives.

- 7:30 am: Breakfast at the women's group
- 9:00 am – 12:30 pm: Work day in the village of Chukumuk: design and implementation of a school or family garden, with activities like soil building, water conservation (digging trenches) and tree planting
- 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm: Lunch
- 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm: Work day, continued
- 6:00 pm: Dinner and daily reflection. Discussion on your impression of the 2 villages / general talk on Indigenous community resistance versus foreign aid led development.

Day 7: Get to know San Lucas

After our daily reflection on Mayan cosmology, we will discuss your impressions and observations of what you've learned about Guatemala people and the challenges they face. Then you'll spend a relaxing morning walking around the streets of San Lucas. Visit the lively market and learn about the history of this charming little town.

- 7:30 – 8:30: Breakfast
- 8:30 – 9:30 am: Mayan cosmology reflection and discussion about the week
- 10:00 am – 11:30 am: Tour of San Lucas
- 12:30 pm – 1:30pm: Lunch
- 2:00 pm : Departure