

Mesoamerican Permaculture Institute (IMAP)

HOME GARDENS

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

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 have 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.

OBJECTIVE

The goal of this trip is to design and build a garden in a relocated the community, in a way that can be carried on and replicated by the community members themselves in the years to come.

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. How permaculture is practiced, and how it can be relevant to your own life
5. What traditional Guatemalan food tastes like.
6. How foreign aid can sometimes have disastrous effects.
7. How a garden can be built with very little resources.
8. How permaculture principles can help with soil conservation, land and water management.
9. How a local community can grow their own food and reach food sovereignty.
10. The dazzling colours and textures of a Guatmlan village on Lake Atitlan.

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 – Permaculture in action at the community level

After a delicious breakfast prepared by a women's cooperative, 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!

The goal of the day is to be introduced to the ethics and principles of permaculture. Through a guided tour of IMAP, you will learn about how permaculture is practiced, and how it can be relevant to your own life. You'll visit IMAP's Seed Bank, which strives to preserve the local Mayan seed heritage, and you'll meet the local community of Pachitulul and learn about their interaction with IMAP.

You will also collect seeds that will be used in the creation of tomorrow's home garden, and will be given ideas and inspiration for the design. In the afternoon you will participate in the hands-on implementation of small permaculture project at IMAP.

- 7:30 am – 8:30 am: Breakfast at IMAP prepared by a local women’s group
- 9:00 am – 12:30 am: Welcome and orientation at IMAP followed by a reflection on Mayan cosmology, an introduction to permaculture and a tour of the center
- 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm: Lunch
- 2:00 pm – 4:30 pm: Hands-on permaculture project
- 6:00 pm – Dinner with reflection on the day’s activities

Day 3 – Start building the garden

Today you will be confronted with the typical problems faced by people wishing to implement a home garden in areas with poor soil quality, and by people with limited time and space.

- 7:30 am – 8:30 am: Breakfast
- 8:30 am – 9:30 am: Hear one woman’s experience of the 36-year civil war
- 9:30 am – 11:00 am: Introduction to families where we will be working followed by site analysis and assessment
- 11:00 am – 12.30 pm: Design a garden with help from IMAP technicians and input from families
- 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm: Lunch on-site in Chukumuk
- 2:00 – 4:30 pm: Time to get your hands dirty! You will begin to implement the design developed in the morning. This will involve improving the soil, marking paths, putting in beds, filling pots and tires with soil, setting up a nursery and composting area. We will also aim to implement water conservation and natural grey water treatment systems depending on family needs and available space.
- 6:00 pm – Dinner with reflection on the day’s activities

Day 4 – Continue building the garden

You’ll spend the whole day continuing to build the garden, working alongside family members. This will be all-day practical work in the community, so make sure you get a good night’s sleep beforehand! Free evening tonight.

Day 5 – Finish the garden

The goal of the day is for you to interact with the community members to make sure they take ownership of the project and understand how they can replicate the process in other homes.



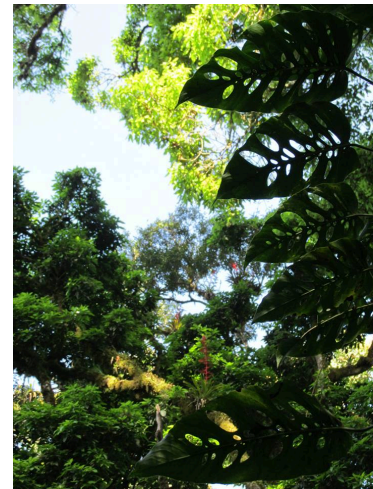
- 7:30 am – 8:30 am: Breakfast
- 9:00 am – 12:30 pm: Finish garden (tie up loose ends). Great chance for before & after photos!

- 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm: Lunch
- 2:00 pm – 4:30 pm: Challenge your assumptions: Group activity based on interpretation and analysis of murals representing contemporary and historical issues in Latin America
- 6:00 pm: Dinner and daily reflection.

Day 6 - Learning in the field

The focus of this day is educational, but also recreational. After breakfast at the regular hour, you have 2 options for the morning:

1. A **hike in a primary growth forest** where you will learn about the essential role of forests in maintaining balanced ecosystems, and how to recognize the natural patterns that exist and that are replicated throughout the natural world.



OR

2. A **visit to the spectacular village of Quixaya.** Quixaya is an autonomous indigenous community that have managed their own affairs since gaining title of their lands 22 years ago. Here you will learn about challenges faced by a rural Indigenous community seeking their own form of development, and you will learn practical solutions based on permaculture principles that this community are continuing to implement as they seek to become fully self sufficient. Bring your bathing suit! You'll have the option to swim in stunning natural pools.



- 1:00 - 2:00 pm: Lunch at IMAP.
- 2:00 – 4:30 pm: Practical exercise involving the construction of a compost pile
- 6:00 pm: Dinner and daily reflection

Day 7: Get to know San Lucas

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
- 9:00 am – 11:00 am: Tour of San Lucas
- 12:30 pm – 1:30pm: Lunch
- 2:00 pm : Departure

