

Amigos,

We hope you are all doing well and enjoying the holiday season. Atitlán is full of holiday spirit. The Hospitalito is decorated, there is a large Christmas tree in front of the post office and the streets are lined with vendors selling imported fruit, apples, grapes, and large tangerines. The new mayor has closed the streets surrounding the park and market to traffic, a great improvement (no tuk-tuks). School was out in November until mid-January, and some students are volunteering at the Hospitalito working with inventory.

The past month has been very busy. Construction on the new hospital has begun in a big way. You can see photos and read about events on the blog <http://www.puebloapueblo.blogspot.com/> Narda Sherman wrote a short article about the tragic boat accident that claimed six lives on November 22nd.

On December 7th, at 6 PM, Guatemalans “burn the devil”, (*quema del diablo*). Devil piñatas filled with firecrackers and bottle rockets are set afire in front of homes, to end the year free of bad energy. The larger cities are filled with noise and smoke on this evening and the tourist hotels leave warning messages in the rooms so that guests do not fear for their lives.

There will be many Christmas “convivios”. The employee party is the 19th, with games, prizes and Christmas baskets. The women in the Maternal Infant program are having their own party with games and will receive holiday baskets of lovely new clothing donated by the Zutano children’s clothing company. The workers building the new hospital will celebrate on the 23rd, with a Bar-B-Q on site.

The traditional Christmas food in Atitlán is tamales. These are special tamales wrapped in green leaves. They are made of a mix of corn and rice with a filling of chicken, red chili, stuffed olives and raisins or a prune. Trust us... they are delicious!

We hope all of you enjoy the holiday season and spend time with friends and loved ones. As it is said here....

Utz La’ Jalix jabel!!

The staff and board of Hospitalito Atitlán