

Jetset Journals


no.1

2025

# GUATEMALA

13 Days

Roundtrip



a travel guide

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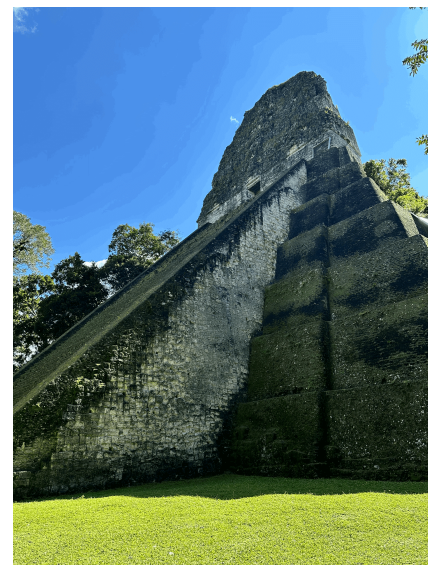
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# INTRO

Guatemala – one of the trendiest countries in recent years, which has experienced a real hype, especially on social media.

Guatemala is particularly notable for its location between two oceans, the Pacific and the Atlantic, and is considered one of the most volcanically active countries in the world.

A visit to the country is often combined with trips to other neighboring countries in Central America, such as Belize or Mexico. After our eventful but exhausting tour, we also added a few days on the beach in Mexico.

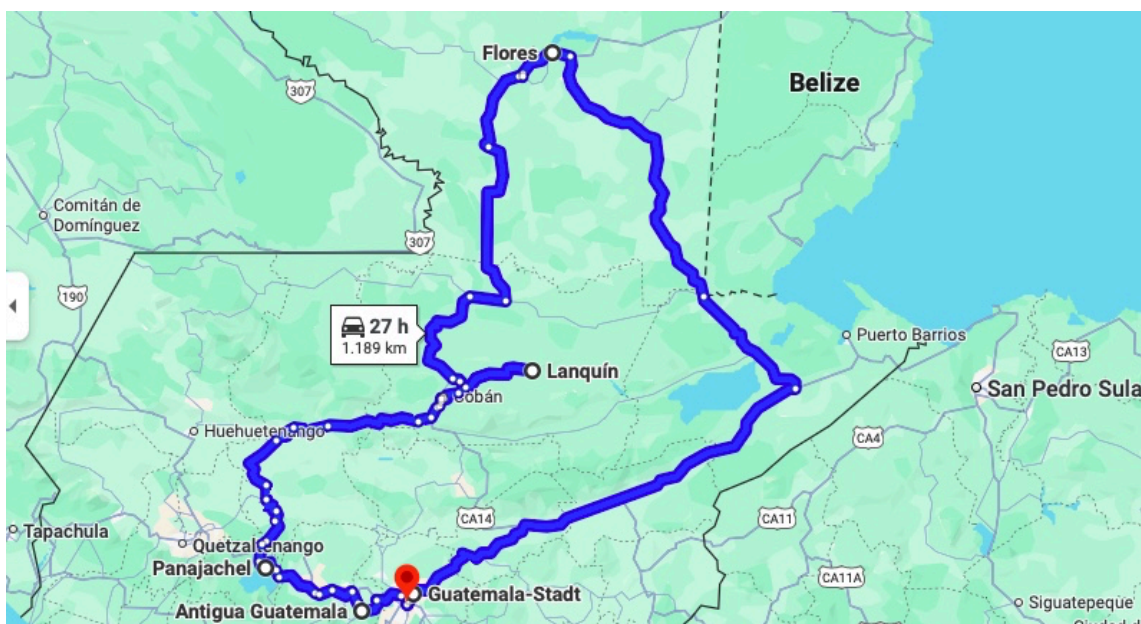
This is also a good option because there are no or only rare direct flights from Europe to Guatemala. People are

often warned against traveling to Guatemala due to increased crime, but we cannot confirm this.

The best time to travel to Guatemala is during the dry season (November to April).

A basic knowledge of Spanish certainly won't hurt, but many people in tourist areas also speak English.

The country is very large and the distances between destinations are very long. The most convenient way to travel is to book shuttles through your hotel, but the public “chicken bus” is also a cheap way to get around the country. I will show you a possible route plan on the next page.



## **Route:**

### *Guatemala City*

When traveling to Guatemala by air, you usually land at the international airport in Guatemala City. We had read beforehand that crime is a problem in the country's capital and that there isn't much to see there, so we flew straight on to Flores after landing.

### *Flores (2 Days)*

After arriving in Flores in the evening, we spent two days here, one of which we spent on a day trip to Tikal and the other exploring Flores Island.

### *Lanquín (2 Days)*

From Flores, we continued on to Lanquín. The shuttle ride took about 7-8 hours, so we spent the rest of the first day relaxing at the hotel. We enjoyed our second day in Semuc Champey.

### *Lake Atitlán (3 Days)*

Another long shuttle ride away from Lanquín is Panajachel at Lake Atitlán, where we spent three days, including the day of arrival, and also visited the surrounding small towns.

### *Antigua (2 Days)*

Antigua, on the other hand, was only a good two-hour shuttle ride away, and we spent one day there before the Acatenango hike and another one after.

### *Acatenango (2 Days)*

Between the two days in Antigua, we did the Acatenango hike with an overnight stay.

### *Departure*

From Antigua, we drove straight to the airport in Guatemala City and departed.

# HIGHLIGHTS



**01.**

## **Tikal**

Tikal, the ancient Mayan city, is the highlight of the northern Petén region. With enormous temple complexes and traces dating back to the 1st century BC, the area also served as the location for a Star Wars film.

You can climb some of the temples and enjoy the view over the rainforest.

We booked a private full-day tour with a guide and transportation (approx. €90) through our hotel and learned a lot. The wildlife here is also worth seeing.



**02.**

## **Semuc Champey**

Semuc Champey translates as “where the water disappears” and the nature reserve is located near Lanquín.

The turquoise-green natural pools, which you can also swim in, are particularly worth seeing.

Here, too, we booked a day trip through our hotel that included a viewpoint, swimming, and cave hiking. Good weather is particularly important here, as the park is closed when there is heavy rain.



**03.**

## **Antigua**

Still the capital of Guatemala until the mid-18th century, Antigua is still well worth a visit today.

Surrounded by volcanoes, the city offers great restaurants and cafés and a hip atmosphere.

Highlights of the city include the Parque Central, the Plaza Mayor, the Arco de Santa Catalina, the markets, and the view from Cerro de la Cruz, as well as seasonal festivities, like Quema del Diablo in December.



## **04.**

### **Lake Atitlán**

The second largest lake in the country is arguably one of the most beautiful in the world. Surrounded by three volcanoes, you can visit colorful towns such as San Juan and San Pedro, but also go swimming, kayaking, and more.

You can even take cooking and Spanish classes here.

## **05.**

### **Indian Nose**

The Indian Nose hike is another highlight around Lake Atitlán. You can book the sunrise tour through hotels or online and enjoy the fantastic view over the lake.

## **06.**

### **Livingston**

The region around the Río Dulce is another highlight of the country. Here you can take a boat to Livingston Island and enjoy beautiful beaches and Caribbean culture.

## **07.**

### **Chichicastenango**

If you have more time, you should definitely visit Chichicastenango. This small town is home to the largest market in Central America. A little further west lies Quetzaltenango, the second largest city in the country, also known as Xela.



**08.**

## Flores Island

If you travel to Flores to see the Mayan ruins such as Tikal, El Mirador, or Yaxha, you should also visit the colorful small town of Flores Island.

Here you can find nice cafés and restaurants and you can take a boat trip on Lake Petén Itzá.

**09.**

## Acatenango

For many, THE highlight of the country is the hike up the Acatenango volcano and the active Fuego volcano. The hike and the views show you the full force of nature. There are various providers, and we were very happy with Lava Trails, which has all the necessary information available on its website.



**10.**

## Food & People

In addition to the classic highlights, it is the people and the great food that make Guatemala so special.

The people were incredibly warm and friendly, and Guatemalan cuisine includes lots of legumes, chicken, and potatoes, and is somewhat similar to Mexican cuisine, but still different.





# DAY TO DAY

**Day 1** – After arriving at the airport in *Guatemala City*, you can choose a connecting flight to *Flores* to cover the long distance in the air. Once there, you will only have dinner at the hotel.

**Day 2** – One of the highlights is scheduled for the second day—a guided full-day tour to *Tikal*. Here, you will spend a few hours exploring the ancient Mayan city and will not return to the hotel until the afternoon, where you can *relax* and enjoy dinner.

**Day 3** – On the third day, there is still time for *Flores Island*.

After breakfast, take a stroll through the colorful streets, have lunch at *Tacos Los Peces*, and take a boat trip on *Lake Petén Itzá*. You can end the day with some *pool time*.

**Day 4** – Day 4 is primarily a *travel day*. After 7-8 hours, you will reach the hotel in *Lanquín*.

**Day 5** – On day 5, there is another full-day trip to *Semuc Champey* on the agenda, where you can also *swim* and hike through a *cave*.

**Day 6** – On the sixth day, another long drive (8-9 hours) is on the schedule until you reach *Panajachel*.

Here you can have dinner at *7 Caldos*.

**Day 7** – Start your first full day at *Lake Atitlán* with yoga and breakfast at *The Little Spoon*. Then take a boat to *San Juan* and also visit *San Pedro*. Take part in a *coffee tour* here and enjoy dinner at *Restaurante Laila* in the evening.

**Day 8** – The next day begins with a morning hike to *Indian Nose*. In the afternoon, you can paddle out onto the lake in a *kayak*, go *swimming* and then have dinner at *Guajimbo's*.

**Day 9** – The following day, continue on to *Antigua* by shuttle. Here, you can start by visiting the city center around the *Plaza Mayor*, *Parque Central*, and *Arco de Santa Catalina*. For lunch, grab a snack at one of the *markets* and enjoy dinner at *Mr. Taco Mexican Food* in the evening.

**Day 10** – On the 10th day, the hike up the *Acatenango volcano* is on the agenda. In the morning, you will be picked up in *Antigua* and driven to the supply center, where you can get water and food and also borrow clothes and hiking poles. The *hike* starts at around 10 a.m. and, after a few breaks along the way, you will reach *base camp* at around 3 p.m. From here, you can optionally hike to the crater of the active *Fuego volcano*. This depends a little on the weather, but it is definitely worth it. In the evening, there is a *bonfire* and dinner at the camp. Up here, you definitely need warm clothes, even for the night in the cabins.

When visibility is clear, you can see the red lava *erupting* from the *Fuego* volcano from the camp every 10 minutes or so.

**Day 11** – The second day of the hike begins at 4 a.m. with the wake-up call. In the darkness, we set off with headlamps through the deep volcanic sand to climb the last few hundred meters to the 4,000-meter *summit of Acatenango*. Even though it's not that many meters of elevation, this part is extremely strenuous because with every step you take, you feel like you're sliding back half a step through the deep ground.

Once at the *top*, the temperatures are freezing and the wind is extremely strong, but the *sunrise* and the view of *Fuego* below is truly a breathtaking experience. After breakfast, we descend through the clouds and *rainforest* back down to the supply center. From here, the shuttle takes us back to *Antigua*.

We were very happy with *Lava Trails* as our tour operator, and you can find detailed information and everything you need to know on their website.

When you arrive in *Antigua* in the early afternoon, you can relax a little and have dinner at *Taqueria Benito Carlos del Toro* in the evening.

**Day 12** – After the hike, spend your last day in *Antigua* relaxing, sleeping in, buying a *souvenir* or two, sitting in a *café*, and, if you still have the energy, visiting *Cerro de la Cruz*. Dinner is at *27 Adentro*.

**Day 13** – The next morning, depending on your departure time, you can enjoy a delicious breakfast on the roof terrace of *Café Lito* before taking a taxi directly to the *airport* in *Guatemala City*.

**Alternatives** – if you have more time, there are other highlights to enjoy (see above).

# WHERE TO EAT

## **Restaurants & Cafés:**

### **Flores**

#### ★ **Tacos Los Peches**

Small shop, authentic tostadas  
*Iglesia Catedral Ntra. Sra. de los Remedios  
y San Pablo del Itza, Avenida Flores, Flores*

#### ● **Restaurante Maracuyá**

Good food and nice lake view  
*Isla de Flores, Calle 15 de Septiembre, Flores*

#### ● **Café Recuerdito**

Great coffee and Cookies  
*Isla de, Calle 30 de Junio, Flores*



### **Lake Atitlán**

#### ● **7 Caldos**

Guatemalan food in Panajachel  
*Calle Monte Rey 3-90, Panajachel*



#### ★ **Guajimbo's**

Great uruguayan cuisine, Panajachel  
*Calle Santander, Panajachel, Guatemala*

#### ● **Restaurante Laila**

Nice food and a good view, San Pedro  
*MPVG+FHV, San Pedro La Laguna*

#### ● **Nativo Coffee Shop**

Great breakfast spot in San Juan  
*5ta ave, San Juan La Laguna*

#### ● **Hidden Coffee**

Delicious coffee, also to go  
*Calle Monte Rey, Panajachel*

#### ● **The Little Spoon**

Nice breakfast spot with roof terrace  
*PRRR+547, Calle Santander, Panajachel*

## **Cooking Class & Coffee Tour**

#### ● **Anita's Cooking Class**

*Zona 2 08 Cl 04-025, San Pedro La Laguna*

#### ● **Shangri-La Coffee Experience**

*Barrio 2, San Marcos La Laguna*

## Antigua

### ★ Taqueria Benito Carlos del Toro

Best tacos in town and stylish interior  
*Cjón. del Sol 8, Antigua Guatemala*

#### ● 27 Adentro

Very good food and cool rooftop terrace  
*6 avenida Sur # 22 Antigua, Guatemala*



#### ● Mr. Taco Mexican Food

Also very good tacos  
*5a Calle Oriente 12, Antigua Guatemala*

#### ● Casa Escobar Antigua

Chic restaurant, beautiful interior  
*6a Avenida Norte no.3, Antigua Guatemala*

#### ● Por Qué No? Cafe

Hyped restaurant & good selection  
*2a Avenida Sur y 9 Calle Oriente Casa 9 Antigua Guatemala*

#### ● Artista de Café

Specialty Coffee Store  
*5ta avenida sur no. 34B, Antigua*

#### ★ Alegria Café

Delicious coffee & smoothies  
*5 Calle Poniente.2 Antigua, Guatemala*

#### ● El Gran Café

Also good coffee spot  
*5a Calle Poniente 3B, Antigua Guatemala*

#### ● Café Lito

Good breakfast, nice rooftop views  
*1a Avenida Sur 6, Antigua Guatemala*

#### ● Siena Luz

Coffee- & Book Shop  
*6a Avenida Norte, Antigua Guatemala*



# WHERE TO SLEEP

## Flores

- **Hotel Villa Maya**

Great resort in the middle of the jungle by the water with a pool and restaurant. We also got picked up from the airport and booked the Tikal tour.

*Laguna Petenchel, Flores 01010, Guatemala*



## Lake Atitlán

- **Socialtel Atitlán (ex. Selina)**

Cool hotel in Panajachel with a pool, library, restaurant, and bar. The hotel and hostel is particularly recommended for the many activities it offers—from yoga and pub crawls to movie nights.

You can book affordable shared rooms here, or very nice and large private rooms for couples and families.

*Calle del Embarcadero Zona 2 Panajachel*

**Alternative:** La Casa del Mundo with beautiful lakeside views

*El Jaibalito, Lake Atitlán, Guatemala*



## Lanquín

- **Utopia Eco Hotel**

Friendly hostess, beautiful hotel by the river with group dinners, morning yoga, and more. You can also easily book a Semuc Champey tour and shuttle to your next destination through the hotel.

*G3R7+FXP, 6, Chicanutz, Guatemala*

## Antigua

- **Cacao Boutique Hotel**

Very nice interior, friendly hosts and still relatively central, but quiet

*Antigua Guatemala 00301, Guatemala*





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