



## **INTERACT TEACHER PLANNING GUIDE**

### **Guatemala Practicalities**

#### **TIME DIFFERENCE**

Guatemala is in the Central Standard Time zone and does not observe daylight-savings time.

#### **CLIMATE**

Weather conditions vary from season to season and region to region. The dry season is from October to early May and the rainy from late May until the end of September. Temperatures vary little during the year. The average high temperature is 77°F and the low 55°F in the highlands.

#### **CURRENCY**

The local currency is the Quetzal, named for the national bird. The US dollar is also accepted as legal currency in major tourist destinations. Change typically is given in local currency.

#### **CREDIT, DEBIT, PREPAID BANK CARDS**

Many hotels, stores, and restaurants accept payment with credit or debit card; rarely are prepaid bank cards accepted. Be sure to let your card carrier know before your departure that you will be travelling to Guatemala and ask them for any service or exchange rate fees. In addition to these fees, it is common and legal for individual establishments to charge their own credit card use fees for purchases.

Cards should always be in the name of the participant themselves. Debit cards work well for cash withdrawals, but typically must be run as credit for any purchases.

#### **WIFI & PHONE USE**

The easiest and quickest way to prepare for phone use while in Guatemala is by contacting your provider to review the packages they offer for international travel. Many companies have plans that begin at \$10 USD per travel day. WiFi will be available in some establishments, hotels, and families, but cannot be guaranteed, and the signal can vary greatly. Purchasing an international SIM card is also an option but will likely be difficult to purchase after arrival.



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### **ELECTRICITY**

Guatemala uses 110 volts. Visitors bringing electrical appliances without a built-in voltage adapter should also bring a voltage converter.

### **LANGUAGE**

The official language is Spanish, but English is spoken in the popular tourism areas. Over 20 indigenous languages are still spoken.

### **RELIGION**

There is religious freedom. Roman Catholicism is the dominant religion, and there are also Protestant and traditional Mayan minorities.

### **CLOTHING**

While in Guatemala City and the Antigua region, wear spring clothing and a sweater or jacket at night. Comfortable walking shoes are suggested. While at Tikal, light-colored, lightweight, cotton clothing and deet are recommended. Sunglasses and a hat are recommended while for beach tours.

### **EATING OUT**

Generally, a 10% tip is appropriate for restaurants. Ask if the tip is included since many establishments add it to the bill.

### **NATIONAL HOLIDAYS**

January 1 - New Year's Day; Holy Wednesday through Easter Sunday; May 1 - Labor Day; June 30 - Army Day; August 15 - The Feast of the Assumption; September 15 - Independence Day; October 20 - Day of the Revolution; November 1 - All Saint's Day; December 24 - Christmas Eve; December 25 - Christmas Day; and December 31 - New Year's Eve.

### **GOVERNMENT**

Guatemala has a democratically elected government with elections every four years.



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### **CUISINE**

Guatemalans enjoy traditional food, home-cooked and made with fresh ingredients. Although international fast-food chains are becoming popular in some of the larger cities, most of the people in this Central American nation still don't care for it, preferring traditional meals.

**Corn:** The people of Guatemala have a very special relationship with corn. In traditional Maya religion, the Gods first made men of mud, followed by wood. Neither of these materials worked out, however, and the Gods finally made men of corn, which worked perfectly. Therefore, many of today's Maya literally believe that their flesh was once made of corn. There exists a certain reverence for corn: if a rural farmer plants a crop of something that is other than corn, and a cornstalk grows in the field (perhaps from a stray kernel that was dropped the previous year) the farmer will not cut the stalk down.

This reverence for corn naturally translates into daily Guatemalan life. No meal is served without some sort of corn product there, be it small, round tortillas, corn on the cob, corn soup, or atol, which is a thick, milky beverage made from corn.

**Beans:** If corn is king in Guatemala, then beans are queen. Frijoles are served at almost every meal and provide much of the protein for the Guatemalan diet, especially in rural areas. Guatemalans generally eat black or red beans, slow-cooked all day long with peppers, garlic and onions and often more than a little bit of lard. Sometimes, the frijoles, particularly black ones, are ground into a thick, salty paste which is served by itself or spread onto hard or soft tortillas.

**Beverages:** Guatemala produces some of the world's best coffee, and you'd think that while you're there you could get a great cup of java. Unfortunately, most of the best beans are exported, leaving the locals with what's left behind. Guatemalans do enjoy coffee, but they tend to drink it very weak and very sugary. The only real drink that is particular to Guatemala is Atol, a drink made of corn and sugar. Licuados, which is a made with fresh fruit and milk, are popular as well. Most Guatemalans seem to prefer soft drinks.



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### **CUISINE cont.**

#### **Special dishes:**

*Pepián* is a thick sauce made from onions, tomatoes and peppers and usually served with chicken or turkey and vegetables. It is a traditional Guatemalan recipe that has been made in the country for centuries and is popular as an everyday sort of dish.

*Hilachas* is a dish made of shredded beef in a thick tomato sauce. The sauce generally included potatoes and carrots and is served with rice. Depending on the amount and variety of peppers put into the sauce, this dish can get spicy, although Guatemalans tend to prefer it mild.

*Kak'ik* is a thick, spicy turkey stew made in the highlands, particularly those where the Ki'che culture is still strong. Done properly, it takes all day to cook and is a real treat for those visitors who get the chance. In addition to turkey, ingredients include achiote, cilantro, garlic, tomatoes and dried peppers.

*Churrasco* is a charcoal-grilled center-cut beef tenderloin steak

*Chiles Rellenos* are roasted fresh green Anaheim, poblano or pasilla chili pepper stuffed with a melting cheese and meat made up of diced pork, raisins, and nuts, covered in an egg batter, and fried. It is often served in a tomato sauce.

*Platanos*, also called plantains, are starchier, less sweet relatives of the banana. Platanos can be part of every meal. When harvested before they are ripe, they can take the place of potatoes in meals, and are especially delicious when mashed and fried in round pieces, then lightly salted. This preparation is called tostones. When ripe, they can make delicious desserts, possibly baked with milk, sugar, and cinnamon.



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### **Guatemalan Crafts**

Guatemala has an overwhelming variety of handicrafts:

**WOODEN CRAFTS** are distinct and diverse. The carpenters are artisans devoted to the production of furniture, chests, musical instruments, toys, kitchen utensils, religious images, masks, etc. All are made from pine that is specially cured to increase its longevity.

Wooden masks (suitable as decorative wall hangings) are hand-carved in cedar or white pine by artisans from Highland towns such as Totonicapán, Chichicastenango, and Quiché using the Vaciado technique. Some masks are highly detailed and decorated with the features of mythical characters or animals or they may depict famous characters from the Spanish Conquest. The natives wear these masks during their Pre-Colombian, religious dance ceremonies.

The marimba, Guatemala's national instrument, is made either of hormigo or white pine (both of which grow near the main marimba production sites of Huehuetenango and Quetzaltenango). Other instruments (Violins, Guitars, Flutes, and Chirimías) are made of white pine and then decoratively carved and lacquered.

**BASKET WEAVING** in natural fibers, such as palm, jarcia, wicker, zibaque, straw, and bamboo is a craft handed down from the ancient Maya. The baskets are of all sizes and shapes and are used to carry fruit and vegetables and the finer examples can even be used for room decoration. Other ornamental articles are made from these fibers including hats, Petates (mats), and brooms.

**JARCIA** is a string-like fiber that is extracted from Maguey leaves, which artisans then use to make elaborate, beautifully colored hammocks and Morrales (tote bags). After extracting the Jarcia from the Maguey leaves it is dyed with intensely colored aniline dyes and finally woven with small wooden sticks.

**MAYOLICA CERAMICS** (glazed, colored ceramic-ware) comes from early Spanish-Colonial times and is still manufactured in Antigua and the Highlands. To make these, the artisan mixes clay and white sand with water and then molds the pieces, which are then baked, and finally enameled with animal or fruit-and-vegetable designs. There are a wide variety of articles such as sets of dishes, moneyboxes, candelabra, glasses, vases, brightly colored fruits and vegetables, etc. The ceramic makers also produce Azulejos (brightly colored tiles bearing coats-of-arms or household insignia and often showing a Moorish influence).



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### **Guatemala Crafts cont.**

**TERRACOTA** items are widely used in Guatemala for their beauty and utility. From pre-Hispanic times, Mayan artisans working in Terracotta have been making tinajas (water pitchers), pots, gavels, mixers, censers, griddles, candelabra, and toys. These pieces are usually baked once or dried in the sun. They are mostly in shades of red, however in Chinautla a different finishing process is used to produce white.

**WROUGHT-IRONWORK** came to Guatemala with the Spaniards, reaching its most elaborate expression in Antigua. Wrought ironworkers create beautiful colonial-style articles such as doorknockers, streetlights, lamps, censers, candlesticks, ornaments, beds, and other furniture.

**JADE** was sacred to the ancient Maya and in the 1970's, geologists rediscovered the source of this precious stone, the Motogua Valley. Now you can buy earrings, pendants, rings, and reproductions of Maya burial masks at prices much lower than in New York or Paris. These are all available in the traditional shades of green or rarer blues, grays and pinks.

**TEXTILES.** Indigenous women produce traditional fabrics in over 350 different designs and a huge variety of colors. Each design is unique to its village of origin and has a ceremonial symbolism inherited from Mayan ancestors. Each piece of fabric (woven on a pre-Hispanic Back-strap Loom) takes many months to complete. From these fabrics, the women make their unique costumes. Some villages have up to three different costumes: one for work and the others for ceremonies or special occasions. The profusion of dazzling, riotously colored costumes is a high point for visitors to Guatemala. The Spaniards introduced the Pedal Loom, which is used by the natives to manufacture larger cotton and wool pieces. The men make carpets, bedcovers, The women: mantel covers, serviettes, bags, etc.



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### **Maya Culture**

The Maya Culture is considered to be one of the largest in the American continent because of their knowledge of sciences, astrology and more. This civilization was born during the third millennium before Christ, living in a 320,000 square kilometers territory, taking in regions of what is today Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Belize and part of El Salvador. Through the centuries they formed a great civilization.

**PRECLÁSICO:** from 1500 B.C. to 292 A.D.; this was the period where agriculture began with corn cultivation. Monochrome ceramic, stone carving and the construction of the first buildings in places like Tikal are part of this period.

**CLÁSICO:** from 292 to 900 A.D.; this period can be divided into the Early Period and the Late Period.

The Early Period goes from 292 to 650 A.D.; during this time the “teocrático” system governed society. The mathematic sciences were developed, as well as astronomy, chronology, hieroglyphic writing, ceramic arts and sciences like medicine. This Empire built big cities like Tikal, Copan, and Palenque (Mexico).

The Late Period goes from 650 to 900 A.D.; during this time, the Maya Culture flourished and reached its maximum splendor by developing arts, agricultural advances, highly developed numeration system, a solar and religious calendar and also a new sophisticated construction systems for pyramids and buildings. The most important Maya cities of this period continued to be Tikal, Copán, and Palenque. In the north, major cities included Uxmal and Chichen Itza.

**POSTCLÁSICO:** from 900 to 1527 A.D.. in this period the decline of the Maya empire began due to influences of foreign groups which began to exercise pressure over the Maya people, their religion and government. They started wars, which created great disorganization and disintegration for the great Maya civilization that culminated with the Spanish invasion in 1527. The most powerful cities were Uxmal and Chichen Itzá.



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### **Guatemalan History**

In 1520, the conquistador Pedro de Alvarado arrived in the American continent and was sent from Mexico by Hernán Cortés to conquer Guatemala. After bloody battles with the indigenous peoples, he succeeded in his objective and in 1524 the first capital of Guatemala was founded, called Santiago de Guatemala. The name "Guatemala" means "Land of Trees" in náhuatl—the language spoken by the Mexican Indians who accompanied de Alvarado—and refers to the forests that were everywhere in this land.

The first capital essentially usurped the city of Iximché, which belonged to the cackchiquel people. After several revolts by the indigenous population, it was moved, in 1527, to the Almononga valley at the foot of the Volcán de Agua ("the Volcano of Water") in a place that is now a small village called the Ciudad Vieja, or "Old City." In 1541, an earthquake brought a mudslide down from the side of the volcano and destroyed the town. After much study, it was decided to move the capital to the Panchoy valley, still near the Volcán de Agua, but also near the Volcán de Fuego and the Volcán de Acatenango. The city assumed its administrative duties two years later and in 1566 was bequeathed the official title of "The Very Noble and Very Loyal City of Santiago of the Knights of Guatemala." Despite frequent earthquakes and volcanoes, Guatemala City continued to grow and today it is considered, by some, the third city of the New World, after Mexico City and Lima.

Santiago de Guatemala was the capital and economic hub of the Kingdom of Guatemala—what are now the five countries of Central America—and it was here that most of the royalty lived. The future looked bright for this city until the devastating "Santa Marta" earthquakes in 1773 ended its colonial role. Despite opposition from the church, the city was moved once again. Santiago de Guatemala, now known as Antigua, is a national monument and was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1979. It is, today, the second most visited tourist destination in Guatemala.





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### **Guatemalan History cont:**

Although the new Guatemalan capital, called Guatemala de la Asunción, was founded at the end of the colonial era, it preserved the design and the social separation of a Spanish colonial city. The new urban area was more spacious, the new Plaza Mayor (Great Plaza) was almost double the size of the one built in Antigua, and the streets were considerably wider. The architecture of the public buildings was not dominated by the colonial Baroque style, but by Neo-Classicism. The secular and ecclesiastical buildings were built around the Plaza

Mayor with the town-hall on the north and the Palacio Real on the west side. The cathedral and the Palacio Arzobispal were built on the east. Construction was limited by lack of money and workers, which is why many of the new buildings were built with materials salvaged from old Antigua.

Four blocks from the Plaza Mayor other squares were built, one in each direction. The presence of religious temples was not so predominant as it was in Antigua, but nevertheless the Church took possession of 60 percent the city's central sector. Private properties, called "Solares", were distributed according to the size and location of the ones abandoned in Antigua. The Mudejar style characterized all the central houses, with an outward appearance so uniform that the only difference between houses was their size. Commerce was conducted in the central market at the Plaza Mayor and in the stores located at the Portal del Comercio to the south. The principal road axis was the Calle Real, (Royal Road) between the Plaza Mayor and the Calvario, known today as 6 South Avenue, Zone 1. After the Independence of Guatemala 1821, few modifications were made to the city until the Liberals came to power in 1871.



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### **Guatemalan History cont:**

The Conservative Government, which came to power in 1855, introduced street nomenclature based on proper names such as Calle del Calvario or Calle del Olvidos. The names indicated salient features about the street, its history or zone. During this period, the University of San Carlos de Guatemala was built, begun in 1786 and finished in 1849 (today in 9 Avenue 9-79, Zone 1). This building was declared a National Monument in 1970 and in 1985, the University of San Carlos began restoration works on the building in order to install the University's museum, MUSAC. During the Conservative reign, many church buildings were constructed, as were two military forts, for use during the Central American civil wars. The San José fort, built in 1846, was demolished and replaced by a modern construction, the Teatro Nacional, on Calle 24 3-81, Zone 1. The San Rafael de Matamoros fort was constructed in 1858 in the northeast of the city and still functions as a military base today.

Another building that typifies the epoch is that which housed the Economic Society for Friends of the Country, finished in 1855 at what is now 9 Avenue 9-44, Zone 1. This building was later used by the Liberal Government for its Legislative Assembly and now serves as the National Congress.

When the Liberals took office, they made many changes to the colonial way of life of Guatemala. The national economy was oriented towards coffee cultivation, and still constitutes the country's principal export. The Liberals encouraged European immigration, which led to the first phases of urbanization, and in turn the establishment of European institutions such as banks. The expansion was made possible by the seizure of church property. In 1877, the street's nomenclature changed, with proper names substituted by a numerical system that is still used today. In 1890, President Barillas ordered the construction of a suburb called "Exposición", with the Guatemalan Pavilion of the Paris World Exhibition at its center. With this suburb the first diagonal streets were created, today the routes and vias in Zone 4.



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### **Guatemalan History cont:**

The Liberal president José María Reyna Barrios (1892-1898) was a typical Euro-centric oligarch. He decided to give the city a facelift, taking as his model Paris. In 1892, he decreed the creation of a public garden as site for the upcoming Central American Exhibition. He ordered the establishment of the Boulevard 30 de Junio, known today as Avenida La Reforma, and one of the most popular tourist attractions in the city. The beautification drew the wealthier families from the center into the south. The architectural style of the private houses was also modified, replacing the Mudejar style with other imported styles.

Another prestigious neighborhood was the Hipódromo Norte around the Avenida Hipódromo. With the construction of Minerva's temple and park, the central Avenida 6 was also extended north, and became Avenida Minerva, today known as Avenida Simeón Cañas, Zone 2. After the earthquakes in 1971, the Minerva Temple was demolished, but in its garden the famous relief map of the Republic was built. This is a must-see attraction!

In the 1950s, many of modern buildings were constructed, such as the Centro Cívico, where the Public Finance Ministry, the Instituto Guatemalteco de Turismo (INGUAT) and other institutions are located. As Guatemala has grown, new architectural styles have appeared, which is very apparent on the Avenida La Reforma.



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### **Antigua History**

Antigua, in the Department of Sacatepéquez, (Cerro de Hierba), may be the most outstanding and best-preserved colonial city in Spanish America. The Spanish Colonial style permeates every part of the town: its houses, churches, squares, parks and ruins, also its traditions and folklore as well. Antigua is a city of charm and color where you can see and buy an overwhelming variety of attractive, handmade products that honor the traditions of generations of artisans.

Antigua's temperate, climate and friendly inhabitants welcome visitors. Antigua sits in a Highland valley (1,500 meters) overlooked by the spectacular Agua Volcano (3,765 meters high). A little further away are two other volcanoes Acatenango and the always smoking, sometimes erupting, Fuego. Antigua is also noted for its crafts: terracotta, ceramics, wrought iron, silver and jade jewelry, wooden sculptures, carved colonial-style furniture, a great variety of traditional costumes and weavings, figured stone, brass, jarcia, traditional toys and much more..

Antigua was designated 'La Muy Noble y Muy Leal Ciudad de Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala' by the conquistadors in 1543 and has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The festival of the town's saint (Santiago or St James: Patron saint of the conquistadors) is celebrated July 25 th.



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### Caminata Antigua

**1. PLAZA MAYOR:** Es perfectamente cuadrada, exactamente 145 pasos por lado. Los edificios principales son el Ayuntamiento, el Palacio de los Capitanes y la Catedral.

The Main Plaza is perfectly square, exactly 145 meters on each side. The main buildings are the City Hall, Captain's Palace and Cathedral.

**2. TEMPLO y ARCO DE SANTA CATALINA:** En 1609, cuatro monjas del Convento de La Concepción obtuvieron el permiso para establecer el Convento de Santa Catalina, el segundo de la ciudad, inaugurado el 15 de septiembre de 1647. Para finales del siglo, la población de monjas había crecido tanto, que fue necesario un terreno adicional para sirviera de huerto, el cual adquirieron en el lado opuesto de la calle. Para mantener las condiciones de claustro, se construyó el arco por el cual las monjas podían transitar sin tener contacto visual con el exterior. Este fue terminado en 1693 y reconstruido en el siglo XIX.

In 1609, four nuns of the Convento de La Concepción obtained permission to establish the Santa Catalina Convent, the second one in the city. It was inaugurated September 15, 1647. By the end of the century, the nun population had increased so much that it was necessary to purchase additional land that was to be used as a vegetable garden. This land was purchased on the opposite side of the street. To maintain the conditions of a cloister, an arch was built that nuns could cross over without being seen. It was completed in 1693 and rebuilt in the 19th century.

**3. TEMPLO y CONVENTO LA MERCED:** Destruído por los sismos, del templo original quedaba muy poco, por lo que en 1749 se encarga un nuevo proyecto el arquitecto Juan de Dios Estrada, el cual concluyó en 1767. Este nuevo templo junto con el monasterio debió ser abandonado en 1773, debido a los danos sufridos. Su fachada de estilo barroco antigüeño es una de las mejores restauradas y conservadas. En el interior del templo encontrará imágenes bellamente elaboradas; la más venerada es la de Jesús Nazareno. En el interior de lo que fuera el rden, podrá encontrar un enorme estanque con forma de rdena y una rden en forma octagonal, bellamente decorada.

Destroyed by earthquakes, very little of the original temple survived. In 1749, a new temple was authorized and completed in 1767. This new temple as well as the monastery were apparently abandoned due to additional earthquake damage. Its Antigua baroque style façade is one of the best restored and preserved. Inside, beautifully elaborated images are found; the most venerated is Jesus of Nazarene. In the patio of the former convent, an enormous star-shaped pond and beautifully decorated octagonal fountain are found. Admission is apx. \$1US.



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### **Caminata Antigua cont.**

**4. TEMPLO y MONASTERIO de CAPUCHINAS:** Debido a su diseño sísmico, la mayoría de las estructuras han resistido los terremotos que sufrió la ciudad, por lo que es el edificio que mejor se ha conservado. Sus fundadoras llegaron en 1725 de Madrid, siendo la última orden que se estableció en la ciudad. Iniciaron la construcción del edificio en 1731 y lo terminaron en 1736. Del conjunto formado por un templo y un monasterio, únicamente el monasterio quedó intacto con el terremoto de 1773, el cual abandonaron por temor a nuevos sismos.

Due to its earthquake resistant design, most of the structures have survived the various earthquakes. Today, it remains the best preserved historical building. In 1725, nuns from the Madrid order of the Capuchino Convent arrived. They were the last religious order to arrive. Construction was started in 1731 and completed in 1736. Originally a temple and monastery, the former was damaged and abandoned. Today, only the monastery remains intact. Admission is apx \$5US.

**5. TEMPLO y CONVENTO de SANTO DOMINGO:** Conocido como el monasterio más grande y rico de la nueva capital, su iglesia fue terminada en 1666. Contaba con dos torres para los campanarios, en una de los cuales funcionó el primer reloj público de la época. Actualmente en la parte de las ruinas que ha sido restaurada, funciona un centro de convenciones, un hotel, y museo.

Completed in 1666, this was the largest and richest monastery in Antigua. It had two bell towers, one of which held the first public clock. Today, the Santo Domingo hotel features a convention center, several small museums, and restored archaeological ruins. Admission is apx. \$4US for the archaeological ruins.

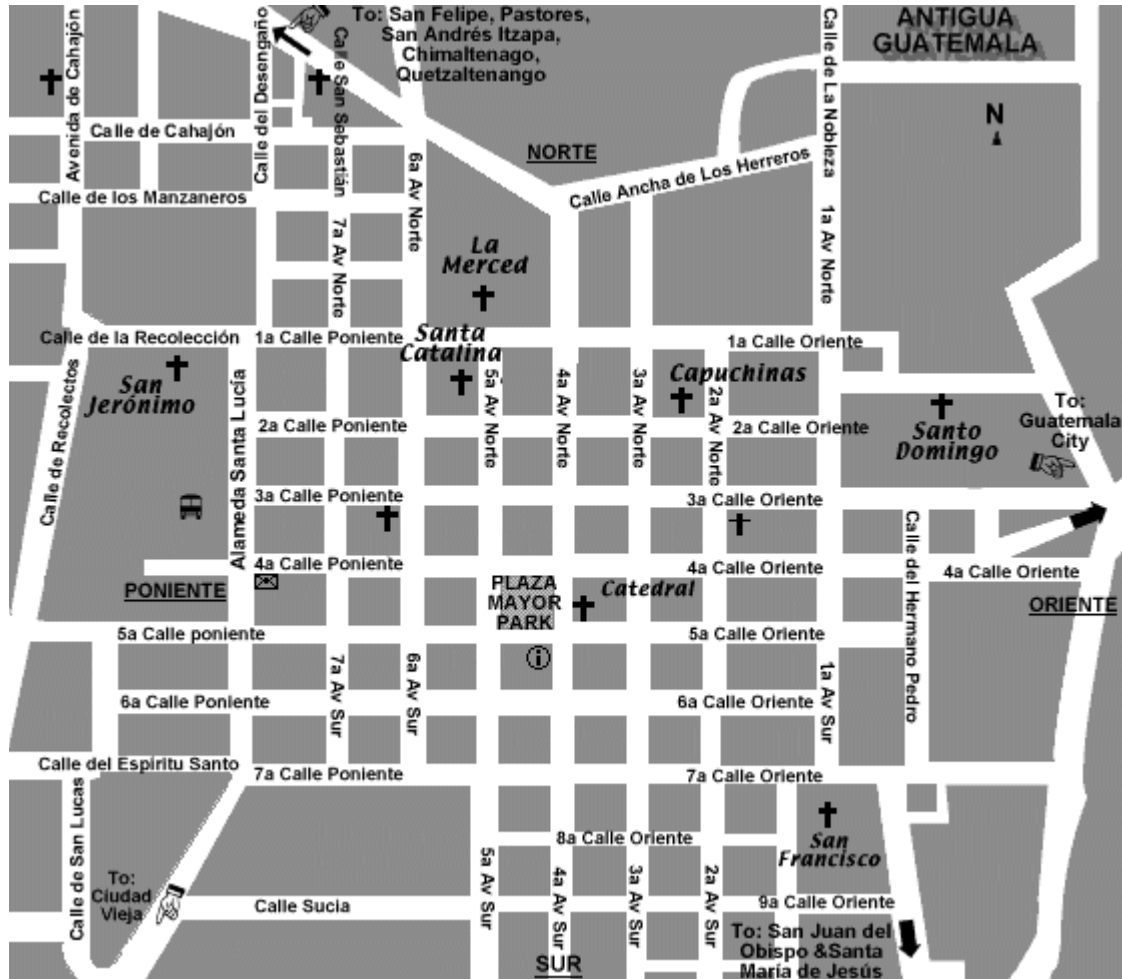
**6. TEMPLO y MONASTERIO de SAN FRANCISCO:** Posee las mas ricas piezas de arte colonial. Es el templo mas visitado por ser el que guarda en una de sus capillas la tumba del Santo Hermano Pedro de San Jose de Betancourt y también por ser uno de los que continúan con mas fervor las tradiciones religiosas antiguas. Pertenece a la orden de los franciscanos, se construyó entre 1575 y 1590. Fue destruída casi en su totalidad en 1773. En el siglo XIX se construyó la capilla de la tercera Orden Franciscana y en 1837 se colocó allí la tumba del Santo Hermano Pedro, hasta 1991, año en que fue trasladada a una capilla especial donde permanece actualmente.

San Francisco has the richest colonial art. It is the most-visited temple because it houses the tomb of Saint Hermano Pedro de San Jose de Betancourt and because much of the Antiguan religious traditions continue to be followed here. Belonging to the Franciscan Order, it was built between 1575 and 1590. It was totally destroyed in 1773. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a chapel of the Third Franciscan Order was restored and in 1817, the tomb of Hermano Pedro was placed inside. The tomb was transferred to a new, special chapel in 1991, where it remains today. Carriage rides available in the courtyard. Admission apx. \$1US.



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## ANTIGUA CENTRO HISTORICO MAP





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### **Tikal**

Tikal is the largest excavated site in the American continent. It is Guatemala's most famous cultural and natural preserve. Tikal possesses a certain mysticism and magic. Like all puzzles without answers, it fascinates everyone.

This majestic archaeological gem comprises 222 square miles of jungle all around the ceremonial center. It took the University of Pennsylvania 13 years to uncover about 10 square miles of structures at Tikal. However, much of it is still left to be unearthed.

After being abruptly abandoned by the Maya over 1000 years ago and overgrown by a relentless jungle, Tikal remained a mystery. Only a legend survived among the Indians of a lost city, where their ancestors had achieved a high cultural development. In 1848 the legend faded, giving way to an exciting era of discovery.

Its discovery was made by Ambrosio Tut, a chiclero. He saw the temple's roof combs in the distance and ran to tell Modesto Mendez, the Governor of the Petén Province. They visited the site with an artist who recorded some of the carvings at Tikal. Their findings were published by the Berlin Academy of Sciences in 1853. It was only a matter of a few years before curious scholars started traveling from the corners of the world to see for themselves what had been discovered.

Discover Tikal with your guide and enjoy the largest ceremonial center in the Maya World. Carry plenty of water, DEET, a flashlight, wear a good pair of hiking boots and be prepared in case the rain gods visit.