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GUATEMALA

TOURISM INFORMATION:

Area 108,890 sq km (smaller than the US state of Louisiana, a bit bigger than England)
 ATMs Plentiful
 Budget: US\$15-30 per day
 Capital: Guatemala City
 Country code: 502
 Electricity :115V to 125V, 60 Hz; US-type plugs
 Famous for Maya sites
 Head of state President Álvaro Colom
 Languages Spanish, Maya
 Money US\$1 = Q7.60 (quetzals); US dollars readily accepted
 Population 13.1 million
 Non Maya :56 %, (3,1 children each family)
 Maya :44 %, (6,5 children each family)
 Government : democratic
 Department: 22
 National Day : Independence Day, 15 September (1821).
 External debt: 4.9 billion \$US (2002).
 Weights / Measures: Metric
 Time GMT minus 6 hours, minus 5 hours in daylight savings
 Traveler's checks Cashed at major banks (ATMs are easier)
 Visas North American and most EU citizens need only a valid passport

BEFORE TO GO:

Since most vaccines don't produce immunity until at least two weeks after they're given, visit a physician four to eight weeks before departure. Ask your doctor for an international certificate of vaccination (otherwise known as the yellow booklet), which will list all the vaccinations you've received. This is mandatory for countries that require proof of yellow fever vaccination upon entry, but it's a good idea to carry it wherever you travel.

WHEN TO GO:

There's no bad time for visiting Guatemala, though the rainy season – called invierno (winter) – makes unpaved roads more difficult from mid-May to mid-October, and into November and December in the north and east. In the lowland jungles of El Petén, the mud at this time will slow you down, guaranteed. Humidity – never low on the coasts or in El Petén – increases during the rainy season, too. In the highlands things get cold and damp during invierno, especially at night. It doesn't rain all day during the rainy season, but you can expect daily showers (downpours in the north) at the very least. The dry season – verano (summer) – is from about November to April, and this means sweltering heat in El Petén and along the coasts and comfortably warm days in the highlands. In the eastern parts of the country, rain is possible at any time.

The height of the foreign tourist season is from Christmas to Easter. Things become acute around Christmas, New Year's and Easter, when Guatemalans take holidays too– in many places you'll need to book ahead. Another high season runs June to August, when throngs of North Americans descend on Guatemala to study Spanish and travel.

Economy :

Coffee
 Tourism: \$300 millions us
 Sugar and fruits.

Minerals: Zinc, jade, copper, obsidian, Or.

VISA:

Citizens of the US, Canada, EU countries, Norway, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand, Israel and Japan are among those who do not need visas for tourist visits to Guatemala. On entry into Guatemala you will normally be given a 90-day stay. (The number 90 will be written in the stamp in your passport.)

In August of 2006 Guatemala joined the Centro America 4 (CA-4), a trading agreement with Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador. Designed to facilitate the movement of people and goods around the region, it has one major effect on foreign visitors – upon entry to the CA-4 region, travelers are given a 90-day stay for the entire region. This can be extended once at the Departamento de Extranjería (Foreigners' Office; 2411 2411; 6a Av 3-11, Zona 4, Guatemala City; 8am-2:30pm Mon-Fri).

For an extension take with you one of the following: A credit card with a photocopy of both of its sides. An airline ticket out of Guatemala with a photocopy.



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