



Antigua

POP 68,637 / ELEV 1530M

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ La Fonda de la Calle Real (p80)
- ➔ Bistrot Cinq (p81)
- ➔ Caffé Mediterráneo (p80)
- ➔ 39 Azul (p81)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Casa Jacaranda (p76)
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- ➔ Hotel Quinta de las Flores (p78)

Why Go?

A place of rare beauty, major historical significance and vibrant culture, Antigua remains Guatemala's must-visit destination.

A former capital, the city boasts an impressive catalogue of colonial relics in a magnificent setting. Streetscapes of pastel facades unfold beneath three volcanoes. Many old ecclesiastical and civic structures are beautifully renovated, while others retain tumbledown charm, with fragments strewn about park-like grounds.

Thanks to the dozens of Spanish language schools that operate here, Antigua is a global hot spot. Yet it remains a vibrant Guatemalan town, its churches, plazas and markets throbbing with activity. Outside the city, indigenous communities, coffee plantations and volcanoes offer ample opportunities for exploration.

Perhaps the real miracle of Antigua is its resilience. Despite earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and floods, followed by virtual abandonment, it has re-emerged with a vengeance, buoyed by the pride of its inhabitants.

When to Go

Blessed with a spring-like climate year round, Antigua is a great destination at any time. Ample sunshine prevails most days with slightly cooler temperatures from mid-May to October when afternoon downpours are the norm. Antigua's biggest deal is Holy Week, when religious processions enliven the streets, Passion Plays are performed and hotels are fully booked. Other particularly lively times include Corpus Christi and All Saints' Day (Nov 1) with obligatory feasts of *fiambre* (chilled mixed salad) and festive visits to the graveyard.

