



Antigua

POP 34,685 / ELEV 1539M

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Cactus Grill (p80)
- ➔ Bistrot Cinq (p81)
- ➔ Zoola Antigua (p79)
- ➔ Mesón Panza Verde (p81)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ El Hostal (p76)
- ➔ Earth Lodge (El Hato; p86)
- ➔ Posada del Ángel (p78)
- ➔ Hotel Quinta de las Flores (p78)
- ➔ Casa Santo Domingo Hotel (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 catalog 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 parklike 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 are throbbing with activity. Outside the city, indigenous communities, coffee plantations and volcanoes offer ample opportunities for exploration.

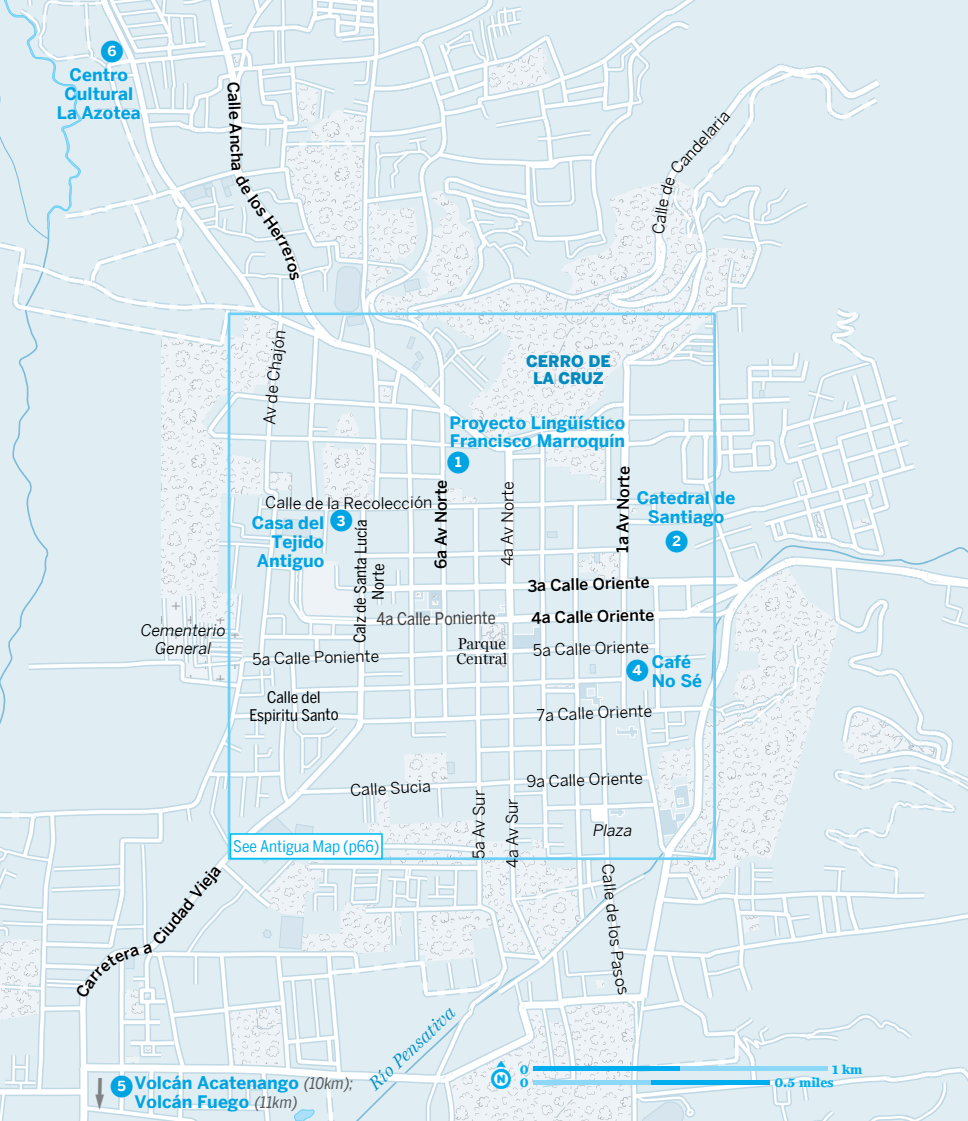
Perhaps the real miracle of Antigua is its resilience. Despite earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and floods, followed by virtual abandonment, it has re-emerged with a vengeance, buoyed by the pride of its inhabitants.

When to Go

Blessed with a springlike 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 Semana Santa (Holy Week), which precedes Easter, when religious processions enliven the streets, passion plays are performed and hotels are fully booked.

Other particularly lively times include Corpus Christi (May/June) and All Saints' Day (November 1) with obligatory feasts of *fiambre* (chilled mixed salad) and festive visits to the graveyard.



Antigua Highlights

① Resurrecting your high-school Spanish at highly regarded **language schools** (p72).

② Witnessing scattered slabs of masonry, such as at the **Catedral** (p65), that display mute evidence of Antigua's quake-ridden history.

③ Admiring and acquiring traditional Maya wear at **Casa del Tejido Antiguo** (p69), with its seminal collection of *huipiles* (embroidered tunics) and *cortes* (wraparound skirts).

④ Sampling a clandestine mescal at **Café No Sé** (p82),

the low-lit lair of choice for Antigua's expats.

⑤ Scaling **Acatenango** (p72) for jaw-dropping views of its sister volcanoes, including fire-spewing Fuego.

⑥ Savoring volcanic coffee beans at the **Centro Cultural La Azotea** (p86).